

MAY 2020

ON A PERSONAL NOTE

Dear friends,

Many of you have echoed my concerns about jumping right back into the status quo. The last two month's pause allowed for some mindful questioning. What is essential and how I can reduce, if not eliminate those things that are not? How do I focus on the 'stuff' and thoughts that don't serve a higher purpose for my happiness and wellbeing?

The good news is that we don't have resume business as usual. Over the last 6-9 weeks we have learned to adjust our expectations as to what is important and enjoy the peace that comes with shedding the extraneous. When stripped away, time with family, mindful consumption, quieter streets, cleaner air, a slower pace, kindness and gratitude, became our new norm. Sure, there have been some frustrations and fear. Some might have even suffered tragedy during this time. But in general, we quickly adapted to the new way of being and even started to appreciate the changes necessitated by a global slow down.

Its important to recognize that it has been a very difficult time. On the other hand, it is easy for us to forget when we're in the trenches, that we are decedents of resilient survivors. We are here because our ancestors survived natural and human made disasters, war and global economic instability, famine and drought, slavery and genocide, and yes, diseases.

Resilience is in our DNA.

A wise philosopher once said, let the stuff that comes come; let the stuff that goes go; and let the things that remain be the foundation from which we act (I'm paraphrasing). I take this to mean that resiliency is not just built from the stuff we suffer, but that we actively seek to learn and grow from our suffering. And developing actions and values that become non-negotiable.

We can choose to set the foundation from which we act and think. If we don't, it would be all too easy to slip back into old habits, even the ones

that caused us to unwittingly suffer. We can let others or the systems that are in such great need of consideration and repair, dictate where we put our attention and intention.

As we anticipate Phase 2 of this global pandemic, let us not lose sight of the things that brought us joy. It is rare that we, as a global community, get to pause, take stock and reexamine our dated social and economic structures. This is an opportunity for us to reconsider new systems that serves us as a collective best.

Let us attempt to make as many decisions as possible from the seat of mindfulness, and a grounding firmly rooted in our true selves; in what we value most.

Wishing you all good health and happiness and looking forward to seeing many of you in person soon!

And in the words of our good Dr. Bonnie Henry –
"Be kind, be calm, be safe"



A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several stylized, overlapping loops and a long horizontal stroke at the end.

ENGAGEMENT POST COVID

Multi-stakeholder engagement offers much to the design process. It provides designers a nuanced insight into the client's needs. It helps us generate thoughtful design solutions that go beyond the surface. In this time of physical distancing, we need to review how best to move in-person engagement workshops, to an online platform. Added to this, virtual meetings with spotty technology, and awkward communication, can make online facilitation a challenge when creativity needs to flow, and participants need to be present and engaged.

Here are some techniques we're working on to help you consider a safe and enjoyable stakeholder facilitation.



1. **Be human.** Online participation is not a performance. Share something fun or interesting with the group to generate the space for openness and vulnerability. As the facilitator, ask for and encourage diverse input from everyone through various response avenues. (Check out our January newsletter outlining 7 principles of effective stakeholder engagement in particular- *Strive to consciously level power dynamics*).



2. **Be flexible.** If we're still working from home or in a staggered back to work scenario, recognize that participants lives can be disrupted at any turn (childcare, technological limitations). Allow for rescheduling, postponement or even multiple sessions.



3. **Facilitate equity.** Find the best technological tool that facilitates equity. Consider those participants with hearing or sight challenges and make ample arrangements for their full and equal participation. This may include sign interpreters. Smaller group participation may be more effective. In the facilitation world we call this breakout or café sessions.



4. **Security.** This is a big concern when dealing with sensitive or confidential information. Clearly understand the requirements of the client group and limitations of the platform being considered.



5. **Be prepared.** Provide as many materials ahead of time so that participants come prepared to engage and contribute. Assign homework if it makes sense and check in with participants ahead of time so they don't feel on the spot. This may mean more work for the facilitator but if the goal is to have a fruitful and engaging session, its worth the extra effort. Creativity is squashed when we pin it against competition so remember to still leave room for ideas to flow.



6. **Use active visuals.** Consider digital white boards so participants can be encouraged to articulate their points of view in a highly visual way. Use high impact graphics that are clear but allow for participatory markups and graphics – these are not precious – they are there to start the dialogue.



7. **Champion diverse participation styles.** Appreciate that we all learn in various ways and so we all contribute appropriate to how we're wired to learn. One of the benefits on online facilitation is that it allows for those who prefer not to contribute aloud to have a say via the chat box or the homework previously assigned.



8. **Consider health and wellbeing.** Set the tone for a relaxed, creative and mindful workshop. Allow a few minutes for everyone to become present and centered. If participants aren't bringing an open and focused mind, you wouldn't get the benefit the process is intended to provide. If you can have a physically distanced in-person workshop remember that not everyone has the same risk tolerance. Be considerate. Make the procedures in place apparent and clear. Without the wellbeing of each participant being considered, the creative process is short changed, and solutions are truncated.

Feel free to utilize these principles to conduct your own facilitation or contact us at contact@khoradesign.ca to discuss how we may help.