

## Hosting a 4 Million Dreams Potluck Dinner

*Hosting a dinner is a simple and easy way to get a new conversation started. The 4 Million Dreams Project team have put together a 'recipe' for you to follow – have a great time!*

### Why use this recipe?

This recipe is designed to create the most delicious conversation and *you're the chef*. The **Potluck Dinner** conversation is an immediate opportunity to forward the momentum of **The 4 Million Dreams Project** and to begin to create a feeling of goodwill between people who don't already know each other.

### What is it?

**Two or three people co-host a potluck dinner, of 8 or less people, and facilitate an intentional conversation.** If there are more than 8, answering the questions will take too long and people may lose focus. The intention of the conversation is for each person to share and be truly listened to.

Diversity is created by each of the co-hosts inviting people from their own networks. The role of the co-hosts is to create a space for deep conversation and to help the group maintain the integrity of the conversation. The co-hosts are 'keepers of the flame' for the conversation.

### How to follow the recipe

#### Before the dinner

1. Plan to have a dinner and read through the information pack
2. Connect with one or two other hosts, agree to co-host and set a time and a place for the potluck dinner
3. Send out invitations

#### To start the dinner

4. Welcome guests and make introductions
5. Light a candle to signify the igniting of **The 4 Million Dreams Project** (*If you want to give people a tangible demonstration of what happens when we share, then have a tealight ready for everyone. Light your own tealight from the central candle, then pass the flame to the next person. They pass it to their neighbour and so on. The result? More light in the room.*)
6. Formally start the dinner conversation by sharing/reading the [4 Million Dreams Vision](#), [Intention for the evening](#), [Process](#), [Guidelines](#), [Pitfalls to avoid](#) and your roles as co-hosts/ 'keepers of the flame' (see below for an overview of each)



#### During the dinner

7. Facilitate the conversation
8. Discuss **4 Million Dreams** "next step" opportunities (e.g. initiating a 1-on-1 interview, co-hosting, participating in a **4 Million Dreams** planning session)
9. Ask for those who want to be on the **4 Million Dreams** database to receive updates and alerts about the project to write down their email addresses

#### At the end

10. Formally wrap up the conversation by asking people what they want to share in closing the evening (Need ideas? *What would you like to say in closing our conversation? What stood out for you this evening? What will you take away with you from our conversation?*)
11. Gather notes on:
  - Names & contact details of those who took interview packs
  - Names & contact details of those who want to co-host an evening like this one
  - Names & email addresses of those who want to be on database

### The Gourmet Meal: About The 4 Million Dreams Vision

The **4 Million Dreams Project** has at its heart the dream to engage all New Zealanders in a conversation about the best of who we are and about our dreams for our most positive potential future. We live in beautiful spot. We have some amazing strengths in our communities, but we also have no real place to share our stories and our dreams. *What would happen if we did?* **The 4 Million Dreams Project** is a virtual dinner party happening in conversations all over the country. In hosting this dinner you are making a tangible space for a conversation that will help awaken dreams for the people who come. *And who knows what they might achieve after that?*

### Intention For The Evening

To have a focused and engaging conversation – a positive conversation about what matters most to us about this place – Aotearoa/New Zealand.



### Introducing the Process

"I've got some questions to guide our conversation. We can do it however we want, whether we go around in a circle or people just speak when they want to. However we do it, let's make sure as a group that we get to hear from everyone."

### Guidelines

Give everyone a copy of the guidelines so people can remind themselves to maintain the intention of the conversation:

- Keep your focus on the intention of this evening
- Stick with the positive
- One person speaks at a time and holds the talking space until they feel complete
- Respect all views

## What will burn the cake? - Pitfalls to avoid

Rebuttal, debating, talking over each other, interruptions, one-up-manship, one person dominating the conversation, blaming or complaining, poor quality conversation caused by alcohol.

## Gently stir ingredients – Appreciative Inquiry Questions

1. How did you come to live in this community? What's it like for you living here?
2. Without being humble, what do you most value about this community, about Aotearoa/New Zealand and about what our country can contribute to the world?
3. If you had a magic wand, and you can make a wish for the health and vitality of Aotearoa/New Zealand, what would it be? How could we start to make your wish come true?



## Why use these questions?

These are *Appreciative Inquiry* Questions designed for the evening. They are designed to stimulate reflection and conversation about what we appreciate and value most. There's a simple reason for focusing on 'what's going well around here' rather than 'what needs to be fixed around here' – the more we focus on what's wrong here the more depressed we feel, and the more drained we get. When we debate, express opinions and hold positions, there is always a winner and a loser.

But *when we talk about what we appreciate or what we value, we get inspired and energised*. The conversation has a higher quality to it and all people feel good from the evening. They are also more likely to see possibilities and do what they can to make this a better place to live. They might even discover what they could do *together*.

Want to know more about Appreciative Inquiry? Have a look on <http://www.appreciativeinquiry.case.edu>



## Chef's Notes - Notes For Co-Hosts

- You are the holder of the flame of intentionality.
- At the heart of the word 'conversation' is the desire to learn – learning from and with each other is the spirit of the evening. When you remain in the state of learning, no judgment or opinion is needed. You can simply turn over in your mind what someone else has said and see what it inspires in you.
- The guiding principles of the conversation are **listening** and **respect**. Listening is one of the greatest gifts we can give each other and **deep listening** – that is listening to witness the other, rather than to react or fix something – doesn't often happen at work or at home. Please ensure these are always present and remember that silence is valuable too.
- There is a difference between conversation and debate. Interrupt any debate or disagreements. The evening is for each person to express their view and have it be listened to.

For more information contact: Mary-Alice Arthur on (021)687-627 or [mary-alice@getsoaring.com](mailto:mary-alice@getsoaring.com)

## How do you get all the ingredients together? - How To Invite People

- Hand pick people. Think about how you can put together interesting insights and diversity around your table.
- Share from the heart and make it personal (*'I'm interested in having a different conversation on XX date evening about what's important about life here in New Zealand and I'd like you to be there. Would you like to come?'*).
- Send them an [email invite](#) that says clearly what the evening is about (see attached for an example email).

## Sample email invite

Hi XX,

I'm interested in having a different conversation about what's important in life....and it's a dinner party.

***But not just any dinner party.....A 4 Million Dreams Dinner Party and YOU are invited:***

- **Date & Time:** **(date)**. Come right after work from 5:30 onwards. We will eat at 6:30 and begin the conversation at that time.
- **Venue:** (your address)

Directions: (blah blah) Call (123-4567) if you get lost.

Parking: (No street parking in front of house. Best to leave your car lower down on the street.)

- **Dinner:** Potluck. We are making a big pot of (spaghetti or whatever you're making). Please bring another main or a desert or veggies or salad or nibbles, whatever you like. BYO drink.
- **RSVP:** by (date)

**The 4 Million Dreams Project** is an initiative to engage New Zealand in a powerful conversation about the best of who we are so that we can choose our most positive future. I'll share more about it at the dinner party.

We'll be talking about some very interesting topics for people and sharing some delicious food. I'm inviting some really interesting people. This will be a dinner party like you've never been to!

Hope we see you there!

*The 4 Million Dreams Project would like to thank Leanne & Ron Eckman of Wellington, who hosted the first potluck dinner and created these notes.*

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