



Preserving the environment is connected to all the other challenges we face. It's just one of the many reasons for interrupting the damaging policies of governments and corporations.

Tim Jackins

This Present Time starts off magnificently with an Indigenous statement about caring for the Earth. Tim Jackins' introduction to a Pre-World Conference, and articles about South, West, and Central Asian women; the oppression of Eastern Europeans; alcohol as a liberation issue; and many other important topics follow. Gordon Jackins, who has run Rational Island Publishers for decades, has decided to mostly retire. Please see page 71 for more about Gordon. We will miss him very much.

Here are the deadlines for the July Present Time: May 20 for articles and poetry; May 28 for changes to the back-pages lists.

Lisa Kauffman, editor

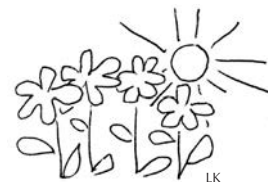
719 2nd Avenue North, Seattle, Washington 98109, USA • publications@rc.org

CONTENTS

Building Indigenous RC in Australia, Rie Shiraishi, 3-4
 A Statement from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Co-Counselors, 5
 An Introduction to a Pre-World Conference, Tim Jackins, 6-7
 Counseling Practice—8-34
 Family Work: Pioneering and Revolutionary, Emma Perrot, 4
 Cleaning Out an Anesthesia Revolving, Harvey Jackins, 9
 The Benefits of RC, Anyayo Jennifer Claire, 9
 Re-emerging from Grief and "Mental Health" Oppression, Marsha Saxton, 10-15
 In the Middle of the Night (song), Russell Hayes, 16
 Mistakes Are Okay, S.J. Shashikala, 17
 Seeing the Person and the Pattern at the Same Time, Harvey Jackins, 17
 Setting Limits—A Session, Manitonquat (Medicine Story), 18-19
 Making Good Use of Tim's Talks, Nancy Perini, 19
 Reflections on an Early Sexual Memories Workshop, several people, 20
 Taking Charge of your Mind, Harvey Jackins, 20
 Thoughts About Dyslexic People, Jenny Sazama, 21
 No Need to Accept Discouraged Thinking, Harvey Jackins, 22
 Discharging "Superman" Distress, Mike Markovits, 23
 The Reward Is This Moment, Michael Newsom, 23
 Always Pleased, Never Satisfied, Jo Saunders, 24
 "Love Awaits Me at Every Turn," Jane Gramlich, 24
 "Mental Health" Labels, and Information Coordinators, Tim Jackins and Janet Foner, 25
 Children, and Violent Events, several people, 26-28
 Using Discharge to Heal from a Concussion, Goof Buijs, 28-30
 Thinking My Way through Breast Cancer, Becky Shuster, 30-34
 Take Charge of Your Mind, Harvey Jackins, 34
 Liberation—35-61
 A Groundbreaking Workshop, Malana Rogers-Bursen, 35
 Proud of Being Indian, Sujata Maini, 36
 Fully Liberated within Our Own Cultures, Rachel Kieffer, 36-37
 More Closeness in Our Cultures, Sharon Wolf, 37
 I Am Home, Nazish Riaz
 Toward a Big Life, Anupama Singh Yadav, 38-39
 I Am Truly Central, Amisha Patel, 39
 We Get to Win, Lorenzo Garcia, 40-41
 Better as We Get Older, Harvey Jackins, 41
 The Oppression of Regional or National Groups, Julian Weissglass, 42-43
 Moving Beyond the Iron Curtain, Violeta Vajda, 44-46
 From an Israeli Jew of Eastern European Heritage, Tami Shamir, 47
 Interrupting Racism in the Present, Patricia L. Mallory-Oduba, 48
 Negative Feelings Come from Outside, Harvey Jackins, 48
 "Literacy Privilege," Louisa Flander, 49
 Alcohol as a Liberation Issue, "Benjamin Rush," 50-52
 White Working-Class Women and Anti-Jewish Oppression, Diane Balsler, 53
 A White Jewish Working-Class Woman, Ela Thier, 54-55
 White Gentle Working-Class Women, K Webster, 55
 White Catholic Working-Class Women, Joanne Bray, 56
 Redefining Grandmotherhood, Jerry Ann Yoder, 57
 Same Amount of Patterns, Harvey Jackins, 57
 Ending Male Domination in Melbourne, Australia, several people, 58-59
 The Roots of Unfounded Expectations, Bas Hurkmans, 59
 "I Will Not Be Bribed Anymore," Benjamin Altman, 60
 Possible to Stay and Fight After All, "Nancy Drew," 61
 Nap Time (poem), Sojourner Truth, 61
 Teaching, Leading, Community Building—63-75
 Addressing Difficulties in Leadership, Diane Shisk, 63-64
 Everyone's a Leader/Cada persona es un líder, Ellen Tait, 65-66
 Teaching by Example, Eddie Hasan, 67
 A Workshop for Central and Eastern European Women, Susanne Langer, 68-69
 Visibly Client and Co-Counselor, Harvey Jackins, 69



A Leaders' Class on the Guidelines, Bas Hurkmans, 70
 Counseling Disabled People, Kath Silard, 70
 Gordon's Retirement, Tim Jackins, 71
 A Great Opportunity, Lorenzo Garcia, 71
 Introducing RC in Northern Ghana, Rafiatu Lawal and Gmabi Philip, 71
 福島プロジェクトの開始/The Launch of the Fukushima Project, Aiko Jinno, 72-74
 Individual Leadership, Harvey Jackins, 74
 Dancing! Jennifer Berry, 75
 Appreciating RCCR, Ayana Morse, 75
 Wide World Changing—77-84
 Care of the Environment in Northern Uganda, topic group, 77
 Intelligent People Can Make It Work, Harvey Jackins, 77
 Ending Racism Can Be Fun! Bill Regan, 78
 Military Service in Israel, Rachel Mendelson, 79-80
 Allies to Jews: It's Time to Take Action, Allan Hansen, 81-82
 Deciding to Be Counselor, Dawn Graham, 83
 Moving Against Language Oppression, Emmy Rainwater, 84
 Speak with Confidence, Harvey Jackins, 84
 Appreciating Present Time, 85
 RC on the Internet—86-88
 Information Coordinators—89-91
 Publications—92-98, 100-104
 Translation Coordinators—99
 Audio Cassettes—104
 CDs—105-106
 Videocassettes and DVDs—107-109
 Ordering Information—110
 Present Time Subscriptions—111
 Reference Persons for Organized Areas—112-115
 International Reference Persons, International Liberation Reference Persons, International Commonality Reference Persons, and the Re-evaluation Foundation—116
 Teachers Outside of Organized Areas—117-122
 Re-evaluation Counseling Contacts—123-124
 Workshops—125-126
 Index—127



APPRECIATIONS

Layout: Amanda Martinez, Travis Quezon, Katie Kauffman
 Typesetting: Amanda Martinez, Travis Quezon, Katie Kauffman, Valerie Jaworski
 Editing: Lisa Kauffman, Katie Kauffman
 Proofreading, shipping, and other help: Emily Bloch, Barbara Boring, Alisa Lemire Brooks, Fulvio Casali, Teresa Enrico, Drew Frye, Yuko Hibino, Mary Hodgson, Susan Hutchison, Gordon Jackins, Tim Jackins, Truus Jansen, Valerie Jaworski, Katie Kauffman, Lisa Kauffman, Sooja Kelsey, Amanda Martinez, Sandra McDonald, Marion Ouphouet, Gale Picker, Ellie Putnam, Travis Quezon, Jayne Schauer, Diane Shisk, Karen Slaney, Dvora Slavin, Steve Thompson
 Cover photo: Jo Perry
 Art and photography: Steve Banbury, Anne Barton, Lance Cablk, Jacky Clark, Theresa D'Amato, Stan Eichner, Maura Fallon, Julie Forgione, Russell Hayes, Yuko Hibino, Bill Home, Janet Hughes, Tim Jackins, Phil Johnston, Sara Kallai, Lyndall Katz, Katie Kauffman, Lisa Kauffman, Azadeh Khalili, Mary Klausen, Nancy Lemon, Amanda Martinez, Daniel Moorehouse, Xabi Odriozola, Lilian Ono, Emma Parker, Helen Parkin, Corina Peila, Rick Perry, Travis Quezon, Steve Richmond, Milena Ruzkova, Samantha Sanderson, Diane Shisk, Lynne Shivers, Beth Shorter, John David Simnett, Mike Spring, Alan Sprung, Kathy Taylor, Brian Townsend, Martin Uebel, Rob Venderbos, Wytke Visser, Lisa Voss, Matt Weatherford, Vasiliki Xanthi, Jerry Yoder

PRESENT TIME (ISSN 0889-2490) is published quarterly in January, April, July, and October for \$16.00 for a one-year subscription, \$32.00 for a two-year subscription, and \$84.00 for a five-year subscription inside the U.S. and \$24.00 for a one-year subscription to other countries, including postage, by Rational Island Publishers, Inc., P.O. Box 2081, Main Office Station, Seattle, Washington 98111, USA. Periodicals postage paid at Seattle, Washington. POSTMASTER: send address changes to PRESENT TIME, P.O. Box 2081, Main Office Station, Seattle, Washington 98111, USA.

Building Indigenous RC in Australia

Marcie Rendon, the International Liberation Reference Person for Native Americans, and Darlene Daniels, a Native Canadian and the Area¹ Reference Person for Winnipeg, Canada, came to the Pre-World Conference in Sydney, Australia, in 2009. At that time we had three Aboriginal people at the Pre-World. Marcie was subsequently invited to return to Australia to help with allies-to-Indigenous-people work. We needed her knowledge about working on oppressor patterns and healing the hurts of colonialism.

WORKSHOPS IN 2011 FOR INDIGENOUS PEOPLE, PEOPLE OF COLOR, AND ALLIES

In 2011 Marcie came and led an Allies to Indigenous People Workshop. Darlene also came, and led a one-day People of Color and Indigenous People's Workshop prior to the Allies Workshop. The initial idea was that after the one-day workshop, we would combine the allies and Indigenous people at the Allies Workshop. Marcie made it clear to the Indigenous participants that the benefit of the Allies Workshop for them would be to learn how to counsel allies well. But it was too hard for the Indigenous people in the mostly white workshop, so Darlene led a parallel Indigenous workshop for the rest of the weekend. That was the beginning of our project.

THE 2012 INDIGENOUS PEOPLE'S WORKSHOP

Next we invited Darlene to lead an Indigenous workshop for all of Australia, which I would organize. I knew it would not work well if we held the workshop without building ongoing local Community support. Also, a workshop would make sense only if we did it with the aim of building an Indigenous RC Community. I encouraged key allies to connect with and back² Indigenous leaders in their Communities. I then asked the Indigenous Co-Counsellors and the allies to recommend Indigenous people for the workshop.

I also contacted all the Indigenous people who had been involved in a significant way in RC in previous years and invited them to the workshop. Also, I encouraged them to do an introduction to RC for their Indigenous friends and families. I encouraged allies to do the same if they had Indigenous friends or family



LANCE CABLK

they'd like to have in RC. Any Indigenous people who came to the introductions would be invited to the workshop. My goal was for every Indigenous Co-Counsellor to have another Indigenous Co-counsellor in their RC Community. In the meantime, I asked key white allies to connect with each other and discharge about their struggles to get Indigenous people to the workshop. They formed a national Skype³ support group. I got funding from the Re-evaluation Foundation for the workshop and to bring people to it from around the country. I also encouraged allies to do fundraising, but not much happened with that. The Indigenous People's Workshop took place in March 2012.

MORE COMMUNITY BUILDING

After that three-day workshop, Darlene spent four weeks traveling to seven RC Communities that had at least one Indigenous Co-Counsellor who was prepared to host her visit and did introductions to RC. (She also went to Aotearoa [New Zealand] to work with the Maori Community there.)

Things started to move after this. Some of the Indigenous people who had been at the workshop took fundamentals classes, and some of them wanted to introduce RC to their friends and family. The project went so well that we all wanted to do it again. So we decided that I would organize another Indigenous people's workshop.

continued . . .

¹ An Area is a local RC Community.

² "Back" means support.

³ Skype is a service that allows people to communicate instantly over the Internet via a microphone or video camera.

... continued

THE 2013 INDIGENOUS LIBERATION WORKSHOP AND THE PRE-WORLD CONFERENCE

The plan this time was that Marcie and Darlene would both come for four weeks before the Australia and New Zealand Pre-World Conference in March 2013 and we would hold an Indigenous workshop at the same site as the Pre-World.

Marcie and Darlene traveled around Australia, reconnecting with the Indigenous leaders they had met before. They shared in leading the allies work and the Indigenous work in the Communities they visited. At the end of their travel, Darlene led an Indigenous Liberation Workshop while Marcie attended the Pre-World and led allies' work there. I attended the Indigenous Liberation Workshop as organizer and supporter.

The Indigenous people who came to this year's workshop were better connected to their RC Communities and had a deeper understanding of RC. Many of them came with other Indigenous people from home. One focus of the workshop was for them to be better at using the discharge process and to

build alliances with each other across the Regions⁴ of Australia and from that base build an Indigenous Australian RC Community.

A STATEMENT ON CARING FOR THE EARTH

During the workshop, the Indigenous people learned that one of the key issues for the Pre-World Conference was care of the environment. Together they decided to write a statement from their perspectives as Indigenous people, as the Indigenous people of the land where the Pre-World was being held. They did mini-sessions and a round of thinking out loud, wrote their key points on the board, and assembled their thinking into a statement that was read to the whole workshop. After feedback, they wrote a final statement and delivered it to Tim⁵ when he met with the Indigenous people on Saturday night. Tim read the statement to the Pre-World on Sunday morning. That statement follows.

Rie Shiraiishi
Sydney, New South Wales, Australia

⁴ A Region is a subdivision of the International RC Community, usually consisting of several Areas.

⁵ Tim Jackins, the International Reference Person for the RC Communities and the leader of the Pre-World Conference



TERESA D'AMATO

A Statement from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Co-Counsellors



We have listened to your words, and now we would like you to listen to ours.

We, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people of Australia, have been custodians of Mother Earth for tens of thousands of years. We have maintained deep connections with Her by participating in Her natural systems, doing so with the utmost respect.

Our physical and spiritual well-being depends upon the health of this connection. The extreme degradation and destruction of Earth, and the disrespect of Mother's wisdom, is blatantly evident in our loss of culture and our failing health. Our dreaming is dying, yet we still feel and hear Her cries.

We are not the only ones affected. We now share this land with many, all of whom suffer in the absence of connection to, and the ongoing devastation of, Earth.

We now implore all peoples to:

Take responsibility for their personal connection to the land,

Stop ruthless exploitation of the Earth's resources for financial gain,

Seek alternatives, giving thought to future generations dependent on Her for well-being,

Shift our thinking—we are not separate from nature, we are one!

Embrace the peoples of this land, give respect to their cultures. Slow down, be still in nature. Don't just hear, act without hesitation to sustain ALL life.

An Introduction to a Pre-World Conference

Tim Jackins, at the West and Central USA Pre-World Conference, January 2013

Welcome to the first of the 2013 Pre-World Conferences. Thank you for doing whatever was required to get here.

We're all involved in this important project. This project has been running since the early 1950s—beginning in a small form at first; slowly spreading out around Seattle; then spreading outside of Seattle, starting in the late 1960s.

As the number of people outside of Seattle grew, we began to think about how everyone could stay in contact with each other and keep their minds steadily involved. We have been gathering in different forms over the years. For a long time, we have been meeting every four years. Currently this means a series of Pre-World Conferences scattered around the globe, followed by a World Conference.

GETTING IN TOUCH WITH EACH OTHER

We are gathering here, first of all, to get back in touch with each other. This alone plays an important role. We get to make contact with all these people who are as dedicated as we are to using RC ideas to move the world forward, to ending the domination of distress patterns on the behavior of humans.

We have made remarkable progress. *You* have made remarkable progress. Your mind alone is a wonderful example of what the discharge process can do. If somebody could watch and track each one of us, year to year, and



MATT WEATHERFORD

then describe how our lives and thinking have developed, it would be impressive. Part of what people like about these conferences is getting to see people they haven't seen for four years: "Hey, I like them more this time! They're a little more approachable. They look friendly almost all the time." We have done consistent work, in particular on the distresses that have kept us separate, looking unapproachable, and feeling unable to approach others. Our relationships have steadily developed. This shows clearly in each of our histories. It also shows collectively here.

PROGRESS ON MANY FRONTS

We have made progress on many fronts. It took a lot of years in the beginning to develop the basic ideas of RC. Then, as we got more clarity individually, we began figuring out oppressions and starting to work on those. We have continued that work. We are looking further and

further into the distresses that have hampered us, and further into society and understanding how distresses got frozen out there.

Steadily, more and more of us have taken RC ideas out into the world. We tend to begin in small ways, without letting anybody know what we're doing. Trying to ease the tension in meetings—make meetings bearable—is often the first thing we do.

We have found thousands of ways to use RC ideas, and this has made a big difference to the people around us. However, I think the biggest difference it's made has been in our own minds. We know now what we are capable of doing. It's clear that RC isn't just a small group of people trying to feel better. It's something that can be applied more and more widely in the world. We get to think about ways to improve how we do that, so it will have even larger effects.

GROWTH OF THE RC COMMUNITIES

We also get to think about the development of the RC Communities. That's still not easy to think about. We want to be such good people, doing such good things, that everybody joins us. Has that worked? Well, to a certain extent it has kept us going, growing, and getting more solid. However, we've had difficulty thinking about growth, and actually planning what we want to have happen. We just hope that by each of us individually doing good things, it will somehow all fit together in an interesting way.

