



PYE Third Thursday Assembly

September 15, 2016

*[Nilisha Mohapatra](#)

Hello hello, hey hello hello!

Welcome to another exciting Third Thursday. I am so glad you're here, because today is PLAY DAY. That means we are just going to use case-studies to explore different iffy, sticky, unsure, soft, loud facilitation moments with groups! The format will be a little different today, where I'll be sharing scenarios, and we'll all jump in to navigate through them! Don't worry about being right or wrong. ALL responses are welcome!

Below you will find the Goals, Agreement and a Check-In for today. 'Like', 'Share', 'Comment', tag your facilitator friends, and let's get this party on the road!

*[Nilisha Mohapatra](#)

GOALS for Sept 15th 2016

1. To unpack and navigate through some iffy, sticky, unsure facilitation moments! We have them all!
2. To share ideas, tips, practices that can help us become stronger facilitators.
3. To gain a real insight and understanding of the range of experiences that groups bring up.
4. To connect, reinvigorate and have meaningful fun online



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AGREEMENTS for Sept 15th 2016

In order to achieve these, here are some suggestions for agreements to make our time together flow really well. Be sure to add what you need or want AT ANY TIME DURING THE PROCESS. Let the group know or privately message the facilitator if you are concerned that an agreement is being broken.

- 1) No put downs of self or others. Keep a positive, lift-up vibe.
- 2) Share at your level; Everyone is welcome, no matter their level of experience as a facilitator or community organizer. All questions are important, and all answers (or further questions) are valuable. It is also okay and important to respectfully disagree with each other.
- 3) Show your presence, by LIKING and by responding to keep the flow. Ask questions, make comments, connect. The technical trick for this format is to REFRESH your browser fairly often.
- 4) Maintain CONFIDENTIALITY by not sharing names or personal information about the participants in your groups, sharing from your own perspective, and asking permission before sharing someone else's story.

*[Nilisha Mohapatra](#)

CHECK IN:

If you were to be a song, which one would it be? Give us a line! Feel free to write your own song :)



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[Helena Hennighausen](#) Hah. A country tune keeps running through my head - "Im in a hurry to get things done - I rush and rush until life's no fun - all I really gotta do is live and die - but I'm in a hurry and don't know why"

[Helena Hennighausen](#) Alabama - I'm in a Hurry

[Nilisha Mohapatra](#) HA! We all can relate to that! Thanks for getting us started, Helena!

[Madhu Shukla](#) for today an indian song: saathi haath badaana.. eh akela thak jaye to ilkar kadam badaana.."

[Madhu Shukla](#) in english: friend lend your hand.. if alone/ one tires ... lets step forward together"

[Nilisha Mohapatra](#) Welcome, Madhu :) I love that song for it captures the beauty of collaboration.

[Kelly Terbasket](#) Star walker by Buffy st Marie She's a history turner, sweet grass burner.... Aim straight stand tall... This song inspires my warrior woman as she lists strong ancestors

[Nilisha Mohapatra](#) Kelly! So so good to 'see' you again :) Just reading that brings out my warrior self!

[Nilisha Mohapatra](#) This morning I a reminded of an Indi-Pop song in Hindi, from the 90s. It goes something like "I am dreamy girl, from lands unseen.. The beauty is flowers is because of me.. the pride in people's eyes is because of me".

[Nilisha Mohapatra](#) The song is 'Pari Hoon Main' by Suneeta Rao.

[Manjunath Anand](#) I would relate to myself to a Kannada song now a days I keep humming it's called "sariyaagi nenapide nanage idekella kaarana ee kiru nage "

[Nilisha Mohapatra](#) Welcome, Manja!! Thank you for being with us :) Could you translate that line in English for those of us who don't know Kannada?



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[Nilisha Mohapatra](#) And beloveds, the first scenario is up! Go go go, play play play!

[Sola Story](#) Open up set your mind so free.. Zimbe Zimbe, Zimbe 🎵. Buganda song from Uganda

[Sumanth Raj](#) Give some sun shine give some rain I wann grow up once again

*[Nilisha Mohapatra](#)

SCENARIO 1:

You are leading a workshop with teachers who have been in their professional fields for over 15 years. Your workshop is about finding new ways of engaging with children, and a part of that involves finding new ways of relating to self. While leading a personal story session about sharing life-incidents that have shaped us, one of the teachers says a loud NO. "I will not share anything about my life with this group here. I do not see value in it. I will not bring up older painful memories in a professional training!" Four other people agree with him, and they walk out.

