

*Christa's Story about using the What's in a Name activity.*

*Whenever the opportunity comes along for me to facilitate a small group, I like to use the "What's In a Name Activity" as a tool for introductions. So, after the women from across Des Moines with whom I had held individual conversations settled down around the dining room table for our first gathering, I invited them to engage in this activity. After modeling with my own name, I turned to Carole next to me and invited her to share her name and how it is meaningful to her. Before settling down at the table, Carole did not know anyone else at the table. Nonetheless she began speaking with relative ease about her name, about the aunt she was named after, about her Lebanese and Italian husband... She said things about herself that she typically would not share with an initial introduction. We progressed around the table with each woman introducing herself and leaning in to hear what others had to say. As we came full circle, there was a new energy in the room and a collective realization that this group of women who had not known each other just a few moments earlier had shared on a much deeper level than any of us anticipated we would have shared. We had moved in a few short moments from the cognitive naming of self, through the experience of another, to the spirit of connection.*