Throughout our day we are making transitions / consciously and unconsciously. Life IS about transitions and interruptions.

It’s how we flow from one thing to another. How do we stay present to one another? How do we transition gracefully from one aspect of a meeting to another? In convening we want the transitions to be clear and graceful.

Our first transition is from our everydayness into this special space of community and connection, leaving behind at least for a while the busyness of our day.

The Art of Convening includes the skill set of the Art of Transitions to

- Refocus
- Reset intention or context
- Remember “what is at the heart of the matter,” no matter the setting.

The key is this: Neuroscience tells us it only takes 60 seconds to course-correct or refocus; having a plan for those 60 seconds is key.

When we convene, we can employ three “tools” that allow us to make the shift in focus and presence: breathing, poetry or a brief body-centered practice.

Notice how building transitional time into your meetings and gatherings can set a tone and pace that is calmer, quieter, removed from the hurriedness of normal conversation.

Transitions are the silence between the notes in music. Without silence there is no music. Transitions allow us to slow to the speed of life.
Transitions are an important and often neglected aspect of any gathering. Whether at the beginning, as people settle into their chairs, or with a change from process to process, transitions are “the spaces in-between” and another opportunity to keep participants present to themselves.

Like cleansing the palate between courses, a Transition Exercise, whether it be a poem, meditation, visualization, stretching of arms or legs, or just a brief breathing exercise, helps people to re-center, recalibrate, to be fully present for what comes next.

For the Convener to be aware and fully present to each transition is a constant practice. There are many ways to create this awareness. [Page 62, The Art of Convening book]