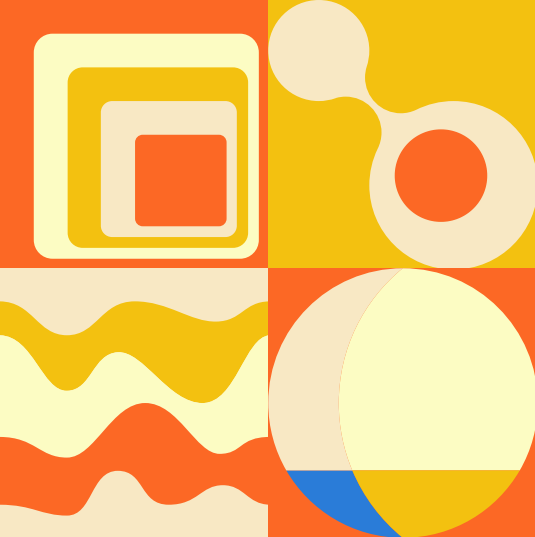




# Backyard BBQ

**A Social Score**

**For a backyard-sized group, outdoors**

.....

**Kristin Barendregt-Ludwig**

## Acknowledgements

Dedicated to Maggie and Erica Kast who made every place of gathering a place of belonging.

With gratitude to Çaca Yvaire who invited me to seek signs of sentience first.

## In Preparation

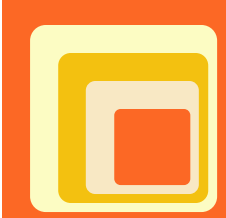
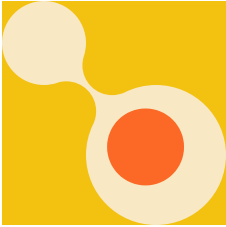
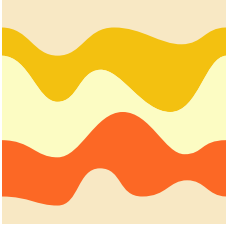
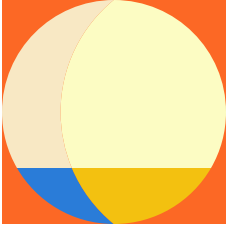
**Site:** Any informal outdoor gathering - at home, in a public space, or at a local gathering space - ideally where there is grass or sand for bare feet.

### **Materials:**

- Cocktail umbrellas
- Water and jars
- Scissors
- Tape, glue, glue sticks
- Paper
- Pens, pencils, markers
- Natural materials - pine cones, sticks, grasses, shells, stones
- Do-dads that might inspire

**Time:** 30-45 minutes

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| SCORE                                                                               | Start in a circle. Hosts guide the group:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|    | <p><b>ARRIVE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Remove your shoes as you are able.</li> <li>● Breathe, feel supported by the earth, and connect to your senses. Feel the ground, the sun or shade; notice sounds and smells.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|    | <p><b>MEET &amp; GREET</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Mill around the site and greet people, plants, animals, and land <b>in silence</b>. Activate all the senses to take them in. (e.g. eye contact, touch, smell, sound, even taste where it feels appropriate)</li> <li>● Find a friend - a plant, animal, or aspect of the land you want to spend more time with. Get to know them. What shapes or qualities do they have? Textures, smells, or movements? What languages do they communicate in? How are they connected to others in the community of life?</li> <li>● Bring the circle back together and introduce your new friends by sharing what you learned about them.</li> </ul> |
|  | <p><b>BRING A DISH TO SHARE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Consider: what would an act of community be to your new friend? How would you show them appreciation or take them into account? (e.g. create a token of appreciation, shift things around for their comfort, offer an act of care, or make a connection to a wider system - see the host notes for more details)</li> <li>● Put your plan into action</li> <li>● When finished, mark the spot where you did it with a cocktail umbrella. People who finish early can visit others' cocktail umbrellas to see what others did.</li> </ul>                                                                                          |
|  | <p><b>TELL A STORY</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Let's share what happened. What did you do and why? How did it feel? What is next for you or what are you still curious about?</li> <li>● Invite everyone to continue sharing their stories with each other during the rest of the BBQ.</li> <li>● Close with appreciation for the group and their gift of presence.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |

# A note for hosts

## For the invitation

- Your party invitation can help set the expectation that you are planning an experience during the gathering. For example:
  - We are planning some engagement with the yard during the BBQ.
  - We're planning some contemplative time in conversation with the space and each other and....there will be a BBQ!
  - We'll explore our relationship with the environment right in the yard.
  - Join us to extend our community to the community of life right in our yard!
  - BBQ| Creativity + Yard = Fun!

## Framing the engagement

- This score introduces a way of thinking about the community of life that acknowledges different kinds of consciousness in all living things. This concept will be familiar for some people but new to others. It may help to say that the experience is a way to connect to the nature around us more intentionally and the social score uses language with this broader understanding of consciousness in mind.
- If you want some help facilitating in a simple, conversational way, see the optional script for suggestions.

