**Tactic: Lightning Talks**  *Spotlight a rapid-fire mix of perspectives that reveal patterns, possibilities, and the power of brevity to anchor a group discussion.*

**When to Use It:**

Use when you want to surface examples of promising (or cautionary) work—especially as a more engaging alternative to traditional panels or presentations. This tactic works well to open a convening with energy and storytelling.

**How it Works:**

**Step 1 | Prepare presenters in advance**

Invite 3-4 participants from varied sectors or perspectives to share a short (5–8 min) case study. To prepare:

* Host a brief call ~1 month before to share goals and encourage narrative storytelling.
* Enforce no more than 5 slides.
* Follow up ~1 week before to answer questions and confirm logistics.

**Step 2 (8-10 minutes each) | Present**

Each presenter shares a brief presentation about their work responding to prompts like the following. After each talk, pause for 3 minutes for individual reflection or a chance for participants to turn to one another to share quick reactions and wonderings.

* What challenge or opportunity did you face?
* What barriers came up and how did you navigate them?
* What’s different now?
* What advice would you offer this group?

**Step 3 (25 min) | Ask**Bring all presenters together for a roundtable Q&A. Participants pose questions; presenters respond in dialogue with one another. A light-touch facilitator keeps it focused.

**Step 4 (30 min) | Discuss**

In small groups, participants share what resonated and discuss implications. Each group reports out one key insight or provocation. Consider discussion prompts like:

* What did you hear that challenged your assumptions?
* What idea do you want to borrow, adapt, or build on?
* Where did you feel a spark of curiosity or energy?
* What tensions or tradeoffs showed up in the stories shared?
* What’s one thing you’re now wondering—or rethinking—about your own approach?

**Helpful Tips:**

* **Emphasize compelling storytelling.** Coach presenters to focus on tension, story, and specificity—not just showcasing success.
* **Highlight diverse perspectives.** Choose speakers who bring different lenses or lived experience.
* **Ignite quick inspiration.** Keep the energy brisk—this is about sparking ideas, not solving everything.