

# RHYTHMS of INFLUENCE

5 Steps to activate Presence,  
Connection, and Influence when  
speaking to groups

*Insights and tools for speakers, leaders, presenters, teachers —  
anyone who speaks to groups!*

Mary Tolena & Ju Linares

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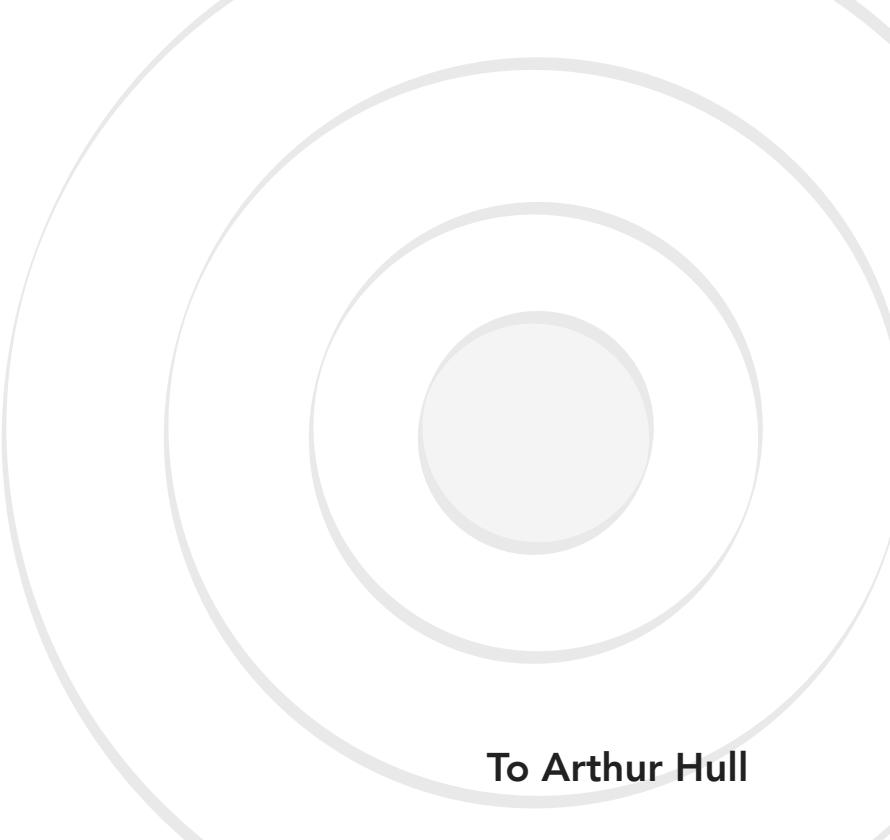
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*This* book is for people who present in front of groups as Speakers, Teachers, Facilitators, Team Leaders, or in any role **where genuine connection and engagement with others matters.**

*In **Rhythms of Influence**, we invite you to learn how principles of Rhythm can give you the confidence on the inside to create that special kind of rapport on the outside.*

— **Mary Tolena & Ju Linares**



## **To Arthur Hull**

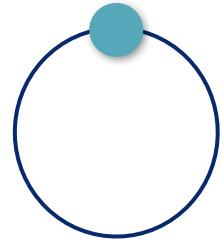
We dedicate this book to our teacher, mentor, and friend, Arthur Hull, whose rhythms and ripples of influence have led millions around the world to discover the benefits of group drumming.

Because of Arthur, we now have maps to “That Place,” that transcendent state of musical melding and human connection where the rhythms flow in, around, and through us.

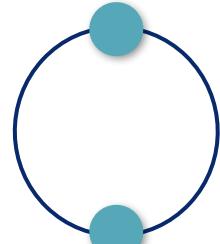
Arthur’s decades of tireless travel, teaching, and advocacy for group drumming has led to thousands of practitioners, a collaborative professional community, and a growing body of research that proves what we already know: Group drumming is good for the body, mind and soul.

***Thank you, Arthur, from the bottom of our hearts!***

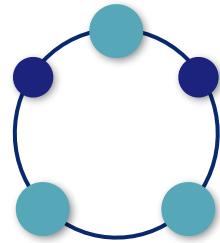
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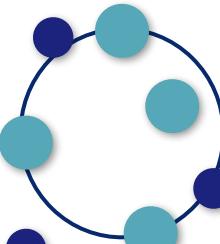
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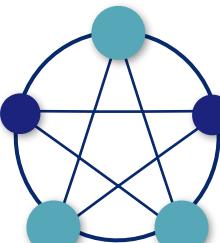
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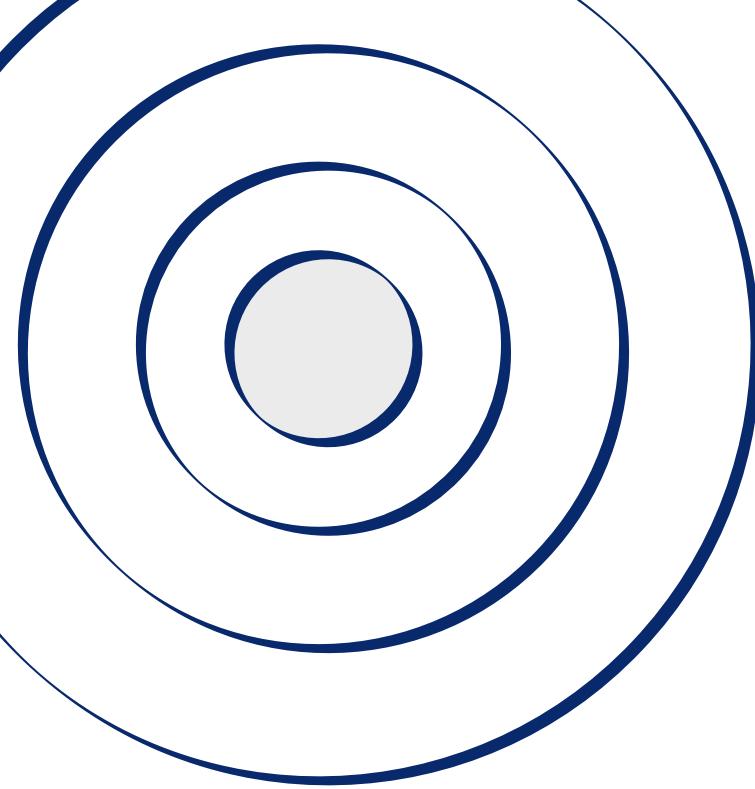
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# > INTRODUCTION

## *RHYTHMS of INFLUENCE*

*5 Steps to activate Presence, Connection,  
and Influence when speaking to groups*



## POWER IN THE ZONE

When we think of the speakers, leaders, and mentors we most admire, it's probably not their words we remember most. What elevates them is usually something else—something magnetic about the way they are that draws us in.

We call that charisma, but it's also something broader, deeper, and more genuine. We use words for it like *authenticity* and *presence*.

## ***People with these qualities are:***

- Comfortable in their own skin
- Present and connected
- Able to hear, listen, and converse
- Open to new questions and ideas
- Aiming at the larger purpose or result

When these people get in front of groups, they seem to be “in the zone.” They appear at ease and their message seems to flow naturally, almost as if they’re just having a conversation with a friend. They communicate in ways that make it easy for people to hear, follow, and engage with them.

You’re probably reading this book because you want to come across like those people do when you’re in front of a group. You want three things to happen:

1. ***On the outside***, you come across as confident, comfortable, enthusiastic, and genuine.
2. ***On the inside***, you feel the electricity of being on your game, in the flow, effortlessly knowing what to say and do next.
3. ***Within the group***, curiosity is sparked, connections are made, and outcomes are created beyond what you could predict.

That “X Factor”—that “good vibe” we feel (and get from others) when we’re really in the flow—is an energetic state with physiological

underpinnings that can't be reached by simply marking items off a checklist. It comes from getting out of our own way and into an "open state" where we meet the moment with just the right thoughts, words, and actions. It feels great when we're there, doesn't it?

When we're able to make those kinds of internal and external connections, we don't just have a positive influence on others. We get positive feedback in return. This reinforcing cycle opens up pathways that allow progress to move smoothly and easily. Learning occurs. Ideas are sparked. Solutions emerge. Relationships strengthen.

You can make that happen more easily. With practice, you can develop those qualities, live from that way of being more of the time, and make your passion, message, and talent radiate with precision and power. Whether you're a presenter, facilitator, trainer, teacher, manager, entrepreneur, or change agent of any kind, these qualities help build:



- ***Clarity and confidence***
- ***Audience connection***
- ***Client rapport***
- ***Organizational impact***

As presenters and influencers, getting to That Place is too important to leave to chance. We can't just hope for moments when "everything comes together" to just magically appear. We all know the audience impact when we're "on" for a presentation, and we know how awkward things can be when we're "off." Finding our way to "on" is a key skill—and the good news is that it can be learned.

Reaching towards our inner sense of flow is something we can practice and develop, like any other skill or good habit. It's worth it, for our own satisfaction as well as for our effectiveness with others. Clearly, finding one's way to Presence and Flow is something worth working on.

## **That Weird Thing We Do: Rhythm & Drumming**

We (Mary Tolena and Jú Linares) work with groups in an unusual (some might even say peculiar) way. We take groups of adults (most of



whom have never even thought of drumming before), give them drums and small instruments, and guide them into becoming a percussion orchestra in as little as an hour. We then facilitate discussions that relate this musical experience to desired outcomes at work and in life. We weave key themes like collaboration, creativity, and unity into each program.

From a presenter/facilitator standpoint, this can be challenging. These events are real-time, dynamic “happenings” of music, movement, laughter, and learning, and everyone is part of the show. Each time it’s different, and we never know exactly how it will all play out. We go in with a plan, but we are always ready to shift on a dime to follow the creativity and insights that participants reveal.

What this means is that we must stay present, connected, and engaged with our participants—leading them into the next moment, and the next—all while staying focused on our overall program goals.

Luckily for us, our very medium—Rhythm—teaches us how to do that. In fact, rhythm lays out a pathway to that cherished sense of Flow that we all want to operate from. From there, Presence can really shine.

## The Transformative Power of Rhythm



We know the transformative power of rhythm because we’ve each experienced it in our own lives. Coming from very different backgrounds, we (Brazilian Jú Linares and American Mary Tolena) met on the North Shore of Oahu, Hawaii at a training camp for drum circle facilitators. Yes, there is such a thing. Discovering it changed both of our lives.

“Drum Circle & Rhythm Facilitation” is an actual professional field that is much broader than its name might imply. DCF practitioners achieve remarkable results in a wide spectrum of settings, including education, health care, elder care, social services, expressive arts, recreation, communities, organizations, and workplaces. A growing stream of clinical and social science studies are documenting the positive impacts of group drumming, including measurable shifts in our self-perception, social awareness, brain function, and even our cellular biology.

***With their ability to affect on so many levels,  
rhythmic experiences are clearly tapping into  
something deep and powerful.***

***Rhythm helps people heal, express, and flourish.***

## **Musical and Metaphorical Doorways**

Another aspect of Rhythm’s power is how it activates us on both physical/experiential and metaphorical/ cognitive levels at the same time. This makes facilitated rhythm programs powerful team-building and group learning experiences. The underlying principles and components of Rhythm provide a whole set of metaphors that help people understand what they’ve experienced and apply it to daily life. We’ve based *Rhythms of Influence* on five of those principles.

# RHYTHMS OF INFLUENCE:

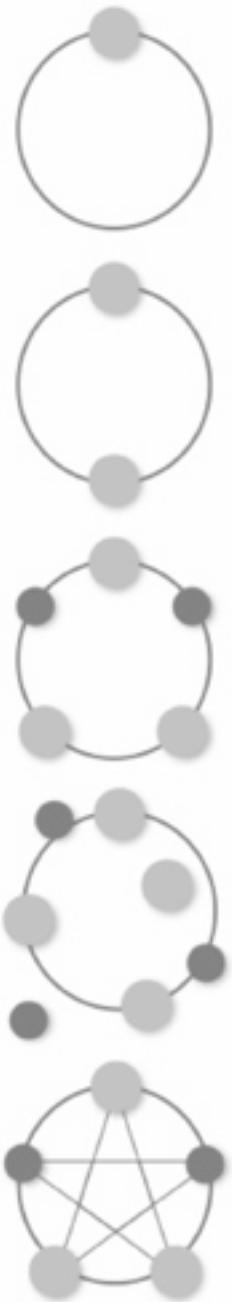
## *Five Developmental Phases*

Blending our experiences in the fields of leadership, organizational development, experiential education, and music facilitation, we've developed a five-phase framework for our rhythm programs. These five stages of musical development connect, align, and spark creative collaboration among participants.

### ***The phases are:***

- AWARENESS
- CONNECTION
- DIALOGUE
- EXPLORATION
- PERFORMANCE

As we guide participants through these phases, they evolve from uncertain individuals to playful explorers to coherent ensemble members. They learn new concepts, discover their creativity, and gain satisfaction from being part of something bigger. Creating music together is a special experience that's much more than the sum of the parts.



## These Phases Apply to Your Groups—and to You!

This sequence forms a strong design framework for just about any presentation, program, or meeting where you want people to listen, understand, and engage.

What's more, these same five rhythm principles can lay out a personal path for you, too—one that helps you develop and transmit that



elusive quality of Presence to your groups. They form the guideposts that help you stay grounded, aware, open, and responsive—in the flow of what's happening, serving the group's progress in real time. They help you “walk the walk.”

### *Get Ready to Flow*

While these five phases can guide us on both personal and group levels, the kind of genuine presence and connection we want to develop doesn't come from simply following the steps like a recipe.

As you'll see in the descriptions below, each phase of the five-part Rhythms of Influence framework operates for us personally, in business groups, and in our group drumming programs. It is a developmental sequence whose focus starts with the individual and expands to the group.

A wide range of situations might put you in the role of a presenter, teacher, speaker, leader, or facilitator whose goal is to lead or guide a



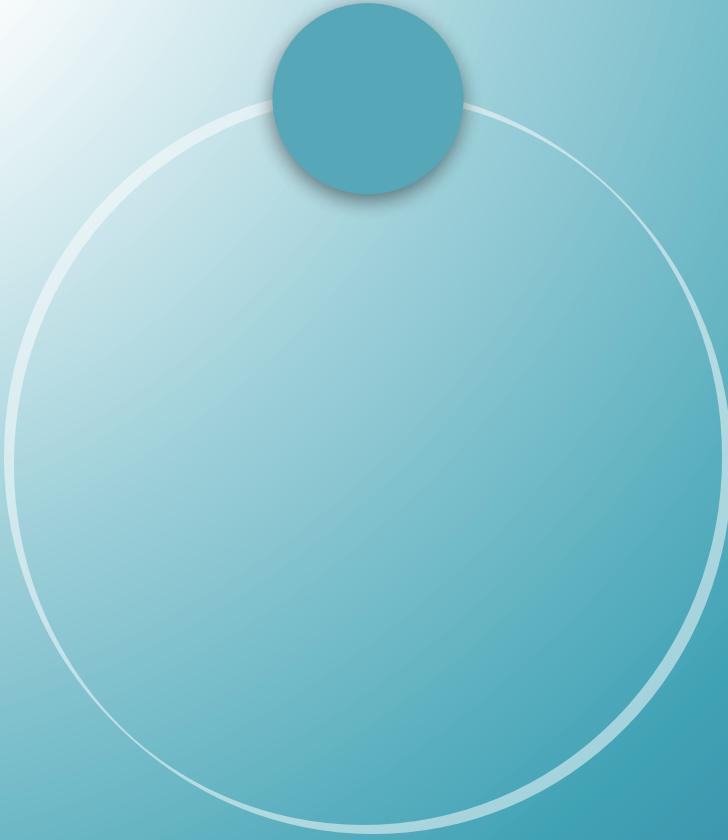
group experience toward a desired outcome. Whether you're speaking to your work team or community group, presenting at a training seminar, or occupying center stage at a TED conference, these five phases will help you create that sense of connection and flow, both within yourself and with your audience.

The five phases correspond to—and fulfill—a sequence of “developmental needs” that exist for both presenters and groups. Each phase relates to a principle of Rhythm that helps us to remember and access the step with ease. We'll see how this plays out—not only in our rhythm groups but in the kinds of groups you speak to as well.

### ***Once again, the five phases are:***

- AWARENESS
- CONNECTION
- DIALOGUE
- EXPLORATION
- PERFORMANCE

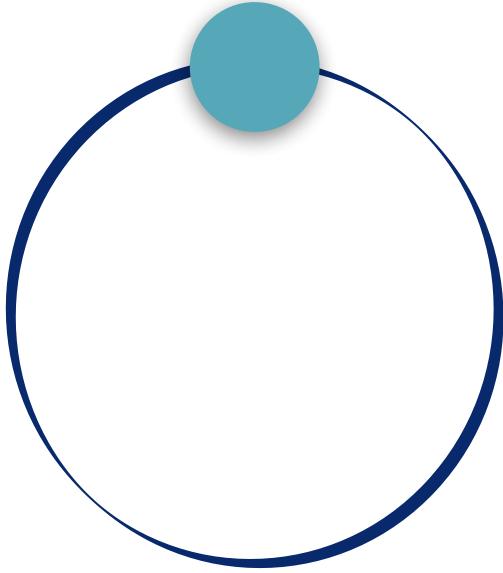
*Let's begin.*



# 1 AWARENESS

*"Awareness is the greatest agent for change."*

— Eckhart Tolle



## TUNE IN to the HERE & NOW

The **Awareness** phase is about helping participants arrive, get settled, and tune in to their shared purpose with an open sense of possibility and positive outcome.

The alchemy of presence and connection happens when we stay aware and in tune with what's going on, moment to moment, in the group and inside of ourselves.

### ***Start with Yourself***

To bring your group into and through the Awareness stage, it is essential to start with yourself—before you start your program. Before stepping in front of the group, pause to take a deep breath, notice where you're feeling tight, and consciously release tension as you exhale. Fully come into This Moment with your awareness.

## **Pulse**

In the Awareness phase, the rhythmic principle of **Pulse** has a lot to teach about Presence and Flow. Pulse is the most basic unit of Rhythm: the steady beat. It's the oscillation between opposites: a note and a space, a sound and a rest, the yin and the yang.



We typically begin our rhythm programs with a steady beat from a large bass drum. We invite participants to take a deep breath and notice what's going on with their thoughts, feelings, and sensations—including how the bass drum beat resonates in their bodies.

Musically speaking, what's important in this first phase is that everyone unifies around a common pulse—hears it, feels it, and plays in time with this heartbeat of the music.

In a non-musical group, the “steady beat” you want to organize around is the session's overall **purpose** and **goal**.

## **Participants at the Threshold: Two Dimensions**

At the start of your program, you're asking your audience to step over the threshold into your special world of ideas, messages, and planned

activities. You want them to be tuned in and present, both physically and mentally.

## ***Physical***

Start with physically: invite them to take a deep, relaxing breath. This can be done in seconds and without saying a word. Simply pause before you speak and:

- 1. Smile and make eye contact with audience members.***
- 2. Feel your feet in a stable, grounded position.***
- 3. Enjoy your own deep breath with a visible inhale and a softly audible exhale.***

Many people will mimic you with a deep breath of their own. You'll sense a wave of relaxation around the room, followed by a sharpened focus. They have crossed the threshold into the beginning moments of your program.

Of course, if appropriate to your subject and setting, you can go further with this by explicitly leading a short centering process. Invite them to take a few deep breaths, feel themselves relax, let go of any external thoughts swirling around in their minds, and envision a successful experience.

## ***Mental***

In the mental dimension of Awareness, we want to activate focus on the topic/purpose/goal of the session and to set up positive

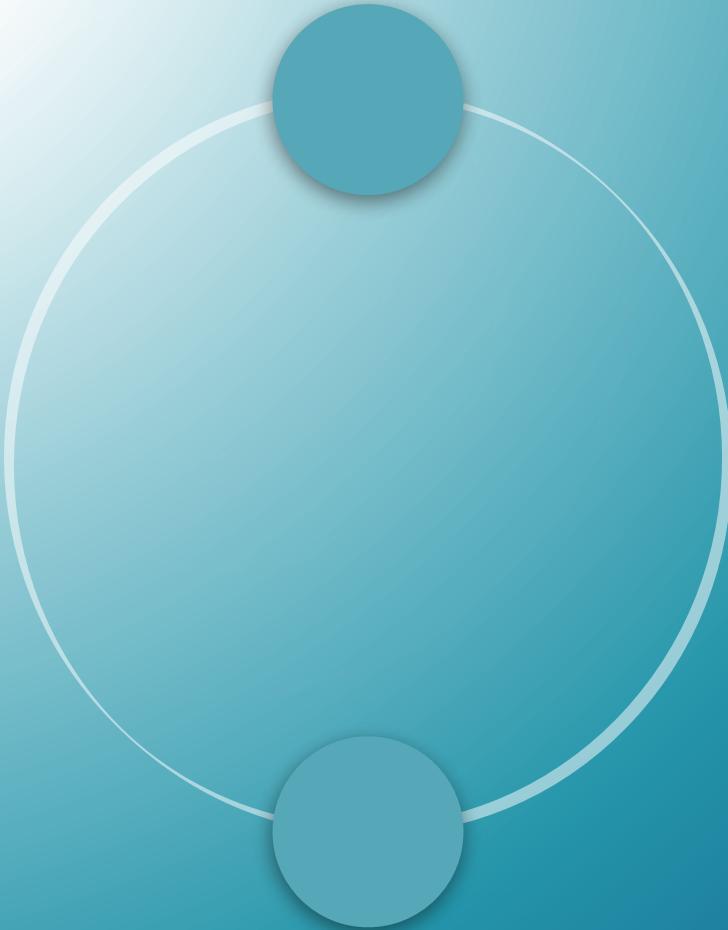


anticipations for the outcome. We want people to feel invested in the session as participants, with their own intentions and goals on the line.

In its simplest form, this looks like your basic welcoming and introductory statements, with these important ingredients:

1. Show appreciation for them—for being here, for the talent they bring, etc.
2. State the purpose/goal of session, including What's in It for Me & Us (i.e., for them as participants).
3. Indicate optimism and faith in the outcome—paint a picture of where you know they can go.

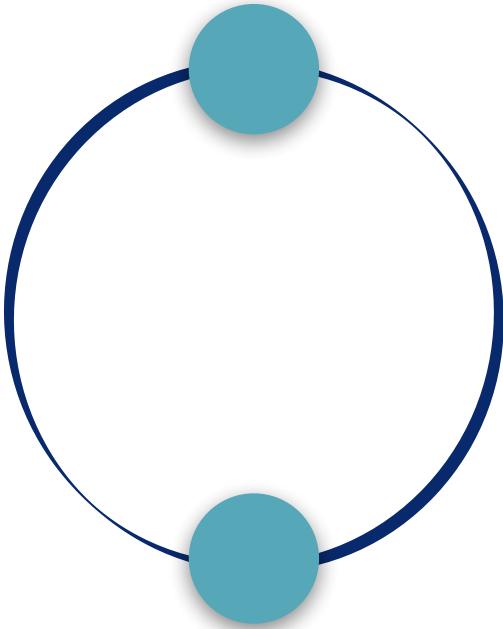
Now that you have helped your participants step aboard the real-time experience of your program, they are ready to form into a capital-G Group, a larger, evolving entity with potential and capabilities of its own.



## 2 CONNECTION

*"Connection is the energy that exists between people when they feel seen, heard, and valued."*

— Brené Brown



## BECOME A CONNECTED GROUP

In the first phase, group members have come into the moment, settled in, and oriented themselves to their purpose. Now it's time to help them connect with each other, first as individuals, and then as a group.

The second step, **Connection**, is about getting a solid experience of themselves as a *Group*, an entity, a single super-organism. When people connect as a Group (even a little), they have much more collective capability than those who remain in their individual experiences.

As the speaker or facilitator, you can sense this. You feel the energy click or "fall into the groove." You have people's attention at a deeper level. They become more ready to be guided as a group.

## ***Synchronize with Cycle***

In our drumming programs, we use the rhythmic principle of to create the container for participants to connect as a Group.



While a straight Pulse is comprised of equal, evenly spaced beats, a rhythmic **Cycle** is established when a regular emphasis emerges, as in ONE- two-three-four, ONE-two-three-four. The group's "common One" becomes a shared orientation point that brings everyone back to synchrony if they happen to "fall out" of the rhythm.

In our rhythm programs, group members quickly learn that it feels better to play in sync.

## **Facilitating Connection**

There are many ways to get groups to connect depending on setting, group size, purpose and topic, the group's culture, and more. As in the Awareness stage, you want to nudge them into a greater degree of connection than they would have achieved on their own. That includes pushing their (and your) comfort zones a bit to open up with each other.

## ***First: Connect as Individuals***

Create an opportunity for people to introduce themselves, give some context about being there, and share something unique about themselves.

- In small groups, everyone can take a turn around the circle
- In large groups, have people to talk to a neighbor they don't know.

The key to this step is to ask a sharing question that raises the energy—one that invites people to reveal something interesting or fun about themselves to bring out their individuality.

Question possibilities are endless—search “conversation starter questions,” and you’ll get dozens of lists. For our purposes here, let’s consider three categories:

### **1. About themselves**

Share details about their life or interests that help people find common ground. Examples: How did you come into this field of work? What was a favorite activity, sport, or hobby when you were 14? If you could take one big “bucket list” trip, where would you go, and why?

## 2. About their work

Describe a professional success or experience that relates to your topic. Examples: What was a recent success or accomplishment you feel especially proud, and why? Who has been a big influence on how you think about work, and why?

## 3. About their aspirations

Activate their hopes and visions for the future. Examples: What do you most hope to get from this program? What ability or gift would you like to share more of with the world?

In all cases, be careful to phrase the questions so that people **think positively**. Some people are quick to complain, and you don't want to trigger that. If possible, write the question on a ip chart or presentation screen to help them keep their conversations on track.

## ***Then: Rejoin and Become a Group***

After people express and connect individually, unify their attention by bringing it back to you—momentarily. Then say something complimentary that *recognizes them as a group* and reiterates their purpose for being there.

