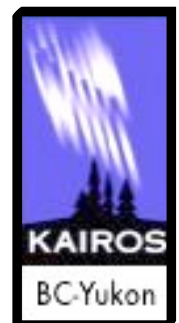
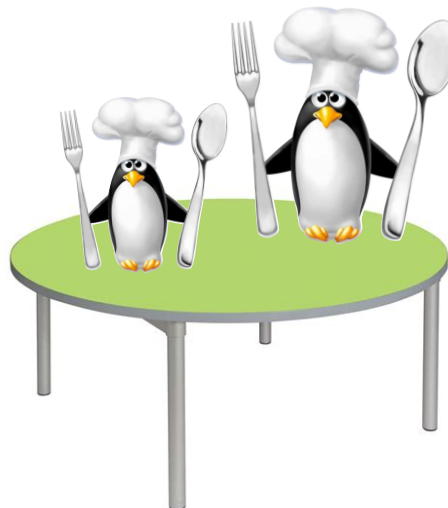


*My world is melting and few seem to care. Why is that?*



# TABLE TALK

a **tool** for change that fills bellies with good food while enabling conversations about *really important stuff*



## Why use this tool:

- to draw the KAIROS circle wider in your community
- to deepen existing relationships
- to explore new ways of being community activists together
- to begin an important conversation about systemic change and the end of modernity
- to find ways to support each other through climate chaos and the long emergency

*“As long as unending growth and consumption are the only intelligible horizons of progress and hope, we are stuck in a place where the solutions of the past no longer fit our present challenges, but we are unable to imagine otherwise. And yet, we also know this is unsustainable. We cannot ignore that, whether it is happening quickly or slowly, “the waters are rising”. We need to prepare for when it will be possible to swim. We need to learn from other swimmers. We need to learn to assist with the inevitable death of a system that has given us many gifts, but also caused incredible harm. We also need to learn to assist with the birth of something new, undefined, potentially (but not necessarily) wiser, without suffocating the baby in the process. We need to face up to the reality of the same mistakes we have been repeatedly making in order to only make new and different mistakes in the future. We need to learn we are part of one large metabolism, that we are connected and inter-dependent in our vulnerabilities, and that turning our back to each other is like severing our own limbs.”* -Vanessa Andreotti



## What you will need:

- two or three people to help organize
- food for the meal (lunch, dinner, whatever works best)
- location that is accessible and appropriate for serving a meal and hosting a conversation comfortably
- questions to explore together

## How this tool works:

timeline- one month before the event, contact people who might be interested in attending.

Minimum # of guests- 5    Maximum #- 25

Suggested guests: people from local churches, students from college or university, new Canadians, business people, all ages, cultures, etc. As diverse a group as possible.

How to contact- Create a digital poster for sharing. Bulletin and newsletter inserts. Personal networks. Local community social media groups.

RSVP is required in order to provide enough food and address any dietary issues.



Registrants should be contacted 3 days before with a reminder.

Day of event: Meal could be as simple as a pot of homemade soup and buns, to ordering in pizza or asking a local restaurant or caterer to help, etc. A vegetarian choice is usually a good idea. Much will depend on your budget. This meal should be offered free of charge, but a donation jar is also fine.

Length of Event: 90 minutes (or longer if everyone is in agreement)

First 30-40 minutes- eating and getting to know one another. Begin with a territorial acknowledgement and an expression of gratitude for the food and the coming together for this sharing of sustenance for the body, mind and spirit. Encourage everyone to introduce themselves at their tables. Name tags might be a good idea, especially if you are working with a larger group and few people know each other.

Distribute questions to each table of 4-5. Spend the next 30-35 minutes engaged in Table Talk. Each table could have a facilitator or not.

Last 10-15 minutes: large group conversation about next steps and expressions of gratitude.

## Conversation questions for each table:

Below are ten questions to choose from. Select one or two, depending on their complexity, and what conversation you believe is important for your community at this time. Remember this is an opening conversation.

Source: Gesturing Towards Decolonial Futures

<https://decolonialfutures.net/>

- 1. How has the climate crisis and its interconnections impacted your life? How have these impacts informed, shaped, or complicated your work and values?*
- 2. What are some of the pleasures of petrocultures that you enjoy? What are some of the characteristics of petro-modernity that you will miss or are reluctant to let go?*
- 3. What could more just climate futures look like if we were to honour our deep interconnections with each other, the land, and all the world's living beings? How could we begin that groundwork here and now today?*
- 4. Imagine what life will be like on Earth in 10, 20 and 50 years time. Share your ideas and look for common themes.*
- 5. How is material prosperity here created by poverty somewhere else? How do poor (or rather, impoverished) countries and peoples subsidize our comforts, securities and pleasures? How do we benefit from exploitation, expropriation and destitution? How are we complicit in harm? Why don't people talk about this? Why can't people stop this?*
- 6. How are we consuming the planet and making it un-inhabitable? Why do people deny that the current patterns of ecological destruction, consumption and exploitation are unsustainable? How long do we have left? How are we going to face the end of the world as we know it?*
- 7. Where does the separation between (hu)man and nature come from? Why do we see ourselves as separate from the Earth and from each other? What are the consequences of thinking and feeling we are separated from nature and from each other? How could Indigenous knowledges and practices inspire us to figure out how to feel interconnected and responsible for everything (without appropriating, projecting onto, or idealizing them)? How does greed work and how could it be interrupted?*

