



PYE Third Thursday Assembly
November 16, 2017

*[Nadia Chaney](#)

Dear 3rd Thursday Assemblers! Welcome back, or, if it's your first time WELCOME! This is an exciting format we have been developing where people contribute and discuss a niche aspect of group facilitation.

Below you will find: A Check-in Question (please answer!); Goals and Agreements for today's session (hit "like" to agree to uphold these agreements during the session); 4 discussion questions and 4 case studies (posted approximately every ten minutes; answer in any order). I will be facilitating this experience for 90 minutes. There will be a pdf transcript posted on the www.pyeglobal.org website, as well as the files of this facebook page, in a short while. These transcripts are so great we're thinking of making a book out of them!

This month we are discussing PATIENCE

From Wikipedia: Patience is the state of endurance under difficult circumstances such as: persevering in the face of delay; provocation without acting on negative annoyance/anger; or exhibiting forbearance when under strain, especially when faced with longer-term difficulties. Patience is the level of endurance one can have before negativity. It is also used to refer to the character trait of being steadfast. Antonyms include hastiness and impetuosity.

Today we are going to talk about the way that patience plays out in our facilitation practice. We are going to learn about its power...and its shadow

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Check-in Question for Nov 16, 2017: Describe the current state of YOUR patience by using the metaphor of a beverage. Describe its taste, colour, size, temperature, and the cup that is holding it.

[Tasha Nathanson](#) A flat soda: I've still got flavour but I've lost my fizzle for the moment.

[Nadia Chaney](#) Welcome Tasha!

[Nadia Chaney](#) posting the first question now

[Tasha Nathanson](#) Thanks.

[Barb Applepieski](#) A thimbleful of warm miso - sitting beside a bright red can of sweet cola...which one will I choose???

[Nadia Chaney](#) Hi Barb! Welcome!

[Michael Beebe](#) Hmm, perhaps a very hot quad Americano with a bit of steamed soy. Just enough sweetness to it to appreciate savoring it, but also hot enough that it will last over time and still be delicious.

[Patty Tee](#) warm and heartwarming, in that favorite pottery mug you reach for when you're slowing down to enjoy a few simple things.



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Goals and Agreements for this session on Nov 16 2017

- 1) To deepen our understanding of patience in facilitation
- 2) To understand the costs and benefits of patience
- 3) To learn how and when to most effectively practice patience in facilitation
- 4) To increase our options and choices as facilitators
- 5) To support each other's learning and have meaningful fun!

In order to achieve these, here are some suggestions for COMMUNITY AGREEMENTS to make our time together flow really well. Be sure to add what you need or want AT ANY TIME DURING THE PROCESS. Let the group know or privately message the facilitator if you are concerned that an agreement is being broken.

- 1) No put downs of self or others. Keep a positive, lift-up vibe. If the facilitator finds your comments aggressive or inappropriate in any way you will receive a personal message.
- 2) Be willing to entertain simultaneous truths. Rather than proving a point, try to listen to understand, and be willing to agree to disagree. At the same time, if you have a strong belief be willing to stand up for it. This will make our conversations rich!
- 3) Show your presence, by LIKING and by responding to keep the flow. Ask questions, make comments, connect. The technical trick for this format is to REFRESH your browser fairly often. The questions move around depending on how many people are answering, so please scan the whole page for new questions now and then.
- 4) Maintain CONFIDENTIALITY by not sharing names or personal information about the participants in your groups, sharing from your own perspective, and asking permission before sharing someone else's story.



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5) Answer any questions in the COMMENTS below the question to keep the conversation organized and readable. Only open NEW questions in new threads.

6) You can come and go as you please, take as long as you like to respond, and basically enjoy the text-format to make this work no matter whether you are just waking up, just going to bed, or on your lunch break (time zones unite!!) A pdf transcript of the conversation will be provided. Feel free to continue the conversation even after the 90 minute period has ended

*[Nadia Chaney](#)

Discussion Question #1: Let's start this session by creating our own practical definition of patience in facilitation. What does patience look, feel, taste, sound and/or smell like during a group's process? When do you notice it?

[Barb Applepieski](#) Its bright...soft...smells like a fresh spring breeze from outside. I notice it when I am relaxed. I notice it when i can fully see the participants in my group. Outside my self ...not inside my self.

[Hatem El Wakeel](#) For me patience in facilitation is the powerful oriented mechanisms I use to keep myself blank as. Possible , offering participant the chance to stain Their colour me me

[Michael Beebe](#) Patience looks like waiting during the silence until someone is moved to speak. Patience is not interrupting as someone thinks aloud with the group. Patience is also making room for your co-facilitator to take the lead.

[Patty Tee](#) Patience looks like a calm, attentive body: listening deeply, leaning into the conversation, giving and modeling space for a gentle, deep form of engagement.

