

November 2016 - Austin Love Juggernaut

Facilitators: River Langford and Sara Ness

THE PLAN

15 Intro the night

- What is AR and why do we do it? Could even read the description at bottom - River

10 Name + Emotional fruit - River

No agreements

- Intro plan for the night, intro skills, and basic

20 Skill 1: **Speaking the moment, awareness and ownership**

- Sara and River demo first
- Have a conversation
- Then, share the quality of the connection together
 - Theory: Moving from the informational to the relational level of conversation. Skill: **Speaking the moment**. Meta-skill: **awareness (and ownership)**. Being able to see my experience and see that it's mine.
 - Take a minute with your partner to look for deeper layers of what's happening right here, using the stems "I feel" or "we seem"
- Sharebacks. We demo using the skill as we take the shares.

20 Skill 2:

- Demo
- With the same partner, notice something you've marked about them in the conversation, or something you're noticing now. Say the story you have about it, and check to see if it's true. If you need a stem, try "I notice...I imagine...is that true?"
 - Skill: **recognize and check assumptions**.
 - When we're triggered, the first thing to go out the window is curiosity. Stretching the muscles of at least being able to recognize our assumptions can help us stay open. Meta-skill: **Distinguish observation and interpretation**.
 - Share a few more noticings and imaginings. Then, comment to each other your assumptions about the room.
- Shares in the whole group. We demo using the skill as we take the shares.

30 Putting it together:

- Play Frustration Station
- A takes on the role of the Fly, a person in their own life who they have trouble relating with. B tries to relate with them. Then B becomes A's Fly, and A tries to relate. Shares. Then do it one more time, but this time, A uses some of the skills they've learned from

the evening: owning/noticing, checking assumptions and getting curious, and - big skill - **committing to connection.**

- Shares (in pairs, a few to the big group) and switch

Shares in the big group. What did you notice in trying to apply these skills?

End with Truths and announcements

BRAINSTORM NOTES

CORE SKILLS:

observation vs interpretation

recognize and check assumptions**

awareness and ownership**

speaking the moment

commitment to connection

**I could use some more context behind differentiating these two pairs; they almost seem like the same thing to me.

THEORY: sharing a withhold. Do this with yourself first!

- Be aware/own,
- separate observation and interpretation,
- check the assumption (or for self, inquire into the feeling),
- stay in connection - engage positive regard, and stay in connection with yourself and your boundaries.
- You can get curious about the other (relate) or continue sharing yourself (authentic). Try to balance these, and if one starts feeling flat or escalates the conversation, try the other.
- CONTEXT DEPENDENCY: jump to whatever part of the process feels right, skip steps if it feels right, iterate back if it feels like things get confusing. Like doing a math problem: you don't always have to show your work, but if you get the wrong answer, you have to go back and check your work.

I enjoy how concise the explanation of theory is. Are you hoping to break this down for people during the opening?

PRACTICE:

- Count off A and B,
- Crowdsourced meditation, eyes still closed
- A turns R B turns L and play Noticing.
- Empathy modification w/ naming the skills (listening, courage, curiosity, listening, self-control/creating space around yourself, acceptance, observation).
- Frustration Station.
- Sharing a withhold in real-time.

To me this reads as:

Intro and Agreements-15 min

Noticing-20 min

Empathy-20 min

Sharebacks-10 min

Frustration Station-25 min?

Withholds-15 min

Truths and Announcements-15 min

Questions to be answered throughout the night whose answers may illuminate your core values:

How can I sharpen my capacity to observe?

How can I change the object that I am observing?

How can I change the perspectives I hold in relation to the object I am observing?

How can I let go of judgments...

-of self?

-of others?

-of the connection between you?

What/where does desire (craving) feel like?

What/where does fear (aversion) feel like?

**Most of this was early thinking I had about the night combined with a little stream of consciousness and later small edits. The bit in "Check Your Assumptions" may become something else over time.

Core Skills of the Five Agreements

Respect yourself

-how to identify personal needs

-how to say "No"

-how to generate self-care

Lean into your edge

-Identifying tension

-taking a deep breath

-relaxing

Stay present

- how to serve your attention and allow it to serve you
- How to narrow and roam the attention throughout the body
- dropping shame and commitment to returning to connection

Check your assumptions

- how communication with intent impacts a relationship
- ownership language
- This is long but I drafted what I'm going to start saying during this agreement to highlight my consolidation of the community views on sexuality. "One assumption I'd like to explicitly check right now is around sexual conduct inside the container. I assume that everyone is going to be respectful of each other's boundaries with regards to sexually charged feelings and behaviors. Often, sex can be a joyous part of life and I encourage a sex-positive environment here in the ALJ. Sometimes though, a different narrative is at play for people. Has anyone ever been attracted to someone in a sexual fashion and found themselves feeling unwanted? Has anyone ever been the recipient of someone else's attraction and didn't actually want to be receiving it? I want us to be able to explore the differences in all these ways of being in a fashion that fosters understanding and intimacy among us. I recognize there are tough and potentially volatile conversations to be found in the realms of human sexuality. I will now explicitly invite anyone who at any time feels they are part of an unsafe and unresolving situation surrounding their sexuality to check out of their game and come find a Facilitator as a function of "Respect Yourself". "...all tyranny needs to gain a foothold is for people of good conscience to remain silent." (Thomas Jefferson) One of our primary duties as Facilitators is to help translate impact so that all parties involved can remain committed to connection and gain the opportunity to grow from their encounter. Can we all agree to practice checking our assumptions as best we are able?"

Confidentiality by request

- to me this one is all about exchanging trust...that is to say, "Trust is not a one way street."
- perhaps there is a way to invite them to experience giving/receiving trust in a non-physical way...a game explicitly around sharing edgy content seems risky, especially given the differences in most people's subjective experience of "edgy" material
- perhaps Anonymous Confessions with an emphasis on feeling your edge?

**Also, this came out when I was describing Games to someone today. I thought you might like to see it...

Authentic Relating is a series of practices that foster empathy, compassion and clarity of communication through social interactions whose rules are dictated by collective agreement and explicitly-stated, non-competitive, game-theory based modeling.

The "modelers" are called Facilitators and generally guide from a place of Surrendered Leadership; that is, being constructive to the needs of the group as they arise and allowing the participants maximum terrain to self-determine within an overall theme. The Participants are often directed toward noticing subtle variation in their word choice and body language to uncover aspects of their relational life that have previously remained unconscious.

Our Austin community is, by and large, a teaching/skill-share community. We host an event almost every night of the week and have several ties to the international scene. This is who has been asking us for our intro night. Austin has an atmosphere like nowhere else and it shows in our capacity for creative throughput. We seem to come up with more new models (games) than most anywhere else and are also pretty invested in sharing them with the wider world.