Smaller Rooms, Bigger Conversations

Have you ever sat through a meeting with something on your mind, but never quite found the opportunity to say it? Maybe the conversation was moving too quickly. Maybe someone else always seemed ready to speak. Or maybe you just weren't comfortable putting your thoughts in front of everyone.

So you listened.

And eventually, the meeting ended. Whatever you might have contributed went unheard.

That's not necessarily a failure of the people in the room. Sometimes its simply the nature of a large conversation.

🎯 But what happens when we make the room a little smaller?

Something interesting can happen when a group of twenty becomes four groups of five.

The conversation changes.

People who were hesitant to speak may find their voices. Questions become easier to ask. Someone shares an idea, and someone else builds on it.

And listening changes, too.

When there are fewer voices competing for attention, theres more opportunity to hear what someone else is actually saying. To consider a different perspective. To recognize the value of a contribution that might otherwise have gone unnoticed.

Not because the technology has changed anyone, but because the environment has given them room.

That's the human opportunity behind breakout rooms in Microsoft Teams.

Whether its students discussing a reading, faculty exploring an idea, or colleagues working through a challenge, smaller conversations can create opportunities that larger meetings sometimes struggle to provide.

⚓ And heres the beautiful part: the goal isnt to keep those conversations separate.

Its to bring them back together.

Each group returns with something of its own. A question. An observation. A different perspective. Perhaps even an answer nobody had considered.

The larger conversation becomes richer because more people have had an opportunity to participate. The whole benefits from the contributions of its smaller parts.

And sometimes, someone who might otherwise have remained silent discovers that what they had to say mattered.

Sometimes the best way to bring people together is to give them a little room.

But giving people room is only the beginning.

What we do with that room makes all the difference.

#AllSuttonedUp