



Facilitating for Friends and Family

3rd Third Thursday Assembly

Nadia Chaney: Hello, everyone! Today's 3rd Thursday Assembly is about facilitating with friends and family. While we're gathering ourselves, please announce your presence by **DESCRIBING A DANCE MOVE THAT WILL SHOW US HOW YOU FEEL TODAY.** Here's mine: Jump up, knees to shoulders, land in a crouch and spin, spider style with tongue out. Then lean back, into low back bend, and spring back to standing hands in the air! (I FEEL GREAT! I'm in my beloved Vancouver, on my dear friend Antje's couch...excited for another PYE FB Chat)

Katie Jackson: Mine would be a bit of a slide move. Feeling a bit frisky today in London with too much energy to be sitting down and heading to a big party in an underground vault tonight so I'm looking forward.

Josie Berezin: Hey, I liked that thing about dance move. Here's mine: put both arms up, one at the time. Then jump as far as you can, bend to your knees, then stand up and step back. Ready to start!

Shilpa Setty: Right hand up in the air, jumping up in the air and landing back. Very excited about my new journey n learnings in store.

Tiffany C Purn: 70's style dance groove today..

Silvia Giovannoni Webster: Gosh. Dance move today is the more like a highly precise and assertive march as I brave London's shopping crowds.

Sally Goodwin: It's called the yawn... big stretch and shake with mouth wide open and maybe some sound.

Nadia: So I think we're in good time to get started. We have about four or five people around, and hopefully more will join us soon. Here are the goals for today's session:

- 1) To explore the challenges and successes that we can have when we bring our facilitation practice into our more intimate spaces
- 2) To share activities and games that work in those spaces
- 3) To build an understanding together of how to approach challenges that come up in those spaces

Nadia: In order to achieve the goals, here are some suggestions for agreements. We are still experimenting with this form, so be sure to add what you need or want AT ANY TIME DURING THE PROCESS.

1) No put downs of self or others. Keep a positive, lift-up vibe.

2) Share at our level; Everyone is welcome, no matter their level of experience as a facilitator or community organizer. Experts are definitely also welcome!!

3) Show your presence, by LIKING and by responding to keep the flow and

4) You can come and go as you please, take as long as you like to respond, and basically enjoy the text-format to make this work no matter whether you are just waking up, just going to bed, or on your lunch break (time zones unite!!)

Nadia: So let's start with some short (two or three sentences) stories about facilitating with friends and family. HAVE YOU EVER TRIED ANY OF YOUR TRICKS and GAMES, in your more intimate relationships?

Tiffany: Yes! I totally have. Every once in a while there's a flop (i.e. I try something and folks aren't on board), but more often than not I end up having a lot of fun and doing something creative with my partner or family. I'm always kind of amazed that they're up for it (easy improv theatre, group poems, sound and movement games, singing...)

Katie: A member of our network shared [this fantastic video](#) with me about using the 'yes...and' game in your every day life. I've been using it a lot this week and it's really great. This is a really gentle form of facilitation in that it isn't formalised, it's just about being consciously more positive and open.

Tiffany: I use "[yes...and](#)" every day...

Josie: I've tried once, but it actually ended very shortly. I took a couple of books and different images to inspire people to make up their own movements, whether in small groups or alone. That was it, I think they got too inspired and didn't get to listen to me anymore, lol

Nadia: what happened next? Did it turn into a dance party?? and where were you when you tried it?

Josie: We were in a big and very green square with some friends, in a party mood - we were celebrating a friend's wedding. So yes, after this short explanation about finding movements, everyone started to move, first of all by their own, then it turned out that everyone was kind of dancing together.

Nadia: hey! that is so cool. I love that activity for folks who don't know where to get started when dancing...wonderful.

Josie: In general it happens that the people that don't know how to get started go following the others who know best - then in a couple of minutes everyone is dancing, you can't tell who is creating and who is following! It's a good atmosphere.

