



Conocimiento

Conocimiento is based on a pre-Columbian Meso-american tradition of educating the future leadership. A group of young men would be identified from the warrior, priestly, merchant, royal family castes. Those of the peasant or artisan caste could be included if they showed promise. These young men would attend a *calmecac*, a kind of academy. One of the operating principles of the *calmecac* was that destiny was very strong force in one's life and the date of your birth had strong portents for one's future. Also, and more relevant to us, is a strong belief that your family's history has a great impact on who you would become. This Aztec practice also helped to build community by building cross-societal relationships.

Conocimiento now is a psychosocial historical process where one holistically develops insight into who one's fellow participants are. This exercise is useful for teambuilding, identifying and honoring both commonalities and differences, and clarifying a key cultural component - values. This helps build bonds with others by creating greater understanding among the participants. Conocimiento can be useful in repairing relationships because it helps people understand where others are coming from.

Ground rules

- Participants don't have to answer all questions
- Participants don't have to tell us why
- Everything is confidential
- The responses are accepted for what they are; there is no pre-determined quality of the work.

The actual process is conducted in the following manner.

- Sheets flip chart paper and colored markers are distributed to all the participants.
- All are encouraged to write their answers in large enough script to be legible.
- The facilitator then presents the first set of 3 – 5 questions, reads them aloud and explains them as necessary. The following sets of questions are presented in a similar manner.
- When all the questions are answered, there is a break, where all are invited to read their colleagues answers.

- After the break, the facilitator asks everyone to read all or part of their responses to the whole group. As an alternative, the facilitator asks each person to read someone else's responses. If there are time constraints and the one is asked to read only a few of responses, often the leader asks the respondents to share one more response, one that struck a chord with them.
- After all have spoken the facilitator or respondents will summarize some of the lessons learned during the Conocimiento.
- Respondents are invited to keep their responses to future reflection and to mark their development.

List of Questions:

Personal history/identity

1. What is your name? Is there a story to your name? Are you named after someone?
2. How would you parents, grandparents identify themselves? (If a Patagonian asked them, what are you, what would they say?)
3. What do you call yourself? How would you identify yourself? What are you?
4. How would your parents categorize themselves by class? What were their professions or jobs?
5. How did you grandparents make their living?
6. What is your favorite comfort food?
7. What is your birth order?

Values

8. What aspirations did your parents have for you?
 - a. What did your father want you to be?
 - b. What did your mother want for you?
9. Who did your parents hold up as an example for you?
10. How did you know when you were doing right by your parents?
11. If you brought a partner home, who would be most accepted by your parents? Who would be least accepted?
12. Who, in your youth, was an example that inspired you?
 - a. Now - Is there someone that you aspire to be like?
 - b. At 18, what did you want to become?
 - c. Who did you want to emulate when you were 21 years old?
13. What words of wisdom did your parents share with you?
14. What is your current personal motto? What words do you live by today?

15. What were the three most important things that ever happened to you in your life?
16. How have these three things continued to affect you?
17. What was the greatest loss in your life? How does that continue to affect you?
18. What legacy do you want to leave? (to your child, nephew, the world) How do you want to be remembered?
19. What incident in your life put you on the road to this place?
20. Five years from now, where do you want to be?
21. Have you ever been in a place where you were totally foreign? What was that like?
22. Where have you felt the least conscious of yourself? Where have you felt the most conscious of yourself? Where do you feel the most free?
23. What has been your most recent 'a-ha' moment? What was your latest epiphany about something? What was it?