Whether you are designing your own workshop or facilitating something that someone else has designed, there are a number of best practices that will help you achieve great results.

1. **Start with - Why?**
   It is really helpful to start by making sure everyone knows what the goals or outcomes are of the workshop. This will also help the participants when it comes to thinking about what you want to accomplish together. Aligning their expectations also makes it easier for them to know how to participate.

2. **Create an environment where people can connect and contribute …**
   As workshops are primarily group experiences, you need to think about elements of group dynamics. For example, you will need to help people get to know each other so they can feel more comfortable participating and learning together. Think about setting up the right kind of activities to bring out the best in each person. This includes using different ways of learning as well as levels of experience and skill. Your goal is to create an environment where every participant can connect and contribute.

3. **Don’t overload participants with information …**
   It is well known that people learn best when content is presented in chunks of information no longer than 20 minutes, before participating in some kind of “processing activity”. You can string several 20-minute segments together to create any length of workshop. This method helps keep participants more actively engaged as well as energized throughout the workshop.

   Processing activities can be very quick as well. In as little as 3 to 5 minutes, participants can process what they have just learned and be in a position to learn more. Simple and fast activities include a discussion with a partner or undertaking a short assessment. Processing activities can of course be longer with people talking in more depth, designing or creating something, debating or problem-solving, and of course getting some hands-on practice.

4. **Empower participants to change …**
   It is vital that you set-up your workshop participants to succeed once the event has ended and they have returned to their everyday lives. Unfortunately, this is the one thing that often gets the least amount of focus when it should in fact be getting the most!

   Unless we drive a real change in behavior, then what is the point of organizing the workshop? People may have enjoyed the workshop, but if they do not ultimately change their behavior, then, in reality, it has not been a success!

5. **Develop a Follow-up Plan**
   The only way to find out if your workshop was a success is to have an effective follow-up plan. Create a questionnaire for distribution to participants once the workshop has ended and give them plenty of opportunities to share their opinions on how it went. Although this can of course be a bit scary, it is the only way to learn and improve for the next time!

   It is also important to have a plan to communicate the decisions that were reached during the workshop. People need to know that their hard work actually resulted in a decision or action being undertaken, so keep them informed about the situation once the workshop has ended.