

Showing Up as Leaders

September 2, 2018

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This week we discussed what Young Adult Group is asking of us this coming year. We agreed we've more or less nailed the physical "showing up" piece, but what does it *really* mean for us to "show up?"

We generated a long list of exciting different ways we could step into leadership roles, including co-facilitating discussions, leading art and dance offerings, and guiding meditation.

However, I also got the sense that stepping into more leadership feels "high stakes," which could decrease the likelihood of follow-through. After our gathering, our facilitators mentioned feeling anxiety beforehand about how the writing activity we did would be received. Would there be push back since we've only ever engaged in discussion? When I heard that, I wondered what aspects of our Young Adult Group culture have made introducing creativity feel like a scary thing.

Possibly, these are fears formed in mainstream culture that we take with us to Young Adult Group. One of my fears when facilitating any discussion is that no one will participate. I generate long lists of back-up questions, as though it were my job as facilitator to design a perfect "product." The "consumers" of my discussions, I worry, will be judging that product with a keen and critical eye, participating if I manage to sell that product or greeting my questions with silence and sighs of displeasure if I don't.

I know we don't take a marketplace approach to discussions here, but I don't know if we've identified an appropriate substitute – like a co-creation approach.

One way to demonstrate co-creation could be for participants to commit to stepping into long silences to clarify what we're being so silent about. Are we confused? Are we unsure of how to articulate an idea? Are we afraid of being vulnerable? Are we uninterested by the question? Co-creation could also mean taking the discussion in a new direction. I know there are times I censure my contributions because they seem off-topic. Certainly, sometimes they are, but I think I have also missed opportunities to add a new layer or bring in a more personal element.

So what does showing up mean for us this year? It could mean committing to creating an atmosphere of co-creation so that as we each take our turn as leaders, we know we'll be guiding a group of eager others who, when our inspiration runs dry, will be willing to supply their own.