Nadia: I think it's great to make spaces where people are ABLE to jump in and let loose. I think that's part of the role of the facilitator...and it's so wonderful because sometimes I think social situations can produce a certain amount of anxiety...dancing can be so exposed for some folks...I love having just that little extra bit of support

Josie: Yes, totally agree!

Shilpa: I have tried the drawing game where we form groups, and go in a circle adding drawings to what the previous person had drawn. They LOVED it!!

Nadia: I love to use games and activities with my friends and family, too. My mother is a game-player from way back

Peggy Taylor: Hi. I am a total fan of Yes..and in all kinds of situations. Charlie and I just did a book reading for [Catch the Fire](#) on Tuesday night with about 40 friends. As soon as we asked them to play Yes...and the group got very cozy. One New Year's Eve, we asked all of our guests to make "Blessing Cards" for one another. Each person decorated a card with a blessing statement starting with the words "May you...." We had a variety of art supplies. They then put the card in a basket. At midnight we all sat in a circle. Each person expressed a wish for the New Year and drew a card from the basket. Inevitably there were synchronicities that delighted us.

Josie: oh I liked that Peggy Taylor, that's a good way to put all people in touch on NYE celebration. A good idea for this one!

Peggy: The interesting thing was that everyone got really happy as they made the blessing card...it was as if they were blessing themselves! So the party took off on a high note from the start. Very loving and connected vibe.

Silvia: One tradition in my family is that when giving out our secret Santa (big tradition in our family) gifts you have to describe the person you got using charades. And people have to guess. Makes for some super hilarious moments and encourages people to think think about the person in a deeper way or get to know them better.

Nadia: that is the most awesome tradition ever! I'm going to see if my fam will try it, too!

Nadia: Tiffany, when you talk about using [YES AND](#) every day, you mean that you are working with that principle from Non-Violent communication, or do you mean you play that YES AND storytelling game every

day (I'm going to find a link to that game on our website, so people can see the instructions...it's actually one that works great with all kinds of non-official groups...)

Tiffany: I mean more philosophically. As in always saying yes to a person, idea, or whatever is coming my way (as much as possible) and moving forward from there. It is really the basis of how I do my work, and I've noticed the shift that it creates. I have also worked with the theatre improv YES AND game with youth, and it is super effective. Especially with the debrief. It's one of my core principles I work from.

Nadia: Great point. Are there any other principles or philosophies that you have embedded in your life from your facilitation practice.

Tiffany: yes, many. For example: meet people where they are at. Listen, listen, listen. Help ignite creative energy or thinking..

Nadia: oooh! nice. I like to try to practice reflecting strengths back to people in general public too, like wow, you're so creative, I love your hairstyle etc...It's a nice subtle way to practice setting habits for myself...and usually makes for a nice vibe, too

Tiffany: Love it! So important to build each other up...

Nadia: Yes, and (see how I did that) as a someone who was a shy kid, some of these practices really help me stay present as I walk in the world

Tiffany: Nice!!! I was also really shy growing up. Great bigger picture intention. Thanks for sharing that.

Nadia: What, if anything, holds you back from trying games, activities, agreements etc in your friend-and-family settings?

Katie: For me, the feeling that it might feel embarrassing is a big one. I take on a certain role with friends and family - we all play many roles, so this would be taking on a different role and it feels a little like an edge I would be pushing.

Tiffany: I haven't thought of using agreements with my family, but I love this idea! Especially with the holidays coming up. What if we all agreed collectively to have fun? I am totally going to do this...

What holds me back, however, at times to be totally honest is a fear that people just won't be on board, or will think that I'm trying to do my "work" with them in my home or personal space. So I wait until something feels honest and authentic.

Nadia: Thanks Katie. I find that, too. Does anyone have any suggestions about what kinds of games and activities are the LEAST embarrassing?

