



**WELCOME!**



# **THE ART OF GATHERING**

HOW WE MEET AND WHY IT MATTERS

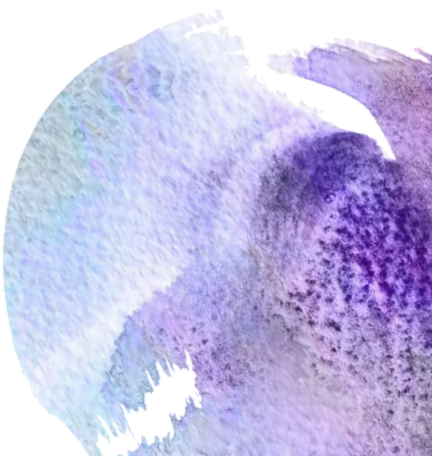
**PRIYA PARKER**



# Priya Parker...



is a facilitator and strategic advisor trained in conflict resolution.





Click to watch Priya Parker's 10-minute Talk on TED.com



# The Way We Gather Matters

## Gathering

The conscious bringing together of people for a **reason**

# The What vs. the Why



## **What**

Location, Venue, Powerpoints, AV equipment, table decorations and menu choices



## **Why**

People and human connection

A hand holding a white sign with the text "START WITH WHY" in bold black letters. The background is a green-to-yellow gradient with a torn paper effect.

