



Conversation Guide

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Conversation Supply List

- Process/Agreement pages — one for each person
- Pens
- Sign in sheet
- Name tags if everyone doesn't know each other well; ordinary labels work great
- Some plain white paper
- Watch with a second hand
- Talking object — something small that can be passed from person to person to designate who should be talking; a smooth stone is a good bet.
- *The Dreaming* story poster

Dreaming Conversation

1. Welcome, Schedule & Introduction to
The Dreaming (12 minutes)
2. Preparing to Talk (8 minutes)
3. Peak experience Go-round (10 minutes)
4. What lasts Go-round (15 minutes)
5. Dreams of your parents Go-round (15 minutes)
6. What would you create Go-round (18 minutes)
7. Final Words/What was meaningful? & Wrap Up
(12 minutes)

Step by Step

Before the Conversation

Purpose:

- Prepare the environment for a smooth process.

Put tables and chairs in a rough circle, if possible.

Set up the greeting area with the sign-in sheets, process/agreement pages, pens, name tags and markers.

Put the talking object and your notes so they are readily at hand.

Prepare for your presentation of *The Dreaming*, reviewing the poster.

Ask guests them to wear a name tag, sign in, take a process/agreement sheet and pen and find a seat.

Step 1: Welcome & Introduction to The Dreaming

12 minutes

Purposes:

- Welcome participants
- Remind participants about the purpose and spirit of this dialog.
- Outline the process for the conversation.
- Put participation in this conversation into context for the participants.
- Educate participants about the content and purpose of The Dreaming.

Welcome and restatement of purpose

Feel free to read this as a script if you would like, or put it into your own words. Say something like

Welcome. My name is _____ and I am hosting this Dreaming Conversation.

Schedule and ending time

Let me tell you a little bit about the flow of this conversation. You'll see an outline on your paper.

We'll begin with a short introduction to *The Dreaming*, the public artwork that our work here today will influence.

Then, we'll agree on some communication guidelines for our time together, and I'll share things to keep in mind as we explore the questions that the artist has prepared for us.

Then we'll take some time to think about four different questions, one at a time, and have a go-round for each where we share what we're thinking about.

Finally, at the end, each of you will get to say some parting words.

We'll aim to end at (time an hour and a half past the starting time).

Can everyone stay until then? If we veer from our schedule for some reason, then I'll check in with the group.

If people have to leave early, determine how they will leave (e.g., by saying a few parting words or by just getting up to leave quietly).

Introduction to The Dreaming

Use the poster you downloaded to guide this. You can just read the word and point to the pictures as appropriate.

Step 2: Preparing to Talk

8 minutes

Purposes:

- Explain the roles of participants.
- Present the agreements and make sure this group is comfortable with them.
- Prepare participants to respond to the question in an open-hearted and authentic way.

Participant roles/Talking and Listening

OK, now let's get ready for our Dreaming Conversation. This is our talking object (*hold up the object you have chosen*). Whoever has this object can speak. Everyone else has the job of listening. Everyone should have this form with The Dreaming logo on it; you'll be writing on the back of this paper. You should have at two blank pages as well. Pens are here if you do not already have them. You can use this plain paper to jot down notes if you want to. This way you have a place to hang on to thoughts that come to you as others are speaking and you can readily return your full attention to listening.

Listener and Witness roles

In my role as Listener, I will guide us through the process and ensure that whatever agreements we make with each other are either followed or renegotiated. If I've asked you to speak no more than two minutes and you've gone over that time, I'll signal you. That simply means that I'd like you to complete your thought, not that you need to stop mid-sentence.

Each of you will be acting as Witnesses for this Conversation. The Witness is the ears of *The Dreaming*. You will be asked to record some of the things people say as part of this conversation, and those things may be used as text or words in the artwork, and they may help shape its design.

When you're acting as a Witness, you should listen especially for key phrases or concepts or for idiosyncratic or interesting phrases or syntax. Try to capture the truthful essence of the vision and emotion in the way it was expressed. Try to record the actual language and syntax used.

Remember that as a participant in this Conversation, any of your words may be used in the artwork, but all of your words and expressions will be used anonymously — no names unless you

specifically say it's ok to credit you for your words. Shared Vision has promised to protect your anonymity so that you can feel free to speak freely and not to worry about how your words are perceived, because no one will know they came from you unless you tell us you want them to know. You will be turning in your own notes, so Shared Vision will have your own words as well as the way the Witness records your ideas.

Agreements

Now let's make some agreements about how we will communicate. The paper you have lists some guidelines that others have used to create an environment where people can speak openly and listen fully. Let's read them aloud, and then I'll check in with you to see if you'd like to adopt them as is or revise them for our group.

Have participants take turns, each reading one.