SOMETHING IS STILL THE SAME

We can look at where our theory and practice are at this point. They keep developing well. However, even though we've done all this work, made all this progress, we still find something we haven't been able to work on. We look better every year, we continue to move forward in our lives, but something is still the same. (*Laughter*) Some of the same chronic recordings¹ still play in our heads. We're still pulling against the same resistance. We haven't been able to fully use our understanding and our ability to counsel. This has

¹ Distress recordings

held us back. That's why I want us to look again, more deeply, at the early childhood hurts we all experienced.

When I look at myself and many other people, it appears that we have things we've been unwilling to do. Some distresses have just seemed too painful. Because they've felt so unbearable, we've not been able to commit ourselves to going after² them systematically. In fact, we've almost never gone after them, unless some accident has happened that's blown them open. We haven't chosen the accidents—we've hated them—but we've used the opportunities. We've made great progress and been happy, but we haven't wanted them to happen again!

It seems we all have a collection of "unbearable" things. They are rooted back early in our lives when we were very alone—with no resource, perspective, or reference—and decided to go on alone. We can look back to that time and use our collective resource to discharge there. We're just beginning to learn to do this well.

We're going to spend the first part of this conference on us. We'll use

² "Going after" means pursuing and discharging.

the rich resource of this group to go after things for our individual benefit. This will also clear our minds to use the rest of the weekend to think about the Community. The *Guidelines*³ are not a major issue this time around. We've put in twelve years of hard work on them. They are really pretty⁴ good. There are only a few developments to look at.

OUR GOALS

We will also think about our goals. We'll be looking at the goals we've had, and how we've done in implementing them, and perhaps think of new goals. The most obvious topic for a new goal is the care of the environment. It's a topic that is large and universal, and clearly our distresses have stopped us from being thoughtful about it. There's also a challenging jumble of information connected with it. I've been thinking about it, and talking with people, and trying to find a large enough context for the challenge. A goal about the environment could be useful for ourselves as well as for reaching others. Many people are clearly concerned and interested. We could have a good and significant effect.

³ The *Guidelines for the Re-evaluation Counseling Communities*—the policies for the RC Communities

⁴ "Pretty" means quite.

FIVE-YEAR SUBSCRIPTION TO *PRESENT TIME*

Rational Island Publishers is offering a five-year subscription to *Present Time*, at the request of many people who would like to not have to re-subscribe every one or two years. The cost is \$84 in the United States, outside of Washington State; \$92 in Washington State; and \$124 (U.S.) outside the United States. (A couple of dollars have been added to partially cover the anticipated increase in costs over the next five years.) To order a *Present Time* subscription, see page III of this issue.

Family Work¹: Pioneering and Revolutionary

Last December I participated in an RC family workshop in Valbonne, France—along with my son, Miro, and his ally. It was not my first Co-Counseling experience with young people, but it was the first time I had measured how much this work is pioneering and revolutionary. No doubt Miro's presence helped me feel involved.

Play sessions with young people involve the whole body. The “co-player-counselors” are jumping, running, falling down, tumbling, throwing themselves, lying down, and so on. It is a fully developed version of what I bring into my adult Co-Counseling sessions. In those sessions I am active but in a more restricted way: I cuddle, hold hands, look, see, listen, smile, along with occasionally being more physically active. While freely playing with young people and following their lead, I am in contact with my three-dimensional, moving, spontaneous intelligence.

The oppressive society has prevented me from functioning in the fully intelligent ways expressed in free play. In the same way that I have been conditioned to control my emotional discharge, I have been conditioned not to jump, play, be noisy, or let my body take on odd positions or make spontaneous, organic, unique moves.

Using my body in playing with young people makes my discharge more freely available. It is such a contradiction to my patterns of “correct behavior”—of being polite and having “good manners”—that I cannot help feeling something. Sometimes it frees up light fear

(of being caught in “unsuitable” postures, of having “bad behavior”), and I just want to laugh. When I take more risks with my body, it brings up heavier fear (like fear of falling down). Often I feel bored. (It must have been boring to “behave” and limit my body to only “correct” postures.) If I am shoved around or hit inadvertently, it can bring up rage. When I am involved in a play session, it is practically impossible for me not to feel something.

Because of the commitment they require, play sessions with young people threaten my oldest patterns. Committing my whole body in these sessions can be compared to a verbal commitment in an adult session. A verbal commitment can powerfully attack one or several patterns, but a commitment made in a play session with a young person seems to shake all my patterns from their foundations all at once. My body bumps into old memories that are inscribed in it, and they spontaneously burst out in the open. My control patterns seem less effective (or even totally ineffective).

In play sessions, the counseling is not dependent on words. A young person feels, sees, and captures the presence and state of mind of whoever is facing him or her. In adult sessions it is easier to “cheat,” to say things that are not synchronized with what we feel.

Another revolution I am experiencing through play sessions is that my state of mind is joyous (at least that is what I am reaching for). This is a step forward in my “being there.” I am in closer contact with present-time reality. I am accessible.

To take part² in these kinds of sessions is, for me, a constant invitation to plunge into the zestful reality that powerfully contradicts my

distresses, plunge into discharge. I make contact with distresses recorded during childhood. It also allows me to get closer to young people and to work on the oppressive patterns I have as an adult.

I often feel a huge resistance when it comes to participating in a family workshop or to playing with young people or with adults. Recently I asked myself what would help me to use the efficient and powerful tool of playing more often. A few ideas came to me:

- to take playtime seriously during adult RC events
- to suggest games at every event, develop my thinking about them, and encourage other RCers to do the same
- to take seriously my resistance to playing and discharge on it
- to discharge on the oppressive patterns I have as an adult
- to play with other adults
- to play with young people, even a little bit, and appreciate myself for doing it
- to look for games that are attractive to me.

As adults, we need a lot of support and encouragement to attack the oppressive patterns we direct at young people and to involve ourselves in playing with children. Thanks to Brigitte Guimbal, Marina del Campo Loubet, and the Valbonne Community for organizing and leading this workshop and for continuing this precious work that is so fundamental for parents, allies, and young people.

Emma Perrot
Die, France

Translated from French
by Régis Courtin

Reprinted from *Ecoute*, the newsletter
for Co-Counselors in France

¹ Family work is the application of Re-evaluation Counseling to the particular situations of young people, and families with young children. It entails young people and adults (both parents and allies) interacting in ways that allow young people to show and be themselves, and to not be dominated by the adults.

² “Take part” means participate.

Cleaning Out an Anesthesia Recording

To clean out an anesthesia recording,¹ you get an interested counselor (or two hundred of them, if possible) and tell everything you can remember about first considering that you might have to have surgery, and everything that happened after that.

When you get to present time, start over at the same place, or earlier if an earlier memory comes up, and tell it all through again to present time. And plan on telling it two hundred million times, so that the two thousand times it will probably take won't seem so bad.

Each time you come to the onset of the anesthesia, tell everything you remember until the memories blank out. Then skip to the earliest memory after the surgery and continue to present time. As you go over it, you will remember farther into the anesthesia period and earlier into the ending of the anesthesia.

When you are bored to death and cannot make yourself tell the long story enthusiastically, and cannot seem to shrink the period of unconsciousness any more, begin to tell a fantasy of what went on during the knocked-out² period. Be as creative and wild as you can be, but do tell everything that occurs to you.

Some people actually recover every detail of what went on in the surgery, but it's more common to get a very mixed-up fantasy because you will have restimulated an enormous number of past experiences that will have become part of the tale. Each time you go over it, try to be more fantastic. On your nineteenth or so repetition, you'll find that certain elements reappear each time you go over it, although they may change their form. The yawns will have begun long before this but will become fast and deep.

When you can't remember anything about it in the framework of "review of a pattern," you can quit. This doesn't mean you have lost your memory. If the material is asked for in another context, and there's some point in your remembering it, you'll be able to present it to a thoughtful, trustable inquisitor.

*Harvey Jackins*³

From a letter written in 1995

¹ Distress recording

² "Knocked out" means unconscious.

³ Harvey Jackins was the founder and first International Reference Person of the RC Communities.

The Benefits of RC

Life is no fun when you have a lot of problems and haven't discovered the distinctly different skills of dealing with them. Years ago, I was in deep pain and tremors, and I didn't know what to do to set my mind free. But now I have managed to eliminate the stress and pain I was in because of the experience Re-evaluation Counseling gave me.

As human beings we need people to pay good attention to us, to give us time to talk about our problems, to show us affection and cry with us. Then we can consequently enjoy life. When we talk about our problems with people who are interested in listening, we can discharge. I have learnt that feelings are to be felt but not to be acted upon. We can simply enjoy the good ones and leave the bad ones. Sometimes I could feel very negative about myself and fail to fix my

problems. I would just sit and cry because I felt defeated in fixing them. But actually, I was doing a great job for myself by discharging. I didn't know that. RC has just revealed to me the secret!

When people share and laugh together, they learn facts about life. I have enjoyed meeting new people in the course of RC training.

"At every moment I have done my very best." This realization has helped me appreciate the little things I do, even something as small as saying "Hello!"

Anyayo Jennifer Claire
Gulu, Uganda

Re-emerging from Grief and “Mental Health” Oppression

Grief at the loss of loved ones is a wrenching experience nearly everyone knows. Undischarged grief is a major source of distress recordings. “Mental health” oppression discourages us from using the discharge process for our feelings of loss and our other emotions. This story is about my using discharge and RC Community resources to respond to my own grief while grappling with the culture’s intense recordings from “mental health” oppression. Writing it has helped me reflect on and make sense of what I’ve learned about dying and grief and “mental health” oppression.

I had a tough couple of years. My husband became extremely ill from respiratory disease, which required intensive caregiving and resulted in financial and logistical stresses. In the same period of time, my brother became ill and then died. Meanwhile, a close relative of my husband’s died suddenly, and then my husband died. The economic crisis in 2009 caused a huge drop in funding and severely threatened the rights and services that had been the focus of my work. I lost my job. All this happened in less than two years. I was never more appreciative of RC. A few months into these crises, I decided to have at least one Co-Counseling session every day.

My circle of friends regarded my losses as severe. But losing people, as well as most of one’s salary, is not that unusual in today’s world, and hasn’t been throughout history. I had to fight recordings¹ of feeling victimized. I had to fight for the perspective that with enough discharge and support from my friends and Co-Counselors, even

this extreme situation could be an opportunity for re-emergence and increased clarity. I approached my grief with some questions: How does “mental health” oppression affect our experience of grief? What are good ways to discharge deep grief? Is the loss of a supportive spouse a “setback” in my life and my re-emergence? I was also interested in the issues of facing our own and our loved ones’ deaths.

LOSING MY TWO MAIN MEN

My brother was a draft resister from the Vietnam era who chose to live in Sweden, the land of my mother’s ancestry. He loved world history, especially the history of the Vikings, and had an amazing memory for details of family events and emotional dynamics. Gratefully, I had visited with him in Finland a few months before he died. He was ill and about to start treatment for cancer, but he was still able to attend a workshop I led. We had a wonderful time sharing about our family and cultural history. Just a couple of months before he was to start chemotherapy, he died unexpectedly.

My husband, nicknamed “Bear” by our goddaughter, was my soul mate. He was funny, smart, affectionate, romantic, a good listener, and a Co-Counselor. He loved poetry and sometimes quoted Keats or Rumi on my voicemail. We worked at sustaining a good connection and at all the ordinary challenges of living together. He was my comrade in the disability liberation movement and an editor and helpmate in my writing and leading. His health declined over the years due to a genetic condition he had been told would end his life in his twenties. He was

able to live decades longer, to which I credit discharge, our closeness, and our persistence in assuming that he would live fully for a long time. But he died earlier than we’d hoped.

Because of my work in the disability community, I am familiar with the reality of early death. Death often arrives earlier for disabled people than is the average for people in affluent societies. During one of his many hospitalizations, we realized Bear was likely dying, not just facing another health crisis he could survive. What followed was an overwhelming series of hopeful moments and wrenching setbacks. One evening, a doctor told me Bear’s vital signs were so extreme that he wouldn’t live through the night. I slept on the floor of his room, and family members flew in. At dawn we crowded around his bed to see if he was still with us. He opened his eyes, looked around at us, smiled, and mouthed through his respirator mask, “I’m hungry. Is there any grapefruit?” Incidents like this occurred again and again for the next year and a half.

DYING

Bear and I discharged and talked together for hours about dying, along with reading books and poetry about death. He was more willing to admit he would die than I was. My goal to fight for the lives of others, especially his, held strong. In his last year this became an ongoing battle between us. I believe Bear died of a combination of his genetic condition and his recorded discouragement. Toward the end, he asked me to let go of my urgent need to save him, and I had dozens of deep discharge sessions on the prospect of letting him go.

¹ Distress recordings

As he declined, he needed 'round-the-clock care, which added substantial financial and household stresses to his increasing physical discomfort. I couldn't handle all his care needs. We had to hire people for up to ten hours a day to enable me to keep working part-time and get enough exercise, sleep, and discharge. I often did the night shift, attending to his bi-pap (breathing device) and his personal comfort. We accessed all the services available, eventually including hospice care. Despite these services, and because of our dysfunctional U.S. medical system, we had to pay substantially out of pocket for homecare, equipment, and treatment.

Our homecare workers were a source of wonderful help and camaraderie. Many times we found ourselves at a sweet party in our home—with friends, nurses, and other caregivers—laughing, dancing, singing, sharing, or watching TV. Bear was an avid sports fan, and he and I, and his friends and attendants, shouted at the TV. (Our teams usually lost.) We also watched and shouted at *Jeopardy*.² (Bear always won.) On Bear's birthday, a few months before he died, we had a party for him in which friends and caregivers surrounded his bed and offered him lovely appreciations. It was a celebration of him and his life—a "pre-death memorial service" that he could participate in and enjoy.

As caring and skilled as the homecare workers typically were, we sometimes felt invaded by their presence. We made some hiring mistakes and had to handle an occasional firing of a worker. They came into our home with their own needs, and we had to manage their intrusions: addictive TV watching;



MAURA FALLON

junk food and sodas spilled on the couch; their own fear, grief, and desire to be client; their own restimulations about Bear's dying.

We found hospice services to be a complicated mix of lovely human caring and "mental health" oppression. Hospice averts expensive end-of-life care in hospital intensive care units and allows people to die at home with their family. We were offered twice-weekly visiting nurses and social workers. The hospice chaplain became a good friend. We had twenty-four-hour phone access to advice from nurses and physicians. All the hospice staff and volunteers were unusually patient, relaxed people who had been trained in compassionate listening. Most noticeably, they seemed to have *time*—time to attend in a relaxed manner to medical as well as emotional needs. This was in stark contrast to the typical health professional. Most hospice workers readily offered hugs and were relaxed with Bear's and my tears. When I explained a little about discharge and Co-Counseling, they were accepting. One nurse asked for more information.

Hospice also offered drugs. A day after Bear was first admitted into home hospice care, a package arrived in the mail with bottles of narcotics for pain, along with other drugs for nausea, for "stopping hallucinations," and for respiratory-secretion management in the last days of life. This combination was given to everyone in hospice; it wasn't specifically prescribed for Bear. The assumption was that Bear would eventually need and use these drugs. The nurses had clearly been trained to encourage their use, though they listened patiently to our questions and concerns and sought to comply with our wishes.

Bear initially resisted the drugs, due to the influence of RC and because he strongly identified his rational mind as his true self. The pressure—from health providers, but also from friends and family—to "try the drugs" was strong. ("Don't you want to be comfortable?") We found out, in the last month of Bear's life, that you can't "try" morphine in a weakened state like his. It is extremely addictive. And for Bear, morphine seemed to consistently cause more discomfort than it reduced. The hospice response was to prescribe additional drugs to alleviate the side effects, which caused more side effects. Prescribed specifically for the panic of shortness of breath, which was terrifying to Bear, morphine also created constipation, sleeplessness, and nightmares. It seemed clear to me it wasn't worth the trade-offs. The increasing pressure to employ the cascade of medications forced Bear, near the end of his life, to submit fully to the intense regimen. This felt like a huge defeat to me, as I had imagined and hoped for a "good death" minimally fraught with drugs. After discharging about this, I came to accept that my expectations about how it should go were from my patterns.

continued . . .

² *Jeopardy* is a U.S. television quiz show.

... continued

Finally, Bear went into a coma. I lay next to him, the only sound being the rhythmic hum of the bi-pap, through his last nights. I was surprised to see tears leak from the corners of his eyes. I didn't mention this to the nurse, because I thought she might say that dying people "released secretions." I preferred to think he was still discharging as he was dying. On his last morning, my friend Jenny and I sat by his bed, singing this song:

*When you were born, you cried,
and the world rejoiced.*

*Live your life so that when you die,
the world cries and you rejoice.*³

The color drained from his face, and he left us. He had lived a good, rich life, full of friends, satisfying work, and deep intimacy with me and our families. We held a lovely memorial service with many moving tributes and songs and a photo slide show. It was videotaped, so that I could share it with friends and watch it again and again and discharge.

GRIEF

I was ready to grieve. Since I had already been discharging daily about Bear's and my brother's deaths, when Bear died I was already set up with regular sessions for continued discharge. I tried to focus on absolutely everything that crossed my mind about his death, and about death in general: my loss of him, death in our culture, my family's attitudes and feelings about death. I looked at old photos, played our favorite music. I asked my counselors and friends to help me find and address any issues I was missing.

