

## THE CACAO-POWERED FACILITATOR



### Module 8: Transitions and Closing a Cacao Experience

#### Tracking Participants During the Journey

- We want to create a safe space for people to experience emotional release
- But it's up to them what to participate in, how long to stay, what to keep private and what to share with the group or facilitator
- Be mindful of how many people we have in a container
- One facilitator can track a maximum of 20-30 people
  - Beyond that you could have co-facilitators, or activities that don't go as deep
- During verbal practices,
  - They're more tuned into consensual/shared reality
  - At the very least, float around the room and let them feel your presence
  - You could also quietly drop in to see how they're doing, and/or invite people to call you over for help
  - Find a balance between checking in on groups to let them know you're present and available... and not taking them out of the experience too much
  - If people look like they're dropped in and flowing along, then let them do their thing
  - This can be a chance to take a breath as a facilitator, just don't get too distracted, go on social media, or anything like that
- During non-verbal like breathwork:
  - Look for looping, find gentle ways to interrupt like whispering to them
  - If you've gotten consent about touch, some touch could help

#### The Flow State of Facilitation

- All the more embodied, shamanic practices in this course have prepared you for this
- Feel into your own body, feel into the energy of the room, feeling into where the participants are at

- Follow the practice outline and also prompt them around breath, felt sense, grounding/ connecting with the earth, relaxing the mind, releasing tension, etc.
- Leading them to sensory-grounded information. People attuned to “felt sense” have been shown to respond more positively to psychotherapy.
- Again, finding a balance >> not interrupting so much that you take them out of their experience, but not abandoning them
- Avoid stating too specific of a time limit during embodied experiences
  - Being outside of “clock time” is part of the healing

### **Holding Awareness of Power Dynamics**

- This is a HUGE topic but we’ll just skim the surface here
- But basically, hold awareness of gender, race, age, different kinds of privilege, etc.
- Support women and people of color to speak in sharing circles
  - Ex: “Now let’s open up for those who don’t usually speak in circle.”
- And if someone needs support like a hand on the back, let THEM choose how and from whom they receive it, especially if they’re a woman
  - Choice = power, and prevents re-traumatization
- Be aware of our own IDENTITIES as a facilitator and mindful of how we’re acting and potentially causing harm
- Keep in mind that you’re just playing a role, that you’re not better or all-knowing. STAY HUMBLE.

### **Transitions and Sequencing of Practices**

- Remember: you’re taking people on a journey. You want them to really feel that.
- Think about an overall flow to the experience and piece things together that way, instead of UP / DOWN / UP / DOWN repeatedly
- Be willing to ditch the plan if people aren’t ready or need something different
- Be mindful of body positioning and where you hope to get them to physically

- The deeper they are in their body, the slower the transition needs to be
- After drinking cacao, some people will immediately lay down
- Allow the most time and gentleness from lying down to standing up
  - “We’re coming to a transition in the journey”... etc.
- Verbal practices can be grounding after a more embodied practice, where people tend to go deeper into different states of consciousness

### *How to Lead a Mid-Way Check-In Circle*

- This can be useful after either an embodied or interactive exercise (especially embodied, to make sure everyone’s okay)
- “Popcorn” style works well. Whomever feels called to share can jump in.
- Presence and compassion with heavy shares. You don’t have to fix it, but you can ask them if they’d like a certain type of support.
- If you see someone processing but they don’t speak up, it’s usually better to just ask the whole group if anyone needs extra support than to call on that one person. They might not want the whole group focused on them.
  - If someone is still REALLY IN IT getting to the final stage of the journey, getting them some support with another person off to the side could be one option

### **How to Lead a Closing Circle**

- Invite people to share what they’re taking out with them, being mindful of time (depending on the size of the group)
- No one HAS TO share. They can bring hands to heart center if they want to pass, or just say “pass”
- In person, go around the circle (it’s the most time efficient)
  - Online, call on people one at a time
- Especially in the closing circle, if there’s a heavy share, make sure to take a deep breath and slow down

- At the end if there's still something dense, you could circle back and give someone a bit more space
- As facilitator you could share some closing words to tie the themes together
- Ask everyone to drink some water and focus on integration (a bite to eat, or in the days to come they could do yoga, meditation, journaling, walk in nature, etc.)
  - Define integration for them: working the insights and felt sense into their ordinary identity and day-to-day life
- Invite people to reach out if they need support
- A synchronized sound ritual can be a good way to close the container. Options:
  - Doing a round of applause
  - Everyone says 3-2-1 and then brings palms to the floor
  - Three "oms"

### **INTER-ACTION EXERCISE: Coming up with your own!**

- Could be in pairs, small groups, or large group.
- Guiding people to more awareness, support, etc.
- Remember the T-Group ingredients: observations, feelings, stories (meaning-making).
- We can affect feeling states by changing stories (affirmations, re-patterning, etc), and we can affect stories by changing feeling states (posture, breathwork, etc).
- **One hidden point of any inter-action (communication/intimacy) exercise:** Being witnessed in a safe container (no judgment, no advice without consent, etc.) can be healing in itself.
- It takes a lot of energy to hide (especially if shame or regret are involved). So ending the hiding can mean freeing up a lot of energy.
- Realizing that other humans are going through similar dynamics can also be relieving
- What are the themes around that time? (Seasonal, belief systems, etc)
- Basically this is **channeling**, part of the flow state

- The deeper our own shamanic/spiritual practice, the easier this becomes
- Also, prevents people from getting bored with the same experience each time
- Simplest version: What are you letting go of? What are you calling in? What can you be grateful for right now?
- If it's a short ceremony (1-3 hours), when prompting people to recall something with a charge (scary, traumatic, etc), you can invite them to choose something that's a 5-7 on a scale of 1-10 where 10 is the most charged.

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**Module 8 / Exercise 1:** Find a place to stand barefoot on the earth (with proper social distancing!) for at least 5 minutes (ideally 10 or 15, closing your eyes as much as possible, but taking deep breaths and really feeling into your connection with the earth. See what it tells you. This is a simple shamanic experience – oneness with the earth, the universe, etc. Share about your experience in the webform.

**Module 8 / Exercise 2:** Experiment with creating your own inter-action exercise. Think: what are three prompts you can guide people through for things to talk about for at least a minute that could lead to some useful new self-awareness, insight, or clarity? Feel free to use ingredients that have been helpful for you in the past. But if you do that, change it up a little bit. Actually practice saying these out loud, as if you were guiding a group. Share the prompts in the webform.

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## NOTES