

The Day the Elections Rocked Our World - *a personal story*

I will never forget teaching a group of 15+ individuals from a civil society organization in the USA. It was the start of Day 3 of the 4-day course, and engagement had been high. The day before there was much evidence of learning and individuals left the venue at the end of the day excited to dig into the work of designing a workshop they planned to use. However, that evening was Election Day 2016 and to many people's shock Donald Trump was elected into office.

I arrived early that day, not knowing what I would see as people arrived. Frankly, I wasn't even sure if participants would show up. I knew the unexpected news would hit them hard.

To my surprise, everyone arrived on time. Although they were physically present, clearly each of them was utterly shattered. There was no way they would be able to step back into the course right away.

I needed to open the space for the emotions being felt. So, I decided to use a [talking circle](#), to offer each person the space to share what was on their hearts and minds while minimizing negative banter or unhelpful anger or ranting. They needed to sit in the space in solidarity.

Tears flowed, shock and frustration were shared, and hearts were emptied. It took time for some people to find their voice, but slowly everyone felt able to enter the day and re-enter the course. In fact, it took almost 2 hours, but it was what we all needed to start our day.

Life happens, and we often need to make space for it.

by Jeanette Romkema, GLP Senior Partner