



FOR PEACE+EDUCATION

how to host dinner dialogues at home + connect for change

What is the power of convening a group of people?

How do you create the space to talk about what matters deeply?

What are the most important questions that we need to focus on if we are to thrive together in the future? (100 questions project)

Keep Connecting for Change

We feel called to make the change, but none of us can do it alone – no person, no sector and no place. Today's most important challenges cannot be met by working within the silos of traditional sectors, organizations and locations. We are in this together! The Dalai Lama Center for Peace and Education Connecting for Change program brings together those who may not ever otherwise meet, to explore possibilities, exchange insights and identify ideas and opportunities for collaboration that we have not previously dreamed. One way in which you can keep Connecting for Change is to become an ambassador and host a dinner dialogue in your community.

How to host a dinner dialogue – come hungry, add in a recipe for change, create a question

Step 1: Frame the most important question(s) you want to explore

As we experienced at the Connecting for Change Dialogue, good questions can be transformative and world-changing. Not only do questions help us learn, stay open, and discover new points of view, but they can also create common ground amongst strangers and create a space for collaboration and shared action. At Connecting for Change, we explored some amazing questions, but these questions are just a starting point for the questions we'd invite you to explore in the weeks, months and years to come. While breaking bread together, participants will have a conversation about different points of view leading to key questions to be fed into the larger Connecting for Change network.

Step 2: Write an invitation to gather a diverse group of people

Bring together a group of 8-10 people who do not know each other from different backgrounds. Think about the people you know. Who can you convene together who have never met but who together will stir up new possibilities and perhaps even work together towards a common future? As Peter Block, author of "Community of Belonging" says, bring the right people together in the right way and you can spruce up old tired conversation and create transformative questions and possibilities.

Step 3: Create the right space for dialogue

Create a dialogue space that feels welcoming, comfortable, inviting, and safe for creative dialogue.

Step 4: Practice the principles for dialogue (see Dialogue Resources below)

1. Respectful and deep listening
2. Speaking with intention
3. Paying attention to the well-being of the group
4. Creating the context of possibility rather than problem solving
5. Focusing on gifts rather than deficiencies

Step 5: Document and share your experience with the Connecting for Change community

Document your dinner in pictures, video clips, quotes and stories, and record the question that your dinner participants feel they would be most interested in further exploring. Have these posted onto the Connecting for Change website (www.connectingforchange.ca) to allow easy access to the shared experiences and to the question that has emerged from the group. You can also join the dialogue on connecting for change and inform others of your activities and projects within LinkedIn (<http://www.linkedin.com/groups?about=&qid=1892045> - Group Name: Connecting for Change).

SUPPORT

Please feel welcome to contact the Dalai Lama Center to answer questions you may have about hosting your own dinner dialogue – (connectingforchange@dalailamacenter.org)

Other Dialogue Resources

PEER SPIRIT CIRCLE GUIDELINES

<http://www.peerspirit.com/>

<http://www.peerspirit.com/gifts/PeerSpirit-Circle-Guidelines.pdf>

PeerSpirit creates interactive social containers where transformation occurs. What do you need to transform? How do you want to honor your life story? How can you be the leader of your own life?

SEEDS OF COMPASSION CIRCLES GUIDE

<http://www.seedsofcompassion.org/>

http://www.seedsofcompassion.org/involved/SOC_CompassionCircle.pdf

The Compassion Circle is a hosted conversation model designed specifically for the Seeds of Compassion Initiative, whose primary objective is “to nurture kindness and compassion in the world starting with children and all those who touch their lives.” What sets Compassion Circles apart is that the focus of the gathering is compassion – what it means, what it looks like, and how we can embody and encourage it in the world around us.

WORLD CAFÉ – HOSTING GUIDES

<http://www.theworldcafe.com/>

<http://www.theworldcafe.com/hosting.html>

The World Café format is an interactive process designed to surface the collective intelligence from a group.

A SMALL GROUP – CIVIC ENGAGEMENT SERIES

<http://www.asmallgroup.net/>

http://www.asmallgroup.net/pages/images/pages/CES_jan2007.pdf

A Small Group is a volunteer group whose purpose is to offer a network and set of tools to create a new conversation and sense of relatedness that has the power to produce an alternative future for the city. If we want to see change in the city [*or the world – our addition*], then we have to change the conversation.

100 QUESTIONS PROJECT – UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE

<http://www.cpsl.cam.ac.uk>

http://www.cpsl.cam.ac.uk/our_work/collaboratories/100_questions_project.aspx

The 100 Questions Project recently launched by the University of Cambridge Programme for Sustainability Leadership is a project to unite great minds, influential people and the collective genius of millions to face one of the greatest challenges of our time – to create a global shift to sustainability. It is a highly participative process that encourages the asking of well-formed questions that help humanity to frame as precisely as possible the challenges to address to secure a viable, desirable future.