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Other resources,

including daily meditations, periodic podcasts, on-line seminars and discussions, and occasional on-line conversations about this week’s curriculum, are available at:

aspeninstitute.org/programs/executive-leadership-development/resources-for-living-and-leading/
How to Use this Curriculum

Connected Learning in Times of Confinement is designed to support people and their families, neighborhoods, organizations, and networks by building upon the Aspen Institute’s unique expertise in facilitating meaningful conversations in a seminar setting.

We envisage a weekly curriculum that can be used in pieces, or all at once, or in various combinations. Our hope is that these readings and guidance will allow you and others to reflect on fundamental human questions in ways that nourish our hearts, minds, and fellowship in a time of confinement. A curriculum (from the Latin currere, to run) is a path, an exploration, not something to be mastered but an invitation to discovery and wonder. These materials are curated to intrigue and delight you, and we invite you to reflect upon them on your own, and to share them—with family, friends, neighbors, teams, networks. In this, the journey itself is the destination, a call to thought, dialogue, and action.

In a journey it is often helpful to have a guide, and in this curriculum you will find three guides:

First, the authors themselves—we do not need to follow the authors, but we do well to understand what they are saying;

Second, guiding questions—for each reading, there is a set of guiding questions designed for individual and collective reflection; they are not the only (or even most important) questions, but a way of getting started; these may be found at the back of the packet and are best read after you have read the texts;

Third, general guidance—for each discussion, participants and discussion leaders may want to remind themselves of some best practices; these may be found at the back of this packet.

We invite you to share these readings widely and encourage others to engage in conversation. As you do so, know that fellow seminar graduates and their families, friends, and colleagues are doing the same. We all contribute to a global chorus of conversation about ideas worth sharing and acting upon.

—Todd Breyfogle, PhD
Managing Director, Aspen Executive Leadership Seminars

About Aspen Institute Seminars

The Aspen Institute Executive Leadership Seminars Department drives change through reflection, dialogue, and action in service of a more free, just, and equitable society. We do this by: curating brave spaces of shared meaning which help people become more self-aware, more self-correcting, and more self-fulfilling; deepening participants’ humane sensibilities and capacities for moral judgment through an examination of the humanistic traditions; establishing meaningful connections among diverse people and organizations in service of a better society.

For more information, including information about customized programs for companies and other organizations, please contact Kalissa Hendrickson, PhD, Director, at Kalissa.Hendrickson@aspeninst.org or 202-736-3586. Learn more.
The Aspen Institute starts from an act of faith in the humanistic tradition: one must be reflective in order to insure that all human activity—political, scientific, economic, intellectual or artistic—will serve the needs of human beings and enrich and deepen their lives.

The Institute believes in the value both of the “Great Ideas” of the past as well as the importance of the sometimes inelegant and highly controversial ideas of the present.

The Institute is dedicated to the fundamental educational value of dialogue for mature men and women from different nations and cultures -- intercommunications between people of comparable competence from various backgrounds and specialized fields of experience.

The Aspen idea recognizes that the processes by which persons learn and develop or change their ideas are not mechanical or even purely rational. As there is a mystery at the edge of human thought, so there is a magic about human relationships, and the magic we attempt to invoke in Aspen is that of the sheer beauty of this area of the Rocky Mountains.

With Erasmus, we hold that “nothing human is alien” to the inquiring purposes of the Aspen Institute. The Institute intends to be, in sum, a place of excellence and excitement where men and women of the finest qualities of mind and spirit from all walks of life in the United States and abroad can meet to learn from one another through serious discussion of and work on significant problems facing society and the greatest ideas which have been expressed throughout history and today concerning these problems.

—J. E. Slater, President, The Aspen Institute for Humanistic Studies, 1972
Readings | Week 13

5    Cristina Perri Rossi, “Breaking the Speed Record”

9    Vu Le, “The Best Leaders May Be Those Who ‘Give Up’”

13   E. Lily Yu, “The Gardener and the King’s Menagerie”

17   George Herbert, “The Pulley”
Breaking the Speed Record

by Cristina Perri Rossi

(1941–)