How would you restore safety, facilitate the remaining session, and bring the participants back?

[Manjunath Anand](#) It's one of those situations where I come across a lot while facilitating teachers. It would be nice to hear from the group.

[Nilisha Mohapatra](#) It is so real, right? How have you managed this, Manju? Do share a little bit of your wisdom.



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[Madhu Shukla](#) wow.. tough one! i would maybe start by hearing how this lands with group. so address the action witnessed. share feelings. not judge what's happening or blame. not sure where next..

[Nilisha Mohapatra](#) It's a challenging one, yes! Love the bit about acknowledging the incident. What do you think is happening with the participants who are saying NO, in a safe space?

[Madhu Shukla](#) yes absolutely.... and lead the conversation of what it truly means to create a safe space without excluding.

[Nilisha Mohapatra](#) Any ideas on how to transition out of this space, and move on with the workshop?

[Manjunath Anand](#) So most of the time, there is so much resistance to share their stories and tell we wouldn't want to remember those saddening moments. I always give them that space we accept as they are. We will also give them a feeling it's okay if they don't share also and respect their decision. That way group senses the safety and others take that risk to share not completely but giving a try.

[Nilisha Mohapatra](#) Beautiful! Safety is definitely first! And such a respectful stance too. Has anyone ever walked out of your trainings because of such resistance?

[Manjunath Anand](#) Not really but I have seen them getting detached from the group.

[Nilisha Mohapatra](#) What are some ideas around bringing them back into participation? Something that I do is to then share my story with as much openness as possible, to make them feel safe, and make the container of the group more real and deeper.

[Manjunath Anand](#) True I also do the exactly same thing but to take a next I would try to spend some time talking to them. Understand the reason behind for not sharing and give time.

[Nilisha Mohapatra](#) I am curious.. Are there any new, unique ways of dealing with such resistance?



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[Verity Jones](#) One of the 7 human needs is feeling safe. As a facilitator, you may tell your own personal story, but that doesn't translate into creating a safe space for others. Let's be real here, you will say your 'thank you's & good byes' and leave these folks with each other. I think you have to start with exercises that allow for the group to share with each other long before you introduce this personal story telling, else some folks will say outright that it's not for them. For the remaining participants, you want to help them process what they've witnessed. It's not that different from teachers who encounter a wounded child who doesn't trust them and their classmates, so what strategies do they employ to gain control after a disruptive outburst? You have to help them see that exposing their vulnerability is what unites is

*[Nilisha Mohapatra](#)

SCENARIO 2:

You've been invited to facilitate a 3-day visioning and team building retreat for a group of engineers, sales professionals and managers. You have the most fantastic arts processes in tow, and have a powerful design. Somewhere in day two, the group participation dips. It's maybe at a 20%! The reason - they don't see how they can take theater, poetry and arts processes into their organizational contexts. A dig or two comes your way, about how you may not know what goes down in their work context.

How would you manage this?

[Nilisha Mohapatra](#) Madhu Shukla, share some pearls of wisdom about this?

[Madhu Shukla](#) okay .. so if i sense it and there is no obvious protest from participants- I may invite some sort of checkin from the group- where are we this far... what are some insights .. what are some questions we have as participants in the process. essentially create space for them to air it

[Nilisha Mohapatra](#) Invite the elephant in the room, into the circle :)



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[Madhu Shukla](#) yes exactly

[Madhu Shukla](#) once i hear the questions.. in someway lead them to dropping judgements.. which i would have set as group norm

[Nilisha Mohapatra](#) I've experienced something similar with teachers, where at the end of Day 1 of a workshop, half the group was confused about how they were going to take it back into their classrooms. Some of them mentioned that since I wasn't a school teacher, I didn't have a sense of what it was like. Big blow to credibility there! But I opened it up by asking if it was working for anyone else, and really facilitating a conversation within the team, with minimal input from my side! Nervous, yet powerful!

[Nilisha Mohapatra](#) Madhu Shukla Ah, dropping judgements! Is there any activity that you'd recommend for this?

