

WORKING CIRCLES

August, 2024

The ABT Framework Course gives you a great introduction AND is even fun, BUT exercising the narrative part of your brain needs the social dynamic and to continue beyond the training, THEREFORE ... Working Circles.

WHAT A WORKING CIRCLE IS ...

It's 3 to 5 people coming together for a half hour to help shape the narrative of the project of the initiator of the circle (the HOST). That's all it is. A one shot event. If it's productive, you can run it again, no worries. And more importantly, it's going to be your long term opportunity for continued narrative training, long after the course is finished.

WHO CAN JOIN A WORKING CIRCLE?

The circles are intended ONLY for graduates or current participants in either Story Circles or the ABT Framework Course.

As part of the ABT Framework course, you will be asked to HOST one circle, then PARTICIPATE in two.

HOW TO PARTICIPATE IN SOMEONE ELSE'S WORKING CIRCLE

During the course, Matthew will provide a link to sign up and participate in other people's Working Circles. You need to sign up to participate in two minimum, but there is no maximum – sign up for as many as you want!

HOW TO HOST A WORKING CIRCLE

- Pick an available half hour time slot on [this page](#).
- Fill in your first name, last name, and a short title for your Working Circle based on your ABT.

SCRIBE

Before your Working Circle begins, the Host should ask for a volunteer to be the SCRIBE. The Scribe will have the Scribe Document shared on the screen and will take notes during the session. You can download a copy of the Scribe Document [here](#).

THE HALF HOUR SCHEDULE.

At the center of a Working Circle is the 3 step process for the Development of an ABT. The [Scribe Document](#) has this 3 step process laid out and the common tools used for each step. Be sure to make use of it!

1 WARM UP - go around the group, everyone introduce themselves saying only their name and program. The host reads their ABT then offers up a little bit of background on the narrative. This should last no longer than 5 MINUTES.

2 THE PROBLEM - the host moderates, calling on each person. See if you can state “The problem is ...” in 5 or less words (not counting those first 3). Ideally each person has this ready before the session, but if not, you can make it up on the spot. Use the BLUE CARD to guide you. If you get a consensus on the problem, then move on. If not, don’t move on — maybe the entire half hour ends up being only about the problem. If so, that’s how it goes. There’s no point moving on if you’re not clear on what the problem is.

3 THE SET UP - there’s two main parts to the Set Up (ordinary world, what’s at stake). The ordinary world is pretty obvious (the basic topic) so plan to spend most of this segment discussing “What’s at stake/Why should we care about this?”

4 THE TWO MOMENTS - the BUT moment is potentially more powerful and important than the THEREFORE moment, so you probably want to spend more time on it, but try to address both.

5 END DISCUSSION - try to save the final 5 minutes to put everything together, revisiting any parts you didn’t finish, or talking about whatever you want — no big deal. Again, the goal of the half hour is not to have a perfect finished product, it’s only to explore the elements in the effort to strengthen the narrative.

THE #1 GOAL OF WORKING CIRCLES: A DIVERSITY OF VOICES

The enemy of effective communication is insularity and isolation. Your goal with WORKING CIRCLES is to reach the people of your Outer Circle. As great and comfortable as it might feel to spend time with the members of your Inner Circle, they aren't the path to effective communication.

The bottom line is you need to seek a diversity of voices. If you work on night skies in Colorado, the last thing you want is four other people from the NPS night skies program in your circle.

What your dream scenario would be is a circle that consists of something like a geologist, an accountant, a child behaviorist and a screenwriter — people who don't have an in-depth knowledge of your material. They are the ones who will be able to look past your CONTENT to help you with the only thing the group has in common — FORM.

THE 3 MOST IMPORTANT ATTRIBUTES OF WORKING CIRCLES

1 INNER/OUTER CIRCLE - again, you need the minds of people who DON'T already know your content

2 THE SOCIAL DYNAMIC - you can't do this stuff alone in your office, you need the group dynamic

3 NARRATIVE INTUITION - this is the perfect mechanism for continuing to strengthen your narrative intuition, long after the course

AND OF COURSE THE MOST ESSENTIAL ELEMENT IS ...

To have fun!