

## Welcome Letter

*We sent this letter to network participants a few weeks before their first meeting with the NLN. We wanted them to take time to prepare for the experience of speaking about why they do what they do rather than what they do.*

*Greetings! We are so thrilled that our time together is coming up.*

*In preparation, we are asking you to prepare two presentations. One is a three-minute introduction to introduce yourself to us -- who you are and why you are the way you are. The second presentation will help us understand what you are passionate about (more on this below).*

*We've also included a reading list for those who have the time and interest to get a sneak peek at the theories behind what we will do together. Nothing is required.*

*Please feel free to get in touch with any questions. We look forward to being together in a few weeks.*

*-- The NLN facilitators*

## Why I Do What I Do: Three-Minute Personal Speech

Mary Oliver's famous poem "The Summer Day" ends with the lines "Tell me, what is it you plan to do with your one wild and precious life?" We have all stumbled into the work we do for different reasons, perhaps a personal or spiritual epiphany, childhood experiences, or the coaching of a trusted teacher or advisor. Some of us have been very focused and directed, some of us more opportunistic.

Whatever the reasons, tell us a bit more about **who you are and why**. How did you come to be doing the work you are doing? What really matters to you? Why, at the deepest level, do you do the work you do?

This talk is meant to be intensely personal and is aimed at both helping you show up as an authentic leader and connecting you to your own story, as well as helping other participants understand you at a deep level.

## **My Issue: Five-Minute Passion Pitch**

This is meant to be a presentation about the community issue that drives you. But don't just tell us about your "job." Tell us what you are passionate about and working on in the community.

We have two goals here. We want others in the cohort to more deeply understand the range of issues in the community that others are working on and why they matter. We also want you to begin practicing skills around presenting with impact.

Handouts are optional; use graphs, images, or statistics if they help illustrate your issue. But don't be overly dependent on them. You will be most effective if your visuals complement your story. We are going to forgo PowerPoint, mostly to save time.

Here's how we'll be framing the presentation on the day of:

- What is the key issue facing the county that drives me?
- What are the obstacles and challenges to success?
- What does the future look like if we succeed?
- What do I need to achieve success?

Notice that we are not asking you to give us an elevator pitch about what you do every day. In fact, you are not obligated to talk about your day-to-day work life if it's not relevant to what drives you.

## **Reading List: Our Faves (more coming...)**

1. [Creating a Cross Sector Leadership Network](#): This article appeared in the Stanford Social Innovation Review in winter 2018.
2. [The Dawn of System Leadership](#): This article from FSG appeared in the Stanford Social Innovation Review in winter 2015 and looks at the capacities that leaders need for collective work.
3. [Design Thinking for Social Innovation](#). This is a nice introduction to human centered design and its relevance to social change, by Tim Brown and Jocelyn Wyatt.