He had begun the fourteenth lap. He was a good runner: the papers announced him as the favorite and even forecast a new record. They had been waiting for a new record for several years, one always waits for this kind of thing. And now this theory of a Brazilian physicist, a madman he thought: that the speed of light does not always remain the same. What could this mean? he asked himself. The papers had said that he was in condition to beat the record. So, had Einstein made a mistake? Or was light also trying to beat a record? In his fifteenth lap the crowds gathered around the track; already he had a good lead, a considerable lead, for he was born to run … in the warm sunshine, and how warm it was! What did it mean to be born to run? Those lap two-thirds through the race, and still keeping up a wonderful pace”…long distance runner…controlled rhythm, when he set off he didn’t hesitate a moment in separating himself from the rest and establish from the start who would be the winner. If they thought that he was going to hold himself back, that he would not sprint away from the team in order to save his strength and leave the final pitiless conflict to the last meters, they were mistaken. He was now running, away from the elbows of the other runners, with nobody coming in his way and with all the track empty in front of him, as fast as light, if light is still moving through space at a constant speed. Somewhere else—beyond the oval racing track around which he was running over and over again, as in a tormented dream—his trainer would be anxiously looking at his stopwatch. To think that the speed of this ray of sun shining across the track was not constant! As constant as his pace. Seventeenth lap, only seven more to victory…this ray of sunshine racing like a breathless runner. The rest had remained behind, he had passed them several laps before; now it was the case of beating someone else, the legendary runner who had established the last record, the final record up till now, if only the speed of light would remain constant. At the twenty-first lap he began to suspect that he would accomplish what had been forecast; in spite of being tired, his rhythm was excellent, he was running along the track with a steady step, his movements were elastic and light, “as light as a gazelle,” as the announcer put it, “elegant, as if running did not cause him any problem.” He had a confused glimpse of the faces of the spectators; there was no need to see them more clearly, only the track turning in his mind…and his trainer would keep his

eyes unremittingly fixed on the stopwatch; now he was passing the young runner with red hair and blue shorts whose breathless panting did not bode well, next runner number seventeen, completely outpaced by the rest, several laps behind him in one of the laps which he had run earlier on, with the brightness of the sun on the track. Everyone’s eyes were clouding over, blinking through the drops of sweat; there remained only three more laps according to his calculations, three more laps before the little man with the flag designed like a chess board would let it drop at the moment he crossed the finish line, the end of the track, the ribbon which meant that the mad race was over…and then he heard a shout, a single shout, it was his trainer calling out assuredly that he was about to accomplish what had been forecast, that he was about establish a new record, the best in the world in the ten thousand meters on the level as flat as a pan.

It was then that he felt an enormous desire to stop. Not that he was tired; he had trained for a long time and all the experts felt that he would succeed; in fact, he was only running in order to establish a new record. But, now, this irresistible desire to stop. To lie on the side of the track and never get up again. Attention: it is forbidden to touch a runner once he has fallen. If he gets up under his own power, he can continue the race. But no one is allowed to help him stand up again. This uncontrollable desire to sit at the side of the track and look up at the sky. Surely there would be trees, he thought. Interwoven branches, quivering leaves and at the top, perhaps a nest. The smallest leaves shaking in the breeze, this same breeze which alters the speed of light, no longer constant, according to the Brazilian physicist. “I am nothing exceptional,” he had said a few nights before to an elderly admirer, “I am just somebody who knows how to organize time.”

His trainer waved to him excitedly: only one more lap. Only one. And his speed had not diminished. He passed a runner who was panting with his hand on his ribs. That dry pain under the ribs, the tightness that makes it so difficult to breathe. Once it begins, the race is over and you might as well get off the track—although one does not do so out of a sense of pride. That discomfort in the spleen, as he had learned during his years of training. An organ of which we are rarely conscious because it only troubles us when we have made an unusual effort, when we have run too much. And now this unknown and uncontrollable longing to stop, to rest by the side of the track, look at the trees, breathe deeply. The laps are all the same, they merge in one’s memory and one no longer knows whether it is the twenty-third or the twenty-fourth, the sixteenth or the seventeenth, as it happened to that boy who thought he had finished and threw himself on the ground. Somebody—most likely his trainer or one of the judges—went near him and without touching him, informed him that he was mistaken (he had figured it wrong) and there were still three laps to run. And the poor chap with his muscles in a knot. Unable to get up. And if he did get up, it would be only to start running again, unless he fainted beforehand. But nothing like this would ever happen to him. He ran with ease, as if it were the most natural thing to do, as if he could run forever. With a rhythm
which was constant, with an unvarying stride, unlike light which had deceived him and which now, it seemed, was moving at uneven speed. He was about to beat the record. But what now of the indescribable pleasure of stopping, sliding gently towards the side, the side of the track, a few meters away from the end, just a little before the finish line, slipping slowly to the ground and lifting his head up...the tall trees, the blue sky, the slow-moving clouds, the curly, bunched-up branches...the leaves quiver, he looks upwards and watches the rhythmic flight of the birds...he does not hear the hubbub of the people crowding around him; undoubtedly they are reproaching him, insulting him, his trainer is furious...to see the rest of the runners go past him, see their shorts, some are panting heavily, one is raising his hand to his chest, you will not finish, you will not reach the end; but high up the trees float in the air, in an unreal atmosphere, unseen by anyone else; now comes the blond fellow suffering from a cramp and beginning to limp...have I seen that bird before?...and the announcer describing the unexplainable event. His speed had been constant but suddenly, as that of light, it longed to stop. And he raised his eyes to the sky.
The Best Leaders May Be Those Who “Give Up”
by Vu Le