[Tasha Nathanson](#) Different people might physicalize their patience differently. Children often need to move and some of us high energy folks cannot easily do that calm, stillness.



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In fact, for me, if I have to be super-still, I actually have divert some of my attention to telling myself repeatedly not to move.

[Patty Tee](#) Tasha Nathanson I appreciate that. I was thinking of my body primarily, so an important addition.

*[Nadia Chaney](#)

Discussion Question #2: When is it hardest for you as a facilitator to exercise patience? When do you most want to be able to be patient when facilitating?

[Hatem El Wakeel](#) Personally the most time I want to be patient when I have criticism on my facilitation style from one of the participants

[Nadia Chaney](#) Thank you for sharing that Hatem. I can relate to that!

[Nadia Chaney](#) What are some strategies that you use in the moment when you've just received some feedback/criticism?

[Hatem El Wakeel](#) Breathing, good intentions , strength points even behind unpleasant behaviours and being non competitive

[Barb Applepieski](#) When people in the group aren't "playing along" ...they are somewhere else...outside the group field. I want to bring them back in... NOW!!! 😊 which is also when patience will really come in handy.

[Nadia Chaney](#) Thank you so much! Do you have strategies that you apply when people aren't playing along?

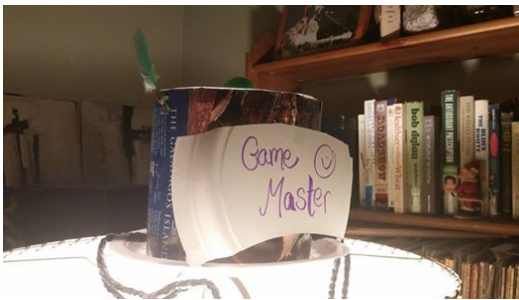
[Barb Applepieski](#) Yesterday I granted my group one magical wish during a game some of them found boring. Which they decided was that I must wear a hat. So they took ten



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minutes to make a hat while I engaged others in what they thought would make the game more fun. Still reflecting on the costs/benefits of this strategy!

[Barb Applepieski](#)



[Nadia Chaney](#) WOW. I have to ask. How did they decide on a hat?

[Barb Applepieski](#) It was the funniest of all choices and the other options...making the game more challenging...weren't going to work for everyone. I led a light discussion on costs/benefits of other choices i.e. hopping on one foot the whole time 😊

[Nadia Chaney](#) the one magical wish is so good. I love how it disrupts the power and just aerates the process.

[Christabel Shaler](#) waiting for a group to settle and arrive in the space before getting a feel for where they are at. AND waiting for myself to arrive before making assumptions about where I am at.

[Nadia Chaney](#) (Hi Christabel!)

[Nadia Chaney](#) That is so interesting. Can you say a little more about waiting for yourself to arrive? How do you practice this?

[Christabel Shaler](#) I tried meditating as a class and it might be a good tool. Perhaps breathing and just being still for a minute. Maybe I could allow kids to be chatty for the first 5 min. before gathering the groups' focus. hmmm



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[Nadia Chaney](#) You know what popped into my mind when I read your comment, what if you had a quote on the board...something that was for the class but also really for you. An invocation, I guess. Something you could focus on while everyone is getting settled

[Christabel Shaler](#) I love this. So brilliant!! I am going to try it today 😊😊

[Michael Beebe](#) When someone in the group is taking up too much space/air time (at least from my perspective).

[Nadia Chaney](#) Oh I relate to allll of these! Michael, what kind of strategies do you work with to manage impatience when people are taking up too much space?

[Michael Beebe](#) I do a self check first to see if it's just me feeling that way, scan the group, look to my co-facilitator if I have one. Yesterday I let this person finish and then did the "do other folks have something to share" and then for the next prompt had them do a go round instead of just open to all to answer.

[Nadia Chaney](#) Love that, using structure and design to support yourself.

[Barb Applepieski](#) So simple! Love it.

[Patty Tee](#) I so relate to this

[Romy Alexandra](#) It is hardest for me to be patient when participants are chatting, distracting others, not staying focused on the task etc. In addition, if I have limited time for my trainings and participants don't listen to directions, and get off topic and find ways to slow down the activities...that brings my impatience to light. I am very curious to learn methods and exercises to improve my patience threshold...any ideas out there?

[Nadia Chaney](#) Hi Romy! One thing that really helps me is to try to find my way to first MATCH the pace of the group and then slow it down or speed up from there. I find that rhythm and music opening activities really help me to do this.

[Patty Tee](#) Somewhat related to Michael's, but I generally am impatient when someone consistently exhibits strong dominance behaviors, and isn't being generous in their engagement with others. This can be taking up too much space/air time, but can also be through not listening



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well to others, misinterpreting other people's comments (without checking in to see if they've understood), bringing every conversation to their pet topic, etc.

