

Pacesetters Experience the Power of Performative Psychology with Cathy Salit

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Pacesetters practice "Mirroring" exercise

The Pacesetters invited 25 members of BNP Paribas' women's ERG, *MixCity*, the bank's women's networking group, to an interactive workshop on February 15th with Cathy Salit, CEO of Performance of a Lifetime. BNP Paribas' FWA Liaison Donna La Spina invited the *MixCity* members so that they could interact with the Pacesetters and gain some new learning as well.

Cathy set the context for the session by explaining that playing as a child is essential for creative, cognitive and critical development. She explained that we relate to a child in who they are becoming. They don't understand us since we speak to them the way they are becoming, sometimes with non-sensical sounds and language. It's difficult for adults to play and improvise because we worry about so many things. She introduced the concept of the Becoming Principle which is who we are and who we are not yet. Cathy challenged the group to stretch, experiment, and do things that don't always feel natural or comfortable.



Pacesetters enjoy the highly interactive session

The group participated in three interactive sessions using theatrical performance techniques. The first was “Who I Am, What I Believe”. We can break from our scripts and push the envelope to positively contribute to the conversation by following on to what someone says. In the second exercise, the group practiced mirroring with a partner, which illustrated that we can give ourselves the right to slow down. Mirroring is about being present and focused on every conversation. The last exercise was a conversation with a time traveler. In conversation, there is a tendency to use jargon which can be alienating. In other situations, specialized language may be used that is specific to a business and not understood by everyone. This exercise forced more clarity in communications and helped to eliminate some of the assumptions we make when we speak with others.

Cathy told the group that influence, confidence and presence are, fundamentally, *choices*. You can't control everything that happens to you, but you can *choose* how you respond, perform and portray yourself. Those choices can make a big difference in how you are perceived, how you feel about yourself, and how you impact others. The art of improvisation, she noted, is making things up on the spot. This is important in the moment because you are performing, saying YES to anything that anyone is giving you (their offer), and building on it. This is the magical, “Yes, and...”