What is required for successful leadership in 21st-century civil society? It is a good question. What kind of leaders do we need in this time and place?

At first, I thought of the leadership paradigms that must shift. In this very challenging time in America’s history, we need leaders who are humble, not arrogant; servants, not heroes; adaptive, not technical; curious, not certain; uniters, not dividers. In addition, they must be able to embrace chaos and complexity, genuinely listen (even to opposing viewpoints), balance continual reflection and quick actions, take big risks, accept failure, and inspire with a vision that includes a place for everyone.

I was thinking of these qualities while on the light rail with my kids, ages five and two, heading home from preschool. They love the train, but on this day, it was crowded and there were no seats. As the train moved, the five-year-old fell against a stranger, while I held the two-year-old and braced for a bumpy ride. Soon, two women seated near us got up. One tapped me on the shoulder, and they insisted the boys and I take their seats. We traded places, and they stood, jostled by the moving train. Although the world has been darker lately, it was nice to be reminded that most people are still kind, still willing to give up their own comfort to help others.

It made me think that while the leadership traits I note above are all necessary, another trait—one we do not talk about often—may be the most important leadership quality of all: The leaders we need in this time and place must be willing to give up things that make their existence comfortable, even meaningful.

A few months ago, I learned about an organization called Can You Not PAC. While there are organizations that encourage and support women, people of color, and LGBTQIA candidates to run for public office, Can You Not’s mission is to discourage straight, white men—who have dominated public office for hundreds of years—from running.

Although the organization “started out as a fun joke,” according to its Facebook page, it does make a critical point. I have seen straight, white men running for public office in neighborhoods where residents are predominantly people of color. Can You Not’s suggestion that these white guys might want to sit it out and use

their influence to lift up others who historically have not had formal power is often unsettling or offensive, even to the most progressive of them. This parallels the thinking of those who say they want to help poor people but oppose the low-income housing unit in their neighborhood. Or those who proclaim they are invested in public education but fight the increase in taxes that would support it.

How is this relevant to civil society? The societal disparities that we as a sector are trying to address are many, but we may be perpetuating them through our own practices and unwillingness to surrender our privilege. For example, the vast majority of nonprofit directors, foundations CEOs, and board members are white. Although the sector is majority women, the leaders of larger, and thus more influential, organizations tend to be cisgender men. And although most people affected by injustice are people of color, only around 10 percent of philanthropic dollars go to organizations led by communities of color.

In light of the challenges facing our communities, civil society leaders must be willing to give up the things they care about, not out of pity and charity, but in recognition of and in response to systemic injustice. Among other things, it means sometimes we men do not apply for that perfect job, even if we think we are well qualified for it. It means white allies sometimes do not take the microphone, literally or figuratively, so that others can have a chance to speak and be heard. It means larger organizations sometimes do not pursue catalytic grants, even if they have a high chance of getting them, and instead support the smaller, grassroots organizations led by marginalized communities. It means foundations share decision-making power with nonprofits and communities who have lived through the inequity they are trying to address.

And, probably hardest of all, it means all of us must let go of our own emotional comfort and ego so that we can have honest conversations about systemic racism, historical and ongoing atrocities, political divisiveness, and other root causes of inequity. By letting go, we can talk about how, in our pursuit of economic gains or existential meaning, we may unwittingly perpetuate injustice even as we seek to end it.

