



# WORLD CAFÉ

*A POWER SOCIAL TECHNOLOGY FOR ENGAGING  
PEOPLE IN CONVERSATIONS THAT MATTER*

## **DESCRIPTION AND CORE PRINCIPLES:**

The World Café is a method for creating a living network of collaborative dialogue around questions that matter in real life situations. It is a provocative metaphor. As we create our lives, our organisations, and our communities, we are, in effect, moving among 'table conversations' at the World Café.

### **Operating Principles of World Café:**

- Create hospitable space
- Explore questions that matter
- Encourage each person's contribution
- Connect diverse people and ideas
- Listen together for patterns, insights and deeper questions
- Make collective knowledge visible

### **Assumptions of World Café:**

- The knowledge and wisdom we need is present and accessible.
- Collective insight evolves from honouring unique contributions; connecting ideas; listening 'into the middle'; noticing deeper themes and questions.
- The intelligence emerges as the system connects to itself in diverse and creative ways.

### **Café Etiquette:**

- Focus on what matters
- Contribute your thinking and your experience
- Listen to Understand
- Connect Ideas
- Listen Together
- Play, Doodle and Draw



### **General Flow of a World Café:**

- Seat 4-5 people at café-style tables or in conversation clusters.
- Set up progressive rounds of conversation, usually of 20-30 minutes each—have some good questions!
- Ask one person to stay at the table as a “host” and invite the other table members to move to other tables as ambassadors of ideas and insights
- Ask the table host to share key insights, questions, and ideas briefly with new table members, then let folks move through the rounds of questions. After you’ve moved through the rounds, allow some time for a whole-group harvest of the conversations.

### **What is World Café Good For?**

World Café is a great way of fostering interaction and dialogue with both large and small groups. It is particularly effective in surfacing the collective wisdom of large groups of diverse people. The café format is very flexible and adapts to many different purposes—information sharing, relationship building, deep reflection exploration and action planning.

When planning a café, make sure to leave ample time for both moving through the rounds of questions (likely to take longer than you think!) and some type of whole-group harvest.

### **Materials Needed:**

- Small tables (approximately 1 metre), preferably round
- Chairs for participants and presenters
- Tablecloths
- Flip chart paper or paper placemats for covering the tables
- Markers
- Flip chart or large paper for harvesting collective knowledge or insights
- Posters/table tents showing the Café Etiquette
- Materials for harvesting