[Patty Tee](#) This isn't very common (to the degree I've described it here), but I recognize that when in these situations, I lose my own grounding and focus very quickly

[Nadia Chaney](#) Thank you for sharing that Patty! What do you do to regain grounding in cases like these?

[Patty Tee](#) A couple deep breaths, consider how to refocus the conversation. In truth, I don't feel especially effective in these situations (and that may be because they happen when I'm not an official facilitator, but acting facilitatively within a group, which happens pretty frequently)

[Patty Tee](#) When trying to refocus a group in which I am a participant (ie, the scenario that's more common), I often ask a question to change the topic back to something more clearly on topic, often in ways that invite particular speakers to the fore. Recent example (earlier this week): a room full of professors, post-docs (like me), and PhD students - a social theory reading group. The conversation had veered way off topic to people's pet theories. I ask the original speaker who had proposed this particular reading for our group for more details re: how she was thinking of using it

[Tasha Nathanson](#) I recently had a facilitation where one of my group leaders did exactly what she wasn't supposed to do, either because she hadn't agreed with it or more likely because she hadn't paid attention when we'd discussed parameters and approaches.

[Nadia Chaney](#) Thank you, Tasha! How did you react?

[Tasha Nathanson](#) I re-iterated to the full room how important it was to get ALL ideas onto their posters without highlighting one over the other (which was the issue: she immediately signaled which ideas she thought were the best from her group). The damage had mainly already been done but at least I tried to convey the tone of the consultation, even if that group leader had come at it differently.

[Tasha Nathanson](#) And at least that group could carry on to include all ideas, even if the top of their poster indicated their "top 3" before anything else, which was not intended.

[Nadia Chaney](#) 😊 nice save



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Here's the tricky one, friends: Discussion Question #3: When does patience hold your group back? What are the costs of patience in a group process? How do you manage these costs?

[Nadia Chaney](#) I'm laughing at myself right now. I am so impatient for you to get to this question!! HAHAHA

[Barb Applepieski](#) When there's a lot to get done. When participants have sacrificed a lot to be there and are hoping to get specific value from their time.

[Nadia Chaney](#) Thanks Barb! When it feels like things are NOT happening, and time isn't being used effectively, what kinds of strategies do you employ?

[Nadia Chaney](#) This is my "what is the positive opposite of patience question" 😊

[Barb Applepieski](#) Hmm..I can only imagine! maybe name the value of the moment to myself and share the beauty back to the group after things are back to centre for me. Giving participants a chance to reflect on what happened in small groups or pairs. Going back to goals and agreements to see if its aligned or needs to shift.

[Nadia Chaney](#) Barb Applepieski I think you're onto something. This sounds like returning to presence, to me.

[Nadia Chaney](#) Okay...here's one that I just have to throw in. Patience can be detrimental when unbalanced power dynamics are at play. For me, sometimes I get patience mixed up with a lack of courage or decisive action. Sometimes I need to intervene...even before the whole dynamic has played itself out

[Patty Tee](#) That was the prime one that came to mind too. Well said re: mixing up patience with courage.



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Discussion Question #4: What exercises or practices do you know that help a group to develop patience?

[Romy Alexandra](#) my question too! Very interested to hear from others as this is something I've been wondering for awhile!

[Nadia Chaney](#) I find that mirroring exercises help, both physical and verbal.

[Barb Applepieski](#) I had a group pick a point in the room..walk to it...pick another...walk to it...then debriefed about getting our way or making space for others. Then round two added a rule about making space for others and making eye contact.

[Tasha Nathanson](#) I like this!

[Tasha Nathanson](#) Modelling is useful. If you portray real interest in what someone is slowly getting out, maybe even exaggerating approval (though not enough for it to be silly or patronizing or even noticed), it can inspire others to slow down and pay more attention.

[Nadia Chaney](#) I just found these...I don't know what I think of them, though. Not exactly the kind of patience we're talking about, right? <http://www.youthwork-practice.com/games/patience-games.html>

[Patience Games](#)
Patience Games with youth
youthwork-practice.com

[Sumanth Raj](#) I personally experienced Breathing exercises for patience building in each n every one



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Case Study #1: You have a group of fifteen teenagers in an after school program. You will be creating a mural together (with the help of local artists) over the course of a semester. When do you think the need for patience will arise with this group in particular? What are some things to watch out for?

[Barb Applepieski](#) If one person has THE BEST IDEA EVER THAT THEY WANT TO START RIGHT AWAY

[Nadia Chaney](#) I encounter this one all the time!

