**Tactic: Opening Introduction Prompts**

*Spark connection from the start by making intros personal, engaging, and a cue that everyone’s voice matters.*

**When to Use It:**

Use at the very beginning of a convening to set the tone, break the ice, and spark early connection. Whether the group is just forming or already familiar, a strong opening prompt helps participants feel present, seen, and invited into the space as full humans—not just titles or roles. It’s especially valuable when trust-building, vulnerability, or creative collaboration will be key to the work ahead.

**How it Works:**

### **Option 1. Rapid Round: 30 Seconds Per Person** Best for: Medium-sized groups (10–20 people) when time is limited

**Step 1 | Kickoff question**

Choose a single prompt (e.g. “Why did you say yes to this convening?”). Consider putting it up on a slide in the front of the room.  
**Step 2 | 30-second shares**Invite each person to share a 30-second response, going around the circle or screen.  
**Step 3 | Model the flow**Model a brief response first then keep things flowing—light, focused, and energetic.

### **Option 2. Paired or Small Group Breakouts: 5–10 Minutes** Best for: Larger groups (20+) or when the goal is depth and connection

**Step 1 | Group up**

Break into pairs or groups of 3–4.

**Step 2 | Reflect and discuss**

Provide a single shared prompt and 5–10 minutes to reflect and discuss. Ideally, put the question on a slide at the front of the room or in a print out to keep groups focused.

**Step 3 | Larger group reflection**

Return to the larger group and invite a few volunteers to share key themes or takeaways.

**Facilitator Tip**: Use a shared slide or printed prompt to keep groups focused. Rotate pairs later in the convening for ongoing connection.

### **Helpful Tips:**

* **Take out the stopwatch.** Gently time each share to ensure everyone gets a turn.
* **Reference intros later.** Call back to participants’ introductions throughout the convening—this reinforces connection and shows you’re listening.
* **Revisit prompts.** Return to these questions throughout the convening—e.g., through paired walks, or small group check-ins.

| **Facilitator Guide - Opening Introduction Prompts**  **For Presence:**  “Why did you say yes to this convening?”  → Helps participants ground themselves in the space and focus on personal motivation.    **For Vision:**  “What do you hope this group can achieve together over the next X days?”  → Aligns the group on shared purpose and future aspirations for collective action.    **For Connection:**  “What was an early moment that inspired your interest in [CONVENING TOPIC]?”  → Humanizes each participant through story and shared roots in the work.    **For Curiosity:**  “What is a topic or challenge that you’ve been dedicating a lot of brain power or energy towards lately?”  → Sparks connections around shared questions and encourages individual follow-up.    **For Openness**:  “When was the last time you changed your mind?” or “What is something you believe now that you didn’t believe 10 years ago?”  → Builds humility and models the possibility of transformation that may happen during the convening.    **For Uniqueness:**  “What’s the story behind your name?”  → Invites personal narrative and cultural grounding.    **For Playfulness:**  “Is a hot dog a sandwich?”  → Creates a light, shared moment of levity and laughter. Models constructive disagreement and debate that can be replicated for more serious topics later in the convening.    **For Humanity:**  “As Walt Whitman wrote in Song of Myself, “I am large—I contain multitudes. We arrive in this space not just as professionals, but as full people, carrying many roles, perspectives, and lived experiences. As we begin, we invite you to introduce yourself by naming 3–5 ‘hats’ you’re wearing in the room. These might include: A professional role, a personal identity or community you represent, Something that makes your heart sing, Any roles that might be in tension with one another.”  → Helps acknowledge the complexity we each bring—and creates space to speak from different perspectives as the convening unfolds. |
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