

Land and Business How-To Guide

The stories in this theme explore the many ways individuals and businesses interact with the environment and the challenges that arise when balancing environmental sustainability and economic development. The oral history selections reveal the personal challenges and triumphs of people who profit from and protect the earth. They encourage new perspectives on how we think about environmentalism, economic development, and other important issues.

This document includes information on materials you'll need, the roles for various participants in the program, what you need to do before the program, information on the arc of dialogue, and instructions for facilitating the program.

Materials

Download the following from Listentoeveryone.com: audio clips, How-To Guide (this document), PowerPoint slides, and transcripts. The audio clips for this theme are:

- Three Generations Working (Glenn Harrison)
- Against Pollution (Ellen Weir)
- Locally Sourced Food (Brent Leonard)
- Starting to Recycle (Carol Malz)
- Natural Resources (Brian Ryther)
- Wall Street and Orchards (Wilfred Bruneau)
- Farming and Conservation (Jennifer Huntington)

*Note: all content for this program can be found at the following URL:

listentoeveryone.com/land-and-business/

You'll need a laptop, smartphone, or iPod as well as external speakers to play the audio files. In addition, we recommend that you use a separate computer and projector to show the PowerPoint slides—rather than trying to play the audio clips and show the PowerPoint from the same device, as this can be difficult to manage, especially when you are also facilitating the program.

Roles

These titles will be used throughout the guide, to distinguish roles.

- Facilitator – This person leads the program. They read from the Program Outline (included at the end of this document), play the audio selections, and lead the discussion. They use a combination of ground rules, questions, and activities to ensure that all participants communicate effectively with each other. Their job is not to be an expert on the content, but rather to make sure that everyone can find their place in the conversation.



- Participant – These are the people who participate in the program. They listen to the audio selections and engage in conversation. They should feel comfortable expressing their opinions and gain insights into different perspectives from fellow participants.

Before the Program

- Ensure that everyone involved in creating and executing the program understands that the primary goal is to encourage conversation and understanding among participants, not for participants to gain specific factual knowledge.
- Familiarize yourself with the oral history material. Listening to the clips several times in advance and reading through the transcripts and question prompts will give you greater flexibility when leading the discussion.
- Download the audio clips and PowerPoint slides onto your preferred devices. Print out this How to Guide and the transcripts for each participant.
- It's a good idea to have some refreshments available, so don't forget to buy coffee, tea, and cookies. People are always in a better mood when they're not hungry!
- Immediately before the program, set up and test your equipment.
- Immediately before the program, set up the room. We recommend placing chairs in a circle. Even if this is not feasible in your space, place chairs in a way so as many people can see each other as possible.

Notes on Facilitating

- It is important to ask open-ended questions that all participants can answer without any specialized knowledge or prior research.
- Facilitators are not working to make everyone agree, although some participants may seek this agreement. If this occurs, facilitators should work to remind participants that the program's goal is to further personal and collective learning, not to accomplish a specific task.
- Some participants will be more talkative than others. Except during the introduction, not everyone needs to talk. However, one or two people should not be allowed to dominate the conversation.
- It is the facilitator's job to make sure everyone who wants to speak has a chance to speak. Be aware of who has spoken and who has not yet spoken. Use different strategies to encourage everyone to speak—e.g. small group discussions.



- Facilitators should refrain from sharing their own stories. The facilitator’s role is to promote dialogue, not to dominate the conversation.
- Do not be afraid of the silence after a question has been asked; give participants time to think about the questions before answering.
- It is a good idea to repeat questions to ensure that all participants have heard them. Use of a microphone is recommended, especially with audiences that may include participants with hearing impairments.
- The facilitator does not need to ask all of the questions listed in the how-to guide—in fact, doing so would likely be impossible, unless one wants the program to last for three hours! Be selective and keep things moving at a moderate pace.
- It is acceptable to ask follow-up questions based on participants’ responses.

The “Arc of Dialogue”

This program follows the “arc of dialogue,” which has been developed by the International Coalition of Sites of Conscience.*

Phase One (Community Building)

All participants introduce themselves to one another and answer an easy and accessible question. This allows people to build relationships with one another, which leads to a more productive discussion. When everyone is given the opportunity to share at the beginning of a program, they feel more comfortable contributing to the discussion later.

