

FAQ

Frequently Asked Questions

Almost everything you need to know to make your experience count!

Ready to take yourself to your next learning edge?



GOT A QUESTION ABOUT ART OF HOSTING EVENTS?

Why the art of hosting & harvesting conversations that matter? You've come to the right place...

Frequently asked questions

What is the Art of Hosting and where did it come from?

Art of Hosting is a practice of looking for the deep patterns around groups that work and creating meetings where people can do their best work together. Practically, it is a fusion of some very powerful participatory facilitation tools (Appreciative Inquiry, World Café, Open Space Technology and Circle work). Each of these practices is powerful in its own right and has been in use for more than 20 years, with international practitioner communities and solid case study examples. Many of these practices came out of the need for radical change. Used together, they are a flexible way to help people lead and help groups to come into connection and deep conversation and action *fast*. It has come from a group of practitioners who were looking for ways to support the people they were working with to work at the boundary of connection and innovation.

Art of Hosting initiatives are never run solo, but always by a Core Team working in collaboration. The practitioner field in action usually comprised of both stewards and apprentices so that everyone learns together. Art of Hosting training has been offered all over the world, and for the first time in New Zealand in August 2009. For 2010 there are four events planned.

But what do you mean by "hosting"?

We've noticed that plenty of people *hold* meetings, many people *lead* meetings, and some people *facilitate* meetings. But there aren't many meeting spaces where people step in, step up and take action together. This demands a different way of working and a different type of container to work in. The word "hosting" indicates a different kind of approach. We know a lot about being a good host here in New Zealand, with our Maori and Pacific communities leading the way. Being a good host means making sure people are looked after well so that they can do their best work together and step onto common ground.



Ready for a change?

We talk a lot about "working differently", but what does it mean? Now is the perfect time to take a dive into a new way of working that could dramatically change your results.

We've all been to meetings that have been well managed, but not well hosted, and often the result is "same old, same old." Just as "hosting" has a particular connotation, so does "art", indicating that this way of working is not a recipe or a set of tools, but an artform in practice. You'll notice a different language around the **Art of Hosting** and there's a reason for that -- we want to stimulate our thinking about this way of working in a new way.

Who has taken part in this way of working?

The **Art of Hosting** has been used in all types of communities from indigenous tribal settings to the European Commission. It has been used for small to large scale meetings and is currently being used by the European Commission to initiate participatory leadership practices and citizen engagement. It is also being used for dramatically shifting healthcare in a major US city and with Native American and First Nation tribes in North America. It has been scaled to community events and has been used inside organisations.

What's unique about the Art of Hosting training?

Two things. First, the training is offered by a Hosting Team using action learning. The team will facilitate the first day, but from Day 2, participants will be asked to step forward to lead and the Hosting Team will become the clients and the coaches, supporting participants to "learn on the job" and gain hands on, practical skills. We learn together as a community and immediately apply what we learn.

Secondly, there is a focus both on *hosting* the meeting and on *harvesting* the meeting. **Hosting** is about how you create group meetings that help people to work well together, innovate from within and make a commitment for action. **Harvesting** is about making sure that what gets covered in a meeting actually goes somewhere. We're finding the harvest is one of the most important parts of our work now. After all, why have a meeting if nothing comes out of it?

Participants will come away with practical experience in group processes and will be able to focus on specific projects with the support of the participant community. Following the training, all participants have the opportunity to become part of the trans-Tasman Community of Practice.

If you are simply looking for new tools, this might not be for you, but if you know that the old way of doing things isn't going to work for much longer, and you're willing to challenge your thinking and your style, you will be stepping into a community that can help you. This training looks different, and *is* different than anything else in this field.

Who's on the facilitation team?

We have a talented, multi-disciplinary team holding and facilitating our events next year. **Toke** joins us again. **Monica** is an international expert on harvesting, **Tim** is leading large processes for young people and on strategic change. **Bob** is an Aikido Master and has run his own dojo. **Mary-Alice** is a leading narrative practitioner, who has taken culture change to scale. **Helen** has worked with senior and leadership teams throughout the public & private sector. **Craig** has been in senior leadership in the public sector with over 30 years experience. *We're looking forward to working with you!*

I've heard I shouldn't come alone.

Why is that?

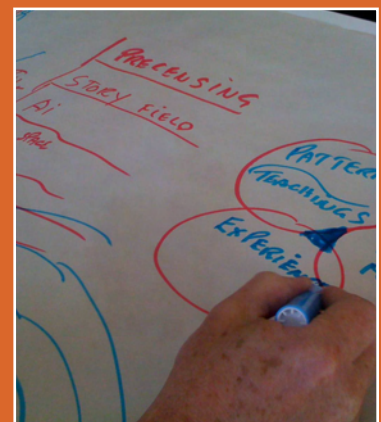
Last year we told many of our participants the "frozen chicken" story -- they might have laughed, but they knew it was true! When you come alone to a training experience -- especially one which has such a dramatically different way of working at its core, like the **Art of Hosting** -- you can feel like you're the only chook to have thawed out and gotten a new way of operating in the world. When you go back to the office, it can feel like a blast from the freezer. People roll their eyes, look at you in that patronising way and say: "You've been on a course, haven't you?". **And nothing changes...**

We've learned in our own practice that this way of working takes a team to do it. If you want to shift the field in the place you work, you need to **be a field**, already operating in the new way -- and you can't do that alone! We encourage you to come along again (and we have a reduced rate for that!) and to bring others with you. If you know of others who'd like to attend, make sure they come with others so that they can put what they learn to work.