**START WITH  
WHY**

# PURPOSE



# PURPOSE



## **Zoom out**

To look at the bigger picture



## **Drill down**

Each time you come to a why, ask why again



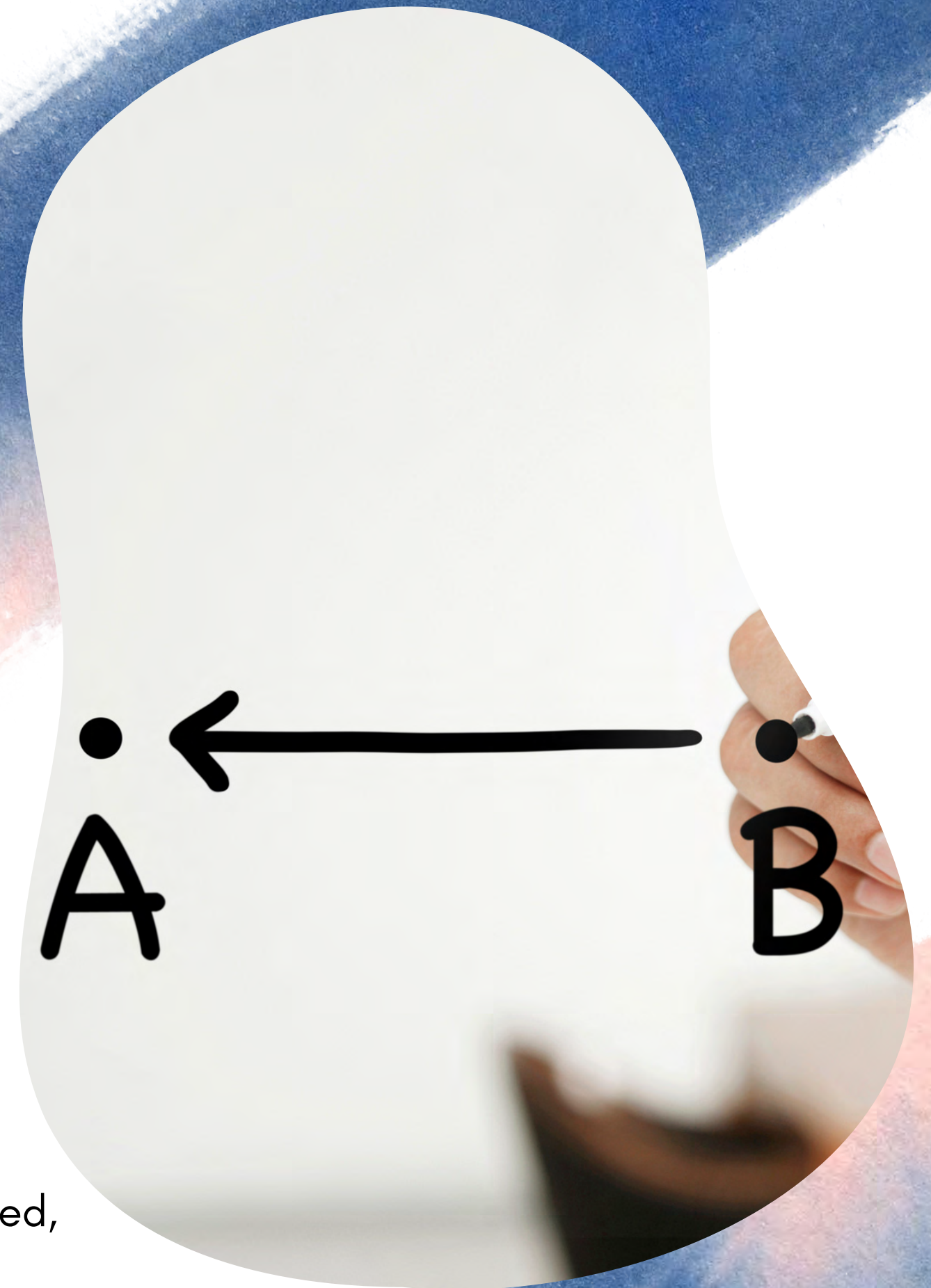
## **What problem might it solve?**

Restore a sense of community? Provide necessary education?



## **Reverse engineer an outcome**

What do you want to be different because you gathered, then work backward from there







**LET PURPOSE BE  
YOUR BOUNCER**



# WHO

## Magic numbers in groups

6

**Pros:** Conducive to intimacy, sharing, and discussion through storytelling

**Cons:** Not ideal for diversity of viewpoints and cannot bear much dead weight

12-15

**Pros:** Small enough to build intimacy/1 moderator to handle solo; Large enough to offer diversity of opinion, plus a little mystery

**Cons:** A difficult size to transition from

30

**Pros:** Starts to feel like a party

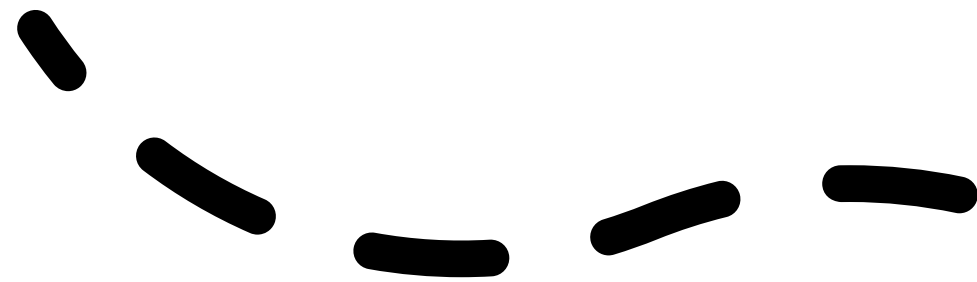
**Cons:** Too big for a single conversation