[Madhu Shukla](#) i dont typically sell the arts.. i persuade them to stay with the process and not feel compelled to agree with me. but be open to anything new they experience and share that at the end.

[Nilisha Mohapatra](#) Madhu Shukla LOVE IT! Meeting the group where they are at.

[Madhu Shukla](#) also with corporates i always add this during gathering expectations- you are here for a certain agenda that someone else may have decided for you. Please ask yourself now that you are here- what would help you the most to be in this session. I dont guarantee you answers.. but lets all be benefitted by your questions thoughts and insights

[Madhu Shukla](#) ths has helped.. to help them move from HR depratment agenda to a personal agenda that they relate to

[Manjunath Anand](#) So I have not had experience of leading to the corporates. I guess may be making them understand the power of art and giving powerful real examples that may help them to see the other side too.

[Nilisha Mohapatra](#) Thanks for thinking out loud with us :) Have you experienced something similar with teachers or youth?



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[Manjunath Anand](#) Haa haa of course like about 75% of the time, they say it doesn't work in classroom setup.

[Madhu Shukla](#) Manjunath Anand same to same in corporate set up. they say we are here.. where is the attendance sheet? when is lunch? what time will you leave us?

[Manjunath Anand](#) Haa haa same to same. One more observation is that, this mainly happens because of the culture or they have been treated like that, where they are here to hear what the higher authorities say and give their attendance and go home. Especially when they come to our trainings they surprised. It gives them an opportunity to share their views and thoughts rather just sit and listen.

[Nilisha Mohapatra](#) Ah yes! Different kinds of spaces. Any tips on how to set up the workshops then? How to open it?

[Manjunath Anand](#) Before the start of the session, it's nice to have an informal conversation and may b cracking some jokes making the feel comfortable would definitely helps. They will come out of their shells and participate freely.

[Madhu Shukla](#) i get all tables removed. projector used mainly for videos.. use music.. embrace garden space or terrace. infact i ask participants to come dressed in comfy clothes.. take off shoes and badges and phones.. which is a big shocker in a tip top corporate office

[Manjunath Anand](#) Yes I agree with Madhu Shukla music definitely makes a big difference

[Nilisha Mohapatra](#) [Manjunath Anand](#) Humour! Yes! I love that suggestion. Such an easy way to connect and establish safety. That's a stretch for me sometimes :)

[Madhu Shukla](#) feel free to sit or lie on the floor is another space change for them

[Madhu Shukla](#) humour is gold

[Manjunath Anand](#) For getting along with people its (humour and funny talks) a great bridge to build a great relationship

[Nilisha Mohapatra](#) Madhu Shukla Creating surprise elements in the physical set-up. That's how the magic starts.



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[Manjunath Anand](#) Hmm interesting like could u give an example Nilisha Mohapatra? What do mean by interesting elements ?

[Nilisha Mohapatra](#) Manjunath Anand Just like we put up scarves and balloons at camps. The idea is to think about the impact you wish to create, right from the first moment that people step into the room. No chairs - just cushions.. music.. maybe twinkly fairy light all around.. getting some plants into the rooms.. handing out candy as they walk in.. Maybe even offering hugs/ appreciations!

[Manjunath Anand](#) Hmm okie that sounds great !!! Nilisha Mohapatra but A just clarification or doubt what kind of music can be played when they walk in?? Is there a specific kind of music or anything that is pleasant??

[Nilisha Mohapatra](#) Depends on the vibe or energy you want to create. To bring in a high energy, dance music! Like Taylor from Grassroot Soccer used to do! Blast it out! If you want people to feel calm, grounded and tender, some really slow instrumentals.

[Sola Story](#) Hashima Nilisha Mohapatra I would do as Madhu Shukla in the set up and especially in my Agreements tailored to their context and environment...

[Kelly Terbasket](#) I have found that the more versed I am at articulating the power of the creative community methodologies the more buy in I get right from the beginning when doing the goals and the by ideas. Also I am getting better at explaining why creativity is important to our work - innovative solutions are needed to address our problems of today. Good research and quotes like 'we can't solve the problems of today with the same thinking that went into creating them.' This helps Connect the dots to their work.

