

Color / Advance

 participants




 15 min



Purpose

Practice deep listening, synthesis, and validation.

Muscles

-  Listening actively
-  Giving / receiving feedback
-  Synthesizing / validating

1. Take a few minutes to **consider a question.** (See reverse for suggestions.)
2. **Decide who will share first.**
3. Start **sharing your answer.**
4. Your partner should **instruct you either to “color” or “advance”** whenever it feels appropriate. If she or he says, “Color,” slow down and start going into more detail. If she or he says, “Advance,” move on to the next part of the story. Your partner should offer these instructions at least 3-5 times over the course of a 2-5 minute story.
5. **Switch with your partner, and repeat the exercise.**
6. Quickly **debrief the exercise.** *What did you notice? How did you feel? What did you learn?*

Color / Advance is a variation of a listening exercise that gives the listener the opportunity to give feedback in real-time. This enables the storyteller to recognize immediately what's resonating and what needs adjusting.

Because the words, "color" and "advance" feel safe, the feedback feels gentle and comfortable, which makes this an excellent warmup for giving and receiving feedback in more challenging situations.

Possible Questions

- What did you do this morning?
- Tell me about a book or article you read recently.
- How did you end up doing what you're currently doing?

Acknowledgements

I first learned of this exercise from Alison Lin.