

OPEN SPACE TECHNOLOGY – Basic principles & guide

STREAMS OF HOPE: New things are sparked and nurtured by the natural flow between conversations.



WHAT IS OPEN SPACE TECHNOLOGY?

It's an interactive process with participants involved in simultaneous mini-discussions based around a theme or an issue. OST mimics the natural way people come together and begin to build networks and share ideas. It accesses the knowledge and wisdom found in any group of people and encourages the contribution of any and all "experts" in the room.

We begin in the large conference room where there will be opportunity for topics to be brought forward. If you have a subject you are willing to host a conversation about, you will be invited to write a short title for that topic. It should inspire participation and be specific enough to indicate the direction you are hoping it will take. You will briefly introduce your subject and a time and space will be assigned for it.

After hearing the topics, participants will choose the topic they wish to start with and go to the assigned space. Notes will be taken at each group to record a summary of the conversations.

Four principles apply to how you navigate in open space:

1. Whoever comes is the right people - Whoever is attracted to the same conversation are the people who can contribute most to that conversation - because they care. So they are exactly the ones who are capable of engaging in this discussion and initiating action.
2. Whatever happens is the only thing that could've - We are all limited by our own pasts and expectations. This principle acknowledges we'll all do our best to focus on NOW - the present time and place - and not get bogged down in what could've or should've happened or been discussed.
3. When it starts is the right time - The creative Spirit has its own time, and our task is to make our best contribution and enter the flow of creativity when it starts.
4. When it's over, it's over - Creativity has its own rhythm. When you think it is over, wrap it up. If it's not, make plans for continuing the conversation.

The Law of Two Feet

If at any time you find yourself in any situation where you are neither learning nor contributing – use your two feet and move to some place more to your liking. That might mean moving to another group or even leaving the meeting entirely, or taking a five minute break in the sunshine. The Law of Two Feet delivers a very clear message as to precisely who is responsible for the quality of any learning. If you are not learning anything from participating in an Open Space then it is incumbent upon you to turn things around so you are or leave rather than complaining or blaming. In Open Space responsibility resides with the individual.

OPEN SPACE TECHNOLOGY – HOST GUIDE & REPORT

If you are hosting/facilitating a session please be sure to:

- Invite people to introduce themselves and get the topic started.
- Keep a record of discussions – get someone to take notes. Or write them on the flip chart.
- If you have a large group, consider splitting in to two groups so people get more air time.
- Turn in your reporting sheet or flipchart notes so they can be typed and circulated. In particular we are seeking ideas and resources.

TOPIC NAME:

HOST'S NAME:

DISCUSSION / SUMMARY: