Please help me with a structure/script/marketing materials for this idea I’ve had for a group meditation.

The core idea: psychodynamic psychotherapy is based on the idea that familiar relationship dynamics will attempt to be enacted in the therapeutic relationship. This enactment can be broken down into “behaviours” engaged in by each party. Those “behaviours” are motivated by an emotion or instinct, to avoid some pain or seek some pleasure. The emotion or instinct is informed by transference and countertransference – the assumptions each party unconsciously makes about what the other person’s behaviour means, and the outcomes of their own behaviour. Psychodynamic psychotherapy attempts to talk about rather than enact these underlying drivers. This involves some level of “let’s notice what is underlying our experience and instead of treating it as true and acting on it, sit with it and wonder what it means”. The goal for this meditation is to give a group of people even a moment’s experience of slowing down, noticing what they believe they “know” about the behaviour of others or the outcome of their own behaviour. To slow down and wonder, to be able to listen to a person without assuming they understand, to not respond on autopilot and instead to allow themselves enough questioning and curiosity (from a place of not knowing) to tap into their reverie. Let’s keep it experiential. I’m not here to give them a lecture on jargon that they need to remember. I need them to slow down, look inwards, and make space for questioning what they think they know.

I can only really create content based on my experience. I value the breadth of your knowledge base. If you can enhance my content with information you have gained from psychodynamic materials, particularly about relatable ways a person might recreate previous relational dynamics unintentionally through their “knowing” causing them to act in ways which elicits behaviour from others, due to the “knowing” of the others?

The structure I was thinking was:

- joint articulation and somatic awareness (can make up new phrases or pull from the butterfly practice) to get people to slow down and notice what’s in their body

- while they are in this state, pose some questions to them. Perhaps get them to imagine themselves in various social scenarios and ask them to imagine what they are feeling, what their mind is telling them they know about the scenario, and how that influences what they do. Some examples are – what do you do when a group needs a leader, assume no one will volunteer and so immediately volunteer yourself, or assume someone will volunteer and so not bother? When you need to pair up with a partner, do you look for someone you know well? Someone who looks fun? Someone who looks out of place? Do you seek someone out proactively, does that feel like you are showing someone a positive interest? Or do you wait for someone to seek you out, wanting to avoid showing a preference that might be unwelcome? When you put a boundary in place, do you want someone to care enough to push past it? Or do you need it to be respected? When someone else puts a boundary in place, do you imagine that they are conflicted and really need to be shown that you care, or do you imagine that they are completely certain of the boundary? How do you feel about compliments? Do you take them, avoid them, seek them out? How do you feel about criticism? Do you take it, discount it, avoid it? Do you think it comes from a place of wanting to help you, or wanting to tear you down? Do you think it makes the relationship stronger or weaker? Can the relationship survive it? When you want to cultivate a relationship with someone, do you worry more about putting them off by coming on too strong, or about making them feel unwanted by coming off as too aloof? Does it feel like a good thing for people to pay attention to you, or does it feel threatening?

Some of this, particularly the quotes, might be better suited as an intro, before the somatic awareness. Can you advise on this?

After these questions posed to them after being in the somatic awareness state, I was thinking I might talk a bit about listening with solutions in mind, and then ask them to pair up and practice reverie listening (I don’t think we can reliably differentiate between reverie which is based on a “knowing” or heuristic and one which is based on subtle right brain communication – unless you know of a way, perhaps we could pose it to them that they can only slow down and wonder about what their mind is telling them, how it is filling in the blanks. Tell them that humans existed as social creatures before our rationalising cortex, so we have the neural equipment to read each other in reciprocal ways).

Here is some more stream-of consciousness brain dump.

The Practice of Not-Knowing: Escaping the Echoing Cycle of Relational Guardrails

the impact of mental models:

"The day you teach the child the name of the bird, the child will never see that bird again" - Jiddu Krishnamurti

when we see something for the first time, we are open to taking in everything about it. We don’t fill in any gaps, because we don’t know how to. We are completely in the dark. Over time, though, we develop ideas about how things will go. We fill the gaps in. This can be helpful as it can save time in understanding and acting.