[Nilisha Mohapatra](#)

SCENARIO 3 (BACK TO BASICS):

You are leading a youth camp. It is a group of 35 - 40 teenagers, in the age range of 14-18. The nature of the camp is such that it invites everyone in - their voices, their stories, their gifts. It's beautiful! And when teens discover they matter, they



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want to share more. As a result, some participants end up being very energetic, enthusiastic, and claim more air time. You've tried inviting the quieter ones in, but notice that its not working. You'd love to get more voices and gifts in. How do you do this, without shutting anyone down?

P.S. This is a common occurrence with groups, and I've had so many facilitators reach out asking how to manage such dynamics. Let's share some wild, unique and fun ways of doing so!

[Madhu Shukla](#) simplest.. get into triads and share

[Madhu Shukla](#) and then do a one word closure or action repeat closure.

[Nilisha Mohapatra](#) Back to basics it is!! What about ways of channeling energy and participation of the ones that are already at peak levels of participation?

[Madhu Shukla](#) i typically preempt with a timer person or a bell

[Madhu Shukla](#) but i do struggle with overflowers

[Manjunath Anand](#) When I come across this kind of situation, I usually ask the quietest one does he/she has something to say at the sametime for the loudest one, I tell will come back to him and ask. That way it doesn't hurt his feelings it also gives him a sense that it's important everyone gets an opportunity to speak.

[Themis Gkion](#) I sometimes ask the louder one to help me out through a different role, such as to take notes of the main discussion points on a flip-chart, if we are having a group discussion.

[Nilisha Mohapatra](#) Themis! Welcome, my friend :) Great to have you chip in! And yes to offering them more leadership! How have you seen that impact them?

[Themis Gkion](#) I am happy to join the discussion! :) They usually accept the invitation and feel empowered to assume the "special" role. Another "special role" could be to assist me in organizing/facilitating a game.

[Themis Gkion](#) If I want to facilitate an activity in small groups, I can assign the louder ones together in a subgroup and leave space for the quieter ones to air their voice in the other subgroups



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[Madhu Shukla](#) hehe nice strategy

[Themis Gkion](#) Or I can facilitate an activity in smaller groups with equal air time from each participant, signaling when to move to the next speaker.

[Kelly Terbasket](#) Sometimes I notice that even an eye invitation helps, like a gentle subtle nudge to the quieter ones, and that way they aren't put on the spot.

Remember that we all come from diverse backgrounds around social spaces. For those people who've been oppressed and thus are repressed in our self expression, it's very hard sometimes to even know what we think or what we have to offer because we haven't been asked much!! So let them join at a pace that is comfortable and respectful, when they are ready, when it feels safe enough they will take me up on that gentle invitation

[Sola Story](#) Partly it's in the set up and how safe people feel in the group. However I agree that small groups (triads, pairs) eases the fear of speaking in a small group. Giving a general reminder about trying new things' stepping out of comfort zone as well as a non specific invite to the quieter ones in the room has served me in this context before... Peace n Love Sola

***[Nilisha Mohapatra](#)**

Alright, alright, alright... that's a wrap! This has been fun, dear people. Our conversations centered a lot around some basic yet crucial facilitation practices. So helpful! I'm grateful for all the thinking aloud, ideating, and sharing! The case-studies are up, if you want to share your wild, unique ideas. New lenses to the scenarios are WELCOME!

Thank you one again. It is always such an amazing space to connect with y'all!
Until next time :)

[Nilisha Mohapatra](#) Manjunath Anand and Madhu Shukla: Thank you for rocking this one totaaaaaallllly!

[Madhu Shukla](#) Thanks Nili as always for making this so thought provoking. Awesome to connect with you again Manju and have this space to reflect.



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[Manjunath Anand](#) Thanks for facilitating nilishaaa

[Themis Gkion](#) Thank you for leading this thought-provoking discussion, Nilisha!

[Nilisha Mohapatra](#) I'm so glad you are here and sharing all your wisdom. So helpful to know of how you've been facilitating with groups.

[Themis Gkion](#) Just got back from school in time for the third scenario. :) Glad I joined the last part of the discussion, at least.

[Nilisha Mohapatra](#) It's all up for you to respond to, in your free time! And I'll keep checking back int today as well :)