150

**Pros:** Intimacy is still possible; Possible for everybody to meet everyone

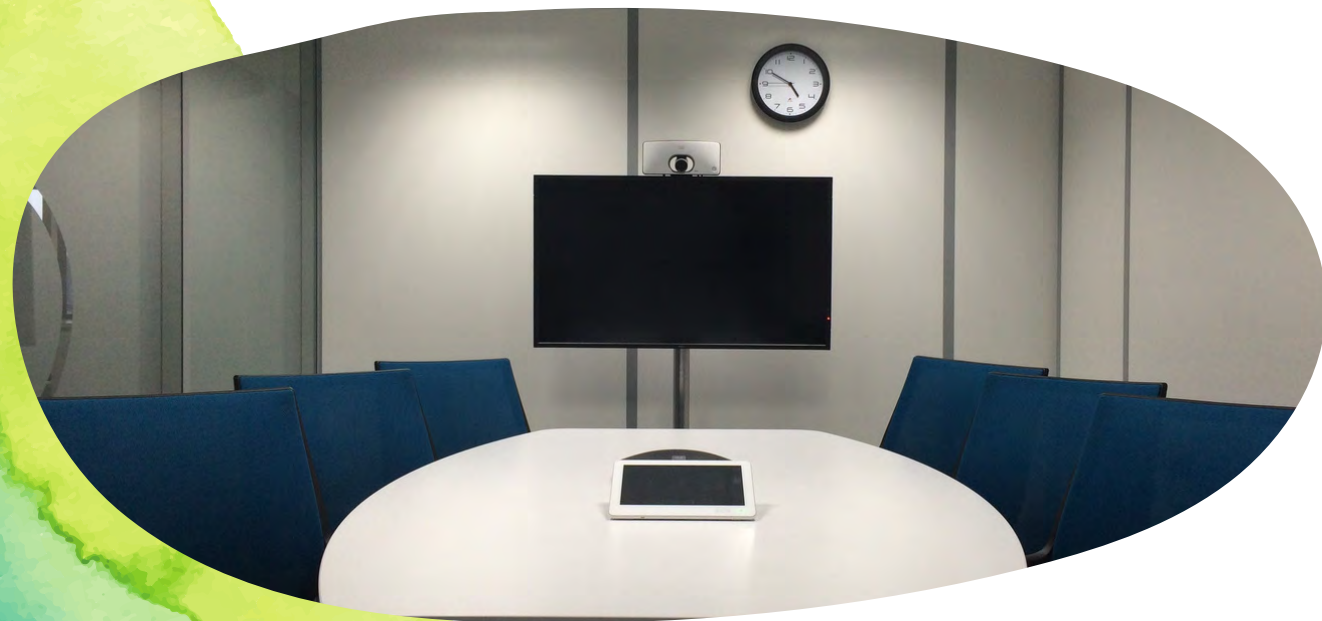
**Cons:** Prepare for subgroups

# WHERE



# WHERE

*Venues come with scripts*



# WHERE



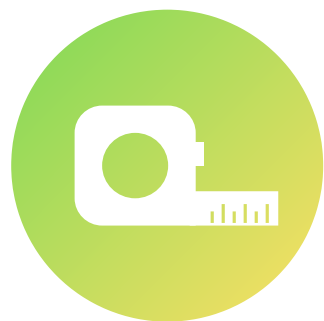
## Embodiment

First, seek a setting that embodies the reason for convening



## Displacement

Breaking people out of their habits

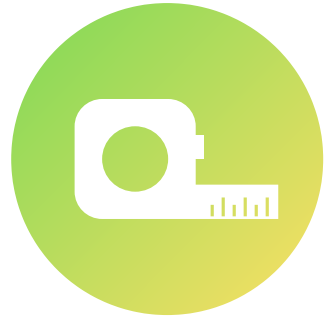


## Perimeter, Area, Density

The practical considerations



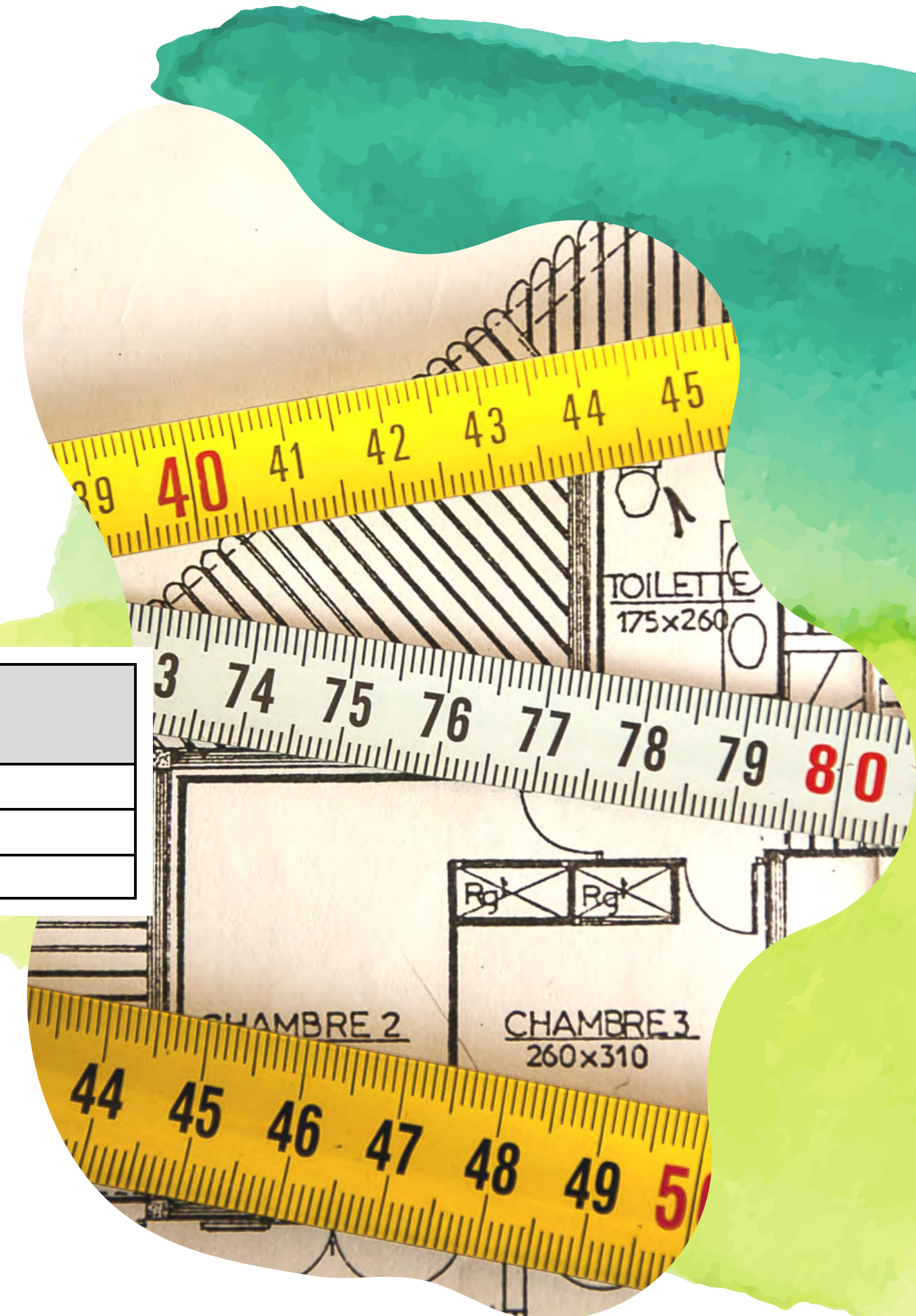
# WHERE



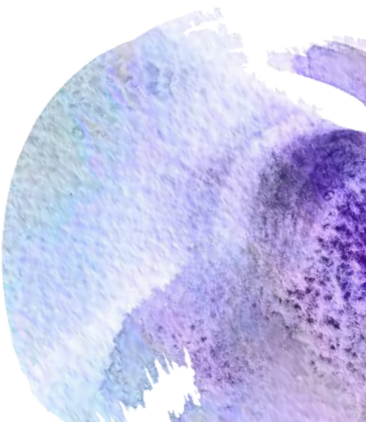
## DENSITY

Divide the square feet of your party space by the number in the chart that will give you the vibe you're going for and this will give you your target number of guests.

| Examples:<br>Square Feet Per Guest | Sophisticated | Lively     | Hot       |
|------------------------------------|---------------|------------|-----------|
| Dinner party                       | 20 sq. ft.    | 15 sq. ft. | N/A       |
| Cocktail party                     | 12 sq. ft.    | 10 sq. ft. | 8 sq. ft. |
| Into the night/dance party         | 8 sq. ft.     | 6 sq. ft.  | 5 sq. ft. |



