

What is Convening?

From *Center for Purposeful Leadership*

Convening is different from facilitation.

Facilitation is 'the process of making things easy or easier.'

Conveners invite participants to co-create the highest possible outcome for a meeting or gathering.

"Meetings are a waste of time," is a sentiment many of us share, which is tragic, because meetings bring us together as human beings. To achieve the kind of meaning or breakthrough results most of us really yearn for when we gather, the key quality needed is *authentic engagement*: a genuine expression of what is true for us, and an attentive listening to what is true for others. Why it so often eludes us can be a matter of habit, distrust, lack of attention, or fear.

Convening goes beyond facilitating. Convening creates an environment in which all voices are heard, profound exchanges take place, and transformative action results. The heart ... is the Convening Wheel, a series of nine steps, or Aspects, that bring the practices and principles needed for authentic engagement together as a whole. (To convene is to) master both the inner and outer dimensions of this work, because, in convening, the state of the Convener is equally as important as the physical preparations.

Read [The Art of Convening](#), the source document for this information, to learn more.

Here are the nine Aspects of the Convening Wheel.

1. **At the Heart of the Matter.** *Who am I to be, in relationship to others?*
2. **Clarifying Intent.** *What is my intent (desired outcome) for this engagement?*
3. **The Invitation.** *How will I extend a sincere invitation that integrates the purpose and my intent for the engagement?*
4. **Setting Context.** *How will I communicate the intent, form, function, and purpose of our engagement?*
5. **Creating the Container.** *What will optimize the physical and energetic space in which we meet?*
6. **Hearing All the Voices.** *What assures each person speaks, is heard, and is present and accounted for?*
7. **Essential Conversation.** *What assures meaningful exchange within an atmosphere of trust?*
8. **Creation.** *What allows something new to emerge?*
9. **Commitment to Action.** *What fosters an individual and/or collective agreement to be responsible and accountable for the way forward?*