Grief for me comes with a sensation of pressure or burning in my solar plexus, a tightness in

my throat, and a lack of hunger. Focusing on these sensations was useful and a source of new thinking about emotion. In every session, I pushed myself to reach for early material⁴: early hospital memories; early memories of grandparents, friends, cats, dogs, turtles dying. I discharged about *Old Yeller*, the first movie I remember from my childhood in which someone died. I tried to imagine my parents' and grandparents' grief at their family losses. My recollections of early-childhood experiences with death were revealing. I remembered being told when my grandmother died that I didn't have to think about it, that I didn't need to try to understand where she had gone. I had many sessions in which I demanded to know, crying out, "Where is she? Why don't you tell me what's happening?" I think I recorded the message "I can't think about death."

My goal was to discharge deeply for forty to sixty minutes every day. I kept to this goal for a year before and a year after Bear died. I learned that I could discharge by myself almost every night. I would put an old teddy bear in the bed where Bear had died and sit down by the bed and talk and cry. My cat would often join in the session "as counselor." Mostly I would tell Bear that I missed him, that I was sorry we hadn't been able to challenge his discouragement, and that I was proud of him for how hard he had fought for himself and for our connection. I would tell him some stories from my day—the kinds of things I would have shared with him before he died. For a few months after he died, I kept his voicemail going so that I could call him from my office or car, hear his recorded voice, and leave ongoing journal entries that I could take down⁵ when I got home.

Sometimes I would get an overwhelming feeling of being lost or abandoned—my early struggle. To counter the victimization and gain perspective, I would try to conjure up the whole world of grievors and feel our common experience throughout history. I found estimates on the web⁶ of the number of people in the world who die each day: about 150,000 according to the U.S. Census Bureau. This number, times the number of family and friends, times the length of time "acute grief" lasts, makes for millions of sad people. This conjures up images for me of women from non-Western cultures "keening and wailing" at funerals.

A month after Bear died, I called to join a hospice-run "bereaved-spouse" support group. I expected it not to be nearly as useful to me as RC sessions, but there were things I wanted from it. I sought conversations with peers in the grieving process, and I was curious about what else it would offer.

When I applied on the phone, the social worker told me I was probably "not ready" so soon after my brother's and husband's deaths, that I needed more time for the loss to "sink in." Apparently, the assumption was that soon after a death people should be allowed to be numbly busy with the funeral, finances, and family needs, rather than addressing their grief. I was put on a waiting list for another month.

The group was facilitated by a thoughtful and warm social worker. She didn't stop people from crying, but she didn't encourage tears. Much of the focus was on "coping" with the feelings of loss. Occasionally, when participants seemed on the verge of reflecting on their own chronic patterns, she insisted that

³ Lyrics attributed to a Native American proverb

⁴ "Material" means distress.

⁵ "Take down" means write down.

⁶ "Web" means Internet.

their difficulties were all about the recent loss. She seemed to have a campaign in her mind to frame the world's problems as denial of death. She seemed to have no notion of early hurts. She did offer a helpful perspective on how the culture doesn't allow bereaved people to have space to grieve, and encouraged us to slow down and not rush back to our usual pace of life, but what we should do with that time was unclear. It seemed we were to wait patiently, to feel better by gradually pushing the feelings back down.

The implication, though not overtly stated, was that our grief was a kind of temporary "mental illness," that our feelings were out of control and we were feeling more emotion than usual, that our "emotional pain" was something like a wound or an illness. She often used the term "emotional healing," which inspired me to rethink the use of the word "healing" in RC. "Healing" connotes that emotional "pain" is a sign of something wrong needing fixing rather than simply a bodily signal of a need to discharge.

We were reassured that we would "recover" from this unusual degree of emotion, which under the circumstances was excusable or understandable. We could "take our time," as if to rest in the context of illness recovery (though lengthy grieving was clearly a worrisome sign of excess). Then, as we felt better, we could "move on," meaning stop feeling so much emotion. We were expected to "get better" and "feel better."

In contrast, from my RC perspective, I understood my grief at my loved ones' dying to be a combination of feelings about the loss of their important presence in my life and a significant restimulation of past losses. I could discharge about the

changes in my life as a result of the current losses, but I could also *take advantage* of the restimulation. Nothing like this was mentioned in the group or in anything I read in the hospice literature.

Most helpful for me about the group were potluck dinners at which we could laugh and share longer stories than was possible in the formal weekly sessions. A sweet bonus was that a former Co-Counselor turned up in⁷ one of the groups. After the first session she approached me and asked, "Are you a Co-Counselor?" I guess it was obvious.

A few times in group sessions, I reached for the hands of participants who seemed ready to cry or I offered simple verbal contradictions to their distress. The social worker kindly but quickly interrupted me. She told me I ought to be in the group for myself, that my efforts to help others revealed that I was avoiding my own grief. I suspected she also felt a bit threatened, since my comments sometimes got others crying, which she seemed to both admire and find disturbing. Perhaps she did correctly see some of my material, as I do have "helper" patterns. Another of the hospice counselors was more encouraging of discharge. How sad, though, that a "grief support group" was not a place for teaching or encouraging us to effectively support each other to grieve with discharge. Generally in our culture, there is some "permission to cry" in the context of recent deaths, as compared to other losses. This is a door into discharge for many people, something we RCers can

take advantage of with our non-RC close ones.

Hospice grief support draws on the Western psychological theories and literature about the "phases of grief." Some of my friends inquired into my "phases." Over time I began to understand where the phase concept

I have learned that grief is a feeling to be discharged, not a big problem to be handled.

was coming from and how, without the benefit of discharge, people would seek to impose this notion on the experience of grief.

After Bear died, I discharged heavily and easily every day, with attention or alone. I had only to begin talking to Bear, and I could cry and cry. I wanted to "live at RC workshops" and attended four in the first two months after he died. I was offered, and accepted, occasional one-way time from my closest circle of a dozen Co-Counselors. I also wanted to be a counselor. I enjoyed giving attention and getting my attention away from my grief for a while. I found it confusing to be discharging about having lost more than one close loved one at the same time. It made me more aware of the impact of war and other disasters and how they can bring many losses within a family.

Because of all my discharge, but also just my tendency, I was able to keep functioning fairly well. I kept working part-time as a university lecturer and writing grants and seeking consulting work. Being under-employed because of the

continued . . .

⁷ "Turned up in" means unexpectedly came to.

COUNSELING PRACTICE

... continued

economic crunch turned out to be⁸ a strange blessing. I was not my usual too-busy self. I had more time for discharge, for personal writing and hanging out with friends, and for exercise. I usually slept well, dreaming often sweet, strange dreams about Bear and my brother.

Except for occasional visits from family and overnights with friends, I was living alone for the first time in decades. I noticed another strange feeling: my grief “kept me company.” I was “busy” with grief, my central focus. It gave me a sense of connection to Bear and my brother. It was as if my feelings of grief were the phone line to them. I could deepen my discharge by appreciating the loving connection we *did have*. The presence of grief *means* there was indeed deep connection. I could see that someone not discharging could get stuck there, hanging on to a romanticized continued relationship with the deceased person. This has been the plot line of many novels, plays, and movies in Western culture.

⁸ “Turned out to be” means resulted in being.

About three months into the grieving, I noticed my attention shift in uncomfortable ways. I became oddly “spaced-out”⁹ and confused. I lost my keys and forgot appointments—unusual for me. I kept discharging on early memories of loss, death, and abandonment. In the hospice group, the social worker said that this spaciness was normal, though for some people it would go on for months or a year. I created my own theory: maybe I was trying to discharge very early distress—perhaps feelings about birth, like terror about the anesthesia or about losing my womb relationship with my mother. I noticed that active exercising every day would lessen the confusion. It eventually lifted.

Losing my two closest people in the same year left me feeling “untethered.” Two of the people I’d known the longest, and my two most important men, were gone. My brother’s knowledge of me and our shared childhoods, his memories of our family history, were gone—along with Bear, my

⁹ “Spaced-out” means dazed.

life companion. This began to sneak up on me as a recurrent feeling of dislocation. Where was my home base? After at first wanting to go to lots of workshops, I started wanting to stay home and found traveling hard. I also experienced a kind of denial of the fact of their deaths. I would momentarily forget and then need to re-remember especially my brother’s death: “Oh, yeah, he did die. Really?! Oh . . . yeah.” I had moments of complete disbelief that it had happened. I tried to reach for the early roots of this feeling—perhaps birth and the first feeling of disconnection.

EARLY LOSSES, AND RESISTING “MENTAL HEALTH” OPPRESSION

We humans are able to discharge our distress recordings, but because of “mental health” oppression, we’ve learned to push feelings down and harbor them as patterns, which make trouble for us later. As much as I was discharging, I still observed this pushing down, this repacking back into unawareness the material that had been exposed by my losses. I had to fight against being urgent to get my ordinary level of free attention back and feel more “normal.” I could usually distract myself from the feelings. My counselors, however, encouraged me to “take advantage of the feelings.”

The emotional overload and “pain” that follow the loss of a close beloved, especially for those who aren’t able to discharge, is profoundly misinterpreted due to “mental health” oppression. I pondered the extent to which these feelings, though attached to current losses, are primarily about the early loss of our mothers. I imagine that these sensations of grief and fear are what we felt as babies every day—from the loss of closeness and connection and from going through traumatic experiences without the



LOCH NESS, HIGHLAND, SCOTLAND • BILL HORNE

champion protector we needed. This “pain” is what it feels like to be a human and not shove the feelings away.

Some years back, when my ninety-two-year-old Aunt Alice was nearing her death, I listened to her as she cried out for her mother (my grandmother). I remember thinking she was longing for her mother in the face of grief for her own life, as well as her mother’s. Then I realized, “Oh yes, she is discharging her oldest babyhood feelings, of course still with her, of longing for her mother.” This triggered deeper insights: We are all always feeling, at some level, our earliest babyhood separation. If we are able to discharge grief at all, whenever we grieve we are grieving these early losses. If we had been able to discharge earlier, would the loss of a spouse or close family member be so wrenching? I began to consider the sensation of grief as something like hunger or sleepiness—an ordinary feeling to be met with ordinary attention to a human need.

All the discharging I did every day for two years brought important re-evaluations. I now have a better picture of how deeply hurt we all are. In my sessions I tried to take a look at nearly every important loss I’d experienced. I think I’m ordinary in my list of losses, and what a list it is! But I also have an appreciation for how well we humans are able to function despite the distortions in our intelligence due to our undischarged hurts. Our species has survived surprisingly well.

I have learned that grief is a feeling to be discharged, not a big problem to be handled. I have learned good grieving skills. I have also discharged about discharge. I recalled a childhood incident in which I thought, “If I can control this bad tendency to cry and show

my feelings, my parents will love me more and be happy.” This is one of the profoundly distorting tenets of “mental health” oppression communicated to young people.

Many counselors offered the direction to say “good-bye” to my loved ones. It was not always a useful direction. In my family, “good-bye” was supposed to be a happy send-off, like people waving and shouting, “Have a great time!” as the boat pulls away from the shore. I could discharge most heavily when my counselors relaxedly offered me their hand or a shoulder to lean on, with no expectations for me to talk or say directions.

Earlier in my grieving process, I imagined being able to discharge heavily every day for the rest of my life, but I have been unable to continue with this consistently. Of course, I haven’t finished grieving for my beloveds, but I think that the pressure of “mental health” oppression has made me push my grief back down. I’ve “gotten better” under the duress of ordinary life pressures and with the distractions of work and friends and because of time passing by. I do continue to meet my goal of at least two mini-sessions a day and a longer session two or three times a week. I do discharge about reaching for more session time.

Now, over two years later, I have occasional moments when I feel a pang of loss (that solar-plexus sensation), or my throat tightens (I “choke up”), or I recall an incident

and feel a strong desire to tell someone about it. As often, I have fleeting fond memories of my loved ones and feelings of gratitude for their having been in my life. (According to the grief group counselor, this is a “fast recovery.”) Although my goal is to return to discharging grief, both early and recent, about once a week, the persistent daily urge to discharge heavily on the loss of these particular beloveds has passed by. In a way, I miss my daily sessions on deep grief. I liked the easy access to heavy discharge and the clear sense of prioritizing grief. I enjoyed the tumble of re-evaluations. I imagine that the “acute grief” sensation and ease of discharge are closer to what we would experience as adults if we were free of “mental health” oppression, and that we wouldn’t regard the sensation as a problem but as just a sensation that inspires discharge.

I can smile at something about myself: In writing this story, I spent many hours thinking about my grief instead of simply discharging about it. All of us writers telling our stories are seeking attention for our experiences—an abstract “session.” I also wanted to share my thinking with you, and hopefully inspire you to grieve more deeply. But just imagine if all our writers had discharged their grief instead of writing about it. How different our world literature would be—along with everything else about our world.

Marsha Saxton
El Cerrito, California, USA



ANNE BARTON

In the Middle of the Night

(a song)

In the middle of the night . . .
Countless times throughout my days . . .
When some meanness comes my way . . .
When there's beauty that I see . . .

* * * * *

In the middle of the night
When my monsters pounce and bite
When I shiver in my fright
In my heart you hold me tight.

When I wake up with a start¹
When a nightmare jolts my heart
And spurns my request to depart
You chase my shadows with your light.

In those small, dark morning hours
When scary phantoms make me cower
When I lose track of my power
You comfort me until daylight.

When my very bones go chill
You help my quivering heart to still
You soothe my scattered wits until
My soul and body reunite.

* * * * *

Countless times throughout my days
I hold in mind your loving gaze
Quiet, radiantly ablaze
Strong, serene, and forthright.

You cannot begin to know
How often tenderness does grow
Brimming up to overflow
In gentle, overwhelmed delight.

I often smile out of the blue²
When something calls to mind anew
This miracle I share with you
Which flesh and spirit does unite.

The best that's in me you invite
To celebrate with all that's right
You encourage me to flight,
And to appreciate the height.

* * * * *

When some meanness comes my way
Or hurtful, dark things people say
Your presence eases my dismay
I always feel you by my side.

When shaming echoes yammer strong,
Try to convince me I am wrong
You tell me plain they don't belong,
That all these many years they've lied.

When I'm too tired to make sense
Or maintain my confidence
I know you're here in my defense
I feel your full support inside.

When there is badness that I feel
You're here with me to help me heal
Reminding me goodness is real,
Rising like in-flowing tide.

* * * * *

When there's beauty that I see
Of kindness shown, or honesty
Or birds or butterfly or tree
Or shining stars or full moonlight

When I see strength, weakness defend
Or rigidity unbend,
A hand of tolerance extend
And give apology outright

When I hear children understood
And babies told they're always good
And more support for parenthood
Considered to be only right

In the middle of the night . . .
Countless times throughout my days . . .
When some meanness comes my way . . .
When there's beauty that I see . . .

Abundance will not be finite
It fills up every day and night
It's all too much for one to keep
You'll have to share it all with me.

¹ "Start" means sudden movement.

² "Out of the blue" means unexpectedly.

Russell Hayes
Lexington, Kentucky, USA

KK

Mistakes Are Okay

Learning is a continuous process in life, and making mistakes is an important part of the learning process. When we learn new things, we tend to make mistakes, which is natural and common. The problem is not in making mistakes but in how we look at our mistakes and how we feel about them. As toddlers when we started learning to walk, we fell over and got up and tried again. Finally we learnt to walk without falling. If we had seen our falling over as a mistake, and felt regret about it, perhaps we wouldn't have learnt walking. It was essential that we fall over and learn from that.

Unfortunately, the adults around us installed so much fear about making mistakes that now we are terribly scared about mistakes all the time. Nobody told us that it's okay to make mistakes, that we don't need to feel guilty about and blame ourselves for them.

As the eldest child in my family, I was not allowed to make mistakes. In school the expectation from the teachers was that others could make mistakes but not me. I still remember one of my teachers telling me, "I will excuse others for their mistakes, but I can't excuse you for the same mistakes." I used to be conscious all the time about mistakes.

Thankfully I got into RC, and now I know that I, too, can make mistakes—like any other human does. Though I feel scared about my small mistakes, I have learnt to tell myself, "It's okay, Shashi. You have the right to make mistakes." I discharge and arrive at a place of appreciating myself for making the mistake and for facing it.

As a teacher I get to witness every day the effects of misinformation about mistakes. I notice that when students are writing their class work, homework, and examinations, they often don't strike the words that are mistakes but instead scratch them. Sometimes they tear the whole sheet of paper. I kept on instructing them not to scratch and make their writings look untidy. Then I realized that they scratched because they wanted to hide their mistakes. Probably as teachers we have failed to let our students know that mistakes happen and that it's okay. Now I have started telling my students that it's okay to make mistakes but that it's not okay to hide them. I instruct them to strike the word when they get it wrong instead of scratching. They deserve an appreciation for realizing their mistake, not blame for making it.

All humans make mistakes, so we need to accept our children with their mistakes. This doesn't mean ignoring any mistakes. It means teaching our children to take responsibility for their mistakes, and standing by our children. I am sure that if we stand by them, they will dare to show their mistakes more openly. They will start analyzing them and correct them themselves. As teachers, it's our responsibility to train our students not to run away from their mistakes. Instead we need to understand our students and train them to own their mistakes and learn from them.

As a teacher, I declare to my students that it's okay to make mistakes, that they have the right to make them. I vow to my students that I will trust them and stand by them with their mistakes, that I won't let them down or let them be isolated because of their mistakes. I would love to be their ally forever.

