



# Heart to Heart Communication

## A Community Building Workshop

## Building Circles of Trust & Opening the Heart.... Gracefully

### Facilitators:

**RoseMarie Pierce, B.Sc.Pharm**, has over 20 years experience in offering community development workshops to groups of all kinds in both N. America and Europe and Hawaii starting in 2014. Her partner, **David Brougham, B.Comm**, has 14 years experience, practicing and co-facilitating Heart to Heart workshops.

Community Building refers to a group process where participants experience and practice communication skills that create the possibility for deep human connection, both with the self and the other. This process was described by author Dr. M. Scott Peck in his book, The Different Drum. Further information was presented in a later book, A World Waiting to Be Born.

Peck describes the joy felt in experiencing true community: "It is like falling in love. When they enter community, people in a very real sense do fall in love with one another en masse".

The workshop provides a process-orientated group experience that can lead to deeper, more authentic communication. Individuals and groups have an opportunity to improve interpersonal skills, and to experience and understand group dynamics.

### Heart-to-Heart / Two formats

**Full Workshop:** The Workshop has two basic components. Part One, which takes approximately one and one-half hours, is an introduction and an opportunity to ask questions. Part Two is primarily process-oriented, requires approximately 16 to 20 hours to complete, and is the main component of the Workshop. For groups who regularly work together, an optional Part Three may be desired. It is a consolidation and practicing of the skills and knowledge gained during the first two parts, and may be done as a third or extra day or at a future date. The objective of the Workshop is to learn how to build circles of trust, provide an opportunity for self-development through relationships with others, and learn how to arrive at decisions through a different, deeper form of interaction. Many insights can be gained, and communication skills and healthy ways of relating can be learned through the experience.

**An Evening of Heart to Heart:** Focuses on the middle component and shortens the time to between 3 to 4 hours. The objective of the Evening is to learn how to build circles of trust, provide an opportunity for self-development, and make deeper connections with each other. Many insights can be gained, and

communication skills and healthy ways of relating can be learned through the experience. The Evening events are free, held regularly and open to all Full Workshop attendees.

## Ground Rules:

The following is an outline of the ground rules, logistics, and format of the processing portion of the Workshop, all of which are covered in Part One of the Full Workshop.

### ❖ **Speak your name**

Saying your name before speaking is one of the few basic rules used in the Workshop. There are specific reasons for this rule. It is one of the tools that bring awareness to how people converse with each other. Speaking one's name serves to claim or create a space. It also very clearly indicates who is **speaking** and that the rest of the group is **listening** until the person stops speaking and, following a considerate few moments or more, someone else begins by saying their name. When only one person speaks at a time, the whole group has an opportunity to participate in what is happening through that speaking. It also serves to make each person responsible to the whole group. Interruptions are more obvious when a person has to say their name before speaking. It also helps to deter side conversations, flippant remarks and other innuendoes. Speaking your name calls you to yourself and gives ownership to what is being said. Groups have found that this rule can serve as a small ritual that can help to create a sacred space for the group. Many find this rule awkward at first and yet my experience is that after a short time, it is appreciated and valued.

### ❖ **Speak from your heart and use 'I' statements**

The Heart-to-Heart process is meant to be alive and in the moment, focusing on what is happening at the **feeling** level. When an 'I' statement is used appropriately, it requires individuals to speak what is in their hearts or true personally for them. 'You' or 'we' statements usually imply a generalization and take the focus off the individual. The following is an example that illustrates the difference between a general statement and a personalized statement.

*General Statement:* "We need to take a break. This is hard work."

*Personalised Statement:* "I need to take a break; I am finding this hard work."

Intellectualizing or conceptualizing is another way to keep the focus off oneself and avoid taking personal responsibility. Speaking from the heart using 'I' statements helps prevent judgements, criticism, generalizations and intellectualizing. This rule helps the individuals take personal responsibility for their own feelings rather than trying to change or blame others.

