

Important notes to the “keeper of the cards” for the Sharing Cards

This is an exercise in communication and careful listening. Not everyone is experienced at sharing and listening. The purpose of the Sharing Cards is that everyone leaves feeling good about themselves and that they have learned about others. It is up to the “keeper of the cards” to facilitate this. The “keeper” must be in a position physically to see everyone and mentally to gently monitor the situation.

It is suggested that the “keeper of the cards” invite people of like mind to join the exercise. If someone is in an altered state, the only one of the opposite sex, younger or older than most in the group, before the start the “keeper” is advised to assess the situation. At the start, it is helpful if everyone is comfortable and enjoying themselves. It is suggested that the “keeper of the cards” end the exercise or restructure it if there is a problem. If a person passes often, struggles with answers, is cryptic or seems ill at ease, gently suggest that they drop out and observe for a while so they can feel the rhythm of what is going on. Please do not coax them to join back in. When/if they are ready, they will say so. This is an exercise in allowing another to get comfortable and not forcing their experience. Children and teens especially like this exercise because they can speak their mind without being challenged.

If participants are allowed to look at questions ahead of time and prepare answers, they are not fully present. Emphasize this at the start and remind everyone that anyone can PASS if they feel uncomfortable with a question. Be sure to remind the group that in order to PASS the question must be read to the group. The best way to prevent peeking is to have one group-draw pile.

Often people do not know what to do with the Question/Comment card. Participants can look at the used card pile to jog their memories about past questions, then answer one or ask someone else to. They can also keep notes, if they wish.

The job of “keeper of the cards” is an important one that takes a bit of practice. It is easy to interact with two or three and more complex if the group is disparate or large. As the “keeper of the cards” be aware that, on occasion, those involved have old patterns that come up. Participants can blame, pout, complain, get impatient, argue, try to make their own rules, decide they are victims, speak out of turn, make jokes, get annoyed, whisper, chat, interrupt or try to leave. It is important that the “keeper of the cards” be aware of these possibilities and be willing to stop or restructure the exercise if necessary. When problem occur, emphasize the purpose of the experience:

Being present in the moment, trust, compassion for others, careful listening, deep sharing, being spontaneous, concise and understanding the value of no cross talk. These are wonderful life skills to have! This exercise is a success when everyone leaves feeling good and has a deeper understanding about the life and values of those who participated.

It is suggested that the “keeper” announce ahead of time that what is talked about within the group stays with the group and is not shared with others. Some stories are funny and others are deeply personal. None of them are to be shared without permission.