**8.** *How has formal education colonized our hearts, intellect and imagination with messages about and desires for individualistic urban consumerism?*

**9.** *How do we prepare to face the global challenges and crises ahead of us? How can we unlearn harmful ways of thinking, feeling, doing, relating, knowing and being? What will it take for us to wake up and do the difficult and uncomfortable work that needs to be done when many people just want to feel good, to look good and have a good time? When will this work be most needed?*

**10.** *Life overview questions:*

*How has society changed over the years from your perspective?*

*How have you changed over the years? How have your priorities changed? What were the most difficult times for you? What were the most interesting times?*

*What were the times of most growth for you? What were the times of most intense joy?*

*What challenges is humanity facing now that could not have been anticipated when you were a child?*

*What challenges was humanity facing when you were a child that people often fail to remember today?*

*What kind of conversations would have been helpful in the course of your life?*

*What kinds of questions and conversations could help humanity prepare for the challenges ahead?*

**Follow up suggestions to build community:**

Agree to meet again for lunch and another round of Table Talk.

Let whatever happens, happen. Some groups may want to continue to meet in this way. Others may like to change the format and begin to do other kinds of actions together. There is no one way to proceed. Focus on strengthening relationships and letting things happen organically.



# Useful Quotes, Poems, and Reflections

ME: Why am I alive?

OLD WOMAN: Because everything else is.

ME: No. I mean the purpose.

OLD WOMAN: That is the purpose. To learn about your relatives.

ME: My family?

OLD WOMAN: Yes. The moon, stars, rocks, trees, plants, water, insects, birds, mammals. Your whole family. Learn about that relationship. How you're moving through time and space together. That's why you're alive.

***Richard Wagamese***

Being fully present to fear, to gratitude, to all that is- this is the practice of mutual belonging. As living members of the living body of Earth, we are grounded in that kind of belonging. We will find more ways to remember, celebrate, and affirm this deep knowing: we belong to each other, we belong to Earth. Even when faced with cataclysmic changes, nothing can ever separate us from her. We are already home. The practice of mutual belonging is the medicine for the sickness of the small self and can accompany us through ... the hard times ahead. ***Joanna Macy***

Human conversation is the most ancient and easiest way to cultivate the conditions for change—personal change, community and organizational change, planetary change. If we can sit together and talk about what's important to us, we begin to come alive.

***Margaret Wheatley***

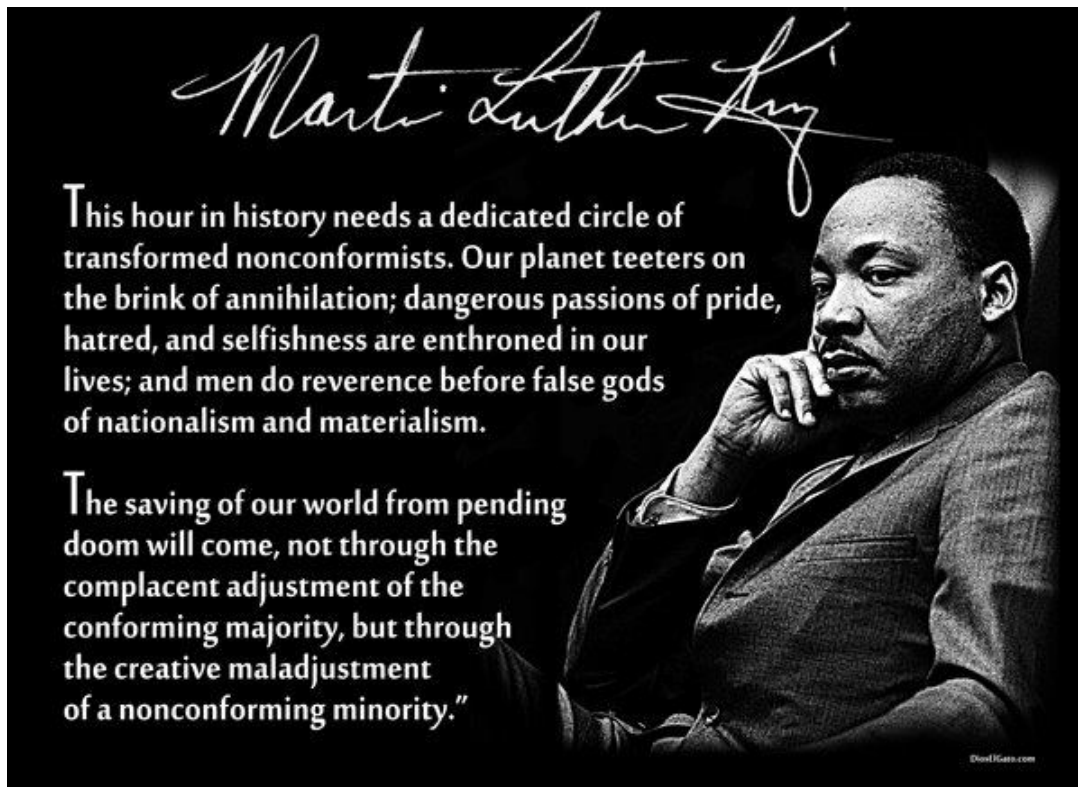
Hope locates itself in the premises that we don't know what will happen and that in the spaciousness of uncertainty is room to act. When you recognize uncertainty, you recognize that you may be able to influence the outcomes — you alone or you in concert with a few dozen or several million others. Hope is an embrace of the unknown and the unknowable, an alternative to the certainty of both optimists and pessimists. Optimists think it will all be fine without our involvement; pessimists take the opposite position; both excuse themselves from acting. It's the belief that what we do matters even though how and when it may matter, who and what it may impact, are not things we can know beforehand. We may not, in fact, know them afterward either, but they matter all the same, and history is full of people whose influence was most powerful after they were gone. ***Rebecca Solnit***