PROPOSED AGREEMENTS

Acceptance	Suspend judgment as best you can.
Listen	with respect. Interrupt only if you cannot hear.
Sincerity	Speak what has personal heart and meaning.
Brevity	Go for honesty and depth, but respect other people's time as well.
Curiosity	Seek to understand rather than persuade.
Diversity	Invite and honor all points of view.
Discretion	What is said here, stays here. Except for the parts that become part of the artwork anonymously. When you tell others about the Conversation, please honor the trust that has been created and keep participants' information confidential.
Agenda-free	Explore your thoughts and ideas, but please don't promote an agenda or market a product, service or event.
Pass	If you don't wish to speak.

Are there any questions about what any of these guidelines mean?

Would you like to suggest any revisions or additions?

If suggestions are made and agreed to by all, have people write them on their papers.

Is anyone here NOT prepared to follow these guidelines?

Look for verbal and non-verbal responses.

OK, these will serve as our agreements. If at any point you feel that these agreements are not serving our purposes, speak up and we'll

see if it makes sense to revise them.

Do not proceed to step 3 until you can tell that everyone is ready and the feeling in the room is positive and the entire group seems ready for an exploration.

As we prepare to respond to the questions, please keep in mind a couple things:

First, **we all have a voice in our heads** that is evaluating and critiquing everything around us — our “I think” voice. For our time today, when you hear that voice, let it say what it’s going to say (because you can’t really squelch it), but then set it aside. There are no wrong answers to the questions I will ask you — and no right answers. This is simply an exploration, so try not to get caught up in trying to do this the “right way.” There is **no right or wrong way**. If there is something you may want to remember, jot it down. But then let it go and turn back to listening. When you aren’t talking, your job here is to listen.

Second, as part of this process, you may have thoughts about things you would like to change in your life. **You are free to try on those inspirations here and you are perfectly free to leave them here when you walk out the door.** I want to assure you that we’re not asking you to change anything. We don’t want anyone to feel guilty about what they haven’t done yet in their lives. But we do hope you will think as bravely and as courageously and as openly as possibly.

The artist of *The Dreaming* says that the only difference between artists and regular people is that artists have chosen creativity as a way of life, and so they spend a lot of time every day deliberately thinking differently. They have trained themselves to do this. Even for them it is never easy. Everyone has that option, but not everyone exercises it a lot because it means **going past your comfort zone**. Let me show you what it feels like to step outside your comfort zone, your habits.

Everybody cross your arms. *Wait until they do.* Does that feel comfortable? Now cross them the other way. *Wait until they try.* If you find it hard, do it slowly, one hand at a time. Now hold it for a moment and notice what it feels like. *Ask them:* What does that feel like? *(People will probably say “weird, uncomfortable, etc.”)* We are all creatures of habit, and it can be uncomfortable to try something a little different. It’s the same way with thoughts. Thinking in a little bit of a different way isn’t always comfortable. That’s ok.

Step 3: Peak Experience Go-round

10 minutes

Purpose:

- To invite participants to connect with their core
- To practice speaking in a group about something important to them.

Turn your paper over. This is what you'll use to jot down your ideas or answers as you consider the four questions today. We'll be collecting these papers at the end. Please put your name at the top. That way, the artist will be able to contact you if he has any questions. If you do put your name but you do NOT want Shared Vision to attribute your words to you publicly, please put an X beside it.

Now, for the first query. I'd like you to take a few moments to think of and reflect on a "peak experience" in your life — a time, a moment, an experience that stands out for you. It might be a very exciting or fulfilling experience, or maybe one that expressed or reflected your deepest held values and aspirations, or maybe just something that has stuck with you. You'll have 2 minutes to think about it, and jot down some notes or write the story next to #1 on the back of your paper. Then you'll have one minute to tell that story to the group.

After 2 minutes . . .

Let's go around and say your name and describe your peak experience. Each person will have a minute. Anyone of you can start when you are ready. Then we'll go around from there. If we come to you before you are ready, you can pass and I'll check in with you later to see if you'd like to speak.

I'll be the witness for the first person. After that, you will each witness for the person who speaks after you. Everyone take one sheet of blank paper and put WITNESS at the top. Write the name of the person you are witnessing for and then write down beside his or her name the most interesting phrases or sentences he or she says.

Who would like to tell their story first?

Step 4: What Lasts Go-round

15 minutes

Purpose:

- To have each participant generate their response to the question and say it out loud to another person.
- To have each participant witness and record someone else's response.
- To have each participant report out someone else's meaningful story.
- To encourage participants to go deeper into what is important to them.

Thank participants and say something like:

For our next question, we're going to do things a little differently. I'll explain the question, you'll have a few minutes to think about it and take notes on the back of your paper. Then you'll pair up with someone you don't know and you'll have a minute and a half to tell them your response and clarify anything they don't understand. Then you'll switch and they'll tell you their response and you'll help them clarify anything you don't understand. After that, we'll do a go-round again, but this time, you'll report the response of the person you were listening to.

Here's the question: What lasts? What in your life will outlast you? You have two minutes.