Let us handle our mistakes not in isolation but in cooperation and understanding. I would love to learn not only from my mistakes but also from yours. Teachers are always learners, and I take pride in learning from my students.



S.J. Shashikala
Bangalore, India

Seeing the Person and the Pattern at the Same Time

To accurately see the patterns of the client is a great part of effectiveness in counseling. I think the difficulty in seeing accurately the person and the pattern at the same time probably comes out of the long years when we didn't know there was a difference, and the confusion that formed in our heads at the time.

Harvey Jackins
From a letter written in 1995

Setting Limits—A Session

We were at the end of a (non-RC) weekend workshop for an assortment of people from many countries who happened to be staying at a small island center. There was a five-year-old boy there whom I will call Tommy. He was bright and energetic and full of life—and mischief. Unfortunately, the center had not expected or prepared for children at the workshop. Their care was left up to the parents, who wanted to devote their attention to the workshop, and the children were told to “go and play.” This was not meeting Tommy’s needs, and he constantly sought attention from the adults. What attention he got from his young single mother was mostly an attempt to try and control him in his fleeting assaults on people. I liked Tommy. A lot. I thought his wild forays were often imaginative and humorous, but they were also provocative and sometimes unwanted—especially by the other little boy his age who complained about him.

I wanted to take some time to give Tommy attention, to play with him and let him use me to express and let go of the “demons” that demanded our notice. But this was not an RC family workshop, and as he was not disrupting the participants during the circles, I thought I would wait until the workshop ended.

Fate—or Tommy—hastened an intervention. At the end of the final circle, Tommy began hitting the smaller boy and, as always, laughed and ran away. His mother tried to grab him, but he was too fleet for her.

I had been watching this develop, as we all had when he began hitting

the protesting boy. I thought to myself, “All right, Tommy, you have been showing us all what you need, so I guess it’s time now for me to help you with that.”

I was out of my chair quickly and was right there when he danced away from his mother. I reached around from behind him and snatched his left wrist with my right hand as I grabbed his right wrist with my left, and I hugged him to me, his back pressed to the front of my body. Then I lifted him swiftly and backed us both up to my chair and sat down with him on my lap. At first he laughed—it was a game, and at last he was getting the attention he wanted. Then he tried to get away, but I held on, firmly but gently, using my embrace to immobilize the struggle of his arms, avoiding his attempts to kick me with his feet or butt me with his head. He shouted at me to let go, and I stayed calm, not angry or upset, telling him in a soft and friendly tone, “I’m not going to let go; I’m not going to let you hit anyone. I’m just going to hold you until you calm down.”

He screamed in indignation and anger for me to release him and used, over and over, the limited number of foul words he had acquired in his short life. I just kept telling him, in a light and pleasant voice, “I like you, Tommy. I really do. But I am not going to let you go now while you are still so angry.” And I hugged him closer and nuzzled him playfully.

“Let me go!” he shouted. “I hate you! I’m going to kill you!”

“Well then,” I said, still very lightly, “I guess I better not let you go; I don’t want to be killed!”

And so it went for about forty-five minutes. The circle—at first interested, then concerned—began trying to get him to understand, but I told them that while he was so upset there was no point in trying to reason with him—he could not hear it through his anger.

I kept reminding myself that his physical struggle was just what he needed and really wanted. His actions had been a cry for help, without his awareness or conscious intention. He didn’t know what to do with all those wild, aggressive feelings pressing inside him except to rage and fight, and he needed to do it in a safe way that wouldn’t hurt him or anyone else. I had to tell myself that, as old as I was, he was having to put out much more energy fighting than I was holding and I could outlast him and give him the opportunity to discharge all that stuff boiling inside him. I reminded myself what a wonderful little boy he was and how I admired the warrior in him that wouldn’t give up; that the distresses eating at him were not his fault, not anyone’s fault; and that my holding him, my physical closeness, and my liking him and pulling for him* were things he wanted and needed.

Eventually, of course, he did get tired, and his mind clicked on and started to figure out how he could get out of this. I could feel that in him. I had done this so many times with so many children—and it had always worked.

“I’ll stop if you will,” he said.

“Okay, Tommy. I’ll let you go if you can make an agreement with me.”

* “Pulling for him” means supporting him, being on his side.

A big change. Now he was curious. I watched him really thinking. "What's that?"

"You have to agree to stop hitting people; that's all. But you have to really mean it and really do it. I believe you can do that."

He thought again for a moment. "Not even my mother?"

"No, Tommy, not even your mother. Hitting hurts."

He thought again. "All right."

I set him down and he broke loose instantly and ran. We all watched to see what he would do next.

He ran around behind the circle, to all the people, one at a time, most of them strangers to him, and hugged every one—a big, strong hug for each.

When he came to me, the last one, he hugged me shyly from behind, then without letting go he worked his way around to crawl up onto my lap and put his head on my chest, hugging hard and crying. By now I was crying, too, and so were most of the circle. And then he fell asleep.

For the rest of that evening, and the next day on the long boat ride to the mainland, Tommy never left my side. He snuggled, he played

and laughed with me, as if he had known me forever and it was the most natural thing in the world. And so it was—the absolutely natural way that people could always be with one another if they had no confusing distressful feelings but were relaxed and open to enjoy each other.

That was almost two years ago, and I have seen Tommy since and played with him. We are comfortable with each other, and his mother says he is quite a transformed little boy, that she and all of us had a great lesson that day on the island.

Manitouquat (Medicine Story)
Greenville, New Hampshire, USA

Making Good Use of Tim's Talks

Dear Tim,¹

I want to let you know how much I appreciate your talks on CD.² I have used them to get ready for RC classes that I teach and have noticed that my theory talks are more grounded because of my being able to hear your thinking.

I did a couple of classes to help folks understand how tangled up our distresses are and how painful it was early on that we couldn't discharge. I wanted to talk about how distresses that get tangled up with instinctual drives are particularly confusing, so I did a class on sex. It was helpful for folks to hear that the distress recordings that tell us that our lives depend on sex have come in part from times when the human race was down to five thousand people. I talked about several other things you spoke about on the CD,³ particularly the confusions about connection and relationships, and how capitalism constantly

manipulates our distresses related to sex. The people in my class have noticed that my talks have gotten clearer, more powerful, and more meaningful to them, and this one was even more so.

I could go on about how helpful your talks on CD are for my teaching, but I really want you to know how helpful they are to me personally:

For a couple of years now I have used your CDs to help me clean my kitchen. I feel overwhelmed and discouraged and like I can't get the job done. Then I remember to put on one of your CDs, and by the time the talk is over, the kitchen is clean and I have a new perspective. I use them to help me get out of many such jams. They're like a private class, and they interrupt discouragement. Sometimes I invite my husband to this private class. Thank you so much.

Nancy Perini
Albany, New York, USA

¹ Tim Jackins

² Rational Island Publishers has been producing a series of CDs, called *RC Teacher Updates*, of talks given by Tim Jackins at recent RC workshops. To see a list of all the *RC Teacher Updates* to date, go to page 105 of this *Present Time*.

³ *RC Teacher Update* No. 33, *Sex and Relationships*



LK

Reflections on an Early Sexual Memories Workshop

The following are comments on an early-sexual-memories workshop led by Tony Smith, in Melbourne, Victoria, Australia:

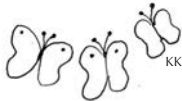


Tony started the workshop with “Sex is a human activity, but because it is a human activity, we are vulnerable to being confused about it. Discharge would help, but ‘mental health’ oppression gets in the way of discharge, so it is confusing!”



Dennis Wollersheim
Rosanna, Victoria, Australia

This workshop made room for me to discharge early hurts, confusion, and misinformation about myself and being close with people. Tony reminded us that shame has been attached to early sexual memories and that this is not our fault. Everyone has been trashed¹ in the area of being close to humans. I can see that any closeness I have achieved with other humans has been a huge victory for me.



Cynthia Johnston
South Frankston, Victoria, Australia

We can heal from these hurts, be connected, and be impervious to manipulation by sexism, racism, and fear.



Christine Marnane
Kew, Victoria, Australia

We can get good at doing anything we practice. If we practice paying attention to our sexual restimulation, we will get really good at it. The same applies to any distress. I have had lots of practice paying attention to my distress. Now I can get lots of practice doing the opposite. I can decide to pay attention to all sorts of wonderful things in the present. I can spend all my time deciding to use my mind in interesting and fun ways. When I decide to do this, my Co-Counseling sessions go better. I make better use of my time as client.

Sexual distress is what the capitalist society wants me to pay attention to instead of noticing each and every person I encounter. Sex in my white Australian Protestant world

¹ “Trashed” means mistreated.

is a commodity. The sexualised identity I thought I had to take on² as a young woman is part of how male domination has affected all my beloved sisters and me.

In my life and in my counselling, as counsellor and as client, I can always reach for the human being. I can remember that the people in front of me are always doing everything they can to connect with me and that I can take them into my heart and love them.



Victoria Kemp
Thornbury, Victoria, Australia

I got to see clearly that as a male I was set up to feel that the only way for me to achieve closeness with another human was to have sex with that person. Tony offered the possibility of shifting my focus from human body parts to the human being. I can see the importance of getting my Co-Counsellors to help me make that shift. I could see how counseling on early sexual memories uncovers pathways to many distresses.



Bartley McGowan
Port Melbourne, Victoria, Australia

An idea that I will take away from this workshop is that practice makes perfect. If we practice, say, being a victim, we will get really good at it. Likewise, if we choose to practice a different, more leader-like perspective, we will get really good at that instead!



Lisa Rassmussen
Northcote, Victoria, Australia

Reprinted from the newsletter of the Melbourne, Victoria, Australia, RC Community

² “Take on” means adopt.

Take Charge of Your Mind

Take charge of your mind and order it to quit “noisily telling you” all the negatives. YOU are the boss.

Harvey Jackins
From a letter written in 1997

Thoughts About Dyslexic People

I am dyslexic. I spent a lot of years trying to think about whether or not dyslexia was a distress and could be discharged. I decided that for me, at least at this time, I couldn't tell¹ and so it didn't really matter. I know that some hard things happened to me around reading that certainly made my dyslexia a lot worse. Whether they made me dyslexic or not, I don't know. I am dedicated to discharging all of the distress that makes me struggle with reading and writing the way that I do. And as I build up contradiction,² that gets easier.

I am writing this for two reasons:

1. I want to share some of my thinking about and experience with dyslexia and see if others have thoughts or similar experiences.

2. I would love to hear who out there is dyslexic. If you are raising a dyslexic child in RC, and it would be okay with your child for you to write to me, I would love to know about him or her. If you know of people in your RC Community who are dyslexic, please pass this e-mail on to them.

Years ago, after listening to an interview with the author on the radio, Harvey³ got me a book called *The Gift of Dyslexia*. It is the only thing I've ever read about dyslexia that has made sense to me, probably because it was written by a dyslexic person. The author talks about dyslexia as a gift. He talks about the strengths of dyslexic people and helps people think about ways to learn differently.

Harvey used to tell me about a United Nations strategy for teaching people how to read. United Nations workers would go into communities

where the literacy rate was low and set up stations. When people would come for the first time, the workers would say, "Welcome! We are so glad you're here!" and be pleased with them just for showing up.⁴ On the second day that people would come, the workers would be pleased again and then teach them to read one word. The workers would say to them over and over how pleased they were that they could read that one word, that they had done such a nice job learning that word, and that the workers would be so pleased if they would come back again the next day—and so on, like that. I have a feeling that if we all learned to read that way, there would not be such a big difference between people who are dyslexic and people who are not.

I've decided that the biggest contradiction is to be very pleased, out loud, everywhere I go, about being dyslexic. I get so many strengths from the way that my brain works. Being dyslexic and being targeted for the resulting difficulties that come with traditional learning have made me understand a lot about school systems and young people's oppression. They have also left me room to feel and be more connected to people whose first language is not English and who live in English-speaking countries.

What I have understood is that most of us who are dyslexic learn to read by seeing things in pictures. For many of us, this seems to leave us room to be "big picture" thinkers. The dyslexic people I have met are good at projects. Many artists are dyslexic. An article in the *New York Times* a while ago said that thirty percent of New York City small-business owners are dyslexic. We are starters and dreamers.

A while ago I was an ally at a young people's workshop. I was there with

my son. He decided to call a topic group for dyslexic people. Four of us got together. It was wonderful to be in the same room and just look at each other. We all knew each other well. We went around the room and told each other specific ways that we thought each other was smart. We all laughed a lot.

I, and all the dyslexic people I have talked to, feel bad about reading and writing and feel like something is wrong with us. Teachers feel bad when students do not learn to read, write, and do schoolwork in the way that the teachers were trained to teach these things. Then when the teachers feel bad, they mistreat the students who are struggling. They target them for being "spaced-out"⁵ or lazy or stupid." Most of us who've been targeted like that feel like something is wrong with our brain.

In the last bunch of years, I have been enjoying talking to people who are dyslexic. I've begun to organize dyslexic people in my Area.⁶ There are some dyslexic people at my workplace, too. I'm interested in finding out who is dyslexic or identifies that way. I would love to be in touch with them. I think it makes a big difference for us to be close to each other.

Jenny Sazama

Jamaica Plain, Massachusetts, USA
Reprinted from the e-mail discussion
list for RC Community members

⁵ "Spaced-out" means inattentive, distracted.

⁶ An Area is a local RC Community.

¹ "Tell" means determine that.

² Contradiction to the distress

³ Harvey Jackins

⁴ "Showing up" means coming.



MATT WEATHERFORD

“Today’s Thought”

Dear RC users of electronic media,

The RC web site includes a page on which each day there is a different RC thought about the world—usually from Harvey Jackins or me. Many people have requested assistance in making this page the home page of their Internet browser. If you do that, “Today’s Thought” about reality will be the first thing that appears on your screen when you log on to the Internet.

There are many different types of web browsers. We have written out below, for the three most common types, how to make “Today’s Thought” the home page. Try these instructions and see if having an RC thought as your starting point helps you to hold perspective.

With love and appreciation,
Tim Jackins

For Safari

- 1) Open Safari.
- 2) Open <<http://www.rc.org/thoughts/index.html>>.
- 3) Choose PREFERENCES from the Safari menu and click GENERAL.
- 4) At the “Home Page” setting, click SET TO CURRENT PAGE.

For Mozilla Firefox

- 1) Open Mozilla Firefox.
- 2) Open <<http://www.rc.org/thoughts/index.html>>.
- 3) On a Mac, choose PREFERENCES from the Firefox menu and click GENERAL. On Windows, choose TOOLS menu and click OPTIONS.
- 4) At the “Home Page” setting, click SET TO CURRENT PAGE.

For Internet Explorer

- 1) Open Internet Explorer.
- 2) Open <<http://www.rc.org/thoughts/index.html>>.
- 3) Click TOOLS on the Menu bar, then choose INTERNET OPTIONS. Internet Options dialog box appears.
- 4) Click the GENERAL tab.
- 5) Click the USE CURRENT button in the “Home Page” section.
- 6) Click OK in the Internet Options dialog box.



WATERCOLOR • KATIE KAUFFMAN

No Need to Accept Discouraged Thinking

I appreciate the dilemma you feel about accepting your doctors’ judgments, and I am on your side. I do not think you need to accept any kind of discouraged thinking. The doctors may know doctoring, but they don’t know what we know.

Harvey Jackins
From a letter written in 1995

Discharging “Superman” Distress

I want to share some work I have been doing related to expectations and being a Jewish man. I have been working on how disappointed in myself I feel. From a young age I internalized an incredibly high set of expectations for myself. I refer to them now as my “superman” material.¹ I have thought I should be able to do anything and everything: cure cancer, end world hunger, end all forms of humans harming humans, and so on.

I remember a mealtime discussion with Harvey Jackins in which I fought as hard as I could against his direction to be pleased with myself. I remember arguing that I could not be pleased with myself—not while X, Y, and Z (oppression of people in various ways) were present in the world. I intellectually understand and try to live by Tim’s² tenet of being pleased with ourselves, but I still, deep-down, struggle to believe it applies to me. I recently created an understatement: “It sometimes happens that a Jewish man, raised with the highest expectations for himself, is actually pleased with himself no matter what he does or does not do.”

For as long as I can remember, I have tried to get rid of how disappointed I feel in myself by doing things, and no matter what I have done, it has not taken away the chronic distress. We all know, and I need to be continually reminded, that the only way to rid oneself of a distress is to discharge it. No actions, no matter how big or how many, will take away this distress of being disappointed in myself. So I have been trying to openly show how disappointed I am. It feels yucky to put my attention there, but it seems to be helpful. In my mind I am whipping myself forward, yelling at myself to move and get stuff done, but I fear that if I let go of that I will become a “worthless good-for-nothing.”

The contradiction³ does not seem to be to do nothing (although I have tried that, in and out of sessions). It seems to be to think and discharge about what I want to do and to be pleased with myself no matter what. I’d be interested in how other people have thought and discharged their way through distressed expectations and feelings of disappointment.



Mike Markovits
Greenwich, Connecticut, USA
Reprinted from the RC e-mail
discussion list for leaders of Jews

¹ “Material” means distress.

² Tim Jackins’

³ Contradiction to the distress

The Reward Is This Moment

It seems like I have the same struggle, Mike.¹ For most of my life, I’ve had no idea what my life would look like if it were really my own (and not dictated by the expectations placed upon me). I, too, have experimented with doing nothing—and yes, that is not the contradiction.² My “little boy downstairs”³ goes “on strike” from time to time in response to the harsh “whipping myself forward.” During that period I get little to nothing done, and it does not resolve the issue. Discharge does.