Give them a reason to be proud to be there and in such esteemed company. Tell them about a special capability you see in them as a group and how it will carry them toward their goals.

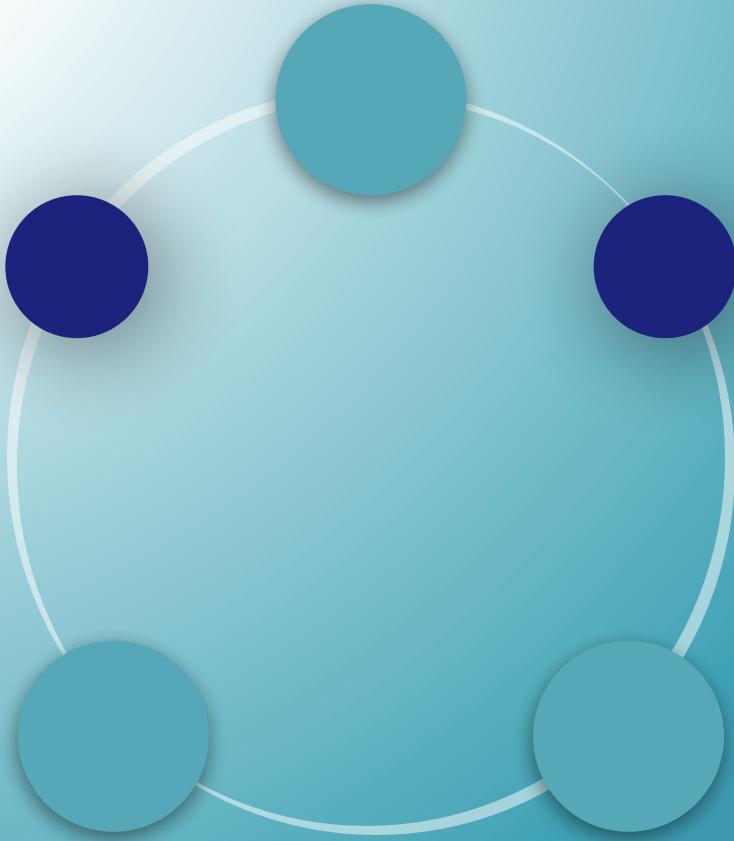
Next, shift their focus to themselves as a group, and create an experience of shared appreciation. The easiest way to do this is to simply



have them cheer or applaud the capability and potential you just highlighted, or perhaps a recent group achievement.

Here's the key: Get them to look around **at each other**, not at you. You can say something like "Look at all of the dedicated, talented, interesting people in this room!"

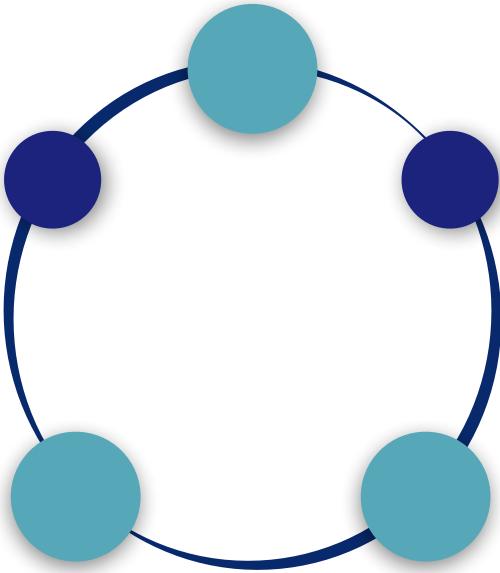
with a warm, friendly smile. In a small group, you can have them raise their water glasses in a toast to their potential and goals.



## 3 DIALOGUE

*"In true dialogue, both sides are willing to change."*

*— Thich Nhat Hanh*



## LISTEN, EXPRESS, ENGAGE

With “group power” activated, you’re ready for **Dialogue**—to exchange ideas and perspectives about the topic at hand. In this phase, participants bring out their individual voices and learn how they interplay with others.

### ***Beyond taking turns***

At its most basic, Dialogue implies a back-and-forth way of communication, with people alternating talking and listening. But what we mean is more than that. We’re looking for **generative dialogue**, where the conversation builds value because we arrive in a better place by the end. We have broader perspective, more complete understanding, and greater compassion. We see more possible ways forward.

***Generative dialogue is more than taking turns.  
What else is needed?***

When we ask that question in our groups, the instant and unanimous answer is “Listening.” People say it with a certainty that implies, “Yes, we need more of that.” The importance of listening is no secret.

***Two Components of True Listening***

When we believe someone is truly listening, we say that we “feel heard.” The two distinct parts of real listening are reflected in those two words.

One part is about sending and receiving information—does the listener correctly understand the meaning and intent of what was said. That’s the “heard” part.

The “feel” part comes when the listener is open to being influenced by what the speaker says. That’s what feels good when we believe someone is truly listening. They not only understand what we said, but they also respect it, consider it, and take in its importance—whether they agree with us or not.

***Dialogue in Rhythm***

The musical principle we call on here is also called **Dialogue**—the interplay between two or more melody lines.



The key to successful musical dialogue is SPACE. Dialogue occurs when we play patterns of relatively few notes and leave room for others to play theirs. When we leave space, the clarity of the intertwining song can be heard.

Leaving space in the stream of talk is key to dialogue between people, and it's the same within a group, too.

## Facilitating Dialogue

The easiest and fastest way to facilitate dialogue is to say, "Turn to a neighbor and take a minute to share about \_\_\_\_\_," (i.e., a question that is relevant to your topic and purpose). Trios are fine to include odd numbers of people.

This is a simple, versatile, and powerful technique that can serve in almost any situation.

Why is it so powerful? Well, consider the opposite way to attempt to start dialogue: throwing a question out to the whole group like, "What do you think about \_\_\_\_?"

What usually happens? Awkward, energy-draining silence, right? When that first brave (or opinionated) person finally speaks, their statements inevitably define the scope, tone, and perspective of everything that comes afterward. Instead of a true dialogue, the discussion becomes reactions to those first statements.

***In contrast, having people start with conversations in pairs accomplishes a number of important functions:***

1. Overall energy goes up, as everyone is brought into participant mode. All voices are activated and valued.
2. Everyone's thinking on the topic evolves as they reflect on the questions and clarify their thinking by articulating their thoughts in words. People often discover new ideas and understandings as they speak.
3. Everyone gets practice listening in a focused conversation.
4. There's an explosion of new lines of thinking and inquiry in the room as each pair generates new ideas and understandings themselves. The collective intelligence in the room suddenly jumps, even before anything is shared with the whole group.

