



EXERCISE: SHARING YOUR OWN STORIES

Subject(s): English and Theatre

Goals: Students will be able to:

- Use a variety of strategies to listen actively and speak using appropriate discussion rules with awareness of verbal and nonverbal cues.
- Respond thoughtfully and tactfully to diverse perspectives, summarizing points of agreement and disagreement.
- Develop ideas individually and collaboratively.
- Propose and select alternatives to solve problems while building an ensemble.
- Apply communication and collaboration skills for theatre experiences.

Show Connection: When Tori arrives in Failureland, real-life figures from throughout history and pop culture run to her side, ready to share their stories with her. Failureland is the kind of world we all wished existed. The kind where everyone's stories are known and where every person is ready to share their story if sharing means helping someone else rise up.

Materials: A clock or timer.

Description:

- This exercise may feel very surface level. It can serve as an ice breaker or as a hook introduction to deeper explorations.
- Put students into two-person partnerships somewhere in the room, giving each group a distinct area to work (preferably as far away from other groups as possible).
- Round One - All student partnerships have three minutes to accomplish the following task with one another: Partners share with one another **where they are from, where they live now, and how they feel about being from there.** (Good, bad, or otherwise.) Then, as a partnership, create a full-body "secret handshake" somehow inspired by the information exchanged.
 - Bring the class focus back together and have several of the partnerships present their handshakes. (If time permits and interest allows, have some students share the stories that prompted the handshakes.)
- Round Two - Students have ten seconds to find a new partner to work with in a distinct area of the room, preferably as far away from other groups as possible. All new student partnerships have three minutes to accomplish the following task with one another: Partners share with one another **one recent success or accomplishment (big or small)** from their own life. Then, together, they create a celebration / victory

dance, inspired by that information exchanged.

- Bring the class focus back together and have several of the partnerships share their life celebration dances. (If time permits and interest allows, have some students share the stories that prompted the dances.)
- Round Three - Students have ten seconds to find a new partner to work with in a distinct area of the room, preferably as far away from other groups as possible. All-new student partnerships have three minutes to accomplish the following task with one another: Partners share with **one another their earliest childhood memories**. Then, together, they create playful nicknames for each other, inspired by that information exchanged.
 - Bring the class focus back together and invite several of the partnerships to introduce their partners via their new nickname. (If time permits and interest allows, have some students share the stories that prompted the nicknames.)
- Round Four - Students have ten seconds to find a new partner to work with in a distinct area of the room, preferably as far away from other groups as possible. All-new student partnerships have three minutes to accomplish the following task with one another: Partners share with **one another one recent failure (big or small)** from their own life. Then, together, they create one shared life motto, inspired by that information exchanged.
 - Bring the class focus back together and have several of the partnerships share their newly-developed life mottos. (If time permits and interest allows, have some students share the stories that prompted the life mottos.)

Discussion:

- Several people just told stories to us. Describe to me their approaches. Were there moments where people were excited and full of details to share? Were there moments where there were fewer details or it was harder to share in that moment?
- Have you ever experienced a moment where sharing a personal story had a significant impact on someone else's perspective? What happened and how did it influence the relationship? How might a shift in your perspective affect how you view your own success and failures?
- In what ways can the act of listening be just as important as sharing when it comes to exchanging stories?