How can we make this training really work for us?

Begin by being clear in your intention. If your intention is to demonstrate leadership in your sector, build capacity within your organisation and with stakeholders, and integrate what you find

WHAT'S IT LIKE?



These events are NOT for spectators

Art of Hosting is a hands-on, participatory, group centered way of working. Expect to step in, step up and take responsibility for whatever it is that calls you. Expect to be challenged as well as supported as we step into learning together.

out fast, then we can support you to create the process to make this happen.

- **Get the team together.** Who from your organisation should be involved? From other agencies? From partnership organisations & groups? From the wider community?
- **Decide what initiative will be the framework.** Do you want to achieve something in the OD space or within your culture? Do you want to demonstrate leadership in your sector? Have you got an upcoming meeting or project that could be the reference site for this work? Do you want to build a platform for community engagement that works?
- **Look at how this work fits within your strategic plan and business scope** in the foreseeable future — are you willing to commit to creating a community of practice within your team or organisation over the next 2 –3 years?
- **Work with us to scope the coaching support** you need to achieve your goals and vision.

But why should we really be interested?

How much internal and community engagement is really “Decide – Advocate – Defend”? How many meetings have you gone to that didn’t work? Don’t you think it’s time they did? What if meetings were a place where people came together to get really innovative, engaged and charged up about the challenges they’re facing and the work they have to do? What if your culture were “Inquire – Discover – Collaborate” instead? If you know something different needs to happen in your organisation or in the wider sector, this could be the place where you find out how to innovate, create a new conversation and get to where you really want to go.

What if I’m interested, but I can’t afford the price?

The **Art of Hosting** community works on the premise that people should give what they can and ask for what they need. If

price is a barrier for you, please talk to us and let’s see what we can do together.

Alternatively, if you can, please pay a little bit more than the price and support others to come along. If your organisation would like to send a bigger group, consider our 20 participant rate and offer some places to community, youth or your stakeholders or sector partners. Doing something challenging and worthwhile together is one of the best team buildings around!

Which event should I choose?

Each of the four events is based around Art of Hosting practice, but each has a specific theme. If you are interested in how to create the container to get people to step in, step up and take action, or you are interested in supporting potential leaders in building their skills, the **Participatory Leadership** would be a good choice. If you are part of a team that needs to enhance its results on a project you’re working on, or get started on a strategic initiative or develop some new thinking as a team, then **Teams Creating Strategic Results** is for you.

If you are interested in exploring and enhancing your own leadership capacities or you want some reflective time and space for challenging yourself, **Warrior of the Heart** will be the place for you. If you are interested in the future of New Zealand for children, you are community minded and want to be involved in a different kind of conversation or you are interested in how this way of working helps create the space for new conversations around old issues to happen, then **Bridging the Islands of Achievement so New Zealand is a Great Place to Raise Kids** is your event.



Be sure to bring someone with you!

What about accommodation and transport?

Neither of the trainings are residential, although in **Auckland**, the Waipuna Hotel has offered us a special rate. We can send you the form to fill in so that you can make your bookings directly with the hotel. In **Wellington** there is a wide range of accommodation available all the way from a great Youth Hostel very close to Te Papa to 5 star accommodation. Either check on wotif.com for hotel bookings or contact the Wellington Visitors Centre bookings@wellingtonnz.com. Both of the other events are residential, with participants staying at Tatum Park, which is on SH 1 just south of Levin.

You are responsible for your own transport to the venues, but in the case of the children’s event, we will work on arranging some transportation from Wellington CBD.

How can I handle payment?

Once you have registered for the event, you will be sent an invoice which requests payment within 7 days. You can either write a cheque or direct debit to our account through internet banking. Sorry, we don’t have credit card facilities.

At first my Practice Manager and I were reluctant to commit to a 3 day training session on hosting conversations -- by the end we wished we had brought a larger team! Experiencing practices that support authentic conversations between people is simple and powerfully transformative to conventional organisation structures and systems." --
David Hanna - Director Wesley Community Action

After participating in the Art of Hosting we have seen new formats for meetings and conversations being used across our organisation. Since attending the programme, our participants have been actively working across organisational boundaries to help make our conversations more effective. -- *Adam Cooper, Geospatial Custodian (Acting), Land Information New Zealand*

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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