

Welcome to *My 2 Cents*
by Creative Action Marketing, LLC
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Sometimes people or books become part of our business and personal world. Time with them is interesting, sometimes intense, and always worthwhile. Such was my revisit to [The World Café](#) by Juanita Brown with David Isaacs and the World Café Community.

My goal here is to introduce the World Café concept and its basic principles. At the end I'll add a couple of items I consider ideas to ponder. The World Café is about creating business or social value by addressing meaningful topics/questions among vested participants. It is one way that many organizations are using to connect to their employees/constituents, partners and/or customers. It is a powerful tool for growth and change in this new economy. So, if this intro piques your curiosity, please, at a minimum, find the book and read the Foreword, Chapter 12, and the Epilogue. If time is at a premium, explore The World Café website (Link listed below).

The World Café is a guide for meaningful conversations to gain/share knowledge and generate actionable insights. In some form or another these types of conversations have been integral to how people historically solved issues. In New England it is the premise for our town meetings. Interesting examples abound throughout the book:

- HP used it to reduce plant accident risks and brought their accident rate down by more than 50%.
- Saudi Aramco used it to create more cohesion throughout their various entities and developed comprehensive business plans.
- The government/community organizations in Singapore used it to build strategies and action plans to take their small nation from its traditional model into a more entrepreneurial society.

Most recently World Café sessions have been delivered in countries and companies across the globe - German town mayors, a Korean multi-national company, and charter school first-graders in San Diego. You can learn more about these stories and others on The World Café website. As you can see, this concept is about new possibilities. It works with other action planning techniques and can be adapted to benefit our personal, business and community lives.

The 7 World Café principles are the framework to create and host these meaningful dialogues. Some seem simplistic and logical however the 'magic' is in their combination as a whole.

1. Set the context – Define the purpose, identify the participants (not just who should participate, but others who matter; diversity creates richer results) and know the parameters (i.e., time, money, etc.).
2. Create the right environment – An intimate, comfortable and approachable space for honest dialogue (i.e., the café environment with tables of 4-5).
3. Questions that matter – Compelling, genuine questions that participants are invested in and that encourage discussion, exploration and a means to positive change.
4. Everyone is a contributor – All participants are equal; each person has insights to share to make a positive difference.
5. Cross-pollinate and connect perspectives – Sharing/movement among the individual conversation groups to allow ideas to spark other ideas and build on each other.

6. Thoughtful listening – Encourage participants to find patterns, insights and even deeper questions. Tools such as drawings, shared table notes, and doodling done as part of the process make the conversation visible. It's important to have time for reflection - on what each member is saying and what is developing as a whole. Allow for “connecting the dots”.
7. Harvest and share collective discoveries – Gather key ideas, notes and graphics from the conversation groups for all participants to see and discuss. Collectively develop actionable items for further exploration or implementation. This then becomes the visible story/results for participants and for sharing with the larger organization as well as for further action planning.

Ideas to Ponder (taken directly from the pages of the book):

Intelligence – originating from the Latin words *inter* and *legere* meaning “to gather understanding in between”

The Chinese character for crisis means both danger and opportunity.

Conversational leadership – a term coined by Carolyn Baldwin; an educator and World Café host in Florida. It is defined as the leader’s intentional use of conversation as a core process to create business or social value.

Conceptual leadership – creating shared contexts and common frameworks in which groups can deepen or shift their thinking together.

Websites to check out:

The World Café: <http://www.theworldcafe.com/>

Please visit my website for past issues of *My 2 Cents* and info on services – <http://www.creativeactionmarketing.com/>

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