## In the “Bring a Dish to Share” section, examples are helpful. Some suggestions:

- Try the score yourselves at the party site before hosting the BBQ - see what examples come up for you and share those.
- Some great examples are:
  - Tokens of friendship, like
    - Writing a note of appreciation
    - Drawing a picture of the impression the relationship has made
    - Leaving a small item made from natural materials collected from the site like fallen sticks, grass, stones, etc.
  - Changing the site for comfort, for example
    - If the food table is close to an ant hill, a guest might move it so that people won't walk on it.
    - If bees are busy in a place people are busy, create a perimeter from natural materials for people to walk around to give the bees some distance.
  - An act of care (but be sure that people consider what is actually healthy for their friend)

- Watering a flower that looks a little wilted
- Gathering acorns
- Creating a temporary bird bath.
- Connect your friend to a wider system. For example,
  - Research the pesticide or rodenticide use in the area which can directly affect birds
  - Look into the availability of native-plantings which can affect pollinators like bees and butterflies
- When gathering materials for inspiration, consider what can biodegrade suitably in the yard.

**Please document what your group creates and share it!**

- You can take photos, jot down quotes, note themes on how guests felt or what they were really interested in. Any feedback on the process is very welcome too - this is a collaborative work in progress! Make sure it's ok with guests first if you share what they made or said.
- Email me documentation at [kdregt@gmail.com](mailto:kdregt@gmail.com). I will ask your permission to share some of your documentation to the Backyard BBQ Project on my website to inspire others who may want to host one!

# Optional Facilitation Script

Let this script breathe with many pauses. Feel free to adapt but be specific and direct.

## Framing

[Gather the group. Bring them in close enough to hear you.]

- *Let's come together and make a circle and I'll introduce what we'll be doing.*
- *For the next 40 min. or so we'll be taking time to experience and connect with the nature around the yard doing things we would typically do when we gather - we'll Arrive, we'll Meet and Greet, we'll Bring a Dish to share, and we'll Share a Story. We'll have an opportunity to expand these acts of community to the non-human life that is part of this gathering as well.*
- *The experience includes a way of thinking about plants, animals, and land as beings - a community of life, each with different kinds of consciousness. It is a way for us to connect to the nature around us more intentionally.*

## Arrive - 2 min.

- *If you are comfortable, let's take off our shoes. Feel the ground (grass, sand) beneath your feet.*
- *Breathe and feel supported by the earth.*
- *Let's connect to all our senses. Notice the sensation of the ground on your feet, the feeling of sun or shade. What sounds are in this moment? What smells?*

## Meet & Greet - 10 min

- *In a moment we will **start to move around**, just milling about - no need to stay in a circle. As you walk please move **in silence**. Notice others around you and silently greet people, plants, animals, and land.*
- *Notice opportunities to **use all your senses to connect**. For example, (you can act these out) you can make eye contact with someone, grasp their hands warmly, go in for a hug, trace bark with your fingertips, feel the texture of a rock, smell a flower, a leaf, listen to a bird or follow an insect with your gaze. If you want to taste something - use your best judgement!*
- *Acknowledge, greet and continue on - we won't be lingering with anyone for too long at first. Eventually, **turn your attention to a plant, animal, or aspect of the land** you feel drawn toward, that you would like get to spend more time with and get to know better.*
- *When you've found who you want to spend more time with, **use your observation and senses to get to know them better**. You might notice their shapes, qualities, textures, smells, or the way they move. Deeply observe and you might consider what languages they communicate in or how they are connected to others in the community of life. Follow your curiosity. Meet back in the circle in 5 minutes.*

- After 5 minutes, invite everyone back. **Invite people to share** briefly who they were spending time with and what they learned about them.

### **Bring a Dish to Share - 18 min**

- Let's take a little time to **reflect on acts of community**. For people, acts of community may be small, like passing a plate or opening a door for someone. Or they may be expansive like deeply listening, or acting in solidarity toward a shared goal - but all are meaningful.
- **Consider what an act of community might be for your new friend** in the yard. How would you show them appreciation or take them into account?
- [If you have examples to show, share them.] **For example**, you might make a token of friendship like a note, or make a small item made of leaves, sticks or grass to leave with them. You might change something about the space to make things more comfortable for them, like moving the table if it is too close to an ant hill, or build a perimeter from natural materials for people to walk around if bees are at work in a place where humans are also active. You might offer care like watering a wilting flower or creating a temporary bird bath. You also may be interested in drawing connections between life here and local efforts to support native plantings, limit pesticide use, or other initiatives.
- There are some materials on the table that may be inspiring or useful. Whatever you decide to do, **put your plan into action and mark the spot where you did it with a cocktail umbrella** when you're finished. I'm here for any questions or to help find household items you want to use for your plan.
- I'd also like to take photos as you're working, would anyone rather not be in any of the photos? [take note and do not photograph them]
- We'll take the next 15 minutes to **reflect and put your plans into action**. If you finish early, you can walking around to where you see other umbrellas and see what others have made. If you're not finished when it's time, don't worry - you can keep going after we regroup.

[Stand by to help anyone with questions or requests for materials. Take photos of your group in process. Give them a 2 minute warning before calling them back. Remind people to mark their spot with a cocktail umbrella]

### **Tell A Story - 10 min.**

- It looks like most of us are complete - let's come back together briefly and anyone who has not finished can continue after we close together.
- Let's regroup in our circle and hear how that was for you. Would anyone like to share what you did as an act of community?
- Invite several volunteers to share - ask follow up questions to go deeper. (e.g. Why did you decide to do that? or How did it feel doing that?) Let the conversation be open and free flowing.
- Thank you for sharing stories and I invite you to continue sharing through the rest of the party.

### **Closing**

- *If anyone is interested in seeing the social score we just did, it's on the table and you can scan the QR code to take it home with you.*
- Thank you for your participation and presence today!