

Work In Progress: Building a Culture of Connection

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Transforming Disconnection in Personal Relationships

1. Decide if there is possibility for growth or mutuality in this relationship
2. Name the disconnection in a non-accusatory way
3. Examine one's part in the disconnection and take responsibility for it
4. Hear the other person's sense of what is going on
5. Examine together the variables that influenced the disconnection
6. Jointly make a commitment to improve the relationship
7. ***Relationships are a living thing and must be nourished continuously***

Recommendations for Creating a Culture of Connection in Activist Work

1. Make room/time/space to discuss how the group is functioning (talk about process of group dynamic, not just content)
2. ***"Talking is Action" and that is how we should treat it.....***
3. Create a culture that is more reflective of connection:
 - Be present/pay attention
 - Maintain open body language
 - Engage in mutual sharing about yourself/your experiences
 - Ask questions and express curiosity
 - Validate other's experiences
 - Communicate as equals (avoid power-over dynamics)
 - Create a culture of respect
 - Decrease urgency with patience, calmness, balance and mindfulness
 - Express appreciation, decrease criticism
 - Use laughter and humor
 - Support the ideas and suggestions of everyone
 - Inspire each other to take action
 - Take on the right amount of responsibility (not more than is possible)
 - Express hope and optimism (support cynical feelings not actions)
 - Tell the truth
 - Build trust
 - Create relaxed environments
 - Share decision-making and power
 - Have concern for the collective well being
 - Create a culture where self-care is respected (instead of burnout being expected)

"A group is nothing more than a collection of relationships. If those relationships are strong and nurturing, the group will last longer and do more substantial work. Time invested in making the group healthier and more supportive of its members will pay off in increased productivity and decreased drop out rates (p138, Jones)."