What is public? What is private? What is community?

- Some activities that involve many people, like a chess club, are private. Some decisions made by just a few people, like how to manage municipal water delivery, are public. So what is public and what is private involves more than the number of people involved, it is related to the type of activity something is and whether or not there is public oversight.

- A community seems to be an intersection of public and private. Being a good neighbor is not something that is regulated by the public, but extends beyond our own private considerations.

- One thing that affects our sense of community is that our nation seems divided and driven by greed rather than a sense of compassion and caring.

What is How do we identify with nonhuman communities?

- Peter Block writes about communities, but only human communities. Is it possible for communities to extend beyond the human realm? It seems that it is possible, and that communities are often a result of what we consciously include. Communities involve both human and nonhuman relationships. Sometimes the interests of human communities come into conflict with the interests of nonhuman communities.

How healthy are our communities?

- People need to take active responsibility for the health of their communities. Metrics exist to measure this and they were used to assess the Harmony neighborhood in Sedona.
- Private enterprises can work for the community benefit as well as their own. One example is the free Thanksgiving dinner that is served every year by the Coffee Pot Restaurant.

- Beginning in 2014, Arizona businesses will be able to opt for a B-Corp status, or benefit corporation. This tax status enables businesses that are working for profit to work for the public interest as well, and they need not be required to always put profit ahead of the public interest.

- Just because we find disagreements in communities it does not follow that the community is dysfunctional or unhealthy. Just like there can be disagreements in healthy families, there can be disagreements in healthy communities. Both, however, benefit from compromise.

- Each person at the discussion came into the community this evening, and each person came with different views. This divergences are not seen as points for sparring, but ways of understanding each other.

- Safety was considered very important, and some people said they enjoyed these discussions because they are safe insofar as they promote compassion, understanding, and reason as ideals. Knowing that we will find acceptance from others gives us courage to participate. Working through issues together on one occasion may give us the resources to do this with more skill on future occasions.