

# A Facilitator Toolkit

**Facilitation Helps for Fostering Learning**





*A Facilitator Toolkit: Facilitation Helps for Fostering Learning*

Copyright © April 2025 by Entrust

P.O. Box 25520, Colorado Springs, CO 80936, USA

[www.entrust4.org](http://www.entrust4.org)

*All rights reserved, including translations.*

**010.101.12**

Thank you for choosing Entrust leadership training materials. May the Lord use these time- and culture-tested materials to help you be as effective as possible in your ministry.

These materials are available to approved Entrust facilitators and those attending Entrust training courses. We ask that you honor Entrust, the copyright holder, in compliance with U.S. copyright law, which includes (but is not limited to) the following:

1. Training materials (hard copy or electronic) may not be altered without written permission from Entrust.
2. Quotations or paraphrases must be properly credited to Entrust (please do not exceed 1,000 words).
3. Printed materials may not be duplicated.
4. Digital files may not be shared. The purchaser of the digital file may print one personal copy.
5. Those outside the U.S. in possession of digital English files may only print a specific number of copies as agreed upon in writing with Entrust, for the purpose of facilitating their small group.

May the Lord teach and guide you as you study.

# Table of Contents

<b>Introduction.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Foundations of Small Group Facilitation .....</b>	<b>6</b>
What Is Facilitation? .....	7
What Kind of Facilitation Are We Talking About? .....	8
<b>The Role of Questions.....</b>	<b>11</b>
What Kinds of Questions Best Aid Learning? .....	12
What Are Effective Open Questions?.....	13
What Are the Different Kinds of Open Questions? .....	15
How Does Our Attitude Affect Questions? .....	17
<b>Ten-Minute Facilitation Helps .....</b>	<b>19</b>
Do We All Expect the Same Thing? .....	19
Who Ate My Pie? .....	21
When You Talk, How Can I Think? .....	22
How Small Can a Small Group Be? .....	23
Anyone for Popcorn?.....	24
Should I Acknowledge All the Contributions?.....	25
Do I Have to Do This? .....	26
How Can We Stay Positive? .....	27
Please, Can You Just Lecture? .....	28
How Can I Just Ask Questions?.....	29
Why Did that Scripture Discussion Feel Empty? .....	30
When Is More Less? .....	31
Why Have a Cofacilitator? .....	32
Why Does the Small Group Have to Be Small? .....	33
Why Can't We Stand Up? .....	34
When Is a Question too Open? .....	35
What Kind of Creativity Is Best? .....	36
What about Cows and Ducks?.....	37
Who Does the Holy Spirit Speak Through? .....	40
We Have Homework? No fair! .....	41
What Is Wrong with Did and Could? .....	42

How Are Different Personality Types of People Challenged to Facilitate Open Questions in a Discussion? .....	43
Are the Participants “and” or “but” People? .....	44
How Can I Lead a Discussion in This Room? .....	45
How Can I Manage the Noise in Here? .....	46
Where Should I Sit in the Group? .....	48
What Do Cortisol and Endorphins Have to Do with Learning? .....	49
Why Do We Share Our Stories? .....	50
What Does the Clock Have to Do with a Good Discussion? .....	51
Is It a Personal Agenda or Clarifying Objectives? .....	52
Who Is the Authority around Here? .....	53
Are New Year’s Resolutions Good Enough? .....	54
Why Summarize? .....	55
<b>Conclusion .....</b>	<b>56</b>
<b>Endnotes .....</b>	<b>57</b>
<b>Appendix 1: Facilitating a Scripture Passage, Psalm 23 .....</b>	<b>59</b>
<b>Additional Facilitation Helps .....</b>	<b>61</b>

# Introduction

“You should write a book on facilitation.”

This statement was a wonderful compliment but a bad idea—at least that was my first response. It was a wonderful compliment from a gifted, trained, influential educator, Dr. Muriel Elmer. We invited her to attend our Colorado *Facilitating Relational Learning* to give us an evaluation of our training.<sup>1</sup> So yes, I received her thoughts as the wonderful compliment they were.

But another book?

There are already too many books gathering dust.

A *book* on facilitation seems to be an oxymoron. Facilitation is to be experienced, not read about in a book.

And, I am not an author.<sup>2</sup>

I do not even like writing. I would rather be sewing a curtain, refinishing a dresser, or facilitating a women’s Bible study. Oh yes, I love those early morning moments when the Lord gives me some ideas for an article, and the ideas flow. I just have to sit and write them down. But writing a book sounds worse than scrubbing the kitchen floor—even on my hands and knees.

But maybe on my knees is where the Lord wants me. I do not recommend going against the current the Lord is taking a person. So, I humbly record on these pages some thoughts I have learned over 50 years of facilitating small groups. These thoughts will make the most sense if you have attended a *Facilitating Relational Learning* training sponsored by Entrust. If the concept of facilitating by guiding a discussion instead of leading a discussion is a new one for you, I hope these ideas will encourage and equip you to lead a thriving small group.

I hope you will add *chapters* of your own and share them with me and the readers of this book. After all, facilitation is an interactive, flexible, and vital way for adults (and actually everyone) to learn.

Here are my suggestions for using this book:

1. Read it over time—not in one sitting.
2. Read it in the order of the lessons that are interesting to you—not chronological order.
3. Do at least 50% of the exercises before you consider the book finished.
4. Read this book with a pen or pencil to make notes as you read.
5. If at all possible, read this book with another facilitator and discuss the concepts together.