A white colleague of mine once told me that she will never again apply for an executive director position at an organization that serves primarily people of color. Another colleague told me she plans to give her entire inheritance back to the Native community, after discovering that her family’s wealth came from displacing Native families. On the train heading toward a just and equitable society, we must acknowledge who always gets to be conductor, who always is forced to stand and struggle for balance, whether we got our seat only because of unearned privilege, and whether it is now time for us to get up so that another can sit down.

Although it seems that by yielding to others we are giving up a lot, there is also much to gain. My kids on the train, for example, learned a lesson about kindness, which I hope they will pay forward and thus strengthen our community. When each of us, following our leaders, examines our own privileges, power, and resources,
and thoughtfully understands how we got them and when to intentionally let them go, it leads to a better community—one we all benefit from.

But relinquishing the things we are used to having is not easy to do, and there is no certainty that our sacrifices will lead to the ideal outcome. Who is to say that when my white colleague does not apply for this executive director job, it will go to a person of color? What if a guy does not run for office to increase the chances for women candidates to succeed, and another dude runs and wins, but has awful policies? What if I let down my guard, reveal my weaknesses and inexperience with talking about race or transgender identity or disability, and get called out?

There are no guarantees that these things won’t happen. And it is paradoxical that the kind of leaders we need must be willing to give up being a leader at all. However, the comfort of certainty, simplicity, linearity, and clear-cut answers is another privilege that the leaders we need in this time and place must be willing to sacrifice.
The Gardener and the King’s Menagerie
by E. Lily Yu

“Come up, come up, the festival’s here,” the gardener sang, spading the rows, as she did every spring.

Crocodils bloomed snout by green snout out of the wet earth, opening pupils of purple and gold. The massive, pungent elefoils that flowered only once a decade wobbled on their slender stems, then split open. All year the gardener had hurried along with wheelbarrows of potting soil and buckets of water, until the tendrils of her head oozed sap and stuck together, all for this day, for this hour, for her King.

In that country of brief memories and few remembrances, the only constants were the King and the festival. On this morning, a glorious, clamorous procession wound its way through the city, from palace to plaza. Mummers in gold and silver paint tottered down the street, children skipping between their stilts. Lovers tossed tame bumblebees back and forth, gilding their fur with pollen, until the bees were too dizzy to fly. Behind the mummers danced flutes, calliopes, and harps, who bent their hollow bodies and tuned their taut hair for the wind to make a careless music upon.

The gardener followed them, leading her menagerie on a vine: crocodils, elefoils, dandelionesses, and giraffanthus, flightless cassavaries and peaflorets. After her marched soldiers in trellis formation, clad in thorns and glittering with medals like a hedge with morning dew. The General of Poisons rode behind them on a war bamboo, silver rosettes upon her sleeves. Last of all came the King astride a tumbleweed, his perianth held high.

On that sweetly scented day, all who saw the King, from the smallest shoots to the mossiest snag, fell at least a little bit in love. This was not the light and easy romance of green things, dicing with breeze and bee, quickly fruiting and forgotten. This love turned the gardener’s head toward her King, wherever she was, and by degrees kinked and corkscrewed her back, as it did to all subjects who were near him. For that reason the King spent most of his days in the palace’s innermost gardens, out of sight, only emerging for the festival or occasions of state.

If only the King acknowledged her, the gardener thought, she would bristle with suckers, thicken to a respectable girth, and bloom twice in one season. If he

bent his crowned head in approbation, she might even be granted a plot of her own. 

At present she rotated between the mulched beds of the outer gardens, as all the royal servants did, so that each received their allotment of sunlight and rain, and none could spread their roots and grow dull and slow. The gardener had saved four seeds in paper, mementos of past joy, but she had no place to plant them. Although she knew her country was no place for keepsakes and bygones, she longed to see them put forth leaf and root and flower. 

The wind hummed in the harps and whistled through the flutes. The city’s fountains plumed bright and crystal. Dreaming of pasts and futures, the gardener swung her whisk and cane. 

Now and then she glanced behind her, hoping for a sight of the King, but the soldiers’ thistle pikes bristled high as a forest, and she saw no further. Now and then the General or her soldiers kicked aside one of the dandelionesses, or pricked the ankles of an elefoil in their way, and the gardener thought unkind thoughts. 

When the procession turned into a narrow passage between high houses, it slowed and thickened. One crocodil was trodden upon, first by cassavaries, then by the jostling soldiers. A trumpet blatted in its ear, and it lashed its taproot back and forth. 

