

Vision Gallery

Goals:

- To stretch people's imaginations in envisioning the kind of society they would like to create, going beyond vague values to specific features.
- To facilitate a group's development of a common vision and clarify the values its members share.
- To help people discover their own ideas and how much vision they have in common with others.

Materials:

- large sheets of newsprint or construction paper;
- lots of markers or crayons;
- masking tape; and
- a smooth floor or table space.

Time: 30 minutes to 2 hours (depending on how deep you want to go)

How it's done:

This tool has been tested cross culturally and worked well with many groups, including Thai lesbians, Russian environmentalists, U.S. high school students, English anarchists.

Steps:

1. Select a topic, specific or general. People may want to work on many features of their vision simultaneously, such as government, defense, economic system, family structure and recreation; or they can focus on a specific question like "What might this community look like ten years from now if really good changes kept happening? what would my life look like? What would schools be like?" or "How will people defend themselves and/or their values?" Encourage each other to think creatively. Assume no constraints on money or power.
2. Questions could be brainstormed at the beginning to trigger visionary thinking. Questions helpful to student reformers/revolutionaries might be: What would the goals of the "school" be? What kinds of decision-making processes would exist? How would learning take place? What kinds of social relationships would exist? What roles would students, faculty, administrators play? How would the physical plant be used?
3. For 15-20 minutes, individuals spend time alone, sketching their personal visions by writing, outlining, diagramming or drawing.
4. The next 30-45 minutes are spent in small clusters of 3-6 people, pooling their visions and expressing a common one on a large sheet of paper.

5. Each small group posts its composite utopia on the wall in the main meeting room, creating a "vision gallery". Participants look, compare, discuss and question, informally. (15-20 minutes)

6. The total group gathers to discuss what they noticed. Questions to consider about process are: What are the areas of agreement revealed in the visions? What areas need the most work in developing a viable alternative to the status quo? What concepts do individuals agree or disagree with?

If the group is an organization which might propose a vision as part of its campaign for change, the facilitator can encourage those most motivated to find each other and create a task force to pull the common ideas together, back them up with research, and present them to a constituency or as demands to power holders.

Where tool comes from:

Adapted by George Lakey from Resource Manual for a Living Revolution, by Virginia Coover, Ellen Deacon, Charles Esser, and Christopher Moore, published by New Society Publishers and now out of print. Currently this tool is available on the Training for Change website: www.TrainingForChange.org