However, when we use pre-existing knowledge or frameworks to speed up the process of perception and action, it is as though we are moving so fast that we start to glide, and our feet leave the ground. What this means is that if we are not going through the slow and unsure process of looking at something with the detail that we would if it were new, we are not taking in those details from reality. Reality may coincide with our expectations, or it may not, but we also probably won’t notice if it doesn’t.

our mental models separate us from reality. Our minds seek to reduce uncertainty by both altering our perceptions to be in line with our mental models, and subtly interacting with our environment to go down familiar paths.

Our minds really don’t like uncertainty. Our minds often prefer the worst possible option over not knowing what will happen. Have you ever taken a test, or a job interview, or reached out socially to someone, or had any sort of hope for an outcome that is uncertain, and in the period of uncertainty, tried to convince yourself that you have failed, or are rejected?

We each subtly influence each other in ways that are hard to define, or to trace to their origin, but can be felt in our body. Someone might make you laugh no matter what they say. Someone might make you cringe or feel uncomfortable. Someone might make you feel like you are walking on eggshells. Someone might feel really interesting, no matter what they are doing. Someone might feel easy, someone might feel difficult. Someone’s interest might feel creepy, someone else’s might feel flattering. Someone’s disinterest might feel mysterious, or hurtful, or inconsequential. Someone might walk into a room and command attention. Someone might walk into a room and disappear.

based on your interpersonal experience, what are your worst fears? (mine are that I might take advantage of someone, as I am a 6'3" 110kg white male it could happen without me knowing it, and also that I might be talked about in a judgemental way). How do you act to minimise those fears, or to most pre-emptively reduce their likelihood? (I try to make myself smaller and not noticeable, and am hypervigilant to signs a person is pulling away from me). We might try to foreclose this fear with our perception (hypervigilance) or our behaviour. What else could this motivated perception and behaviour be costing us? let's take our developed subtle awareness from the joint articulation and somatic awareness and apply it to our interactions. When do we step in to talk? how forceful is our language? when do we create silence, when do we fill it? what do we invite the other person to do? how to we accommodate or push them? what do we guide them away from, or towards? what do we expect them to think about each of our idiosyncratic social behaviours, and how does this influence our subsequent behaviours? what do we expect others to be thinking about us on a general level? what social situations or relationships do we know how to handle, or feel safe or certain in? what social situations or relationships would have us wondering what to do, doubting the other person, worried that we might miss something or not anticipate something? even unpleasant feelings or situations can feel preferable to uncertainty because it gives us a sense of control and predictability. what do we tell ourselves or do, not because it feels good, but because that is what we know? what else could we do, if we were not tied to comfort and predictability?

"When you meet someone new, what do you find yourself trying to prove or disprove about yourself?"

* "Think of a relationship where you feel most 'yourself' - what makes that possible? What expectations do you sense are different there?"
* "Can you recall a time when someone responded differently than you expected? What happened in your body in that moment?"
* "What beliefs about relationships did you inherit from your family that you've never questioned?"
* "How might you behave differently if you were certain the other person would stay connected no matter what?"

validation:

\* feelings are not problems. harm done to a person and how they feel about it are two separate things. look at roller coasters or sad movies/music/poetry - people are ok with the experience of fear or sadness if it doesn't come with personal harm

\* since the two occur together it can be easy to treat them as the same - I'm sorry you are sad rather than I'm sorry you have been hurt. How can we get rid of this sadness rather than how can I show you that you aren't alone in this experience

\* feelings by themselves do not harm a person, but a person can experience feelings as overwhelming or burdensome. how does this happen?

\* let's look at babies and children, everything is new, and when every hurt is new, they have no context to know whether they can get through this, whether it will last forever. but childhood is not always traumatic. why is this? it's because of how their emotions and received in their relationships. when they experience an overwhelming emotion and their caregiver allows them to feel the emotion, doesn't treat them as though the emotion is overwhelming to them, unwelcome by them, scary or burdensome to them, the child picks up on the sense that "this is ok", and starts to internalise it.

\* when a child is treated as though their emotion is not ok, not welcome, scary or overwhelming or burdensome to other people, suddenly the child is dealing with both the original hurt, the isolation and rejection, and the internal battle with their own genuine reactions. that is overwhelming. that creates a sense in the child that this emotion is not ok, and creates a pressure to fix or get rid of the emotion

\* when we respond to a person's expression of an emotion with an attempt to "fix the problem", sometimes this is what the person wants or needs or finds helpful. but often it can be taken as a repeat of an early experience which feels like "I can't tolerate your distress and I need to get rid of it". when we jump to solutions, we aren't saying to this person "your feelings are welcome, I can tolerate them, I can stay connected to you through this experience", we are saying "this emotion does need fixing, I can't be with you in it, I need to live in a version of reality where there is a solution to this". This leads to things like suggesting a B vitamin to someone who opens up about postnatal depression.

\* so, how do we respond? we need to accomplish two things: I understand how you are feeling, and how you are feeling is something I can tolerate

\* We can do this by reflecting back our understanding of what the person is trying to say (which also helps us clarify any misunderstandings), and expressing how this feeling makes sense to us, without moving to get rid of it.

\* imagine if you were trying to share your joy over a personal success, and instead of celebrating with you with something like "wow that is great, I can see this means a lot to you", you are met with a suggestion, like "have you tried X?". clearly this is misplaced and you are just looking for someone to share in your experience. the same is true for distressing experiences, even when we have internalised a drive to fix distress and may consciously be looking for a solution.

\* linking this to our exploration of mental models of relationships – how have you been taught to respond to distress? Your own or someone else’s? How do you expect people to respond to your distress? How do these expectations influence your behaviour? What are you preventing, and what are you sacrificing?

\* Bion said “the purest form of listening is to listen without memory or desire” (nothing which motivates us to separate from reality)

\* reverie based-listening exercise: find a partner and discuss a recent event that had an emotional impact (no deep trauma). notice your instincts to manage the interaction, and try to create a space between the impulse and acting on the impulse. As you listen to the words, try to notice yourself filling in the gaps with your own expectations or experience. When this happens, deliberately adopt a stance of not knowing. For example, if your partner talks about their car breaking down, instead of calling on your own knowledge of cars or your own experience of having a car break down, you might instead ask “what happened? What was that like for you? What were you experiencing?”. Our goal lies within us – we want to fully understand the experience of the other person, through as minimal filters as we can. We don’t want to make suggestions, or reframes, or assumptions. What was going through your mind? What were you feeling? How is your partner, themselves, relating to their experience? Are they managing the interaction? What are they inviting from you? What are they leading you away from? How is what they are saying making you feel? How is the way they are saying it responding to your own unconscious rules for interaction?

Here is the text I am showing on an Instagram reel as the marketing material. I believe we need more to indicate that this will be on a wooden floor with optional rubber mats, so people don’t come along expecting a conference room wearing a business suit.

- "The Art of Not-Knowing: Escaping the Echoing Cycle of Relational Guardrails " "A group experience with David O'Donohue, Clinical Psychologist"

- "Your task is not to seek for love, but merely to seek and find all the barriers within yourself that you have built against it." —Rumi

- 1)Have you noticed a familiar pattern or role repeating in your relationships? 2)A way of being that feels inescapable or pre-destined?

- 1)Our subtle efforts to know, predict, and control may have downstream effects. 2)Invisible barriers that constrain our experience

- 1)How does your way of being influence your relationships? 2) How do you respond to the influence of others? 3) How does your mind keep you on a familiar track?

- Join us to become curious about the invisible guardrails shaping our experience

- Together, let’s explore what we find when we meet reality as it is, unfiltered by the pull to be certain about what we might find

- April 10th, 7:30pm at Praksis, 15 Provan Street, Campbell. Details in description

Rough plan/script:

# The Art of Not-Knowing: Escaping the Echoing Cycle of Relational Guardrails

## Opening & Setting the Frame (10-15 minutes)

[As people arrive, soft ambient music plays. Room is set with mats in a circle]

Welcome

Welcome everyone. I invite you to find a comfortable position, either sitting on your mat or on the floor. Take a moment to settle in, adjusting your posture so that you feel both comfortable and alert.

I want to begin by thanking you for showing up today—not just physically being here, but for being willing to engage with something that might feel unfamiliar or uncertain. That willingness is at the heart of what we'll be exploring together.

Introduction to the Concept

Today we're exploring what I call "The Practice of Not-Knowing." This practice is about creating a pause between our habitual patterns of perceiving and responding to each other, and discovering what might emerge in that space.

Jiddu Krishnamurti once said, "The day you teach the child the name of the bird, the child will never see that bird again."

Think about that for a moment. When we first encounter something—or someone—we're open to taking in everything about it, without preconceptions. We don't fill in any gaps, because we don't know how to. But over time, we develop ideas about how things and people will be. We start to believe we know what will happen, how others will respond, what their actions mean. And in that knowing, paradoxically, we may stop truly seeing.

Our minds create shortcuts—mental models or frameworks—that help us navigate the complexity of human interaction. These models can be useful, but they can also separate us from the reality before us.

It's like driving to a familiar location. Have you ever had the experience of getting in your car intending to go somewhere new, but then finding yourself arriving at your workplace or home instead? During that drive, your mind disconnected from the present reality. You don't remember the turns you made or what you saw along the way. Your "knowing" of the route was so strong that it overrode your actual intention.

In relationships, something similar happens, but with a critical difference. Unlike physical locations, people respond to our subtle cues—cues that emerge directly from our "knowing." Our expectations actively shape our behavior in ways we're not conscious of, which then influences others to respond in ways that confirm our expectations.

For example, if we "know" that showing vulnerability leads to rejection, we'll subtly hold back, creating distance that the other person feels and responds to with their own distance—confirming our original belief. It's not a coincidence; it's a direct causal chain that begins with our "knowing."

These mental models form what I call "guardrails" in our relationships. We carry certain wants and fears, and develop strategies for getting what we want and avoiding what we fear. These strategies are based not on the present moment, but on what we think we already know about what we like, what we can't handle, and what leads us toward or away from these things.

The guardrails constrain us because when we're responding to a partially imagined social situation rather than what's actually happening, we can't really break free. Unlike that moment of "waking up" on the wrong driving route, in relationships we rarely have that moment of clarity because the other person's responses have been influenced by our expectations, keeping us locked in familiar patterns.

Today, we're practicing keeping our feet on the ground. Staying with the uncertainty of not immediately knowing. Being curious about what's actually here, rather than what we expect to find.

What to Expect

Our practice today has several components:

First, we'll begin with an embodied awareness practice to help us slow down and connect with our bodies.

Then, from this more grounded state, we'll explore some reflective questions about our relational patterns.

I'll share a few thoughts about how our mental models shape our interactions.

Finally, we'll pair up for a listening practice where we can experiment with a different way of being with each other.

There's no right or wrong way to experience any of this. I simply invite you to approach everything with curiosity, noticing what arises for you without judgment.

Let's begin.

## Embodied Awareness Practice (15-20 minutes)

We'll begin with some joint articulation to help you connect with your body, and then move into a more open somatic awareness practice.

I invite you now to close your eyes if that feels comfortable, or simply soften your gaze.

Begin by taking three deep breaths—inhaling fully, and then releasing completely.

[Pause]

Now allow your breath to find its natural rhythm. No need to control or change it in any way. Simply notice the sensation of breathing.

[Pause]

Bring your awareness to the places where your body makes contact with the floor or your mat. Feel the support beneath you. Notice how your body is held, supported by the earth.

[Pause]

[Note: I'll guide the joint articulation in the moment, moving through different parts of the body and inviting gentle movement and awareness.]

Now, with this awakened body awareness, I invite you to shift into a more receptive, exploratory state. Rather than following my guidance, simply notice what draws your attention in your body.

Perhaps you notice areas of warmth, or coolness. Areas of comfort, or discomfort. Regions that feel heavy, or light. Sensations of tingling, pulsing, or stillness.

[Pause]

As you rest here, I invite you to notice the quality of your awareness itself. Is it focused and narrow, or diffuse and spacious? Is it moving around or relatively stable? There's no right or wrong here—simply noticing.

[Pause]

In this state of embodied awareness, we're now going to explore some reflective questions about our relational patterns. You don't need to analyze or figure anything out—just notice what arises in your body and mind as I pose these questions.

## Guided Reflection on Relational Patterns (20 minutes)

Before we begin, I want to emphasize something important: When we explore these questions, remember that our reactions and feelings in social situations are often based not on what's actually happening, but on what we "know" will happen. The more certain we are about what a situation means, the more likely we're responding to an imagined reality rather than what's directly in front of us.

As we go through these reflections, try to notice not just how you feel or behave, but the underlying "knowing" that drives your experience—the assumptions and predictions your mind makes automatically.

Keeping your eyes closed or your gaze soft, I'd like you to first think about other people in your life.

[Pause]

Think of someone who puts you at ease, someone you feel comfortable with without really knowing why. What is it about their presence that creates this feeling? What might they believe about themselves, about others, or about relationships that shapes how they interact with you? What might they be seeking or trying to avoid through their way of being? Are they getting what they want? Are they getting what they expect?

[Pause]

Now think of someone who puts you on edge or makes you feel uncomfortable, even if you can't quite explain why. What subtle cues might you be picking up from them? What might they believe about themselves or about relationships that creates this dynamic? What are they afraid might happen if they behave differently? How might their expectations be shaping both their behavior and yours?

[Pause]

Think of someone who always seems to need help or support, regardless of the situation. What might they believe about themselves—perhaps that they're incapable or that vulnerability is the only way to connect? What might they believe about others—perhaps that people will only stay if they're needed? How do these beliefs manifest in specific behaviors that influence how you respond to them?

[Pause]

Now think of someone who always seems confident or in control. What might they believe would happen if they showed uncertainty or vulnerability? What "knowing" about relationships—perhaps that weakness invites attack or that control ensures safety—might be guiding their specific behaviors? How do these behaviors influence how people respond to them?

[Pause]

As you reflect on these different people, notice how their ways of being might stem from what they're seeking or trying to avoid—their own invisible guardrails shaped by what they think they "know" about how to be in relationships.

[Pause]

Now, let's turn our attention to your own patterns. When you enter a room full of people, what do you typically do? Do you scan for familiar faces? Look for someone who seems to need connection? Find a quiet corner?

[Pause]

More importantly, what is the "knowing" behind this pattern? What do you believe would happen if you did something different? What are you trying to get or avoid through this habitual approach?

[Pause]

When someone pays attention to you, how does that feel in your body? Does it feel warming and pleasant? Threatening? Neutral? What story does your mind tell about what their attention means about you or their intentions?

[Pause]

When you need to collaborate with others, what role do you typically take? Do you lead? Support? Mediate? Challenge? What do you "know" would happen if you took a different role?

[Pause]

When someone puts a boundary in place with you, how do you typically respond? Do you respect it immediately? Test it gently? Push against it? Feel rejected? What does your mind tell you their boundary means about you or the relationship?

[Pause]

When you set a boundary with someone else, what do you expect from them? Do you expect them to respect it completely? To care enough to try to understand? To push past it? What does your mind tell you their response means?

[Pause]

When you receive a compliment, how does your body respond? Do you take it in? Deflect it? Feel uncomfortable? Crave more? What "knowing" about yourself or others makes you respond this way?

[Pause]

When you receive criticism, even gentle feedback, how does your body respond? Do you defend? Withdraw? Become curious? Feel shame? What do you believe criticism means about you or the relationship?

[Pause]

Now, in this embodied state of awareness, I invite you to notice: What core beliefs or "knowings" about relationships might be underneath these patterns? What were you taught, explicitly or implicitly, about how relationships work? About what you need to do to be accepted, to be safe, to be loved?

[Pause]

And finally, ask yourself: What might be possible if I held these "knowings" more lightly? If I approached my interactions with more curiosity and fewer certainties? How might my experience change if I stepped outside these invisible guardrails, even momentarily?

[Pause]

Gradually bring your awareness back to the room, to your breath, to the sensations in your body. When you're ready, you can open your eyes or lift your gaze.

## Brief Teaching on Relational Dynamics (10 minutes)

What we've just explored touches on something fundamental about human experience. Our minds really don't like uncertainty. In fact, research suggests our brains often prefer a negative certainty over an uncertain outcome. Have you ever found yourself catastrophizing about an exam result or a job interview, convincing yourself you've failed even before you know the outcome? That's this principle at work.

This relates to another common misconception—that positive thinking is the antidote to negative thinking. But both positive and negative thinking are forms of self-delusion seeking certainty where none exists. Both pull us away from reality. Positive thinking can sometimes fail against negative thinking because negative thinking is often fueled by fear, which is a powerful motivator.

A different approach might be: "I don't actually know how this will turn out. I am scared of how it might go. It's okay for me to not know, and it's okay for me to be scared. I'm not going to tell myself I will fail. I'm not going to tell myself I will succeed. I will give myself the kindness to stay in this moment of uncertainty, and to stay with reality as I watch it unfold."

We each carry mental models of how relationships work—models we've built from our earliest experiences. These models are like invisible guardrails that shape how we interact, what we expect, what we notice, and what we miss.

They shape not just our conscious choices, but the subtle, unconscious ways we influence each other—through tone, posture, micro-expressions, timing, and a thousand other invisible cues.

What's remarkable is how often we unconsciously encourage others to behave exactly as we expect them to. Let me give you some examples:

* If you believe people will eventually reject you, you might hold back parts of yourself or subtly test them, creating a guarded quality in your interactions that actually makes connection more difficult.
* If you believe you need to be the caretaker in relationships, you might quickly jump in to help others, inadvertently signaling that you don't see them as capable, which can lead them to act less capable around you.
* If you believe conflict means the end of a relationship, you might become anxious at the first sign of disagreement, sending signals of distress that either escalate the situation or train others to avoid honest communication with you—which often leads to them silently resenting you, potentially avoiding you, or conflict erupting more intensely when it finally does surface.

These aren't conscious strategies—they're the natural result of responding to what we "know" rather than what's actually happening. And they create self-reinforcing cycles that keep us trapped in our familiar patterns.

I've observed this in my work as well: when clients only talk about things they know, not a lot of progress is made. Clients make more progress when they reflect on things they don't know, when they experience things without knowing where it will lead.

Interestingly, research shows that therapist outcomes are often negatively correlated with years of experience. One reason might be that the more experienced we become, the more we rely on what we "know." If we go from hearing about anxiety to immediately recommending breathing exercises or a specific technique, we never explore what the anxiety is actually about or what caused it. The "knowing" of what works can prevent an exploration of what is actually there.

The psychoanalyst Wilfred Bion said something profound about this. He said, "the purest form of listening is to listen without memory or desire."

Think about that. To listen without memory—without imposing our past experiences, our categories, our interpretations. And to listen without desire—without needing the other person to be a certain way, without needing to fix or change or control the interaction.

This kind of listening—what some call "reverie listening"—creates space for something new to emerge. It's not about abandoning all we know, but about holding what we think we know more lightly, creating space for surprise, for discovery.

This brings me to something important about emotions. One reason we often rush to "fix" someone's emotional state is that we've been conditioned to see emotions themselves as problems. But feelings aren't problems—harm and feelings about harm are two separate things.

Think about roller coasters or sad movies or emotional music—people willingly seek out these emotional experiences because the feelings themselves aren't harmful when they don't come with actual threat or danger.

When we respond to someone's emotions by immediately trying to solve or fix or change them, we're unintentionally sending the message that their feelings are not okay, that they need fixing. This often happens because that's how our own emotions were treated—as problems to be solved rather than experiences to be felt and shared.