Phase Two (Sharing the Diversity of our Experiences)

Participants listen to audio selections from oral history interviews and then share their own experiences with the group. They listen to several clips, discuss the topic, listen to more clips, and then talk some more. Each person’s responses are treated equally. Questions during this phase help participants think about how individuals’ experiences are similar and different.

Phase Three (Exploring Perspectives Beyond Our Own Experiences)

Participants listen to additional audio selections from oral history interviews and then reflect on others’ perspectives. In addition, they explore the program’s theme more broadly. Participants listen to several clips, discuss the topic, listen to more clips, and then talk some more. During this phase, the group actively examines the underlying social conditions that impact how people think about important issues.



Phase Four (Synthesizing the Learning Experience)

During this phase, the facilitator asks one or more questions to synthesize the experience and help the group reflect on what they have learned from listening to the oral history clips and speaking with each other. Participants are also encouraged to decide what, if any, next steps they would like to take. This phase should reinforce a sense of community, but participants do not have to agree with each other.

*For more information on the “arc of dialogue,” visit the [International Coalition of Sites of Conscience](#)’s website.

Program Outline for Facilitator

Below is a detailed outline for the program. Use this as a roadmap while facilitating.

- Welcome – Introduce yourself, say who you are, briefly explain the purpose of the program and the agenda, and go over ground rules.
 - Agenda
 - Introductions
 - Listen to oral history selections
 - Use those oral histories as a jumping off point for conversation about education. Our hope is that oral histories can serve as a basis for an informed and civil dialogue about how we learn and how others learn.
 - A simple way to think about it is: We’ll listen then we’ll talk, then we’ll listen some more, and we’ll talk some more.
 - Share ground rules
 - Be respectful.
 - Make sure that everyone has a turn to speak.
 - Focus your comments on the oral histories.
- Phase I – Community Building

Everyone in the room should briefly introduce themselves, including the facilitator. Make sure all voices in the room are heard. When everyone is given the opportunity to share at the beginning of a program, they feel more comfortable contributing to the discussion later.

Question for Introductions

- Give us your name and where you live, and tell us about a type of plant or animal you feel connected to.



- Phase II – Sharing the Diversity of Our Experiences

Start by playing three audio selections: Glenn Harrison, Ellen Weir, and Brent Leonard.

Before playing each selection, share the person’s bio and a brief description of what will be discussed in the selection.

Glenn Harrison

- Interviewed by Kahla Woodling, November 12, 2012
- File Name: 1. Glenn_Harrison_Three_Generations_Working

Glenn Harrison Clip Description:

Glenn Harrison was born and raised in Mt. Vision, NY. His family has lived in Otsego County since the 1790s and has been very involved in various agricultural industries, including running dairy farms. He was also active in various community organizations, such as the local Methodist Church and the Grange. In this clip, he talks about working in a lumber mill and on dairy farms.

Ellen Weir

- Interviewed by Michelle Paulus, November 14, 2012
- File Name: 2. Ellen_Weir_Against_Pollution

Ellen Weir Clip Description:

Ellen Weir was born in 1951 and grew up in Cooperstown, New York. She has been passionate about environmental issues from an early age. After receiving a master’s degree in clinical psychology from John F. Kennedy University in California, Ellen returned to Cooperstown and ran two small businesses, a boutique and a store selling health and beauty products. In this clip, she talks about her early environmental activism.

Brent Leonard

- Interviewed by John Varley, November 9, 2015
- File Name: 3. Brent_Leonard_Locally_Sourced_Food

Brent Leonard Clip Description:

Brent Leonard was born in 1961 and has lived in Cooperstown, New York for most of his life. Brent and his wife Mary are co-owners of Carefree Gardens, a garden center in Cooperstown. They have three children, a son and two daughters. His daughters are involved in the locally-sourced foods movement and started Origins Café in the garden center’s greenhouse in 2011.



