

MUTUAL INVITATION & LISTENING WITHOUT FEEDBACK INSTRUCTIONS

from The Wolf Shall Dwell With the Lamb by Eric H. F. Law

In order to ensure that everyone who wants to share has the opportunity to speak during our table conversations today, we will proceed in the following way:

The leader or a designated person at your table will share first. After that person has spoken, he or she then invites another to share. Whom you invite does not need to be the person next to you. After the next person has spoken, that person is given the privilege to invite another to share. If you are not ready to share yet, say “I pass for now” and then you can be invited again. If you don’t want to say anything at all, simply say “pass” and proceed to invite another to share. Do this until everyone has been invited.

During the Lectio exercise, you are invited to listen and not to respond to someone's sharing -.

During the lunchtime conversation, you may choose to ask questions without judgment but try to ask questions for clarification only, for understanding further what someone is saying.

A basic outline of these instructions is as follows:

After a first person shares, each person who is invited has three options:

1. Share and invite.
2. Pass for now and invite. The group will return to this person later, or
3. Pass and invite. When a person chooses to ‘pass,’ the group will not return to this person in this round.

Ask questions without judgment, try to ask questions for clarification only. Do this until everyone is invited, remembering to return to those who ‘passed for now.’

Explanation of the benefits of Mutual Invitation

Because there will be participants with different perceptions of power, facilitation that exclusively uses the “volunteer style” of interaction that favors those from individualist cultures excludes those whose interactions favor a collectivistic culture. Therefore, the Mutual Invitation process is used in order to ensure that everyone who wants to share has the opportunity to speak when the facilitator gives the instruction to do so. As group members become more accustomed to using this tool, they make connections with everyone in the session, because they are required to invite each speaker by NAME. The person who is invited may or may not be someone from whom she/he ordinarily wants to hear.

When Mutual Invitation is used, it encourages deep and holy listening to one another, because there are no interruptions or refutations allowed until everyone has spoken who wants to speak. It is important to remember that in some cultural settings, group members will not speak up in a discussion unless they have been invited. The reasons for this may be gender- or age-related or other traditions embedded deeply in one’s culture. There may be those who are uncomfortable singling a person out to share. For them it may feel like when they were a child and were being selected (or not selected) to play on a team.

There are two safeguards built into the process that can assuage people’s fears. One: each person invited has three options: share, pass for now (which means “I am not ready, please come back to me”), or pass (which means “I do not choose to share on this topic”). However, no matter which option is selected, the one invited has the privilege of inviting another person in the group by NAME. Two: Throughout the process, the invitation to speak passes back and forth, and no one is left out of the process.

This form of sharing requires self-discipline, and mutual care and respect for others. It also allows for deeper sharing than might be had in everyday conversation.

Thank you for participating in mutual invitation!