True emotional healing happens not when our feelings are fixed, but when they're welcomed and held—with compassion, without shame, without trying to control them—when we experience that our emotions don't overwhelm others, don't drive them away, don't require immediate resolution. When we're met with this kind of presence, we gradually internalize that our feelings are manageable, meaningful, and worthy of attention.

This isn't just about listening to others. It's about listening to ourselves too—to the subtle cues from our bodies, to the quiet voices that get drowned out by our certainties, to the possibilities that exist beyond our familiar guardrails.

When we hold our "knowing" more lightly, we can connect more with what is actually happening in the moment. And what is actually happening in the moment may not be what we expect. We may pick up on things from the other person that we otherwise wouldn't notice. We may even pick up on an internal sense we get from the other person that would be inaccessible if we remained focused on what we think we know and what it means we should do, rather than trying to take in what is present right now.

## Paired Listening Practice (25-30 minutes)

Now we're going to explore this directly through a paired listening practice.

In a moment, I'll ask you to find a partner. You'll take turns speaking and listening. Each person will have about 10 minutes to share about a recent event that had some emotional impact for you—not a deeply traumatic experience, but something that stirred genuine feelings that you're comfortable exploring in this setting.

When you're the listener, your practice is this:

Notice your impulses to manage the interaction—to ask questions, to share similar experiences, to reassure, to fix, to guide the conversation in a particular direction.

Create a space between these impulses and acting on them. You might simply note to yourself, "Ah, there's an impulse to reassure" or "I notice I want to share my similar experience."

Instead of following these impulses, practice listening with what Bion called "without memory or desire." Be curious about the other person's unique experience, without needing to categorize it or connect it to your own experience.

Notice when your mind is filling in gaps with assumptions, and gently bring yourself back to curiosity, to not-knowing.

Pay attention to what happens in this deliberately slowed-down exchange. What do you notice about your partner that you might typically miss? What do you notice about your own internal responses? How does it feel to listen and speak with this quality of presence?

When you're the speaker, simply share your experience as it was for you. You don't need to make it interesting or meaningful or coherent. Just share what happened and how it was for you—the thoughts, feelings, sensations, and any meaning it held.

Let's take a moment to find partners.

[Give time for people to pair up]

Decide who will speak first and who will listen. The first speaker will have about 10 minutes, and then I'll let you know when to switch roles.

Remember, this isn't about doing it perfectly. It's about noticing your patterns and practicing something different—a stance of curiosity and not-knowing.

You can begin now.

[After 10 minutes]

Please begin to bring your sharing to a close. Take a moment to notice how you're feeling in your body right now.

[Brief pause]

Now we'll switch roles. The listeners will become speakers, and the speakers will become listeners. You'll have about 10 minutes for this sharing. You can begin whenever you're ready.

[After 10 minutes]

Please begin to bring your sharing to a close. Take a moment to thank your partner for listening and for sharing.

[Brief pause]

I invite you to return to the larger circle now.

## Group Reflection & Closing (15 minutes)

As we come back together, I'm curious about your experience. What did you notice in this practice?

[Open discussion, with prompts as needed:]

* What was it like to listen without trying to manage the interaction?
* Did you notice any habitual patterns in how you listen or share?
* What was it like to be listened to in this way?
* Did anything surprise you about your own experience?
* Did you pick up on anything from your partner that you might not have noticed in a more normal conversation?
* How did it feel to deliberately slow down the exchange?

[After discussion]

As we bring our session to a close, I invite you to consider what you might carry forward from this practice. Perhaps it's a curiosity about your relational patterns. Perhaps it's a commitment to creating more space between impulse and action. Perhaps it's an intention to listen more often without memory or desire.

Whatever it is, I invite you to hold it lightly—not as another "should" or expectation, but as an invitation to continued exploration.

Let's close with a brief moment of silence, feeling the connection we've created through our shared practice.

[Pause]

Thank you for your presence, your courage, and your willingness to explore the practice of not-knowing. May we all continue to discover what becomes possible when we meet each other and ourselves with fresh eyes.