In close confinement, crowded by the musicians, the dandelionesses began to snarl and snap. As the gardener bent to soothe them, swishing her whisk, the crocodil tore loose from its traces and bowled over a battalion. 

In their confusion, the soldiers parted ranks. The crocodil, seeing its chance, stormed the gap and flew straight at the astonished King. 

He was beautiful, the gardener saw, his flowers many-colored and complex, his leaves like lace, sitting high atop his tumbleweed, but in a moment his fine steed was overthrown, and then her crocodil was trying its best to swallow the King. 

The General barked orders, and her soldiers leapt forward, swinging their pikes. They wrestled the crocodil to the earth and pried open its jaws. 

The King, bleeding bitter milk, wincingly peeled leaf from crushed leaf. He had lost five fine florets and was badly bruised along his stalk. His splendid perianth was pulped. Though the General plucked her own petals for handkerchiefs and offered to impale the crocodil on thorns, the King remained in shock. 

“Put the gardener in prison,” the General said. “Once the King recovers, he shall determine her punishment.” 

And the gardener, protesting, was pulled away from her menagerie. 

The soldiers shut her into a dark and disused cell beneath the palace. The flagstones allowed her no sustenance, and the cupful of stale earth flung into the cell each day was never enough. The only mercies were a seep of water, dark and tasting of moss, and a small slit in one wall, no bigger than a keyhole, that let in a needle of sunlight.
There she waited, growing wan and thin, expecting any day a summons to trial, and then, she imagined, exoneration, a release, and a relieved return to her duties. Who else could tend her menagerie?

But the seasons changed, and no one came.

One day, peering through the hole in the wall, the gardener saw a small young thing pruning the hedge outside the prison. In a voice so frail she hardly recognized it, she called out, “Have you news of the trial?”

“There are no trials, and we have no need for any,” the young thing said. “All is peaceful, and all obey. Who are you, that you do not know this?”

“The gardener.”

“You cannot be the gardener, since I am and have always been.”

“If you are the new gardener, and I am not to be tried or freed, please tell me, how are my dandelionesses, my elefoils, my crocodils? Do they flourish and flower? Do you lead them in the procession with ribbons and bells?”

“What procession? Do you mean our triumphs? Only soldiers parade in those. Elefoils and crocodils and all those monstrous growths are forbidden there. Only a fool would not know that,” the new gardener said. “If you’ll excuse me, I must go tend to the Queen’s lap pansies. They yap and nip and must be mulched.”

“What Queen? Where is the King?”

“We have not had a King since the one killed by a crocodil. Our General nobly nursed him, using her vast knowledge of poisons and cures, but though his injuries were minor, the shock, indeed the disrespect, she said, was too much. Then she who saved us from invasions and caterpillars became Queen. Or so I heard. All this was before my time.”

The old gardener, who was no longer a gardener, subsided upon the flagstones and wept a long tear of sap. And then she raised a stalk to the hole in the mortar, and with what small strength she had left, pressed against the crumbling stone.

Day after day, all of her soul was bent to this task; all of her thoughts were of freedom and the fate of her menagerie.

A long time later, too long to tell, a stone cracked and loosened in its setting. The gardener, struggling, her fibers soft and limp, pushed it from its seat and slipped through the hole.

It was dark. No one saw the gardener, blanched and bent, gliding to the perennial beds where her menagerie grew.

“Come up, come up, the festival’s here,” she sang, as she had so many times before. Although it was night, tendrils stirred, and leaves opened and uncurled.

“Follow me,” she said. One by one they did, the elefoils and giraffanthus, the peaflorets and dandelionesses, sagging and shambling, limp and yellow, up an espaliered vine and over the palace wall, then out of the bright, terrible, poisonous city and into the moonlit wild.

They went a great distance over rocky ground, the sun burning them, the night chilling them. The menagerie grew hardy while the gardener weakened.
When she felt the green leaving her, she gave her four seeds to her elefoils and
dandelionesses and giraffanthus and peaflorets.

“Plant these north and east and west and south,” she said, “that I might be
remembered, when nothing else is.” When the wind turned, she stiffened to black
stalk and broken husks and spoke no more.

Her menagerie dug and burrowed and buried the seeds. Some time later, they
put out their own pods and fruit, and then they too withered.

When spring came again, the crocodils and giraffanthus and dandelionesses
that sprouted grew rank and untended. Knowing no tameness, they bit and
scratched one another, hunted and fled.

