



Theory of Change (TOC) and Goals for the Open Table

Definition of TOC: A TOC defines the fundamental underpinnings of a movement by stating the non-negotiables, without which the goals of the movement will not be achieved. A TOC is important because it serves as a basis for development of standardized measures of fidelity, and most importantly, standardizes a crucial messaging point for Open Table. A TOC for Open Table helps differentiate it from other poverty interventions and defines implementer expectations for what they can accomplish with Open Table.

The TOC for Open Table. The following are the five core non-negotiable elements of Open Table, without which outcomes are unlikely to be achieved:

1. Relationship. Open Table is about a faith community being in direct relationship with those in poverty. The relationships between Table members and the Sister and/or Brother is at the heart of the effectiveness of the model, and the ability of the Sister and/or Brother to establish long lasting relationships with their Table and with other members of the community is crucial to success.

2. Faith and a shared purpose. Through a shared purpose, a faith community builds a powerful understanding of the human potential of each and every individual, and of how to actualize true love for each other through mutual and humble service. Through expression and deepening of their individual faith/spiritual perspectives, Table members and sisters/brothers affirm and deepen their own sense of wholeness, and of their connected humanity and shared purpose on the Table.

3. A Safe Place. A community creates Tables as a way of understanding that community and personal judgment may have contributed to poverty. We have to create a safe place for a community and Tables to recognize that poverty is not about character but rather about experience. We have to create a safe place to support a sister/brother as they move out of poverty. The safe place is free from blame and shame, moves at the own pace of the sister/brother, and is based on the sister's/brother's own definition of success, culture, and support.

4. Transformation and Reconciliation. Transformation occurs when a community is released from preconceived notions of poverty, people in poverty, and poverty solutions, including transaction-based interventions. We understand the mutuality which is built through being in direct, face to face, and long term relationship with those in poverty. As the community moves into mutual, direct relationship to those who are in poverty, reconciliation between races, social groups, and families begins to occur and transformation builds a mutual community sharing of an abundance of heart, spirit, and of intellectual and social capital. This shift forever abandons the paternalistic, dependent model of change and reveals the opportunity to be healed by each other.

5. Local determination and ownership. The Open Table model provides a foundational, consistent, tested, and proven process for addressing poverty, and provides training for communities. However -- exactly how the community of business, non-profits, government and faith sectors form into a local movement, how expansion, focus on populations, and how the effort and scope proceeds are all locally determined and managed as part of a community vision of their system of care under a shared purpose. Faith communities are the implementers of Open Table at the sister/brother level and make final determinations at the model level.

Review of Open Table Goals. The Open Table is successful if the following goals are met, at the sister/brother; the Table member; the community levels; and the national/global organizational levels:

If application of the Open Table model is successful, the following goals at the level of the sister/brother are met:

- They have confidence, optimism about their future.
- They are able to build strong mutual relationships.
- Are able to access a group of people to assist in problem solving.
- Are able to access a network of natural supports to deal with crises.
- They are interested in helping others move out of poverty.
- They have experienced love and community, and support without blame.

If application of the Open Table model is successful at the Table member level, the following goals are met:

- The Table members develop a safe place for all to learn about provision of mutual support and healing.
- The Table members truly understand and appreciate the life experience of the sister/brother, and move beyond judgment to love and kindness.
- The Table members understand that spiritual poverty occurs when we do not believe our Sisters and Brothers experiencing poverty have anything of value to offer us.
- Each Table member is personally transformed, with deepened faith and a greater sense of their purpose in the community.

If application of the Open Table model is successful at the community level, the following goals are met:

- All sectors, including faith, government, business, and not-for-profits begin learning how to operate in true respectful partnerships and shared purpose based on trust and recognition of autonomy and mutual dependency.
- Reconciliation of racial, socio-economic, and cultural divides begins to occur as division is replaced by understanding, shared purpose and true community.
- The faith community adopts poverty transformation as a scalable purpose that can serve large numbers of the population in need. Intellectual and social capital is freely shared.

If application of the Open Table model is successful at a national and global organizational level, the following goals are met:

- The Open Table process is led by people through an open source, volunteer led, powerful movement where the process continually evolves and improves, as an evidence base is established through implementation results and research.
- Our movement continues to maintain a bottom-up, grassroots level growth model.
- The Open Table evolves its training as faith communities adopt it as a scalable purpose through rigorous and continuous improvement, accessing national and international intellectual and social capital of organizations and individuals. Training provides the faith community and it's members with evidence that this approach is one of the most effective teaching platforms for continuing on a transformational spiritual journey of relationship with those in poverty.
- The Open Table movement is helping the world develop one person at a time, changing the world through love, support oriented approach to transforming poverty.

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