### ❖ **Use of Silences**

There are at least three kinds of silences experienced and used during the workshop – intentional, called for, and spontaneous silences. An intentional two to three minute silence is used to begin and end each session. Occasionally, there will be a timed silence requested by the facilitator often accompanied with a question, thought or direction. When respect for one another and the group process is present, the third type of silence occurs. There will be a noticeable pause after each person speaks. It is as if every word said is being thoughtfully received. During this third type of silence, there is a genuine desire to understand the individual and what they are choosing to contribute. It is very important during all types of silences, that people remain present and inwardly observant.

❖ **Additional information:**

- It is important to have a willingness to learn about yourself, how you relate to others, and how you communicate in groups.
- Each participant is responsible for the success of the group.
- It is important to remain present (physically and emotionally) for the entire experience, in spite of possible times of frustration, anxiety, boredom, and even despair, which are normal parts of the process.
- Respect confidentiality.
- Speak only when moved to speak. Do not speak when not moved.
- The intensity of the experience can be tiring, so it is important not to over-schedule free time between sessions. You may need that time to rest and reflect.

## What does the process look like?

Before the Workshop begins, any questions or logistical problems are clarified. The Workshop opens with the thought-provoking story, "The Rabbi's Gift", followed by a three-minute silence. The space is then opened for anyone to speak, always keeping in mind these essential guidelines:

- Speak your name
- Use 'I' statements
- Remain present (physically, mentally and emotionally)

The Workshop takes a circle format, seated in chairs. It is recommended to bring items for your physical comfort such as pillows, blankets, layers of warm clothing, socks, slippers, a water bottle with a lid, etc.

As breathwork is an important part of the process, please consider using only scent-free or natural personal grooming products, including soap and hand cream.

Unlike a lecture format where it would be possible to drop in and catch parts and still gain from the experience, this format does not lend itself to dropping in and out. It is a process-oriented format and therefore each participant's presence during the entire event is very important. A commitment to be on time, and open and ready for each segment, is necessary. At times, due to extenuating circumstances, this may not be possible. If there is a situation that occurs during the Workshop which would necessitate being late or missing a portion of the Workshop, it is important to let the facilitators know **as soon as possible**.

There are several breaks during the course of the Workshop, and the times for these are set at the beginning of each day. It is best if the circle is kept intact for the sessions between breaks.

After each break, the seating arrangements will change in order to give an opportunity to experience the group from a new perspective. Each session will end with a short silence and possibly a facilitator's thought, to carry the group into the next session.

The nights during the Workshop allow time for both conscious and unconscious insights and understandings to occur. Sometimes these insights come in the form of a dream during sleep. Therefore, it is good to be aware of dreams and share them if it seems appropriate.

## **Experiences, Insights and Skills that may be gained in this Safe and Supportive Space:**

### **It is possible that one may:**

- Experience a deep and profound opening of the heart
- Learn how to identify and work consciously with underlying dynamics in relationships
- Learn how to identify and understand feelings:
  - how to feel them
  - how to own and describe them
  - how to take responsibility for them and prevent projecting them outwardly
- Learn how the need to be right can drive actions and destroy relationships
- Explore what may be underlying your emotional reactivity
- Learn how different frames of reference can sabotage relationships
- Discover old patterns, automatic agendas and hidden motives
- Experience effective communication
- Learn about co-dependence, independence, and interdependence as stages of personal growth
- Learn about pain and resistance and how they can slow or even stop your growth and development
- Find out the difference between working on a task and processing feelings.
- Find out how to integrate task and process in order to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of any relationship or group
- Experience how a group can function in such a way that participants have a nurturing and rewarding experience
- Understand and experience the meaning of genuine community and the process of true consensus.

"Consensus is a group decision which all members feel they can live with and support. The decision is arrived at through a process whereby the issues are fully aired. All members feel they have been adequately heard, everyone has equal power and responsibility so that all are satisfied with the process. The process requires the members to be emotionally present and engaged, frank in a loving, mutually respectful manner, sensitive to each other; to be selfless, dispassionate, and capable of emptying themselves, and possessing a paradoxical awareness of the preciousness of both people and time. This includes knowing when the solution is satisfactory, and that it is time to stop, with a willingness to reopen the discussion at such a time as the group determines a need for revision."