From the gardener’s seeds grew four white flowers, mute and lame and lovely,
and on the petals of each was written a quarter of the gardener’s sorrows. But no
one came into the wilderness to read them. Soon they faded and were forgotten.
The Pulley
by George Herbert
(1593–1633)

When God at first made man,
Having a glass of blessings standing by,
“Let us,” said he, “pour on him all we can.
Let the world’s riches, which dispersèd lie,
Contract into a span.”

So strength first made a way;
Then beauty flowed, then wisdom, honour, pleasure.

When almost all was out, God made a stay,
Perceiving that, alone of all his treasure,
Rest in the bottom lay.

“For if I should,” said he,
“Bestow this jewel also on my creature,
He would adore my gifts instead of me,
And rest in Nature, not the God of Nature;
So both should losers be.

“Yet let him keep the rest,
But keep them with repining restlessness;
Let him be rich and weary, that at least,
If goodness lead him not, yet weariness
May toss him to my breast.”
William Mecham and Tom Merry, *No Surrender* (1891)
St. Stephen's Review Presentation Cartoon, originally published on August 1, 1891
Nicholas K. Robinson Collection of Caricature, Trinity College Dublin
The best questions arise from careful listening (to the author, oneself, and others), and from the spontaneity of wonder

Cristina Perri Rossi, “Breaking the Speed Record”
- What drives our runner? How do you feel about his approaching record?
- What prompts our runner to stop? Is stopping an act of courage or cowardice? Neither?
- Why do you become attached to particular goals? When does this attachment become destructive?
- When is surrender an attachment to something greater?

Vu Le, “The Best Leaders May Be Those Who ‘Give Up’”
- What is the story on the train? What does it mean to you?
- When does your attachment to our good work stand in the way of an even greater benefit?
- What keeps you from surrendering to a greater good?
- Are you called to lead by “giving up”?

E. Lily Lu, “The Gardener and the King’s Menagerie”
- How does the gardener view her task?
- Should the gardener be held accountable for the actions of the crocodil?
- How does the gardener endure her captivity?
- Is the rule of the Queen a revolution or a renewal?

- Do you view the ending as the gardener fulfilling or abandoning her task?
- Who do you serve, and to what end?

George Herbert, “The Pulley”
- Read the poem aloud: What words, images, and/or feelings does the poem evoke in you?
- What does the poem say about the place of human beings in creation?
- What does God withhold?
- Is this a poem of attachment or surrender?
- What restlessness aches in you? To what are you longing to be tossed?

William Mecham and Tom Merry, No Surrender (1891)
- Set a timer and look at the image for 3 minutes: What do you see? What feelings does the image evoke?
- The context is Irish protest against British rule in the 1890s, well before Irish independence. What are the image’s positive demands?
- With whom in the image are we supposed to sympathize?
- When is surrender not an option? And at what cost?

General questions for the week
- What does attachment mean to you?
- Does surrender have negative or positive connotations for you?
- Can surrender ever be a victory? Why? How?
- What are your attachments? Are they rightly ordered? How do you know?
General Principles for Participants

- Read the text(s) to be discussed in their entirety (ideally twice)
- Make notes about what you understand, don’t understand, agree or disagree with
- Focus comments and conversation on the ideas expressed in the shared text(s), not on outside knowledge
- Seek to understand your fellow participants, not to persuade them
- Be freely authentic and morally present
- Listen to the text, to others, and to yourself

General principles for discussion leaders:

- Hold the space for honesty and vulnerability: be honest and vulnerable yourself
- Ask questions, don’t teach: the aim is shared understanding and meaning, not agreement
- Be attached to the conversation: avoid rigidly following your planned order of questions
- Make sure every voice is heard: don’t move too quickly to fill the silence
- Start and end on time: end not with conclusions but with questions you’re taking away

Format:

- Match the texts to the time allotted (Each text can productively stimulate 20-40 minutes of discussion, and can be read discussed individually or together in one sitting, depending on the time available; it is better to end with more to be said, rather than straining to fill the time)
- Begin with introductions:
  - name (if not everyone is well known to one another)

Some helpful tips to keep the conversation going (for discussion leaders and participants):

- “say more about that”
- “where do you see that in the text?”
- “how is that related to what N said earlier?”
- “do you think that’s true?”
- “do others see it the same way?”
- “what did you see in the text that we haven’t addressed?”