Here’s my current perspective for clienting: “There’s nothing wrong with me, there’s nothing I *have* to do (just interesting and rewarding concerns in present time), and enjoyment is the natural way a human being experiences existence.” I don’t mean enjoyment in the way capitalism defines pleasure, but I also don’t mean it in the way that my religious heritage (Protestant Congregational) defined it: as struggling in life for a reward after death. The reward is this moment. As my Regional⁴ Reference Person, Beth Edmonds, puts it, “All the way to heaven is heaven.”



Michael Newsom
South Paris, Maine, USA
Reprinted from the RC e-mail
discussion list for leaders of Jews

¹ See previous article.

² Contradiction to the distress

³ “Little boy downstairs” means real self.

⁴ A Region is a subdivision of the International RC Community, usually consisting of several Areas (local RC Communities).

Complete Index to *Present Time* Available On-Line

On the RC web site is an index covering every issue of *Present Time*. You can search the index by author, title, or topic (from a list of predetermined topics). To find the index, go to the web site at <<http://www.rc.org/>>, click on “Present Time” under Publications on the home page, then click on “Search PT Index.”

Always Pleased, Never Satisfied

Thanks to the two Michaels for highlighting this.¹

Judging oneself for a constant shortfall, being endlessly disappointed in oneself, harsh self-criticism, assuming all the time that one must do better, are key pieces of the internalised oppression of the owning class and reflect the climate in which we owning-class people were raised. The conditioning to be the best, to know best, to see ourselves as superior, had to have this seedbed of never being good enough. I have struggled, and still do, with this.

“Josephine can do better” was always on my report. Harvey² gave me the direction “Always pleased, never satisfied.” No problem with the second half! But actually the whole thing is very workable.

¹ See previous two articles.

² Harvey Jackins

Remember the poster that says that each and every one of us has always, under all circumstances, done the very best that he or she could do? The first half of Harvey’s direction can keep that reality in the forefront of our minds, and the second half can help us avoid pretence and keep us alert to the fact that there is much in the world yet to put right (the dissatisfaction is not with ourselves). I recommend we use it!



Jo Saunders
International Liberation Reference
Person for Owning-Class People
Alresford, Hants, England
Reprinted from the RC e-mail
discussion list for leaders of Jews

“Love Awaits Me at Every Turn”

I had just returned home from a weekend that included nine sessions with three people—and good food, good attention-outs and exercise, and lots of closeness. The next morning I awakened after a good seven-hour sleep, knowing what I was looking forward to doing upon arising. However, I noticed that I was reluctant to get out of bed. Then I noticed that it wasn’t because I was particularly attracted to staying in bed or because I needed more sleep. I felt as if I were cowering from something, avoiding something unpleasant, and maybe protecting myself. But from what in the present? Nothing.

This feeling is an old recording¹ that has intermittently plagued me as far back as I can remember, though less and less over the three-plus decades that I have been discharging and reclaiming my victorious life story. I think it is the result of the early times when I was abandoned for

months to a bleak life, stuck without interaction in a baby bed. Still, I was surprised that morning. I was sorry to see it happening again. Though I realized it was old, I had not yet to my satisfaction unraveled what had periodically robbed me of the precious morning time that I love. And it was so in contrast to the way I had been awakening during the supportive weekend of counseling.

I called a friend for help. I heard my words as I spoke on the phone: “I’ve got to get myself out of bed!” It dawned on me² that my words and tone were much like my mom’s when she used to wake me up when she had little free attention. “Get out of that bed!” she would yell. It was harsh, and I am sure I did not look forward to arising to harshness. (She was a dear person, with internalized raised-poor Irish Catholic oppression that included much family and neighborhood violence.)

I was so glad to make this connection. My insight made everything manageable. “Well! I can easily contradict this,” I said. “I will choose a different perspective—one that is appropriate to my present reality.” Then out it came: “Love awaits me at every turn!” I discharged hard with just that. Then out came the addition, “every minute of my day,” with more discharge. And then, “all day long,” with more discharge flowing. Lastly I added, “and through the night!” followed by more discharge. I had three opportunities during the day to use this.

I know this is how much of our counseling goes, but I am particularly pleased with my re-evaluation: “Love awaits me at every turn, every minute of my day, all day long!”

I thank my smart and loving counselors.

Jane Gramlich
St. Louis, Missouri, USA

¹ Distress recording

² “It dawned on me” means I realized.

“Mental Health” Labels, and Information Coordinators

In the letters below, Tim Jackins and Janet Foner¹ respond to a request for an Information Coordinator for people with “Asperger’s syndrome.”

More and more medical titles are being given to difficulties that people exhibit in their behavior. Part of the reason is that this opens the door for drug manufacturers to develop and market products to “solve” the newly defined problem.

It is difficult to tell² how much these problems have an actual physical basis and how much they are the result of undischarged distress. Most people looking at them have no understanding of distress recordings. Our experience has consistently been that distress recordings play a large role in these behaviors and that discharging the recordings allows the affected individuals to change their behavior in the ways they choose.

In RC we keep getting better at providing situations in which people can discharge their distresses. Hopefully we will continue developing our abilities in this direction and be able to reach more and more people more quickly and more effectively.

Thank you for thinking about this.



With love and appreciation,
Tim

We have never had Information Coordinators for people with particular “mental health” diagnoses, because it would likely not be consistent with RC theory.

I don’t know much about Asperger’s, just as I know little about Alzheimer’s disease, autism, and so on. Asperger’s may have some physical causes, but I highly doubt it, given the history of “mental health” diagnoses. Dottie Curry, who was the International Liberation Reference Person for Elders, said that after she listened for a while to someone who was diagnosed with Alzheimer’s, the person’s attention and memory vastly improved. I’ve heard the same from other RCers vis-à-vis Alzheimer’s. In a school in New England for children labeled autistic, the staff members pay attention to the children (the staff don’t know RC but do something similar to it), and most of the children recover. (See also the article in the January 2013 *Present Time* about an RC play group for children with “special needs.”³) Some of them have re-emerged a lot.

I would rather we didn’t have any Information Coordinators for people labeled with “mental health” diagnoses, because it would give more credibility to and focus people’s attention on the labels—as opposed to helping people reclaim their power to eliminate “mental health” oppression.

A big push in the media in recent years, fueled by the drug companies, has been to see people with various “mental health” labels as having a “disease,” just like diabetes or high blood pressure, that can be medicated and lived with. This has focused attention on so-called “mental illness” in a way that is opposite to the kind of attention needed—the kind that we give and receive in RC. Labeling people and trying to accommodate their “illness” diverts people from trying to understand the unique experience and patterns of each person and creates roadblocks to using RC.

Rather than gathering together people who are similarly labeled, it is more re-emergent and useful, and allows for more safety and discharge, if those people can understand that they’re facing “mental health” oppression.

According to “mental health” oppression, there is “normal” distress, that most people have and understand, and distress that only certain “strange” people have. The “normal” distress is hard to notice or address. When it comes up to be discharged, it often gets pointed at others. It can make the person who has it feel like the others are “the problem.”

I am glad you continue to think about these issues.

Janet Foner
New Cumberland, Pennsylvania, USA



¹ Janet Foner is the International Liberation Reference Person for “Mental Health” Liberation.

² “Tell” means know.

³ “Inklusgroep: Inclusive Play with Special Children,” on page 9 of the January 2013 *Present Time*

The following is from a discussion on the RC e-mail discussion list for leaders of parents:



Children, and Violent Events



Marya¹ is away this weekend, so she asked me to share my thoughts about dealing with events like yesterday's school shooting (in Connecticut, USA).

First, get some counseling time on your own restimulation about this news. We parents love our children mightily and feel quite vulnerable when we hear of children dying unexpectedly. We are in no more danger today than we were yesterday, but the feelings can be quite strong. You won't be able to help your children with their fears until you are discharging your own.

TALKING ABOUT BAD NEWS

In general, shield your children from newspaper photos of and TV broadcasts about violent events. They create or restimulate fear in all of us. If there's bad news and your children have heard of it, their best chance of processing it is to be told about it by you. If you feel fascinated by the news and want updates, take that as a sign that you've got some fears to work on. If you must get updates, do it at times when your children aren't present.

¹ Marya Axner, the International Liberation Reference Person for Parents



MATT WEATHERFORD

You might choose to proactively and briefly talk about this event to a school-aged child (without details unless asked for) if you think the news is likely to reach her or him one way or another. The information is best delivered personally, with your thought and caring as the context, instead of with the more "impartial" reporting tone that usually comes with hurtful events.

At times like this there is much talk of "evil," as though there were a powerful force at work in humans to make this happen. Almost always, the perpetrator has clearly been the target of oppression and has spent years and years feeling isolated and like there was no one to turn to, no one to connect with. There were signals that help was needed, but no one read them or knew how to respond. Sometimes there is a physical illness or a history of abuse. A good human being has been left out of the circle of caring and health. No evil is at work. Distress is at work. Our children need this explanation from us, in very simple terms.

TAKING ACTION TOGETHER

The talk of evil is hurtful and misleading and also restimulates a sense of powerlessness. We need to face and discharge any restimulated feeling of helplessness. We all, children and adults, have power to connect with one another, to build community, to reach out to people and build networks of support. We have the power to spark social and personal change around us. When this kind of tragedy happens, rather than believe the feelings of helplessness, it's smart to discharge them.

If your children are of school age and you let them know that a very sad event has happened, don't leave it at that. Figure out, as a family, what you want to do in response. Light candles? Join others in remembrance? Say a prayer? Write a letter? Volunteer together to help people in your community who are isolated? Your children will have their own ideas of how they want to respond. Listen. Act together in your family. Care together.

SPECIAL TIME

Finally, if your children have internalized fear because of what they've seen or heard, or because of how adults around them are talking and sounding, do more special time.² They can't discharge the distress until they feel close to you, and special time fosters closeness and safety. Don't worry if it's wild, physical, and full of laughter. That promotes the discharge of lighter fears and also prepares the way for the discharge of heavier fear.

Expect that children's feelings about this event are more likely to come up via a pretext—they're angry at you for not drying their soccer shirt in time for the practice, or you've put too much peanut butter on their toast. When big events occur that don't make sense to a mind made for love, cooperation, and respect,

² "Special time" is an activity, developed in RC family work, during which an adult puts a young person in full charge of their mutual relationship, as far as the young person can think. For a specific period of time, the adult lets the young person know that he or she is willing to do anything the young person wants to do. The adult focuses his or her entire attention on the young person and follows his or her lead, whether the young person tells, or simply shows, the adult what she or he wants to do.

the feelings are often best discharged with a focus on the tiny and safe disappointments and irritations of every day. Don't ask, "Are you thinking about those children?" in the middle of your child's attempt to discharge. Let the crying, tantrum, or discharge of fear be about the small thing that just happened. If your child needs to talk about the scary event, he or she will likely bring it up when it becomes safe enough.

We are as safe as our loving relationships, and the frequent opportunity to discharge and then think well, can make us. It's good to be part of this caring and thoughtful Community.

Patty Wipfler
Former International Liberation
Reference Person for Parents
Palo Alto, California, USA



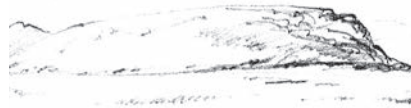
AB

My twelve-year-old granddaughter was spending the weekend with my husband and me, so it fell to us, in consultation with our daughter, to tell her about the shooting. I still needed to discharge more about it, but I was able to be relaxed around my granddaughter and listen to her. Her first sentiment was sadness for the man who did the shooting. Off and on, all weekend, she pondered and talked about how this could have happened, and wanted to cuddle, cuddle, cuddle.

My husband, also an RCer, is chair of the Board of Education. During the weekend he and the superintendent of schools thought together about strategies for how teachers could help students here. My husband sent the superintendent Patty's (non-RC) article about helping children through shocking events, and she sent it on to others. He kept emphasizing that the

teachers and staff needed time to be listened to, so they could be relaxed around the children. In an interview with the local paper, he was quoted as saying, "In reality, we are no less safe than we were last Thursday," which came right out of Patty's posting.

Virginia Fulton
Windham, Connecticut, USA



AB

I decided *not* to tell my six-year-old Jewish son about the shooting. My decision was based primarily on the fact that my family has been facing some challenges recently. Holding out benign reality for myself and my son seems to be the most important and useful contradiction³ at this time, particularly for us as Jews.

I checked in with my son's teacher after school on Monday to find out what, if anything, had come up in the classroom. The teacher said that the topic had not come up in class during the school day. (Obviously, she had no guarantees about what had happened at recess or in other social contacts among students.) I told her I had decided not to tell my son. However, I asked that if the shooting was raised in the class, she let us parents know so that we could follow up at home. (The school had advised the teachers not to bring it up and if it was brought up to just answer the question being asked and not do more than that.)

I myself have been discharging about the event (and about the Holocaust). As a Jewish woman, it is important for me to discharge first. "Scared active" behavior runs pretty⁴ much all the time with me. I run to do and "fix" things rather than just notice that my fear is being

³ Contradiction to distress

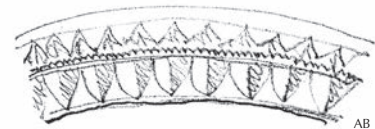
⁴ "Pretty" means quite.

triggered. It's okay for me to err on the side of not acting "in time," as opposed to acting out of fear and urgency.

I feel extreme pressure as a parent to get it "right" in "crisis moments." I have to remind myself that the day-in-day-out relationship with my son is what matters. That he can tell⁵ he has me, that he knows discharge is welcome, and that he usually shows me, in some way or another, what he is "working on," are what matter.

I'm weighing different options and making the best decision I can for my family. Other families will do that, too, and it will look different.

Rachel Landsberg
New York, New York, USA



AB

Thanks, Patty, for your thoughtful guide to how we can approach this event with our children. I found the part about taking a stand against our own feelings of powerlessness to be especially useful.

After two Co-Counseling sessions on what a powerful response might look like for me, I decided I would make contact with the teachers at my son's school. I will check in with them about how they are doing with the news, tell them how I handled it with my son, and offer to listen to them as they "process" their own reaction and think through handling the news with the children at school.

I have no idea how they will respond, but this is a good first step against my powerlessness. I hope it will also open the door to a closer relationship with

continued . . .

⁵ "Tell" means perceive, see.

... continued

them, as well as contradict the isolation they are probably feeling as they deal with this news in the school setting.

I will let my son know what I did. I will also ask him if there is anything he would like to do in response to the shooting.

Julie Fox-Rubin
Basalt, Colorado, USA



We are living in a time of major global upheaval. We are living in an oppressive society that is crumbling because of its own contradictions. As a result, hard things have happened and will continue to happen. Violence, in its many forms, has huge momentum and will probably get worse before it gets better.

While we can to some extent “shield” young people and ourselves from reports about these shootings (and from becoming addicted to the reporting of violence in general), no one today can actually be shielded from violence or from knowing about it. This is hard to look at. It restimulates our early material,⁶ including our feelings of not being able to think, take a stand, and build a rational society.

We do need to stay close and connected. We do need to face hard material and discharge. We also need to fight for accurate perspectives

⁶ “Material” means distress.

about the irrationalities of society and share these perspectives with as many people as possible. It is true that the shooter was a very hurt young man; he was also a victim and an agent of the violent patterns that are oppressing us all. Instead of individual “evil,” we need to talk about *organized irrationality*. The problem is systemic.

We can communicate that there are humans (some of whom use the tools of Re-evaluation Counseling) who are doing their best to end violence, who are committed to building a rational society in which humans do not harm humans. It would be interesting to have discussions and listening projects, with people of all ages, on the topics of “How do we end violence?” “What would a world without humans harming humans look like?”

Diane Balser
Jamaica Plain, Massachusetts, USA

Using Discharge to Heal from a Concussion

At a recent Regional¹ workshop, during playtime, one of my closest male Co-Counselors and I decided to go for a jog. We are both experienced runners. When we are at a workshop together, we usually go out for a run during playtime; it is a nice way to get our attention out. He is visually impaired, so we hold a towel between us to guide him. He was running on my left side, when suddenly I tripped over his right foot. This was directly after my proposal that he move to the right side of the track, which he did, and somehow I did not go right so his foot got in my way. Before I knew it, there I went—landing straight on my forehead.

Time was too short to catch myself during the fall. My forehead was the first part of my body to hit the

ground. It was extremely painful. As I lay on the ground, my only thought was to get back on my feet as soon as possible and carry on.² Blood was running down my face, but I got myself in a sitting position. My running mate stopped, turned around, and asked me how I was. I said I was in pain but okay. To clean up the blood on my face, I used our running towel. I was surprised to see it get red so quickly.

We were walking back along the road, when a car stopped spontaneously. The driver saw that I needed assistance. I looked pretty³ messy. When we got back to the workshop, I saw my face for the first time, reflected in a window. I was shocked. Then some Co-Counselors started to clean my wounds and

¹ A Region is a subdivision of the International RC Community, usually consisting of several Areas (local RC Communities).

² “Carry on” means continue on.

³ “Pretty” means quite.

wash my face. They stayed close and encouraged me to discharge.

Some Co-Counselors drove me to the local doctor. He was very relaxed and put stitches in my forehead and bandages on the worst parts on my face. I was shaking, and the counselors encouraged me to continue. The doctor did not seem to mind and kept talking to me. After I got back to the workshop, I got two Co-Counselors to be with me in my room.

