

Sharing (Talking) At A Group Meeting

Introduction

For many people the fear of speaking in public is greater than the fear of death.¹ I was born an introvert; making it more unlikely that I'd want to share in a group setting. I love to share in a group.

This love of sharing (yes, with fear, anxiety or whatever other emotions are there) didn't happen right in the beginning with my first group sharing in 1992. It took about three months of going to the group regularly before I began to feel *somewhat okay* about sharing in a group.

Over the past twenty plus years, I've shared in three different groups. Each group had a leader-facilitator that I'd dialog with. So much has released in me that was in the way of my happiness through my own, and through other people's, sharing. Also is so much more of a feeling of connection within myself and with others by being in the groups.

On The Hot Seat

The first thing that many people say when they share in a new group is how uncomfortable they are talking in a group. A likely second statement is that they feel like they're on the hot seat. They're very aware of themselves. They're uncomfortable, and not quite certain what to say. *Feeling uncomfortable and not being certain of what to say is a great beginning to any share.*

Thinking About What We're Going To Say

In general, the less times we've shared in group, the more we'll think about (rehearse) what we'll talk about. This rehearsing is okay. In the beginning there'll probably be no way to stop from rehearsing.

We're probably going to talk about feeling stuck, fearful, angry or how life isn't working as well as we'd like it to. Sharing is a time to open up and let out what doesn't serve us. Holding onto our judgements and our uncomfortable emotions weighs us down. Sharing is a time to let go of what's in the way of our happiness.

Occasionally talking about what is going great in our life is good to do. It's good to acknowledge the good, though there really isn't anything to work on relating to the good and successful parts of our life. This is why our sharing is primarily about what isn't working in our life. These troubling parts of our life is where we can work and heal.

In The Moment

Usually the more we follow our rehearsed script, the less deep our share will be. If you're following your rehearsed script, just know that you're sharing from the past (from a pre-scripted place) and not sharing fully in the moment. Some people may need to follow their rehearsed script for their first few shares.

A very popular Self Realization Fellowship minister told me that people compliment him most on the services when he has gone 'off script.' He has his service talk planned out, though there are services where his talk 'takes a right turn' and starts going in a very different direction. It's these services that people invariably say have touched them the most.

There have been times with Charles (my teacher) where I thought I was going to talk about one thing and I suddenly find myself talking about something very different. After sharing for so many years, the amount of rehearsal is now minimal. For me the starting point of most of my shares with Charles is whatever comes to me after he asks: "Phil, what's going on?"

My advise about sharing is: Don't try to imitate anyone. Don't try to have no rehearsal. Don't indulge in your rehearsal. Be uncomfortable, be uncertain, be fearful, be angry, be shy, be rehearsed, be with whatever is in you when you begin to talk.

During A Person's Share

The dialog of words is not what is most important. How a person is at the end of their sharing is what is most important. A person can release a lot of held emotions and held tension in their body. Our mind cannot keep a story, a problem, going all by itself. Emotions fuel and keep the story going. Tension in our body and restricted breathing help the story to keep going. There are no gold stars given out for yelling, crying or for your body shaking. Yelling, crying and shaking may happen as a person releases the energy that keeps the story active.

Yelling, crying or shaking is not necessary during a share. What is important is for the person to be more connected to their Truth, and not imprisoned as much by their story. A person may be more at peace at the end of their sharing.

A person may also, in a positive way, be agitated, irritated or upset at the end of their share. This agitation or irritation can be positive in that the issue that they're working with is big and it cannot be resolved in one session. Now they're more alive in their trouble. It doesn't feel good, though if we're numb to our trouble, then the trouble won't resolve.

The purpose of sharing is to let go of what blocks us and to be in a feeling connection to our deeper love and to our deeper wisdom.

Non-Dialog Sharing Meetings and Dialog Sharing Meetings

I've gone to twelve step meetings. The sharing in these meetings is non-dialog. A person shares and no one says anything or asks any follow-up questions. Many people's lives have greatly improved by going to twelve step meetings. Not everyone in these meetings shares, and yet everyone can benefit by being there and listening.

These non-dialog sharing meetings weren't for me. I was moved and intrigued by what the person said, though inside me it felt like their sharing was only a first, and a very big, step. They're feeling the fear, anger, loneliness, and speaking of this helped them to be more free. I could see this, *and* something in me wanted them to keep going deeper into their feelings.

The Thursday and Friday meetings are dialog sharing meetings. A person has more opportunity and encouragement to keep going deeper into what they're saying and feeling than just their opening statement. I love the increased depth of dialog-sharing meetings.

The Facilitator-Leader Is Sometimes 'In The Line Of Fire'

I'm not always going to be liked by the person I'm dialoging with. We're going to work on some 'hot button' issues. At times it won't be pleasant and the person can become irritated with me. The people talking are going to be encouraged to go deeper into what is uncomfortable, and this can bring up anger. Fortunately for me and for the people sharing, these rougher shares are in the minority. Mostly people do not get upset with me.

The people who have stayed in the Thursday group for years understand that it's sometimes messy and irritating as a person breaks free of their limiting and binding thoughts and emotions.

Other People Talking

When I leave a retreat or a workshop with Charles, what other people shared-said can have a greater impact on me than what I've shared. A lot of feeling can come up in me as another person shares. I have 'a piece' of what they're experiencing. I may not have the same circumstances or the same exact feelings as they do, though I do have, or I have had, similar distressful circumstances, thoughts and feelings.

As they're struggling with, moving through and releasing what holds them back, I also can feel a release, an opening or an increased agitation. I'm never bored at a meeting. The other person is doing the work and I'm 'tagging along' while similar stuck places in me are worked on.

Other people sharing is the majority of the time of a meeting. If you're thinking that what other people are sharing is not connected to you, then you won't be interested in coming to the meetings. If you find that as other people share and become more free, that somehow, you're also working on what holds you back, then you'll probably want to come to the meetings.

Being A Participant

I love being a participant in a group. Leading a group is so much more work. As a participant I can more fully take in and apply to myself what each person is going through.

I've been a participant in groups led by my peers. At first my ego was up: "who are they to tell me things?" Then I realized that they were there to help me go deeper to what is inside me and for me to become more free. My resistance to 'who do they think they are' quickly became 'thank you for helping me.' I always look forward to again being in the participant's seat and to go deeper within during my share.

Trusting Yourself

My teacher has said, from the beginning, that the greatest wisdom is inside. No one outside has greater wisdom than the deep, inherent wisdom that is in each of us.

Charles has said that his job is to help a person to connect to their deeper love and to their deeper wisdom. He's said that 'he can't hold a candle' to the deeper wisdom inside each of us.

As a group leader, I'm not here to tell you what to do in your life. I'm here to help blocks in you become less and for more of your Truth to come through. I may suggest certain things, though know that you're always to trust yourself before anything that I say.

Concluding Remarks

Trust yourself first and foremost. Everything we need to know is already inside us. Charles likes to say that our job is to get out of the way and let God come through. The Friday meetings are being held so that more of what blocks our happiness can release-resolve and to help each person connect more to the deeper love and wisdom that is waiting to come more alive.

I hope this article had helped you understand more about the sharing that is done in the Thursday and Friday meetings.

May all beings live in peace.

Footnotes:

- 1 [Click here](#) to read an interesting psychology article about why speaking in a group may be such a big fear.