[Nadia Chaney](#) curbing enthusiasm is an art in itself

[Nadia Chaney](#) also, your CAPS here are cracking me up

[Shane Sable](#) In my experience working with teenagers, I found I needed more patience with the adults around them. The adults had ideas and expectations of the teenagers that was rigid and based on preconceived notions of who the teens were as children. The adults would try to direct how I ought to see each of the participants.

Regarding patience with the group in particular, patience was vital in finding a balance between getting the work done and honouring the fact that when you're that age, you may not have a lot of spare time, you may not be participating in the project voluntarily, and that there's still a lot of social politicking to navigate anytime you're around your peers.



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Case Study #2: You are facilitating a community meeting about a serious neighbourhood issue that needs urgent resolution. Emotions are running even higher than you had expected. People are talking over each other, and even standing up or shouting at each other. How can you help the group to develop patience with each other? What do you need to be aware of as you do this?

[Patty Tee](#) Such a hard, important question. The situation I'm thinking of is public engagement meetings led by a government agency on a contentious project.

Just writing to think here: I might use a gesture to quiet things down (preferably one pre-established), and ask that we each take a few moments to pause. Then I might revisit the ground rules and/or ask people to do an independent thinking or writing task. Either to write their comments down (which the group can do something with), or ask them to reflect and write about what they think those who oppose them fear, or want (which could then be discussed after.)

In situations like this, it's safety that I'm most concerned about. Safety in a physical sense, even, but also from other forms of abuse. Also, this kind of facilitation can backfire in the situation I'm thinking of, where many think they are coming to be 'heard' but not to be challenged to think deeper or differently about the project.

[Barb Applepieski](#) So good.

[Patty Tee](#) Barb Applepieski Thanks! I think there's something about finding common ground that's the core of the task. The question is how, in my mind.

[Barb Applepieski](#) Yikes! Small groups maybe and naming all the perspectives. Mapping all the angles. Identifying the needs behind the perspectives. Then recategorizing based on needs...need for connection...need to be seen...need for food...need for challenge. Getting empathy into the room!

[Deb Reynolds](#) Dream plan - Have everyone sit in triads. Ask the question: Why was it important for you to be here? Triad members speak one at a time for 2 or 3 (timed) minutes. Listeners don't interrupt or reflect back. After each person in the triad has had their turn, reflect together in what



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was heard. Come back into the larger group, in circle. Each triad reflects back to the larger what the themes were in the triad.

*[Nadia Chaney](#)

Case Study #3: You are leading a team building session for a group of twenty young (13-18years old) members of a community art centre. Participants seem very quiet and low energy and in the break one of them informs you that they have done all of your activities before and are feeling bored, and wondering if they can leave early. What is the quality of patience that is missing here? How can you help support this group's process?

[Tasha Nathanson](#) I'd engage with them on how to approach this activity differently: what different ideas or techniques could they bring to make what might be the "same" activity different for them? This might help them understand their part in the process, rather than imagining it to be something done to them. I might engage them in a discussion of what results/outcomes we are gearing towards (so that they can see a point to what is being done) and see if this helps them either buy in or figure out an adjustment that will spark it up for them while still building towards the same end. I'd try to have a few examples/ideas at the ready in case you get an empty shrug. 😊

[Nadia Chaney](#) Kinda like Barb Applepieski's one magic wish!!

[Sumanth Raj](#) its challenging task and creative to support the group not no make boring to young one



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Case Study #4: You are facilitating a week-long personal development seminar for teachers and staff at a local college. They make it clear in the agreements process that they don't have time for this session because of their heavy workloads. Is there room for working with patience in this group's agreements process that supports and respects what they are saying?

[Romy Alexandra](#) I might consider scheduling in the program time for Open Space Technology, that way the teachers can discuss among each other the issues that are most pertinent to them (for example: heavy workloads and how to address them).

*[Nadia Chaney](#)

Well, thus endeth our 90 mins together this month. Thank you all so much for a rich conversation!

PYE will soon post the transcript (I believe this is our 37th session!!) and this page stays open if you would like to add anything to any of the posts. We are always open to new topics for the upcoming sessions. If you have any ideas please feel free to post them on this page. If you enjoyed today's session please tell your facilitator, teacher, manager, social worker, group therapist, activist and social artist friends! Don't forget to check www.pyeglobal.org for upcoming trainings, too, there's some new ones just posted.



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[Barb Applepieski](#) Thanks!! Great way to start my day today.

[Patty Tee](#) Thank you. I find these such good conversations and provocations to think with, Nadia.

[Nadia Chaney](#) Thanks so much you two. Appreciate you so much.

[Natasha Duchene](#) oh darn I just missed it!

[Nadia Chaney](#) rats~!

[Tasha Nathanson](#) Thanks, Nadia Chaney!