A schedule was made so that I could have non-stop sessions, each with two or three counselors paying attention to me for half an hour. This brought eight hours of non-stop discharge. The first feeling that came up was loads of fear. I was shaking all the time. The fear was about the actual fall, how sudden it was, and the pain and discomfort in my body. I was also afraid that the damage on my face might never heal. I was encouraged to recount the incident over and over again. This helped me get my memory back of what happened. I could also discharge old pain of earlier physical damage and old fears of getting hurt.

After my first round of sessions, I noticed that I was thinking better because I decided that my counselors also needed to discharge—about being close to someone whose face was a big, bloody mess. The decision to be a counselor helped me get my attention in the present, and I found myself discharging heavy fear and terror.

Tim⁴ encouraged my counselors and me to get me to laugh a lot. Laughing was painful, because of the wounds, stitches, and dried blood on my face, but it helped to get my mind to places where it needed to go. We had lots of fun. Then some Co-Counselors with experience in counseling on physical hurts started threatening to touch the fresh wounds and press on the bandages, which was effective.

I asked a close Co-Counselor to stay with me during the night. He said I could wake him up in the night if I needed to, which I did several times. I had one of the best sessions then, with him being so close all the time.

⁴ Tim Jackins, the leader of the workshop

The next morning, starting from before breakfast, I had more three-way sessions. I continued to discharge feelings of fear and terror, especially after taking a shower and seeing my damaged face in the mirror. I did not want to come to class, because I was scared and embarrassed. Tim encouraged me to come anyway, which I hated, and later he did a demonstration with me. It felt like a great opportunity to show my face in public and feel the fear and embarrassment. I literally discharged blood, sweat, and tears. I think it was a good demonstration of RC theory about healing from physical hurts.

During the next few months, I had lots of sessions—by phone, on Skype,⁵ and in person. I had enough free time since I was off work due to my injury. My local doctor suggested that I might have a concussion.

Some of my regular Co-Counselors were hesitant to touch my wounds, so I encouraged them to do so. It helped me to feel the pain and discharge fear and terror. People have usually never expressed all the pain, fear, and other feelings connected to physical hurt, so it can be restimulating for them to watch someone else do it. The encouragement worked well.

I did not go to work for three months. Now, eight months later, I am back at work almost 100 percent of the time, but I keep a close watch on not underestimating the need for rest and discharge to completely heal from the concussion.

continued . . .

⁵ Skype is a service that allows people to communicate instantly over the Internet by voice or video.



STAN EICHNER

COUNSELING PRACTICE

... continued

On the one hand, I had to deal with the subtle (and sometimes not-so-subtle) pressure to get back to working full-time. It was hard for some colleagues to understand that healing from a concussion takes a long time. A concussion doesn't show much on the outside.

On the other hand, a close friend who had a similar concussion kept encouraging me to take enough time for my full recovery. He went to work too soon, and now, five years later, he still suffers from the effects of his concussion.

At work I have a colleague who got a concussion at about the same time as I did. He is struggling to stay on his feet and realises that he started working too soon. He does not discharge. He likes talking with me about our incidents and how we are dealing with them so differently.

I have decided to go for⁶ full recovery and put myself, not my work, in the centre. Lots of discharge on physical hurts makes my life go better. I am running again, and I cycle every day. I am less scared of being visible and am more able to enjoy my leadership. I have more attention for my own physical pain and offer attention to others when they get hurt. It works when counselors ask me to tell the whole story again in full detail, and when they threaten to touch the spots that hurt.

Goof Buijs
Broek in Waterland,
the Netherlands

⁶ "Go for" means pursue.



LK

Thinking My Way through Breast Cancer

In December 2011, I went for my annual mammogram. That afternoon, the radiologist told me she was almost 100 percent sure I had breast cancer. The following day, her diagnosis was confirmed with a biopsy that showed a small tumor in my left breast. When I had surgery a few weeks later, I learned that I also had a small tumor in a lymph node near my armpit ("Stage 2" cancer). As a result, the oncologist recommended that I receive both chemotherapy and radiation. I had a total of two

lumpectomies, five chemotherapy treatments, and thirty radiation treatments. I finished treatment at the end of August 2012, though I will continue to take hormone therapy (pills) for several years to prevent a recurrence. My prognosis is excellent: women in my particular situation survive breast cancer 97 percent of the time. It was, however, a tough year, both because of the physical ordeal of treatment and the feelings brought up by the experience.

There was a lot to discharge and think about at every stage, including how to take charge of my health care, organize resource from my Co-Counselors for discharge, organize resource from my friends and family for my other needs, and think well about my husband, daughter, and other close loves while still putting myself first much of the time. I'd like to share some of the lessons I learned, especially because many of you will eventually cope with life-threatening illnesses in your own life and/or your Co-Counselors'.

I am a white middle-class Jewish woman who turned fifty a few months before my diagnosis, and I live in Boston, Massachusetts, USA. I have had access to paid time off of work, health insurance that covered the cost of almost all my conventional medical treatment, and enough money (of my own and from friends and family) to pay for



BETH SHORTER

some alternative treatment. I am fortunate to live in a place with long-standing, strong RC Communities plus excellent medical care (or about as excellent as medical care can be within the current oppressive society). I am well aware that many of my victories this year would not have been possible if I were in a different situation with fewer resources.

While it is unclear whether or how distress contributes to developing cancer, it is entirely clear that it can inhibit treatment and recovery. I'll never know whether distress contributed to my getting breast cancer, either directly or indirectly. There is conclusive evidence that certain addictions make breast cancer more likely, but I do not have any of those addictions (such as drinking alcohol or smoking). There is conclusive evidence that ample exercise prevents breast cancer, and I have not had ample exercise during most of my adult life, due to my oppression as a female, Jew, worker, wife, and mother, and because of my "individual" distresses. Paying much attention to the ways my past behavior may or may not have contributed to my cancer didn't seem very useful, though I did need to discharge on my fear that there was a connection between the two, and where that left me feeling bad about myself.

There is some evidence that certain environmental factors increase one's likelihood of developing breast cancer, such as exposure to pesticides in the air, chemicals in cosmetic products, or hormones in food. There is evidence that anti-Jewish oppression has led to Jewish women having a greater propensity to inherit breast cancer. This is because for much of their history, Jews were forced to live in ghettos, marrying and reproducing within a small gene pool. Two of the identified genes that lead to breast

cancer are more common among Jewish women, but testing showed I do not have either of them. (My great-grandmother died of breast cancer, and I may carry a gene that is yet to be identified.) I did find it useful to discharge on the conditions of society—the environment, anti-Jewish oppression, sexism, and so on—that may be connected to breast cancer and the increasing number of women who are developing it, particularly in countries where capitalism is most "advanced." One in eight women in the United States develops breast cancer (one of the highest rates in the world), and Massachusetts has the second-highest rate among U.S. states.



Most importantly, I needed to discharge any distresses in my way of taking charge of my treatment, my health, and my well-being going forward. For example, before heading to the hospital for breast surgery, I discharged on early memories related to hospitals, particularly feelings of terror and powerlessness. As a result, I was able to think better during my time at the hospital. I aimed to stay alert and in partnership with the doctors, nurses, and technicians. From my diagnosis forward, to make things go well, I had to decide again and again to prioritize Co-Counseling sessions over almost everything else.

Here are some of the themes of my sessions:

- Deciding to put myself first, fight for myself, and fight against early discouragement and victimization. While my prognosis was favorable, I viewed the fight against cancer as a life-and-death struggle I intended to win. I fought hard to be treated well by all I had contact with during my treatment. To get sufficient discharge and rest, I had to put myself first most of the time. This was particularly difficult as a mother, wife, daughter, and female. I thought well about my seven-year-old daughter as she coped with the impact of my illness on her life, but I accepted that she would sometimes be in a less-than-ideal situation while I prioritized my healing.

- Discharging on my chain of memories related to cancer. For me, this included a friend dying of leukemia when I was a teenager.

- Telling the story of what happened at each appointment, and discharging directly on my physical symptoms.

- Noticing that I was not alone and was cherished. I received an outpouring of affection and help, and it was important to absorb that contradiction¹ over and over again. Sometimes people said and did things that were not helpful, and I aimed to discharge enough on that that I could focus on their desire to do right by me.

- Celebrating my victories. I handled many things well, and noticing my successes helped me keep my attention in a useful place. I got to be pleased with myself along the way and continue to enjoy the many wonderful people and meaningful activities in my life.

continued . . .

¹ Contradiction to the distress

... continued

• Facing my deepest fears, including what felt “unbearable.” I chose to look directly, over and over, at my fear of death. For example, I discharged on imagining my husband telling my daughter that I was dead. I tried to make decisions that would help me face the most difficult aspects of being a cancer patient, rather than attempt to ignore them or go numb. For example, I chose not to wear a wig when I lost nearly all my hair during chemotherapy treatment, and instead wore hats and scarves and occasionally no head covering at all. As a Jewish woman, I often discharged on how breast cancer reminded me of the Holocaust (for instance, when women arrived at the concentration camps, their heads were often shaved).

It was invaluable to have one Co-Counselor who kept track of me consistently—including “referencing” my use of RC resource, especially one-way time.

My Regional² Reference Person, Joan Karp, whom I counsel with regularly, made a decision early on to keep track of my well-being. We didn’t Co-Counsel every day, or even every week, but she always knew the most important facts about my treatment and the key distresses I needed to discharge. During the toughest weeks of chemotherapy, she called me every day until my symptoms began to lift. She was also the person I consulted with about requesting extra counseling resource. (Because I am building a Community outside of an organized Area,³ I do not have an Area Reference Person.)

² A Region is a subdivision of the International RC Community, usually consisting of several Areas (local RC Communities).

³ An Area is a local RC Community.

I needed to think about when to accept one-way counseling time and when to schedule two-way sessions.

I have taught RC for almost thirty years and have many close Co-Counseling relationships. With referencing from Joan, I continually assessed what made sense at each stage of my treatment: Was I in shape⁴ to be someone else’s counselor? Would being someone else’s counselor (a unique form of human contact) be useful in getting my attention out? Did I have the stamina and attention to set up my own sessions?

I also had to take into account the finite resources of the Communities. I tried not to exchange time based on feelings of obligation or a fear of feeling “indebted” to others. At the same time, I didn’t want my counselors to give me one-way time out of a feeling of obligation or “owing” me for time I had given them in the past. In the current state of collapsing capitalism, it is challenging to think about how to spend our “leisure” time (those few hours when we are not working or sleeping) and where to apply our resources. I wanted to help set up the circumstances in which each counselor could think about what to offer me. In some cases, it was more than they “felt like”; in other cases, less.

⁴ “In shape” means in a condition.

Most of the time, I was able to split time—at least as an uneven split. Almost always I organized my own sessions. I stayed in touch with Joan about what kind of resource made sense at each phase: from whom, how much, and so on. Around the time of my first surgery, two Co-Counselors organized one-way time for me. One evening, I gathered a small group of women to give me one-way time while I shaved my head in anticipation of losing my hair. At a later stage, a Co-Counselor organized an intensive in which I received several hours of one-way time. I continually aimed to think about what was best for me, while also taking into account the bigger picture of the Communities’ resources.

I made clear distinctions between what to ask of my Co-Counselors and what to ask of my friends and family.

I asked Co-Counselors to have sessions with me. I asked friends and family to accompany me to medical appointments, pick up my child at school, bring me and my family meals, and provide other kinds of practical assistance. Sometimes I cried with friends who were not active in RC, but I did not expect them to have the skills or attention to craft contradictions to my distress. I tried to invite friends with RC experience to my most challenging medical appointments, such as chemotherapy treatments. Occasionally, I brought Co-Counselors with me.



EVERGLADES NATIONAL PARK, FLORIDA, USA • MARTIN URBEL

I thought about the kind of help I needed, thought about each person, and tried to ask for help that made sense according to each person's strengths, life circumstances, and relationship to me. A— could cook meals for my family and me the week after surgery. B— could take my daughter for fun play dates. C— could take me to acupuncture appointments when I was too ill to drive.

I thought a lot about Harvey Jackins' adage that human beings have a greater need to love than to be loved. Asking for help required me to remember that people's lives would be better with this opportunity to be close to me. Whenever I could tell⁵ that someone had made a genuine offer to help, I chose to take the attitude, "I accept." Now that the most serious treatment is behind me, I can say with joy that my relationships with dozens of people became closer during that time.

Because I could discharge, painkillers were rarely necessary.

Throughout my treatment, doctors prescribed painkillers. After each surgery, my surgeon prescribed a narcotic called Oxycodone. During chemotherapy, my oncologist prescribed Ativan, an anti-anxiety drug or tranquilizer. During radiation, a nurse instructed me to take 2,400 milligrams of Ibuprofen, an anti-inflammatory, each day. I took medication for pain or extreme nausea a handful of times during the nine months of treatment. I took one 200-milligram Ibuprofen after the first surgery and none after the second.

I was in mild pain often, moderate pain sometimes, and severe pain occasionally. Health-care providers

often commented that I should take painkillers "around the clock" (regularly, throughout the day and night) to "stay ahead of the pain." Their goal was for me to be medicated enough not to feel even a hint of pain. But without medication, even the severe pain was almost always fleeting. When I discharged directly on the pain, it subsided, or I could think of something to do to alleviate it (such as eat or sleep), or I felt different about it.

It is clear to me that U.S. society, at this time in history, is organized around keeping people numb. It was interesting to see how uncomfortable other people were with the idea that I was in pain. Health-care providers, friends, and family often tried to persuade me to use prescription or illegal drugs, overeat, or drink alcohol. When I was waiting for my first surgery, the nurse approached me with a syringe. She was about to give me an injection when I interrupted her to ask what it was. She explained that it was a local anesthetic to numb my arm before she placed an

intravenous needle there. Her plan was to put a needle in my arm so that I wouldn't feel a second needle going in! She explained that the first needle was smaller and thinner so it would hurt a bit less than the second. I told her I didn't need the anesthetic, and she responded, "It doesn't make sense to me either, but that's what they tell us to do!"

My first surgery required general anesthesia. I was able to convince the surgeon to perform the second one without it, and my recovery was much quicker.

It is impossible for me to know what my experience would have been if I had routinely taken painkillers or hadn't discharged for hours each week. What I do know is that medical professionals frequently commented on how well and quickly I recovered from surgery, chemotherapy, and radiation. For example, I continued to work throughout my treatment—not every day, but on many days. Other patients undergoing similar or identical treatment were unable to do so.

continued . . .



© SAMANTHA SANDERSON

⁵ "Tell" means perceive.

... continued

The medical care I received was improved by my ability to be a partner in my own care.

I discharged enough before and during each phase of my treatment to be able to take charge of my care in many ways. I was able to make intelligent decisions about what health-care providers to choose, even in the early weeks after my diagnosis when I was very scared. I built good relationships with health-care providers, creating the conditions for them to think well about me. I aimed to at all times be respectful and appreciative of them as workers. I took in complex information from multiple sources and made good decisions about my treatment options. Several times, I intervened when health-care professionals were about to make an error in my care.

I was able to identify the distresses that had left me vulnerable to making mistakes in taking charge of my care. For example, I noticed that I didn't like to call the doctor for extra help when I didn't have an appointment, especially on weekends or holidays. My oppression as a female, a Jew, and a Jewish female had left me feeling like I was being a "burden" or a "hypochondriac" or a "complainer" or "hysterical." Over time, my judgment improved about which symptoms required immediate medical attention.

My counselors, friends, and family needed to discharge to continue to think well about me.

Sometimes, I was able to be a good counselor to others on their feelings about my cancer. For example, it was often a pleasure to listen to people cry about how much they cared about me and my well-being. Other times, I was not in shape to listen or the distresses they needed to work on were not

useful for me to hear. Joan led two conference-call support groups for my most frequent counselors. My regular Co-Counselor, Gladys Maged, led a conference call for a number of my friends and family, all of whom had completed a fundamentals class even if they were not currently active in RC. After each of those calls, I could see a difference in the participants' attention for me.

I set a goal to be in better emotional and physical shape after breast cancer than I was before.

To contradict victimization, and for the sake of my long-term survival and flourishing, I decided shortly after my diagnosis that I would not only survive breast cancer but

would end the experience in better emotional and physical shape than when I started. I believe I have already achieved that goal in terms of my re-emergence. Physically, I am still recovering from the long-term effects of the treatment and hormone therapy, but I am hopeful that I will succeed in that arena as well. I am already exercising more than I was prior to my diagnosis, and I am confident that upward trend will continue. Of course, I will never be glad that I got breast cancer, but all things taken into account, I believe I moved forward as a result of the experience.

Becky Shuster
Boston, Massachusetts, USA

**Challenging the Limits
of Internalized Racism**

**A talk by Barbara Love,
the International Liberation Reference
Person for African-Heritage People**

(CD #1003)

This CD offers a look into the work of Black liberation at the Black Liberation and Community Development Workshop. In this talk from 2010, Barbara speaks candidly about the content and the effects of the racism directed toward African-heritage people. She stresses rejecting the oppressive messages, discharging their effects, and completely claiming the goodness, brilliance, and beauty of Black people.

\$10.00 (U.S.), plus postage and handling

Ordering information on page 110

The following seven articles, taken from the RC e-mail discussion list for leaders of women, are about the South, West, and Central Asian Women's Workshop, led by Azi Khalili, assisted by Diane Balsler,¹ near Boston, Massachusetts, USA, in December 2012.

A Groundbreaking Workshop

What a groundbreaking workshop! We were forty-two powerful South, West, and Central Asian women. One woman had traveled from Palestine and another from Trinidad and Tobago. Four had come from Denmark, Sweden, and Ireland. I am a twenty-four-year-old Indian and Jewish woman living in Connecticut, USA.

