

About the ABUNDANCE Interview

Below are some of the questions that Marty Pottenger developed for her ABUNDANCE Project exploring the emotional, political, practical and social issues connected to money in the United States. Over 5000 people answered these questions in arts civic dialogues between 1998 and 2004 in Houston, Providence, White River Junction, Dartmouth, New York City, Philadelphia, San Diego, La Jolla, Beverly Hills, Seattle, Los Angeles, Burlington, Chicago, Amherst, Washington DC among other. Whether 8 or 400 participants, each workshop was powerful and illuminating. The more diverse in background and circumstance the participants were, the more insights everyone gained.

Two practices were critical to the success of the workshops. The first was to begin by sharing the ABUNDANCE project's principles that...

- there is enough for everyone, more than enough in fact.
- we are all in this together
- pointing fingers and attributing blame can divert us from the goal of getting our thinking back about money and resource.
- when everything is taken into account, everyone everywhere has done the very best they can...and that that means you.

The success of the workshops hinged on creating a space that allowed people to be themselves, show themselves more fully, speak honestly about their experiences and think clearly about something that everyone is pretty confused about. This was achieved by asking participants, after they'd shared their earliest memory connected to money, to spend about 5 minutes creating a 'refrigerator poem' (think Haiku) about that memory in their heads not on paper). We then all shared our poems out loud, with the rest of us listening closely to each participant. This is how every civic dialogue began.

The Interview

What is your earliest memory connected to money in any way at all?

What is one thing you love about money?

What is something you hate about money?

What is a lie you tell yourself about money?

What do you buy that you don't need?

What was a time in your life when you felt you had enough?

What is the time in your life that you felt the richest? The poorest?

What would be enough for you?

What is the one thing you would need to know was true, in order to give all your money away?

What is one thing in your life that would change if you knew that everyone everywhere would always have enough?