# HOW TO HOST



# HOW TO HOST



## Don't be a chill host

"Chill" is selfishness disguised as kindness



## Authority is an ongoing commitment

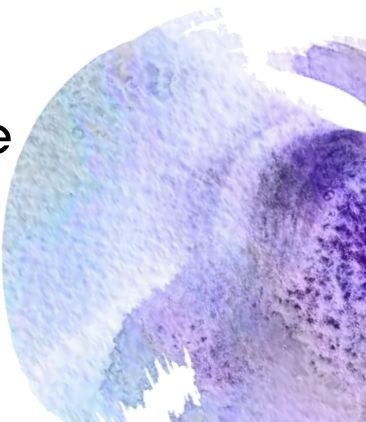
You can't set purpose, direction, and ground rules then pretend to be a guest



## The wonders of generous authority

Imposing in a way that serves your guests

- **Protect:** From one another, from boredom, from themselves
- **Equalize:** Leave titles and degrees at the door
- **Connect:** You have to design your gatherings for the kinds of connections you want to create





# CONFERENCES



# CONFERENCES



**15 ways to make a conference suck less**



# CONFERENCES



## 8 ways to make a conference suck less

1. Go for the sprout speech, not the stump speech



# CONFERENCES



## 15 ways to make a conference suck less

1. Go for the sprout speech, not the stump speech
2. Focus on experiences



# CONFERENCES



## 15 ways to make a conference suck less

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3. Don't be afraid to go dark

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5. Fresh eyes



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5. Fresh eyes
6. Be explicit in your explanations
7. Host, reveal thyself
8. Risk management



# GOOD CONTROVERSY



## **Death to dull**

Avoiding traditionally taboo topics is getting a little old



## **Take it to the grass**

Curry controversy with a cage match



## **Heat maps, safe spaces, and ground rules**

- Figure out the sources of potential heat
- Move slowly and expand outward
- Begin the event itself by setting ground rules

# WE ALL NEED CLOSURE



## Why closings matter

How you end things shapes people's experience, sense of meaning, and memory



## Last call

Just as with an opening there is ushering that should occur, guests need to be prepped for the closing



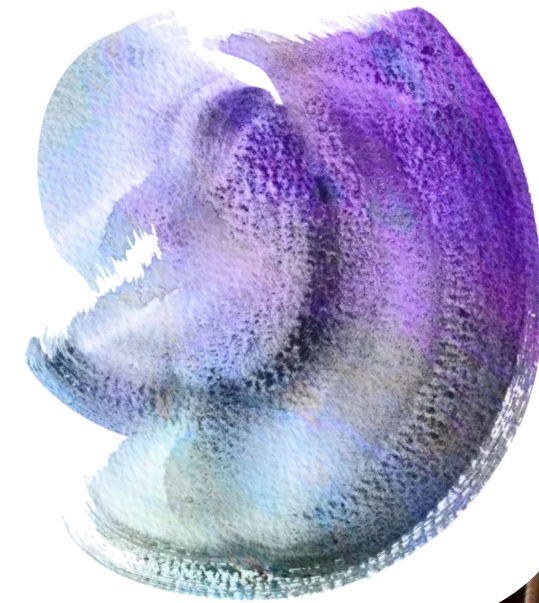
## When and who?

Quit while you're ahead and lead vs. being led.



## How?

- Look inward: Connecting one last time
- Turn outward: Separation and reentry



# Virtual Suggestions



**Choose a song to play at the beginning that will set the tone**



**Have a slide up prompting attendees to put a 2-word check-in into the chat**



**Prior to the event, ask attendees to bring an object (or beverage). This can be used as a visual (to unify) or as a talking point prompt**



**Ask everyone to dial in from a specific room in their house or in front of a window with a view**



**Take everyone off mute for a group hello, goodbye, or to loudly voice their opinion**



# Resources



**There's so much more in the book!**



**Priya and Brene Brown discuss the book (November 2020)**

<https://brenebrown.com/podcast/brene-with-priya-parker-on-the-art-of-gathering/>



**Priya and Brene Brown discuss returning to in person (May 2021)**

<https://brenebrown.com/podcast/brene-with-priya-parker-on-how-we-return-and-why-it-matters-part-1-of-2/>



**Priya gives Brene Brown a team meeting makeover (May 2021)**

<https://brenebrown.com/podcast/brene-with-priya-parker-a-meeting-makeover/>



**Priya's Podcast "Together Apart" on gathering during the pandemic**

<https://www.priyaparker.com/podcast>