South, Central, and West Asian women have a deep understanding of sexism and male domination. Our voices need to be heard.

We are deeply connected with each other in our countries of origin, but our connections are not encouraged in the white-dominated communities that many of us come to. We need help reclaiming them. We need to push for deeper connections with each other—to where we do not doubt that we can fall into each other's arms, hold hands walking down the street, and tell each other everything.

Azi gave each woman from outside the United States a chance to work on what it was like to be in this country. Many of the USers discharged along with these women as they revealed the harshness of the racism and sexism aimed at them as Arab Muslim women.

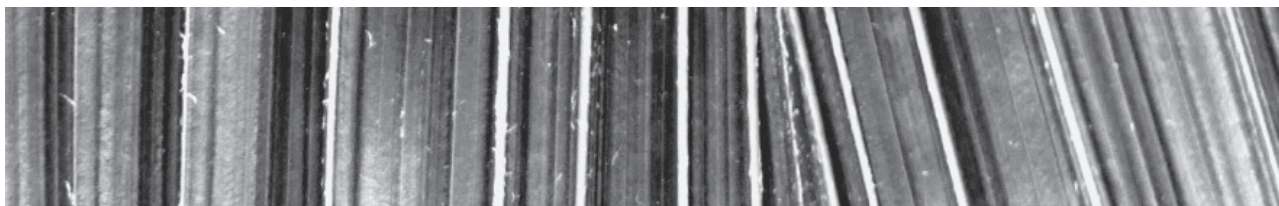
On Saturday morning Azi counseled me in front of the group. I am a dark-skinned Indian woman who was adopted from India as an infant. I was told that a nun at the orphanage took me outside in the sun to make my skin darker, so that a U.S. family would adopt me. I got the message that my own people would not want me, that dark-skinned women were ugly and stupid, and that white people were better. Azi let me rage against this. She had all of the South Asian women come to the front to contradict the feeling that I was not wanted. She pointed out all the dark-skinned women in the group. I realized that "dark-skinned" felt to me like a negative term. Just to hear her say it in a loving tone was a contradiction.²

Azi talked about how the effects of war on women are rarely looked at. Men who go to war in our countries do horrible things to the women there. They also come home and act out violence, sexism, and male domination in their own families. Azi counseled a number of women in front of the group, some of whom had grown up in countries that were in the midst of war. Those of us raised in the United States need to hear these stories. Being numb and not having information are ways of complying with U.S. imperialism.

Malana Rogers-Bursen
Hartford, Connecticut, USA

¹ Azi Khalili is the Area Reference Person for the Brooklyn Gardens Area in Brooklyn, New York, USA. Diane Balsler is the International Liberation Reference Person for Women.

² Contradiction to distress



ALAN SPRUNG

Proud of Being Indian

I travelled to the workshop from Sweden. I was one of six women from outside the United States.

As South, West, and Central Asian females, we got the message early in life that we were not as valued as boys and that our voices were not as important. We were silenced. I rarely heard my mother speak her mind. We were trained to serve others. We were pressured to stop wanting things. We have to go back to the little one,¹ fight for her with complete respect, and remind her that she matters. Nothing she has to say should ever be trivialized.

Women have been the preservers of our languages and cultures. My mother grew up in a religious Hindu home with lots of daily religious practices. My father trivialized Hinduism. He let us know that he was an atheist, which fit well in Sweden—a secular country where immigrants are expected to assimilate and abandon their cultural and religious traditions. Religion was a realm in which my mother's voice was heard. She

fought male domination and sexism in order to teach her daughters about Hinduism. We visited Hindu temples and Sikh *gurdwaras*.² She told us stories from Hindu mythology. My father, lacking her knowledge, was dependent on her wisdom about our culture. My mother also insisted on speaking Punjabi with us. Realizing that she did stand up for herself and her daughters was an important insight for me. I feel much closer to her now. I am proud of being Indian. I am proud of our generosity, warmth, intelligence, and caring.

Our South, Central, and West Asian cultures and countries are rich with resources that others fight over and exploit. All of our families have some connection to war. The partition of greater India and the subsequent war were a frightening early defeat that I need to look at and discharge. When I came home from the workshop, I decided to join a peace movement.

Sujata Maini
Stockholm, Sweden

¹ "The little one" means the little girl that we were.

² A *gurdwara* is a place of worship for Sikhs.

Fully Liberated within Our Own Cultures

The South, West, and Central Asian Women's Workshop started a couple of weeks before we got there, when Azi¹ and Diane² asked us to write about our backgrounds. The result was an amazing string of e-mails that helped us get to know each other, feel connected, and keep women's liberation in the forefront of our thinking.

I am an Israeli woman of Yemenite and Moroccan heritage. I live in New York City, New York, USA. As a Jewish Israeli woman, I was terrified of going to the workshop. It brought up feelings

of being attacked and hated. Going there with a Co-Counselor who was born in Israel, being in contact with a small group of Jews beforehand to plan the Shabbat,³ knowing that Azi was a fierce ally to Jews, and having Diane⁴ there made it possible for me to feel safe enough to attend.

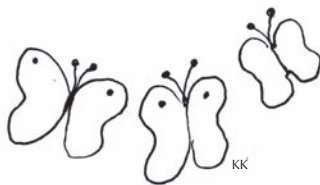
³ The Shabbat ceremony. (Shabbat is the Jewish Sabbath. It has become a tradition at RC workshops to observe Shabbat on Friday evening, as a way of contradicting anti-Jewish oppression.)

⁴ Diane Balser is also a Jew and a leader of Jewish liberation.

On Friday afternoon at the workshop, Azi talked about how we as yet have no picture of what our lives can be, how much joy we can have. She encouraged us to use the workshop to find our voices and to fight for ourselves and each other.

Here are some of my other highlights from Azi's talks:

- Feudalism collapsed in Europe in the 1700s. It collapsed in Asia in the 1940s, '50s, and '60s. In Asia people are only one or two generations away from feudalism. Many of our parents were born under that system. Landlords dominated the men, and the men dominated the women and children. Under feudalism men owned the bodies of women and children. Women had no right to



¹ Azi Khalili, the Area Reference Person for the Brooklyn Gardens Area in Brooklyn, New York, USA, and the leader of the workshop

² Diane Balser, the International Liberation Reference Person for Women, and the assistant leader of the workshop

education, divorce, or protection from violence or rape. Rape in marriage is still not illegal in most Asian countries. Often women cannot travel or have a job or a bank account without a man's permission. However, under feudalism women did productive work. They got a sense of themselves as being capable and were deeply connected to each other.

- Under capitalism, everyone can fight for individual rights. All of the rights movements have emerged under capitalism and have brought tremendous gains. However, we South, West, and Central Asian women have lost our connection with each other.

- Whereas in Asia there is no pretence in regard to sexism, in the United States and Europe people are told that sexism no longer exists. However, a woman who is

forced to wear a hijab⁵ is no more oppressed than a woman who feels compelled to have plastic surgery. Our direction is to be fully female and liberated within our own cultures.

- We come from colonized nations. Our languages have been regarded as inferior. Many of us do not speak our native language. Women often spoke their native language at home and taught it to their children, while the men spoke the language of the colonizer. Because of this, the women were regarded as more backward.

Language interpretation at the workshop helped us to show and reclaim ourselves. I interpreted some of the talks into Hebrew. It was wonderful to share that part of myself and to hear all the other languages.

⁵ A hijab is a covering of the head worn by some Muslim women after puberty, in the presence of non-related adult males.

Many of us brought pictures of our families, including our parents and grandparents, and made a collage of them on the wall. There were pictures from our countries of origin as well as our present-day lives.

Azi's talk about how our cultures are portrayed as backward touched me deeply. My Yemenite grandfather was a polygamist. My grandmother was "given" to him at a young age by her father when my grandfather already had a wife and three children. I grew up feeling ashamed of and hiding many such details about my family. The workshop was a safe haven in which to reclaim my heritage and see it as no worse than Western culture. I shared some Yemenite songs during the Shabbat and cultural sharing.

Rachel Kieffer
New York, New York, USA

More Closeness in Our Cultures

We are told, over and over, that the culture of Western society is "correct," in particular as regards sexism and women's rights, and that our families and cultures are "backward." We are told that we are lucky to live in Western societies because they allow us to escape sexism—that it is only in our home countries that sexism exists. However, our cultures are not "worse" or more sexist than Western cultures. Women pay a big price for living in Western societies.

Azi talked about the close relationships she'd had with women when she lived in Iran. Women would hug and kiss each other while naked in the bathhouses. In Western cultures, such closeness is immediately sexualized. Women are called Lesbians if they step outside the expected and enforced limits to closeness. Western societies require women to live with a massive amount of isolation.

Sharon Wolf
New York, New York, USA



JOHN DAVID SIMNETT

I Am Home

The moment I saw the forty-two women at the workshop, I thought, “I am home.” I could be myself, relax, and fight for my liberation. It was safe to work on anything. No one would judge my culture or religion. I felt that I did not have to explain anything because everyone understood. As a Muslim Pakistani woman, I haven’t found it easy to work on the sexism and male domination in my life. I’ve worried that I am reinforcing the prevailing stereotypes of Muslim men.

I loved witnessing Azi,¹ my brilliant Iranian Muslim sister, leading these amazing women from all over the world. The fierce duo of Azi and Diane² reminded me of the centuries-long connection between Muslims and Jews and gave me hope for our future.

Working on sexism in groups defined by religion was groundbreaking for many of us. It was my first time being with so many Muslims at an RC workshop. I was able to work on how furious I am about Muslim men taking over Islam and maligning it by promoting male domination and the oppression of women. I could discharge heavily about the attempted assassination of fourteen-year-old

¹ Azi Khalili, the Area Reference Person for the Brooklyn Gardens Area in Brooklyn, New York, USA, and the leader of the workshop

² Diane Balsler, the International Liberation Reference Person for Women and the assistant leader of the workshop, who is Jewish

Malala Yousafzai, an activist working for girls’ education in Northern Pakistan. The first words of the Quran ask Muslims to “read” or “seek knowledge.” This is a message for us all, not only men. I believe that the basic ideals of Islam are intended to combat sexism.

I was on a panel about war and its impact on women. The safety of the workshop allowed me to show how terrified I feel all the time, how I worry a lot about my family and loved ones. For the first time I was able to discharge, without first giving a long explanation, about the drone attacks carried out by the United States on Pakistan. I felt that everyone knew what was going on³ in my part of the world, which is not always the case. Since I came back from the workshop, I have been discharging terror.

Azi’s talk on sexism and feudalism enabled me to look at the effects of that economic system on me and especially my mother. In some ways, parts of Pakistan still operate under feudalism. I was able to understand more clearly why certain male figures in my family had behaved in particular ways. My grandfathers on both sides were landlords (one still is). I unearthed an image of everyone stopping what they were doing and standing up quietly and obediently when my mother’s dad entered the room. When I was as young as four

³ “Going on” means happening.

or five, I figured out that something was wrong with this and I would not do it. My grandfather did not allow my mother and her sisters to go to school (they were homeschooled.) As a result, my mother wanted my sister and me to have all the opportunities she didn’t have and encouraged us to spend more time with our dad and his side of the family as opposed to her and her side of the family. This drew me apart from my mother. I had huge sessions about how upset I am about all this.

Diane led a topic table on being allies to Palestinians. It was powerful to see a Jewish sister leading liberation work for Palestinians. She asked us to work on our connection with Palestinians and what it would take for us to reach out and make Palestinian friends.

Late Saturday night it dawned on me⁴ that the workshop would end the next day and I wanted it to go on forever. On the last day we worked on how we could break the isolation in our lives and bring home with us the connections we had created at the workshop. Azi reminded me of the life I had left behind in my country of origin, in which women were close to each other, and not judged for their closeness.

Nazish Riaz
Arlington, Massachusetts, USA

⁴ “It dawned on me” means I started to realize.



Toward a Big Life



I am Hindu and grew up in the Midwest of the United States. I got messages, primarily from white Christian women who were close to me, that I was going to hell. It felt like there was no escape from assimilation.

In India, Hindus are the majority, and Hinduism is used as a tool of the state to perpetuate the oppression of women, working and poor people, rural people, and people from other religions, such as Muslims, Sikhs, Jains, and Christians. I need to work on both oppressed and oppressor roles. It is hopeful that Hinduism has powerful female deities to which both men and women pray.

I led the songs committee at the South, West, and Central Asian Workshop. We quickly realized that it made sense for us to sing women's liberation songs from our own heritages and in our various languages. We supported our sisters from outside the United States to share their songs and dances.

I got a chance to discharge heavily on the 1947 partition of India and Pakistan, which left millions dead and installed recordings* of terror on me and my family. The sexual violence, used as an instrument of war, was devastating. I got to fight the recordings of defeat and hopelessness that come up when I learn how war is affecting my fellow women throughout the world. I need to know what is happening in the world in order to be in charge, participate in change, and have a big life. My silence colludes with U.S. imperialism and male domination.

In Washington, D.C. (USA), I lead a support group for women targeted by racism in which there are women from various constituencies. I grew up with little information about my own heritage and was pressured to assimilate into white culture and cut off ties to my own culture and family. To be an ally to women of African heritage, I need to build relationships with Indian-heritage women. With a team of my Indian sisters, I can discharge my oppressor recordings that target women of African heritage and from other oppressed groups. Doing this will also help me have a big life as an Indian-heritage female.

Anupama Singh Yadav
Washington, D.C., USA

* Distress recordings

I Am Truly Central

As the workshop organizer, I got a picture of the male domination and women's internalized oppression that many of the women had to battle to make it to¹ the workshop. Once there, we all dove right in. The workshop radiated love, power, and significance.

We had some of the first RC support groups ever in North America for Hindus, Jains, and Muslims. I am of Hindu heritage. What a contradiction² to have eleven other Hindu women with me! We worked on the intersection of male domination and Hinduism. We also remembered what is beautiful about Hinduism. Our religion, unlike many, worships female divinity. In my discouragement

¹ "Make it to" means successfully arrive at.

² Contradiction to distress

about the oppression in the religion, I had forgotten to notice what was wonderful about it.

In our cultures, skin color is intimately connected to sexism. My mother is of medium complexion, and when growing up she was teased and mocked unmercifully. Her brothers are dark-skinned, but they never faced mistreatment based on their color.

Two of the languages spoken in the interpreting in front of the workshop were Urdu and Hindi. Neither is my mother tongue, but both are familiar to me. Hearing RC theory in our different languages was powerful.

The combination of all the above led to a huge re-evaluation. I was suddenly overtaken by the knowledge of my significance,

and I cried and cried. Never before had I felt this—that I am truly central, that my women are central.

I pictured myself as a baby girl surrounded by this beaming, beautiful group of South, Central, and West Asian women. It was the first time in my thirty-seven years that I experienced feeling completely free of distress. I tasted what it would be like to know my power as a woman—and what it would be like if we all knew, really knew, our power.

There is so much oppression that I could not get to this "place" until I had done years of work, and until I had this room filled with my women, and had a counseling leader who had been fighting for our re-emergence for many years.

Amisha Patel
Chicago, Illinois, USA

We Get to Win

From a talk by Lorenzo Garcia, the International Liberation Reference Person for Chicanos/as, at a Latino/a workshop in New York, USA, December 2012

We are here to notice each other and to see all the dimensions of what it means to be Latinos/as. All our colors, shapes, sizes, and ways of speaking are good.

We are here to have a safe space with one another. When we are with white folks, what mostly happens is we “fade in” and “fade away” and don’t notice that there is a group of us in the room. The oppression forces us to try to not look like ourselves, to assimilate, to be someone we are not.

We are all mixed-heritage, and for many of us the pressure is intense to choose one or the other, to decide that we are this and not that. When we were small, we tried to figure out what it meant to be in our families—what our father’s family was like, what our mother’s family was like, which of our siblings we were like—as we figured out who we were.

All of us are good, completely good. We are all completely innocent. We are all completely intelligent—way beyond our wildest dreams. Even the smartest among us are just an approximation of what is possible for all of us. We are just as smart as all the people who have been ignored in most accounts of U.S. history, who have been eliminated from the textbooks.

Intelligence has nothing to do with what we were able or not able to do in school. The whole education system is designed not to validate who we are as people and what our minds are capable of. It is a big piece of our oppression. As far as I can tell,¹ the big battle in social justice these days is in education. Any of you who are teachers or are in that system can see that it’s the front line of where most of us are getting smashed. A term that is gaining popularity in the mainstream media is the “school to prison pipeline.” What is happening, or not happening, in schools is forcing a lot of Latinos, and also Latinas, into the prison system.

¹ “Tell” means perceive.



CLIFFS OF MOHER, IRELAND • RICK PERRY

OUR FAMILIES

In many ways this workshop is a sanctuary. It is *una mirada*, a glimpse into reality. Here we are more able to distinguish what is real, what is true about us, what is possible in our lives. At the same time, we get to notice that most of what we have to contend with is the lies, misinformation, and oppression that show up in our families. How could our families not be dysfunctional, given what we have been through and what we are subjected to on a day-to-day basis?

This doesn’t look like a regular RC workshop. We have families here. We are being more intentional about bringing our families into Co-Counseling. One of the goals of the RC Community is to share Co-Counseling with the people in our lives. What do we have to step over—what fear, what terror, do we have to face—to share some of what has worked for us with the people who are more confused than we are, who have gotten more lost in some ways?