In human affairs, no single person, organization or social formation ever has a final or an absolutely correct position. It is through conversation, debate and critical discussion that we approach positions that may provide workable solutions. ***Nelson Mandela***

No matter how dark the days, we can find light in our own hearts, and we can be one another's light. We can beam light out to everyone we meet. We can let others know we are present for them, that we will try to understand. We cannot stop all the destruction, but we can light candles for one another. ***Mary Pipher***

Hope is not the conviction that something will turn out well, but the certainty that something is worth doing, no matter how it turns out. ***Victor Havel***

It's 3:23 in the morning  
and I'm awake  
because my great great grandchildren  
won't let me sleep  
my great great grandchildren  
ask me in dreams  
what did you do while the planet was plundered?  
what did you do when the earth was unraveling?  
**Drew Dellinger**



I get optimism from the earth itself. I feel that as long as the earth can make a spring every year, I can. As long as the earth can flower and produce nurturing fruit, I can, because I'm the earth. I won't give up until the earth gives up. **Alice Walker**

As we consider the need for bold initiatives by visionary leaders, we must also keep in mind the deeper questions that rarely find their way into political debates or public discourse. "What is the source of true happiness and well-being?" "What is the purpose of economic life?" "What does it mean to be human on a living spaceship with finite resources?" "What is the human role in the great drama of evolution's continued unfolding?" These are deeply spiritual questions that call us to an epic quest of discovery and the great work of redesigning our societies to bring forth the world of our shared human dream. There is a need for people of faith to step forward to make these questions a part of our public conversation as a nation through initiatives such as the Network of Spiritual Progressives and through our churches, synagogues, mosques, and our other religious and spiritual institutions.  
**David Korten**

## **Bones Left Broken**

(adapted from poem: <https://decolonialfutures.net/portfolio/po-ethic-inquiry-7-broken-bones/>)

Imagine a broken limb with an open fracture  
and broken bones left un-connected, already  
calcifying, with an infected wound on top

Imagine that in order to heal it we put a Band-Aid on  
the wound, a cast around the limb, and we take  
powerful opioids as anaesthetic without re-joining the  
bones

The Band-Aids are super exciting: they are colourful,  
hopeful and make us feel really good  
they are simplistic solutions that promise us hope and  
comfort - “everything is going to be ok”

The plaster casts make the limb look functional:  
they are culturally sensitive and artistically crafted  
they give us the warm fuzzy feeling of community and  
care (as long as we don't mention the disjointed bones)

The anaesthetic numbs the chronic acute pain  
celebrating avoidances, denials, delirious and delicious  
distractions - we feel powerful as we escape into bliss  
and indulge with the consumption of pleasurable  
hope

For rehabilitation we would need:  
to cut the cast to expose what is hidden underneath  
to rip off the Band-Aids with the mess of glue and hair  
to scoop the rotten flesh to stop the infection  
to disinfect the wound with stinging anti-septic, and  
to break the tips of each bone again to remove  
the calcification so that the bones can be put together  
again

Who wants to go first?  
When will this choice (of doing it or not) no longer be  
viable?

Patience is not waiting passively until someone else does something. Patience asks us to live the moment to the fullest, to be completely present to the moment, to taste the here and now, to be where we are. When we are impatient, we try to get away from where we are. We behave as if the real thing will happen tomorrow, later, and somewhere else. Be patient and trust that the treasure you are looking for is hidden in the ground on which you stand.

**Henri J.M. Nouwen**