***adapted from "A World Waiting to Be Born" by M.Scott Peck***

# Principles for Heart-to-Heart Communication

## Building a Circle of Trust – A Genuine Community

The following is a list of principles that are the foundation upon which a group can establish itself as a circle of trust, or a genuine community, where contentious issues can be untied, gracefully. These [principles](#) are learned experientially. The format does not take the form of a discussion or study group...or a therapy group, though personal healing may occur...or a decision making group, though the time together will enhance and improve the ability to make decisions.

**Communicate with authenticity** *Speak from your own experience. Avoid generalizing. The suggested guideline of using “I” statements can help.*

**Deal with difficult issues** *It helps if we can encourage each other to bring our relevant concerns, likes, and dislikes to the whole group.*

**Bridge differences with integrity** *Maintaining healthy boundaries and checking our intentions can help. Is my intention to build connection?*

**Relate with love and respect** *That doesn’t mean liking everyone, or his or her behavior. A community learns to fight gracefully.*

**Welcome and affirm diversity** *That means more than being flexible or compromising. It’s learning to seek and celebrate the “other-ness” of others.*

**Tolerate ambiguity** *We don’t need to have a perfectly formed idea in order to speak. We don’t need to know precisely what we’re feeling. No one needs to be right or wrong. Inquire together. Let insights develop.*

**Stay in the awareness of the tension between holding on and letting go** *In community we can learn to stay, and to accompany each other, in the “hard places”, the unknown, longer. Take time to ponder and discern that which you could let go, for example, the need for things to be a certain way, beliefs, roles, the need to speak to every point, the need to appear wise...*

**Be inclusive** *of our selves or parts of our selves; of others, new ideas change...*

**Be open to Spirit** *Through learning to use silence, by becoming “empty” of our barriers to community, we create space for something greater than each of us or the sum of our parts.*

**Listen Attentively** *Stay alert, aware of body language. Don’t interrupt, or formulate your response while “listening”. Don’t assume you know what someone means ...and there will be other principles that you discover during the experience.*

## A Final Note to Help with Inner Preparation

Now that the introduction to the **Heart-to-Heart** community building workshop has been read, one of two possible inner responses is anticipated.

On one side, maybe this all makes a great deal of sense to you. You may be fully aware of the level of intimacy and connection that can be achieved if a group makes the commitment to work together intimately in this way over a period of time, and how this can enhance a group's ongoing work together. Feelings of excitement and increased energy may build within, knowing that you could have the opportunity to be vulnerable, open-hearted, and reach some deep places within yourself. Accessing these open-hearted states that exist within you is a key to bridging the perceived gap between human beings and can lead to incredible joy and inner peace. This joy or experience of community is essentially what the first part of the Workshop is about.

On the other hand, the introduction to the Workshop may seem as if it is vague and unknown territory to you. It can bring up fears, negativity and resistance. You might be saying to yourself, "What is the point to all this *processing*? I don't want to go into deep emotional spaces. How is this Workshop going to benefit my work or personal life anyway?" These are common feelings and thoughts experienced by participants in anticipation of an upcoming Workshop. You will have an opportunity to express all or any of these thoughts and feelings, during the introductory evening and throughout the Workshop.

It is important to listen to the self-talk or inner responses that arise as the above material is read, and to become aware of any doubts about or objections to the Workshop.

If you have any question please contact:

**Rose Marie or David**

604-886-0840

604-741-1749 (RoseMarie's cell) or 778-874-7244 (David's cell)

[RM@Holistic-Pharmacist.com](mailto:RM@Holistic-Pharmacist.com)

This Workshop was originally based on the work of **M. Scott Peck, M.D.** and now has been given a new life with David & RoseMarie's unique style of heart opening.

For further reading on M. Scott Peck see:

*The Different Drum: Community Making & Peace*

*A World Waiting to be Born: Civility Rediscovered*