

Part two - What If?

Time: 3 hours with breaks

Starting to imagine a different, better future together.

Facilitation guide:

1. Introduce the aim and mindset of this session.

Aim:

- To use your collective imaginations to bring to life the future that may yet be possible.

Mindset:

- It is fine for there to be multiple visions - they can potentially coexist with each other.
 - We need to cultivate, in our groups, a culture of 'Yes, And' rather than 'Yes, But'.
 - Seek out the ways that different visions could compliment each other.
2. Run through the following guided visioning Time Machine exercise below, to travel ten years in the future.

This will take about 25 minutes. Option: to help people fully enter into the time machine exercise, you might like to invite the group to make a collective hum or add a short sound effect like this.

In-person: Ask participants to pair up before you start the Time Machine exercise. This allows them to move smoothly into sharing straight afterwards.

Online: Run through the Time Machine script first. Then put people into breakout rooms in pairs and give the instructions for sharing.

Guided visioning process: How to use your Time Machine to travel forward 10 years:

Invite the whole group to get comfortable, to take a deep breath and, if they would like, to close their eyes.' Then one of you can read out the following, or something similar:

“In a moment we are going to take a journey through time. This is a historic moment, the first time in [insert name of your community] that an act of collective time travel has been attempted. I have with me here my Time Machine that I built during lockdown from bits I had at home and using plans I found online. When I turn it on, we are going to travel 10 years into the future. The times we travel through, were the times of the most profound and remarkable transition in human history. Change that in 2024 felt unimaginable happened in in positive and accelerating cascades. Institutions that felt so permanent crumbled and fell, and new, infinitely better ones bloomed in their place.

Those 10 years were the most thrilling time to be alive. They are times that those that came afterwards told great stories about and sang great songs about. I am turning this Time Machine on and we are travelling forwards together. Let's step out, emerging blinking into this new world. It's not a Utopia, but it is the result of everything that could possibly have been done, being done. Take a walk around it in your imagination using all your senses.”

You then 'turn on' your Time Machine and leave people sitting in silence for 8 minutes to explore the future apart from an occasional prompt, with long pauses between, such as.

- What do you see as you walk around?
- What sounds do you hear?
- What does it smell like, feel like, taste like?
- What are people doing for work and leisure?

3. After this time to explore in silence, gently invite people to stay in this future place and transition to discussing in pairs the world they have imagined.

Take 12 minutes for this sharing. Invite them to take 3 minutes each to listen to the other without comment, then take 6 minutes to discuss what has come up and note down two delicious ideas they would like to share with the wider group.

4. Then bring everyone back together and state that

“Now we're going to leave this place, taking away a sense of what's possible and what's important. Let's get back in our Time Machine and travel back to the present. When you are ready, open your eyes and reconnect to the people you are with today.”

5. Allow 20-30 minutes for this step. Ask people to take a couple of minutes to look at what has been noted down by participants.

Then ask if anyone would like to hear more about a specific idea, and give the person whose idea it was a minute or two to explain it in a bit more detail. Aim to hear more about the ideas of several participants. By the end of this people should have a pretty good overview of a range of imaginative visions for their community.

Take a break to let the vision settle in. If you are running the visioning process over one day, this may be a good point for lunch.

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