**‘An Other Kingdom’ highlights Silence and Listening as  practices that orients our thinking toward beliefs in neighborliness and community.**

***‘An Other Kingdom‘ by Peter Block, Walter Brueggemann and John McKnight***

***“The practice of listening brings people together. It reminds us that we are not alone. When people gather, the right questions bring the sacred into the room-questions of connections, not opinions. If you bring questions of depth, questions that are personal, the experience of being together shifts. When we ask questions that are an invitation to hear each other, something is created. How do you construct ways to listen to each other? One is to present questions that evoke profound speech versus just talk. Any time you ask a question that results in a list, nothing is going to happen. Questions of analysis are interesting but not powerful.”***

Asking the right questions creates space for people to come together and hear each other. They evoke a sense of commitment.  What are powerful questions? Questions that have power can change thinking by creating space for people to listen to each other , to choose accountability and to take action. Peter Block explains that powerful questions demand engagement through being “ambiguous, personal and stressful.”  Powerful questions are powerful because we have decided to trade in advice and problem solving  for being curious. Advice and problem solving presume that I have the answers to solve your problems even though I may not understand your context. When I get curious and ask powerful questions, I create space for me to listen and understand where you are and where you are going. Powerful questions also provide an opportunity for community to be built because I treat you as equal in a conversation, not as an object of my advice.

**25 Powerful and Generative Questions**

**Questions for Focusing Collective Attention on Your Situation**

1. What question, if answered, could make the most difference to the future of (your specific situation)
2. What’s important to you about it and why do you care?

3. What draws you/us to this inquiry?

4. What’s our intention here?  What’s the deeper purpose (the big “why”) that is really worthy of our best efforts?

5. What opportunities can you see in this ?

6. What do we know so far/still need to learn about it?

7. What are the dilemmas/opportunities in it?

8. What assumptions do we need to test or challenge here in thinking about it?

9. What would someone who had a very different set of beliefs than we do say about it?

**Questions for Connecting Ideas and Finding Deeper Insight**

1. What’s taking shape?  What are you hearing underneath the variety of opinions being expressed?

2. What’s in the centre of the table?

3. What’s emerging for you?  What new connections are you making?

4. What had real meaning for you from what you’ve heard?  What surprised you?  What challenged you?

5. What’s missing from this picture so far?  What is it we’re not seeing?  What do we need more clarity about?

6. What’s been your/our major learning, insight or discovery so far?

7. What’s the next level of thinking we need to do?

8. If there was one thing that hasn’t yet been said in order to reach a deeper level of understanding/clarity, what would that be?

**Questions That Create Forward Movement**

1. What would it take to create change on this issue?

2. What could happen that would enable you/us to feel fully engaged and energized about it?

3. What’s possible here and who cares (rather that ‘what’s wrong and who’s responsible?’)

4. What needs our immediate attention going forward?

5. If our success was completely guaranteed, what bold steps might we choose?

6. How can we support each other in taking the next steps?  What unique contribution can we each make?

7. What challenges might come our way and how might we meet them?

8. What conversation, if began today, could ripple out in a way that created new possibilities for the future?

**Questions Amanda Fenton**

<http://amandafenton.com/2014/04/check-in-question-ideas/>

Check-in questions I have gathered:

* What’s up for you, in your life? What’s one new and interesting thing you’ve been thinking about lately?
* What’s one thing that brings you energy and joy?
* What kind of a day have you had so far today?
* What is your personal weather status (cloudy, foggy, sunny breaks etc)?
* What’s one thing that you’re really proud of that you’d like to share with the group?
* Why did you accept the invitation to join this gathering?
* What are you seeking to learn and contribute?
* What’s become apparent since we last met?
* What question is being asked of you (or through you) right now?
* What words would you use to describe where your head is? And where your heart is?
* What are you noticing in your environment that relates to this project?
* What are you willing to set aside in order to be present with this conversation?
* How are you arriving today? Happening inside and outside themselves at the moment to acknowledge before we begin?
* How has the last gathering impacted you and your work?
* What is the crossroads where you find yourself at this stage of your life or work or in the project around which we are assembled?
* Why are you really here?
* *(For a group that has been working together for a while, preparing for an event)* What makes you tremble as you look ahead at the event? What worries or fears are bubbling up in you?
* What led you to accept the invitation?
* What would it take for you to be fully present in this room?
* If you could invite someone you respect to sit beside you and support you in making this meeting successful, whom would that be?
* What’s one thing you hope to get accomplished at today’s meeting?
* What is one interest of yours that others in this group might not know about?
* What task or concern would you like to set aside so that you can fully concentrate on our work today?
* What is a recent success you’ve experienced?
* What aspect of your job brings you the most satisfaction?
* Given our work so far, what do you feel best about?
* What do you like best about \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (weekends, vacation, the current season, etc.)
* Each share why we are interested in being part of this core team and what we hope to learn or benefit from being a part of it?
* Share a one or two word intention you hold for today’s meeting.
* What is something you came across recently that gave you hope or inspiration?