

Feminist Leadership & Process Design

Hosted by Xenia Kellner (Young Feminist Europe)

For feminist outcomes, we need feminist processes and spaces.
So what does developing those entail?

That's where process design comes in. If Feminist Leadership aims to transform and shift power, process design can help us plan out the complexity of this with a systems-change approach.

This involves creating doing the groundwork to create a space in which people are willing to feel uncomfortable and challenged.

A safe space is a space where you feel safe enough to feel uncomfortable.

Xenia Kellner

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"Doing something different can create chaos, but doing something new can create order. In that 'chaordic' space in between, transformation can occur."

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Transformative spaces

Feminist Leadership takes as its premise that when we change ourselves, our relations, and our institutions, then society changes - and transformative spaces/processes take place on these three first levels.

When we do change work, we are creating something that is not there yet; we need to make space for imagining, crafting a vision and seeing what emerges. And when we go from something familiar to something unknown, this can create lead to feelings of chaos, discomfort and fear.

So what can we do to develop a space that is able to hold all of this chaos and newness, so we don't simply revert back to the familiar?

Some tips to get you started

- Invest time in the groundwork: build relationships and trust
- Anticipate that people will feel uncomfortable, threatened and/or confused by a radically different process and manage their expectations around this
- Make space for those feelings and find ways to make people feel that this is worth doing
- Give participants time to adjust to new ways of relating to each other
- Make power visible; analyse it and use it
- Track how people are feeling throughout, e.g. through weekly check-ins
- Keep checking in on everyone's individual abilities to contribute to the process; shift power when necessary or bring in someone external
- Focus on the process rather than the outcome
- Remember that resistance is often a sign that change is happening