## *Timekeeping*

Engaging, productive conversations can happen in as little as two or three minutes. Announce when they've hit the halfway point so that both people get a turn. Give a 30-second warning at the end so they can wrap up their thoughts.

## *Debrief*

Call everyone's attention back to the big group. As they settle down, bring them back into "group consciousness" by recognizing them and



speaking to them **as a group entity**, not as individuals or pairs. For example, note the positive energy you felt in the room or the wide range of ideas you heard expressed.

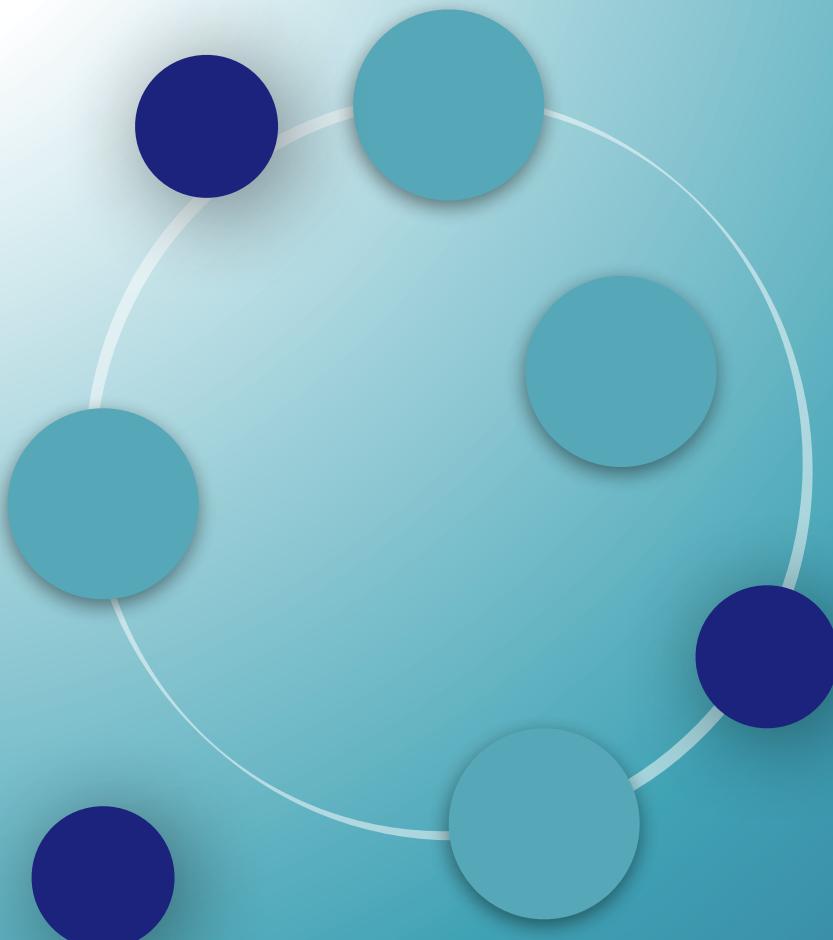
The next step is to help the large group learn more about what was generated in the pair conversations—for the super-organism of the group to learn from its constituent parts. However, unless your group is quite small, you won't have time to hear from everyone.

Luckily, it's not necessary. Simply ask for a few volunteer reports of "a highlight of your conversation." Even if they don't speak, this gets people

to further integrate their thoughts as they distill them into “highlights” in their minds.

When the whole group hears a lively assortment of “highlights,” they gain connecting points among the conversations that raise the group’s overall understanding of the topic. Capture these on flip chart paper, if possible, to create a visual representation of what emerged from the group. After this initial cross-fertilization of ideas, you can trust that further beneficial sharing of specific conversations will happen organically, both during your session and afterwards.

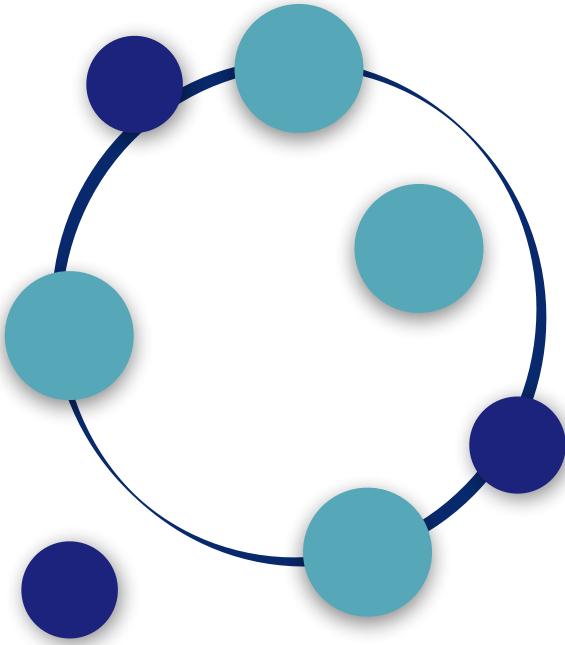
With this basic experience of listening and expressing in Dialogue, you’ve engaged participants in their own meaning-making process. From there, the group is ready to expand possibilities in the next phase: ***Exploration.***



# 4 EXPLORATION

*"When we open ourselves to exploring our  
creativity, we open ourselves to GOD:  
Good Orderly Direction"*

*— Julia Cameron*



## EXPERIMENT, STRETCH BOUNDARIES, PLAY

Once they're present, connected, and primed to listen and express, your group is ready to move into new territory, to go beyond what was previously known.

It's time to be creative, take some risks, and come up with something new. The rhythmic principle of ***Improvisation*** teaches us how to tap into the creative flow, building on emerging ideas, knowing just what to say or play next.

This is the **Exploration** phase, where you and the group really dive into the central message, thesis, or goals that form the purpose of your session. This phase is usually the longest segment of your program. It's where new meaning, understanding, and solutions emerge.

## ***Show the Map***

The earlier phases defined the territory of exploration, framed by the purpose of the session. The Exploration phase begins with participants learning their “map and compass”—your thesis, model, or framework for reaching the shared goal. In the discussions and activities that follow, participants work with the ideas—stretching, recombining, and applying them to their situation or objectives.

In our rhythm programs, this is where we introduce our wide variety of instruments and show how to create their full range of sounds. They evolve into playful percussion songs, playing drums, shakers, bells, and wood blocks. They explore how different sounds combine and bring forth their own rhythmic patterns.

## **New = Creative = Risk**

The Exploration phase is where “New” gets created: new music, new ideas, new perspectives, new ways of relating. You want to stimulate curiosity, challenge assumptions, think beyond old boundaries, and weave facts and ideas in new ways.