Two days ago my friend Rebecca made a wreath and put it on her living room table, then she added white paper hearts all over it like snow, and left a pen on the table with instructions on the biggest heart to "add some poetic expressions of gratitude." I loved that because it was interactive, but no one was put on the spot...

Shilpa: Sometimes I feel they get uncomfortable when you try something without hesitation

Nadia: Ah, that's interesting, Shilpa...so would you say that there is a difference in the tone or approach you use in your less formal groups? If so, what is that difference?

Peggy: My friends and family sometimes make fun of me, or snide remarks, saying things like, "There goes Peggy." Someone once gave me a pin that said "Party Boss?" I actually backed off. But then I asked them if they really didn't like the games and they said, "No... get us to do them. That's just our resistance. "

Nadia: Thanks for sharing that, Peggy.

Peggy: I love the idea of the wreath and papers. any creative activity does the job and that one sounds so accessible.

Nadia: So, how do you work with resistance and teasing as it comes up? My mom is amazing...she never backs down, she just teases back until people are doing their Christmas poems etc.

Tiffany: Peggy - it's great to be reminded that people might really resist something....but enjoy it and be grateful in the end.

Christine Castigliano: My inner resistance holds me back: I'm imposing something on a gathering that has a different set of expected behaviors. Even if the usual "activities" are boring and not soul-satisfying. I know what I bring has value and leads to delight. Must be an old ego pattern I inherited: to fear breaking norms. I actually adore norm-busting, but it takes skill to hold the faith strong in one's body and demeanour.

Nadia: Thanks Christine (and hi!! great to see you!). It's true, it's hard to be the innovator, or the pattern-breaker. It's almost like it's a new challenge every time.

Metta Paterson: Lack of respect for the guidelines of an activity/the space created/taking it seriously.

Cecilia Junqueira Sallowicz Zanotti: Metta, I am in Australia singing the Kookaburra song !! I will be here for Xmas and it will be me, 2 kids 10 and 12, my parents, my pregnant sister and her husband. I'd love to do some

activities but I fear their resistance as well (even of my son, cause my daughter is always doing everything with me). How to start?!!! I will try agreements and big ideas. And a gratitude activity sounds great...

Nadia: One more question. WHAT WOULD YOU DO IN A GROUPS OF YOUR FRIENDS AND FAMILY, IF YOU COULD DO ANYTHING AT ALL?? What's your big dream?

Josie: Thinking about my family, I really wish they could simply sit together and listen to each other. Family gatherings are always a mess, everyone likes talking at the same time - and no one listens carefully. I'm sure you'll have many tips to give me in this case, am I right?

Nadia: We go around the table before a big family meal, and share gratitude, which is really really nice but only if people are feeling at least a LITTLE gooey.

Nadia: Well, good people, this ends the facilitated portion of our time together, but feel free to keep chatting. We won't officially "close" because the page will still be open. If you join late, do check out the agreements and goals, please. This has been a wonderful chat, thank you SO MUCH for your contributions. NEXT MONTH: We will discuss the practice, challenges and purpose of SETTING INTENTIONS in groups. Please join us, and tell your friends, it's open to ALL. Thanks again!

Tiffany: Nadia and Katie - thanks so much for facilitating and hosting! I'm in the Pacific Northwest, and so this is a perfect way to start the day.

Silvia: Thank you! This has been amazing. Wonderful ideas! Thanks for facilitating Nadia Chaney.

Josie: Thanks Nadia, Katie and Silvia, that's always good to be in touch with you, and I find this PYE FB chat such a great idea! Now I got to run, have a good day/night everyone!

Shilpa: Thank you Nadia and Katie this was great. With party season just round the corner, got great ideas from each one of you. Thanks a ton!" U guys are awesome. Have a wonderful day!!

Katie: I love doing these chats because you always give me so many inspiring ideas. It's so great to see our network coming alive online like this and uniting from our own little corners of the globe.