After 2 minutes: Now pair up with someone you don't know and decide who will share first. Use your witness sheet for notes. I'll let you know when you should switch. Get started quickly, because this time goes fast.

After 1.5 minutes: Now switch.

After 1.5 minutes: Ok, now let's share with the group. Remember, you're telling the answer that you heard from your partner. Who would like to start? Each person has one minute to speak. *Give them the talking object and go around from there.*

Step 5: Dreams of Your Parents Go-Round

15 minutes

Purpose:

- To have each participant generate their response to the question and say it out loud to another person.
- To have participants think about intergenerational influences and connections.
- To have each participant witness and record someone else's response.
- To have participants give their response to the group as a whole.

Thank participants and say something like:

For our next question, we're going to change things up just slightly. I'll explain the question, you'll have a few minutes to think about it and take notes beside #3 on the back of your paper. Then you'll pair up with someone else you don't know and you'll have a minute and a half to tell them your response and clarify anything they don't understand. Then you'll switch again, just like last time, and you'll use your witnessing paper to take notes about your partners response. After that, we'll do a go-round again, but this time, you'll be reporting your own one-minute story.

Here's the question: What were the dreams of your parents or caregivers? You have two minutes.

After 2 minutes: Now pair up with someone else you don't know and decide who will share first. I'll let you know when you should switch. Remember, this time goes quickly.

After 1.5 minutes: Now switch.

After 1.5 minutes: Ok, now let's share with the group. Who would like to start? *Give them the talking object and go around from there.*

Step 6: What Would You Create Go-round

18 minutes

Purpose:

- To have each participant generate their response to the question
- To help participants be specific, creative, and speak what has meaning.
- To record the responses for use in the artwork.

Thank participants and say something like:

For this last question, we'll use the #4 space on the back of your paper. Here is the question:

If there were no limits, if you could experience, have, become or create anything, if anything were possible, what would you create?

Put another way: If you were guaranteed to be successful in whatever you did tomorrow, what would be on your drawing board tonight?

Remember, just for these few minutes, anything is possible. Old ideas can be put together in new ways. Tell us about something specific. If you could see your response as a picture, where are you in the picture? How does it feel? What do you hear? What do you see? What are you doing? What have you made, done, or experienced that got you to this point? If anything were possible, what would you create? This is the time to dream — to really be creative. You'll have three minutes to think and jot notes.

After 3 minutes:

Now that you have gathered your thoughts, choose someone to share with. You'll have a minute and a half each. Listen to your partner and help them be specific about their vision.

After 90 seconds: Switch.

After 90 seconds:

I'm curious to hear what you have come up with.

We're going to go back to the Witnessing like we did with the first question — I'll Witness for the first person, and then you will Witness for the person who speaks after you.

We'll start with whoever is ready. Instead of going around this time we'll hear from people in whatever order they feel ready to speak – "popcorn style." – pop when you are ready.

If anything were possible, what would you create?

Step 7: Final Words/What Was Meaningful/Wrap Up

12 minutes

Purpose:

- To encourage reflection about what participants learned or valued.
- To invite participants to say something that will bring their participation to a meaningful close.

Thank participants and say something like:

Our time here is coming to an end. Your work is complete and you have done it very well. We appreciate your participation and the artists and leaders of this project pledge to use your words and concepts respectfully and appropriately. Your words here tonight will be the fuel that drives *The Dreaming* and all of the benefits it can bring to the community. Are there any parting words that you'd like to say to bring your participation to a close? You may want to comment on what the experience has been like for you, say one thing that really sticks out for you, or talk about what was meaningful for you. Who would like to start, and we'll go round from there.

After hearing from all who wish to speak, as Listener, you:

- *Thank the participants.*
- *Ask them to pass the papers with their responses to the Witness or have someone collect them.*
- *Remind participants to sign up on the Shared Vision clipboard so that we can keep them informed about The Dreaming. Pass it around. They can indicate there if they would like to volunteer in any way for this project.*
- *They can download information about how to repeat this conversation process with any group they choose, sending their responses in via mail or through the website:*
www.thedreaming.info.
- *Find out a lot more information about The Dreaming at*
www.thedreaming.info.

After the Conversation:

Send the response forms, witness form and sign-in sheet to:

Shared Vision

The Dreaming Conversation

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If you have any questions or comments, please contact Teresa Cochran, Participation Coordinator for The Dreaming:

teresa.cochran@adelphia.net or 301.698.2647.

Thank you for performing this amazing service to the community!

The process and materials we are using in these conversations is derived from several sources listed below.

If you are interested in how public conversations can be conducted around social issues, we encourage you to look at the models we have been studying:

Conversation Café
conversationcafe.org

Public Conversation Project
publicconversationproject.org

If you are interested in how participatory process can be used in new product research and development for industry, go to **sonicrim.com**. Sonic Rim has been tapping into the creativity of ordinary people in order to assist businesses for 25 years.

Shared Vision gratefully acknowledges the generosity of these organizations in allowing us to benefit from their experience.

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