Your talk, activities, and discussion questions feed participants’ curiosity and delight their meaning-making minds. We humans love “New.”

At the same time, our animal brains are deeply programmed to be cautious about “New,” which is important to remember if your session aims to change, shift, expand, and transform people’s perspectives. When you



ask participants to do something they've never done before, speak outside of prior group consensus, or reveal a deeper truth about themselves, you're asking them to take a risk.

The key to making it easy for creativity to flow is to make it safe and easy for people to take the kinds of small risks they need to get the most out of your session. This gives lasting benefits beyond your program, as participants' "curiosity muscles" are strengthened by the process of learn—stretch—risk—succeed.

## ***Make it Safe and Easy***

The emotional climate you'll be working in is a huge factor in how your session will go. Though not entirely in your control, there are ways you can create conditions for healthy stretching, risk-taking, and growth.

### ***1. Know where you are.***

Groups who gather for meetings and learning sessions are generally in one of three emotional moods:

**Interested**—there by choice, invested in outcome. These are the audiences we all want!

**Disconnected**—maybe there by choice, maybe not. Either way, not fully engaged.

This mood sometimes presents a challenge in corporate training groups, for example, where some people are more interested in the subject than others.

**Discontent**—something is tense or not right in the group.

This climate appears when people meet to solve acute problems, iron out disagreements, or wrestle with big change and consequential decisions.

Even if your session is not directly related to “issues,” you could face an element of discontent if there are underlying problems in the group’s company or organization.

What you *don’t* want is to be surprised by a group’s mood when they walk in the door, if it’s not as upbeat as you’d hoped. Especially if your program pushes people out of their comfort zones, be sure to get a good sense of the group’s context and likely mood as part of your client research and planning discussions.

## ***2. Start with yourself***

As session leader, your own tone and demeanor have a big influence on the mood of the group as your session unfolds. In fact, the way you greet people as they enter can shift people from disconnected to interested or discontent to neutral.

Stay grounded in your own awareness of what's going on inside and outside of you, especially if you're dealing with a not-entirely-happy group. Breathe.

### 3. *Start with small wins*



When you first present an activity to participants, start with the simplest version of the task you can think of. This is especially important when you're asking them to do something they've never done before in front of their peers—like we do with drumming.

Starting at a level that “should be” very easy for everyone has these benefits:

- **Affirms individuals and creates shared group win.**
- **Lets you calibrate overall group skill and identify any outlier participants.**
- **Helps those for whom it wasn't quite so easy to get on board.**
- **Helps you draw out and highlight the most basic essence of the activity—often where the biggest lessons lie.**

## 4. *Keep it light and playful*

Laughter is definitely an ingredient in a healthy climate for Exploration. Brainstorming rules apply: encourage participants to refrain from judgment and evaluation, and turn “yes, but” reactions into “yes, and” co-creativity.

## 5. *Affirm and link*

As the session leader with your eye on the whole, you can see significance and linkages among different comments that participants can't. Highlighting and reflecting those observations back to the group elevates the level of discussion, and it is one of your most powerful facilitation tools.

## 6. *Focus on what works*

Creativity thrives when mixed results are expected without judgment. Some things work out, some don't. In the creative

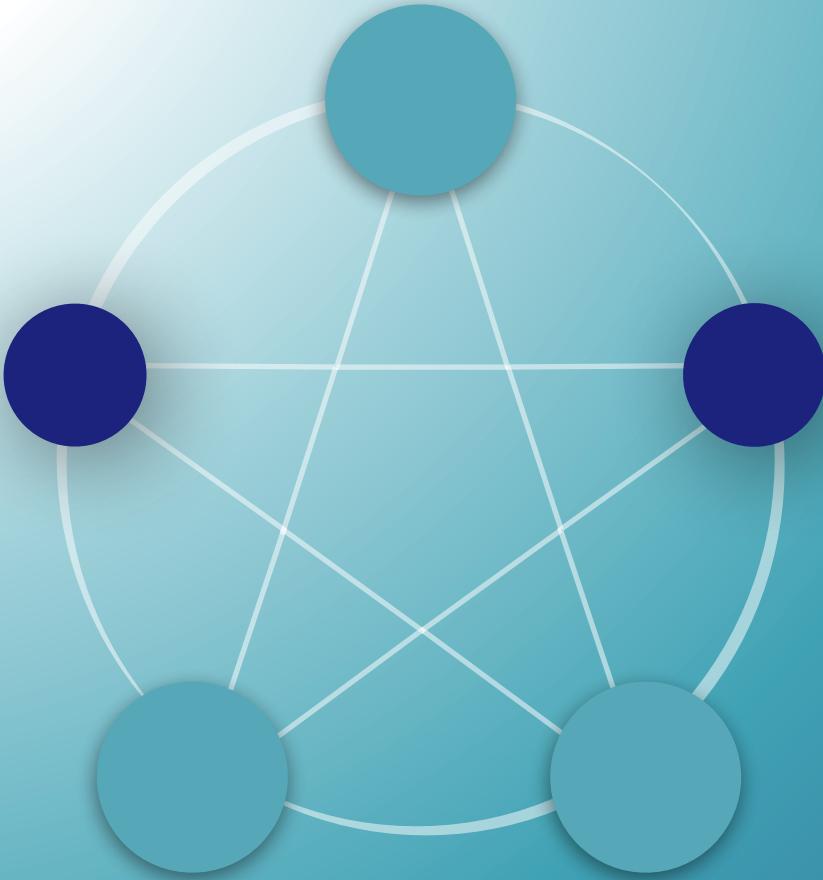


process, we learn from all of it. “There are no mistakes,” as we sometimes say.

Though you may be used to working in this type of accepting mindset, remember that may not be

true for all of your participants. Whether due to high-judgment conditions at work or growing up at home, anxiety about “not doing it right” is a common affliction. Watch for ways to appreciate “mistakes” as pointers toward what does work.

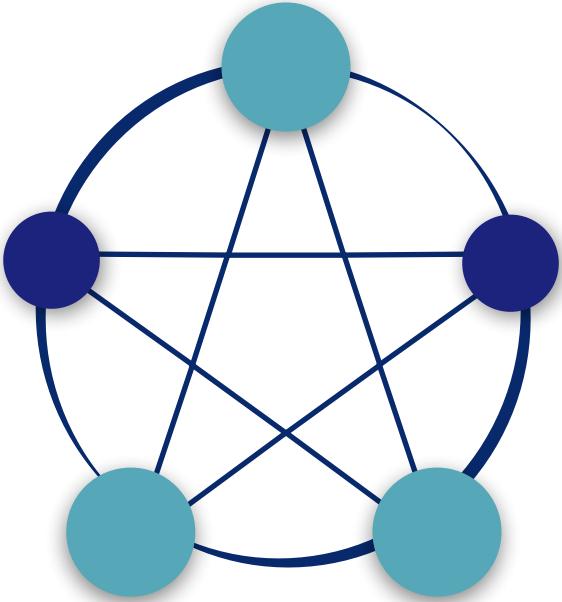
Now that participants have explored your message, or possibilities for their goals, it’s time for a united, culminating experience in the **Performance** phase.



