



This month's circle tale is written by Patsy Tacker, who traveled from New Hampshire to be a participant at the March Art of Hosting seminar on Whidbey. She left enthused and ready to change the world one conversation at a time, as she relates in this story "Shuttle Bus Wisdom."

CircleTale #58: April 2005 Shuttle Bus Wisdom

In preparation for the recent "Art of Hosting and Convening Meaningful Conversations" event held at Marsh House on Whidbey Island in March, our hosts invited us to share with everyone a response to the question, "What is the next conversation you plan to host following the workshop?" With a little less flair for the dramatic, I might have answered, "With the shuttle bus driver and passengers on the way from Mukilteo Ferry dock back to the airport."

But then, I could not foresee a conversation that would wind its way from small talk of the activities of Boeing in the Seattle area, through traffic nightmares and overpopulation, upcoming vacations and work in Arizona, to the political climate in Venezuela. Then there was the larger question of whether President Hugo Chavez is sincerely sharing the oil wealth of his country with the underprivileged millions, or whether there is one more dictatorship in the making. Our fellow passenger had lived in Venezuela for two years in an effort to better understand his own heritage, and is married to a Venezuelan woman. I asked him directly, "Do you see the activities of Chavez as moving in a positive direction, or negative?" Following a pregnant pause, he admitted that he really doesn't know. "It looks good – he's bringing in thousands of doctors to work in the slums of Venezuela, where no Venezuelan doctors will go - but at the same time, he's shoring up the military, and in the long run will probably end up just like all the others."

When the driver arrived at the airline where our fellow passenger departed, luggage was unloaded, wishes for well-being were exchanged, and the driver walked around the van to take us to our destination. As he climbed into the driver's seat he commented, "Now that was great. Look how much you learned about each other in one short drive. And what interesting conversation! I can't tell you how many people I drive who get in with their cell phones and unload verbal diarrhea the entire way to the airport, talking with someone somewhere else about absolutely nothing, and never even acknowledge the other folks sitting right there with them."

The whole encounter was the finest affirmation I could imagine for the work we had just explored in the art of hosting, and for the rippling effects in the great wide world as we practice, practice, practice.

If you have a tale to tell, contact the PeerSpirit office and we'll help you share it.

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