After playing the clips, use these discussion questions:

*You may choose to have participants respond to this question in a pair-share format. Participants share their responses first with a partner and then with the full group. Not everyone needs to share with the full group.

- What issues do people think about when they run a business?
- What is your family's perspective on nature and the environment?
- What do people in your family do for work?
- How does your family think about working and economic development?
- Has anyone in your life affected how you think about the environment?
- Has anyone in your life affected how you think about economic development?
- Who or what first taught you about environmentalism and what did you learn?
- How have you seen businesses help or harm the environment?
- How have you interacted with nature in your job? (I.e. working outdoors, environmental policy, using resources)
- Do you experience nature differently or similarly to your parents?
- Do you experience your work environment differently or similarly to your parents?

- Phase III – Exploring Perspectives Beyond Our Own Experiences

Play two more clips: Carol Malz and Brian Ryther.

Carol Malz

- Interviewed by Karina Kowalski, November 21, 2017
- File Name: 4. Carol_Malz_Starting_to_Recycle

Carol Malz Clip Description:

Carol Malz was born in 1962 and grew up on Long Island. She lives in Oneonta, New York and works as a lawyer. During her time as president of the Otsego County Conservation Association, she started the organization's annual Earth Festival. At the Earth Festival, people in Otsego County come together to recycle.

Brian Ryther

- Interviewed by Alexander Dubois, November 30, 2013
- File Name: 5. Brian_Ryther_Natural_Resources

Brian Ryther Clip Description:

Brian Ryther produces maple syrup in New Lisbon, New York, the town where he was born in 1977. Alongside his father and brother, Mr. Ryther spent his childhood collecting and boiling maple sap from the family's trees. He studied industrial construction, and used these skills when building equipment for his sugar house. In 2006, he established his own company, Mill Hollow Maple. In this story, Mr. Ryther talks about how he cares for his trees.



After playing the clips, use these discussion questions:

- What are some of the ways natural resource extraction can affect the environment?
- In what ways do we associate wealth or economic prosperity with natural resource extraction?
- What do you think the presence of natural resources, such as timber, maple syrup, or natural gas, in a region means for people who live there?
- Should people take environmental concerns into account when they run a business?
- What is more important, environmental or business concerns?
- Do you think being environmentally friendly helps or harms businesses?

Play two more clips: Wilfred Bruneau and Jennifer Huntington.

Wilfred Bruneau

- Interviewed by James Matson, November 9, 2017
- File Name: 6. Wilfred_Bruneau_Wal_Street_Orchards

Wilfred Bruneau Clip Description:

Wilfred Bruneau was born in 1944 and grew up in Massachusetts and New Hampshire. He had a long career in the tech industry working for IBM and then the Digital Equipment Corporation. After he retired, he and his wife Joan bought Middlefield Orchard and began developing what is now an expansive and growing fruit and vegetable farm. In this clip, he talks about the effect of Wall Street on the agricultural business.

Jennifer Huntington

- Interviewed by Kate Webber, November 1, 2015
- File Name: 7. Jennifer_Huntington_Farming_Conservation

Jennifer Huntington Clip Description:

Jennifer Huntington is the owner of the Cooperstown Holstein Corporation in Middlefield, New York. She was born in Cooperstown in 1962. She has spent her life in the Cooperstown area, apart from four years studying Dairy Science at Cornell University. She inherited her farm from her father, and has worked it for the past 25 years. In this story, Ms. Huntington talks about why it is important to farmers to protect the land.

After playing the clips, use these discussion questions:

- Who should benefit from the natural resources in a region?
- What are our most important natural resources?
- What should the role of the government be?
- How has economic development helped and harmed your community?
- Do you think how businesses interact with the environment has changed?



- Phase IV – Synthesizing the Learning Experience

Because dialogue programs reveal differences as well as similarities between participants, it is important to end by reinforcing a sense of community. All dialogue programs should end with synthesizing questions/activities.

Final discussion questions:

- What would you like to learn more about?
- What is one action you can take to support your local economy or help your local environment?
- Has anything you've heard today changed your mind about something?

Be sure to thank everyone for participating and invite them to have some additional refreshments and, perhaps, to continue informal conversations.