# 5 PERFORMANCE

*"Great achievements are the results of great expectations. You will see it happen only when you believe it will happen."*

*— Unknown*



## MAKE THINGS HAPPEN!

The **Performance** stage is where you summon your talents and confidence and pull it all together for the best possible result.

In this final phase, you and your participants make things happen that have never happened before. They operate at a higher level, where they apply their learnings and create momentum to take them forward.

### ***Ensemble and Groove***

Here we work with two musical principles: ***Ensemble*** and ***Groove***. In an Ensemble, each individual plays his or her part, knowing how it contributes to the best possible group song.

**Groove** is that sense of feeling connected as One—with one's instrument, with other players, and with the whole song as it emerges. The state of Groove is the state of Flow, where what is happening has its own positive momentum that carries the music beyond where anyone could have guessed. Individuals' playing skills rise effortlessly to a higher level. They hear nuance and complexity in the music that they didn't hear before.



It's as if the group song pulls the music out of them, as long as they stay open to the improvisational flow.

When a musical group reaches Groove, everyone's job gets very simple: just let it keep happening! Stay open and present to being In the Flow. Stay dedicated to serving Groove and Group.

In your business presentation or training program, the state of Groove shows up as your participants work fluently with your material to develop new insights and solutions. There is a sense of "we're going somewhere" momentum. "Ah-ha!" moments naturally emerge.

## ***Pulling It All Together***

In stage 5, participants gather what they've learned from exploring and experimenting with your concepts and create a practical outcome that will make their lives better in some way.



If your group is a work team, their focus will be to help their collective future. If your participants will mostly disperse back to their individual lives, the outcome focus will be on personal shifts.

For some audiences, both apply.

For example, conference groups have shared interests during the conference; if your program enhances their sense of familiarity and “groupness,” you’ll help boost the quality of connections they make following your session. For the most part, though, conference attendees return to their individual lives, so your “Take Home” points need personal applicability.

## ***Performance = Focus + Trust***

Whereas the Exploration phase highlights the wide range of possibilities, the Performance stage calls for focus and choice to apply the new concepts and skills in ways that matter.

In our rhythm programs, participants take everything learned in the Exploration phase and choose the instrument and pattern to play in our final group song.

In a business presentation, participants can apply your principles to real-world situations in their own lives. In doing so, they prove their basic

skill and facility with your concepts or model. They show themselves the relevance and usefulness to their own lives.

In a team situation, this is the time to focus on specific solutions and action steps. It usually works best to break them into smaller subgroups to discuss different aspects of their goal and generate recommendations to bring back to the whole group.

## ***It's Showtime***

Once everyone knows how they are going to contribute in your session's "final performance," you're ready for Showtime. This is where you

and your participants bring their best in a special Moment to produce something beyond what has existed before.



In our rhythm programs, we have a number of ways of creating culminating musical experiences. Sometimes it's an actual performance, where instrument subgroups learn parts and play together as a final ensemble.

More often, we guide participants into a rocking drum circle groove, where their own unique rhythm song emerges from what they play as

individuals. The whole is truly greater than the sum of the parts. Everyone feels part of something bigger.

As participants experience this real-time creation, all that matters is to stay focused, do their best, and trust—in themselves and their co-participants

## ***Each Performance is Unique***

The culminating “Performance” phase in your business program will, of course, be unique to your context, purpose, and format. Whether you’re speaking to an audience, teaching a workshop, or leading a business meeting, here are three general approaches to designing the final stage of your program.

### ***1. Group performance***

Call for an actual “performance” by the group or subgroups, such as presenting their synthesized findings about your topic or a portion of it.

### ***2. “Performance” by you***

Bring out your inner storyteller with a compelling narrative that helps participants reflect on what they’ve learned, and embrace the power of your message with determination and commitment.

### *3. Personal applications & sharing*

Invite participants to reflect on their biggest learnings and synthesize their new understandings and desired shifts. Using a sharing method that fits your group size and program, facilitate participants' "group song" from their expressed appreciations and commitments to action.

However you orchestrate this final phase of your session, help your participants leave with:

- a) knowing they're in a different place than where they started, with new understanding and outlook, and**
- b) appreciation for themselves, each other, and their capabilities going forward.**

Whatever your subject matter and program format, by this ending "performance," you've guided your participants through a profound transformation. They started as separate individuals, not knowing what your message could do for them. By bringing them to the present, connecting them as a group, facilitating interactive dialogue, encouraging creativity, and calling forth their focus and commitment, they leave your session with more awareness, understanding, and capability.

**Congratulations, you've expanded your own  
Rhythms of Influence!**

# ABOUT US

**Mary Tolena** and **Ju (Juliana) Linares** have brought the power of rhythm and drumming to thousands of participants in business, learning, and community settings. Their lively, interactive programs unlock the potential of groups and teams by building communication, collaboration, and shared commitment.



Coming from very different backgrounds, Mary and Ju met in 2006 at a training camp for drum circle facilitators led by pioneer teacher, Arthur Hull. Mary had 25 years' experience in executive management, experiential education, and organizational development, and had a lifelong passion for helping groups evolve and thrive.



**Ju** was an accomplished percussionist, music educator, and all-around joy-creator who had moved to the U.S. from her native Brazil. Mary and Ju formed a creative partnership to explore, expand, and hone the art of uniting groups with rhythm. The result was their five-step group development methodology that forms the basis of ***Rhythms of Influence***.

After several years of nomadic travel, **Mary** found her home base in Patagonia, Arizona, where she is creating **TerraSol**, a community & music events center featuring programs for wellness, personal growth, and musical expression. She helps drum circle facilitators world-wide with online business development courses and consulting.

Ju returned to São Paulo to form **Ritmo Expansão**, inspiring participants from Brazil's leading companies and organizations with interactive keynotes and teambuilding programs. Ju spoke about entrepreneurship on a TEDx stage 2014, and completed an MBA program in Developing Human Potential in 2017.

# Engage your Group Unite your Team

*with a rhythm program designed just for you*

Help your team get more connected, focused, and committed.

Boost your meeting group's energy, collaboration and results.

Starting with the principles of *Rhythms of Influence*, Mary and Ju add elements from leadership development, experiential education, and music facilitation to create a powerful learning experience for your group. Visit our websites to learn more!

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