About three weeks ago, a few of us did an RC family workshop for my family—for my three children who are in their thirties now, my three children who are teenagers, and the two little ones who are four and six. I handpicked people from the Community that I thought could hang² with us for the weekend. And I handpicked the leader and told her she could not be in charge, that everything she wanted to do had to go through me, because I didn’t want it to be weird. I wanted my family to have a chance to get the information without any weirdness. (*Group laughter*) My children were able to use the information and the time to discharge on things that were on their minds. It was an interesting experiment.

This weekend we are going to leverage some of the family relationships that are here. We are going to put together in sessions people who are in a relationship with each other. If a parent is with a child, the child will get to tell his or her life story first. Then the parent will get to tell the parent’s version of the child’s life story. We’ll have extra resource in the sessions—at least one or two other counselors.

OTHER ISSUES

We face some other issues. One is related to being born in the United States or not being born in the United

² “Hang” means hang out; spend relaxed, unstructured time.

States. The way we put it with Chicanos/as is “those who feel closer to Mexico, and those who don’t feel so close to Mexico.”

There are a number of Jews here. That is part of who we are.

And there is our Indigenous heritage. Genocide recordings³ play out⁴ in all kinds of ways. Because of internalized hurts from genocide, most of our families did things we wouldn’t think of doing. (“I’ll be damned if I am going to do that.”) There wasn’t an understanding of all the oppressions that were beating down on us. We can begin to sort this out in our support groups and sessions.

Colonization: How many of us go around with internalized habits from having come from a colony? Almost all of us, if not all of us. What has that been like? Many Chicanos are killed by the police in Albuquerque (New Mexico, USA), where I live. And I don’t think that’s the only place it’s happening. In Guatemala, in 1951, the United States threatened to use nuclear weapons against the president of Guatemala, Jacobo Árbenz. Hardly anybody knows that history, but it’s true. It happened, and it was close. Some of the worst experiments of expanding colonialism have been carried out in our communities.

Skin color: All the different gradations of skin color here make a beautiful mosaic of who we are. We’ve each had different experiences based on our skin tones. My brother had a completely different experience from me, and a much harder life, because he can pass for black. (As far as I’m concerned, he is both black and Chicano.) We get to talk about stuff here that we don’t always talk about in a regular RC workshop.

³ Distress recordings

⁴ “Play out” means are acted out.

Language: The way language oppression has affected me is that I mostly use English. It is what I learned to speak as a young person, although my parents spoke Spanish to each other. We have been hurt around language.

There is a lot to do here, a lot to discharge, so that we can continue to be intelligent and have very interesting, intentional lives. Many of us, whenever we have challenges in our lives, big or little, go around with the weight of the universe on our shoulders. It was a tragic event, and we carry it for years. We remember the uncle—that’s how he was, and this is what he did, and he drank. We hold grudges. The tragic events in our lives become life-killing events. But they don’t have to be. They can be interesting problems that we discharge about. And then we can move on. I am going to push us to not be stuck in the *telenovela*⁵ version of how we are supposed to end up.

WE GET TO TURN THINGS AROUND

We get to take things on⁶ with a different mindset. We get to choose a different point of view. Things are hard, yes, and tragedies happen in our lives, but that doesn’t get to stop us. We get to be happy, we get to be pleased with ourselves. We get to be pleased with each other and with the battle. Life is good, and we get to win—which is a new thought for many of us. The idea that we struggle and struggle and then we die, that somebody might remember us on a poster someplace—it doesn’t have to be that way. We get to win.

I am glad that you are here, and that we get to try this out with each other. We get to turn things around in a way that is going to be kind of fun. It’s kind of like running downhill. You can’t stop, and you keep running faster.

⁵ A *telenovela* is an episodic TV drama seen in many Latin American countries.

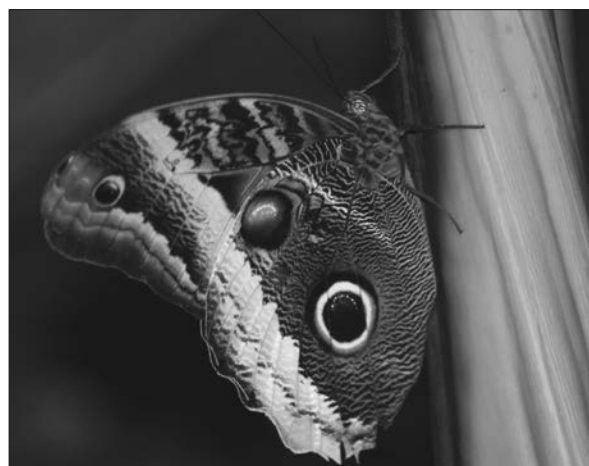
⁶ “Take things on” means undertake things.

Better as We Get Older

I’m firmly of the opinion* that for people like us, things get better as we get older.

Harvey Jackins
From a letter written in 1995

* “I’m firmly of the opinion” means I firmly believe.



ROB VENDERBOS

The Oppression of Regional or National Groups

Societies keep people divided by installing beliefs that some people are superior to others and by installing distress recordings that pull people to act oppressively toward others.

We have the opportunity and responsibility to discharge oppressive recordings. We can correct the misinformation we have about other people. We can help everyone in the world understand that every human being is precious, no human being is better than another, and every child deserves equal access to the resources of humanity.

I will focus here on oppressions based on regional or national groups—especially the oppression of Eastern Europeans by people of Western European heritage. Other regional and national oppressions also deserve our attention and can be counseled on similarly.

REGIONAL AND NATIONAL OPPRESSIONS

I imagine that regional and national oppressions could have started off innocently, with people trying to answer the questions “Who am I?” “Why are we here?” “How did we get here?” It would be natural for people to try to answer these questions by telling stories about the origins of their tribe or group. Such stories were important for the survival of different groups of people. But as societies became more complex, these stories of origins were used to justify oppression and exploitation. The groups that gained power often claimed that their group was superior, favored by God, more intelligent, more cultured. This was used to justify conquest, slavery, economic exploitation, rape, and genocide. Jokes and insults rooted in national, ethnic, and class differences became common and helped spread ethnic stereotypes. If people were

from the same group as the ruler, they could get important privileges: land, serfs, titles, and money. All this took place over centuries, in many parts of the world.

Some animosities have been resolved, at least partly, but many still exist, and the oppressive society uses them to exploit people and keep them fearful. For example, in England the Angles and Saxons, once in conflict with each other, are no longer identifiable groups. However, the people who became the English still have a conflict with the Irish, and anti-Irish oppression persists in England, as do distress recordings about different Indigenous ethnic groups (for example, the Cornish, Welsh and Scottish people). Ethnic and national groups all over the world continue to struggle for respect and sometimes independence. Euskal Herria (the Basque country), for example, was conquered by Spain and France in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and the Euskaldunak (Basques) struggle to this day for their country’s independence. In his article “Nationalism, Patriotism, National Pride, and National Liberation” (on page 33 of *A Better World*), Harvey Jackins points out that although “nationalism is a great big bunch of patterns, installed semi-deliberately and through distress,” national liberation is an important step on the way to human liberation.

THE OPPRESSION OF EASTERN EUROPEANS

The oppression of Eastern Europeans by people of Western European heritage is one of the regional oppressions that has not yet received enough attention in RC.

Those of us of Western European heritage have oppressive beliefs and behavior that can be subtle or blatant, and we can be conscious or unconscious of them. The assumptions we make

about desirable places to visit as tourists or who to choose as friends or Co-Counselors may be subtle and unconscious. On the other hand, in the 1930s and '40s, the Nazis and other Western nations (including the United States) blatantly and consciously acted on the belief that the Slavic people were inferior. Western countries did not welcome Jewish refugees from the East. In some Western countries occupied by the Nazis, Jewish immigrants from Eastern Europe were given up to the Nazis for deportation before the Jews of that country. Of course, the mistaken belief that Northern and Western Europeans were superior to Southern and Eastern Europeans existed long before the Nazis came to power. We carry the distress recordings installed on our ancestors.

Along with creating biases and personal oppressive behavior, oppression becomes institutionalized in policies and institutions. Immigration policies are an example. Western Europeans get treated much better when they visit or try to immigrate to the United States compared to Eastern Europeans or people from Africa, Asia, or Latin America.

To discharge oppressor distress directed at other people of European heritage will be new for many of us European-heritage Co-Counselors, but it is important that we take it on.* The RC Community is an international community. Any oppressive attitudes will impede our progress toward working together for the world we want and deserve.

If you are of Western European heritage, you could start by counseling with other Westerners on these questions:

- What are all your memories related to Eastern Europe and Eastern

* “Take it on” means undertake it.

Europeans? Did you hear jokes, slurs, or negative comments about people from Eastern Europe? (For example, Polish jokes were, and possibly still are, common in many Western countries.)

- How do you feel about people from Eastern Europe? Are your relationships with them close and trusting? Do you respect their thinking?

- What patterns do they have that annoy you? What distress recordings in you do they restimulate?

- Have you ever had a negative feeling about a person of Eastern European heritage (how he or she talks, looks, thinks, or acts, for example)?

- How do class and classism or affluence and poverty (personal or national) affect you in regard to Eastern Europeans?

- What did you hear growing up about communism, the Soviet Union, the Red Army, Lenin and Stalin, the Warsaw Pact, the Berlin Wall, and so on? How does that affect your feelings about or relationships with Eastern Europeans?

If you are of Eastern European heritage, you could try answering the following questions (and use your judgment about whether to do this with Westerners):

- What are your memories related to Western Europe and Western Europeans? How have you experienced prejudice, disrespect, and discrimination at the hands of Westerners?

- How do you feel about people from Western Europe? Are your relationships with them close and trusting? Do they respect your thinking?

- What patterns do they have that annoy you? What distress recordings in you do they restimulate?

- How do class and classism or affluence and poverty (personal or national) affect you in regard to Western Europeans?

- What is your history in regard to communism, the Soviet Union, the Red Army, Lenin and Stalin, the Warsaw Pact, the Berlin Wall, and so on? How does that affect your feelings about or relationships with Western Europeans?

You could also counsel on reclaiming power.

Both groups can ask themselves, How did you experience nationalism growing up—patriotic songs, legends, heroes and heroines, and so on? When do you feel patriotic or nationalistic feelings?

Later

A few people wrote to me saying that what I wrote above applied to different regions in their country. I encourage everyone to also think about regional oppressions in their part of the world. For example, in the United States, Northerners carry oppressive recordings about Southerners and Southwesterners; in the Netherlands, the Dutch carry oppressive recordings about Frisians.

Julian Weissglass
International Commonality Reference
Person for Wide World Change
 Santa Barbara, California, USA
 Reprinted from the RC e-mail discussion list for leaders of wide world change

To truly revolutionize our society, we must first revolutionize ourselves. We must be the change we seek if we are to effectively demand transformation from others. It is clear that the pot is being stirred and people are beginning to breathe in the essence of change that will lead the soul to act. Who will emerge at the forefront of this struggle in the twenty-first century? Perhaps it will be you.

John Lewis



STEVE BANBURY



Moving Beyond the Iron Curtain



For a number of years I have been pondering the role and effects of the Iron Curtain¹ that separated Eastern and Western Europe for almost fifty years. I have lived behind the Iron Curtain and have seen some of its effects. We all need to start discharging about it if we want to create a society based on something other than capitalism.

I want to thank Julian Weissglass² and all the other people in the East and West who have worked tirelessly to create the conditions for Eastern Europeans to be liberated and for Co-Counsellors of Western European descent to start discharging on their oppressor material.³

I have discharged a lot on being an Eastern European and on living in England for almost half my life. I have also discharged on being a "Western European" in relation to my family who still live in Eastern Europe and to more recent Eastern European immigrants.

THE ORIGINS OF THE IRON CURTAIN

I now understand that the origins of the Iron Curtain go back to before 1945. Soon after World War I, the governments of Great Britain, Germany, and other Western European countries went to considerable lengths to ensure that the left-leaning⁴ politics in Russia after the Bolshevik revolution did not "infect" Western Europe. The rise of the Nazi Party was due partly to the fear that swept Europe at that time. Many Western governments preferred to have the Nazis in power rather than let the German political space be occupied by people who would help or promote communism. The Romanian politicians were so scared of our country being overcome by communism that they agreed to side with the Nazis against Russia. Since the end of World War I, people in Western countries have been systematically separated from people living in Eastern Europe in order to ensure that the Western world stay away from communism, even at the expense of its own survival.

At the Yalta Conference in 1945, Stalin,⁵ Roosevelt,⁶ and Churchill⁷ met to hammer out a peace deal among the victors

¹ The Iron Curtain was the military, political, and ideological barrier that separated the Soviet bloc from Western Europe from 1945 to 1990.

² Julian Weissglass is the International Commonality Reference Person for Wide World Change.

³ "Material" means distress.

⁴ "Left-leaning" means politically progressive.

⁵ Joseph Stalin was the leader of the Soviet Union from the mid-1920s until his death in 1953.

⁶ Franklin D. Roosevelt was president of the United States from 1933 to 1945.

⁷ Winston Churchill was Prime Minister of Great Britain from 1940 to 1945 and from 1951 to 1955.

of World War II. They agreed that the Soviet Union could have full influence in Eastern Europe on the condition that it drop its support for communist movements in Western Europe and the United States. This seemed to give Western governments full permission to weaken and persecute the communists that lived in their own countries, such as what occurred during the McCarthy era⁸ in the United States. Thus the anti-communist pattern became even more entrenched, and even took a physical form in what we know as the Iron Curtain.

MY EXPERIENCE

What I mainly want to talk about is how I, as a young person growing up in Romania under communism, experienced the Iron Curtain, and what work we all have to do to discharge its effects on our lives and our thinking.

Seen from Romania, the Iron Curtain enforced the separation of East and West, but it allowed the influences and resources that supported the dominance of capitalism to pass through:

* *Material resources.* I experienced the Iron Curtain as solid in allowing material resources to go from West to East but porous in allowing them to go from East to West. Goods from the West never made it through the Iron Curtain to reach ordinary people in the East. We in the East were literally starved of food and clothing. When the internal market in Eastern Europe malfunctioned, there was no recourse to another market.

However, resources flowed freely from East to West. I grew up next door to a factory that made shoes for export. Everyone knew that they were destined for Western Germany. People in Romania had no access to them. (This was at a time when capitalism had started to struggle because the resources that the Western countries had previously stolen from colonies in Africa and Asia were not as plentiful as before.)

* *Human resources.* With human resources, the Iron Curtain was, similarly, solid from West to East but porous from East to West. Although Westerners were allowed to come to the East as tourists, they never came to live and never contributed to the Eastern economy. On the other hand, the Western nations "bought" people from Eastern Europe to use in their economies, with the "understanding" that everyone wanted to leave the communist bloc and

⁸ The McCarthy era (named after U.S. Senator Joseph McCarthy) was a time during which thousands of U.S. citizens were accused of being communists or communist sympathizers and subjected to aggressive investigations and questioning.

only those who were stupid or corrupt enough would remain. In my hometown of Timisoara, German people and Jewish people were enticed to leave Romania for Germany and Israel respectively. Friends and acquaintances were suddenly spirited away in an atmosphere of secrecy, never to be seen again. We later heard that they had "built a better life" in the West. They did not return to the East. This "brain drain" depleted Eastern European countries of their human intelligence.

* *Cultural influences.* In terms of cultural influences, the Iron Curtain was porous the other way. Information travelled freely from West to East, in spite of big efforts by the Romanian government to stop it. My friends and I knew everything there was to know about Western Europe and the United States. We wore Western clothes, listened to Western music, knew all about the various trends and fashions in the West, and learned the history of Western Europe in great detail. We avidly pounced on any scrap of information from the West that came our way. We thought Westerners were gods and could do nothing wrong. It is my impression that Westerners knew next to nothing about Romania or the other countries behind the Iron Curtain.

THE CURRENT SITUATION

This situation has not changed, in spite of the crumbling of the Iron Curtain. Human and material resources continue to flow from East to West. Cultural influence travels from West to East, so that people in the newly opened markets of Eastern Europe keep buying the products of the West. Eastern Europe is discredited, and learning from the communist experiment is discouraged. This keeps Westerners from entertaining any thoughts of communism or left-wing⁹ politics and allows for the continued development of capitalism as "the only system possible."

Along with being stripped of assets, Eastern Europe has lost its best minds to the West. In 1989, Romania had about 23 million inhabitants. Now it has about 18 million. The rest live in the West. There's not a single family in my hometown that doesn't lament the fact that one of its members lives in the West and is rarely or never seen anymore.

Because of complex patterns set up during the Cold War, the Eastern Europeans I know struggle with relating to the resources from the West: either they cannot make themselves use or accept them, or they will sell their souls¹⁰ to get access to them (I am in the second category).

Beyond what a tourist needs to know, it is difficult for Western Europeans to learn about Eastern Europe, including learning its languages. A "blank" has been installed to keep Western Europeans from being infected by communism. This resulted most infamously and dramatically in the war



NEW ZEALAND • LANCE CABLK

in former Yugoslavia—a war caused in part by the Western world's neglect and misunderstanding of that region and by Westerners arrogantly hammering out peace deals without an understanding of the complicated historical background.

The Iron Curtain exists in all our heads. It stops us from relating to a big part of the world's population in a helpful and rational way. It keeps us from imagining another world is possible. (Whenever people, in the East or the West, think about what could come next after capitalism, their thinking stops at the mention of communism.) It prevents us from working toward another system than capitalism. (This is partly due to discouragement left by the collapse of the little-understood system that existed in Eastern Europe after World War II.)

WHAT WE CAN DO

I think the time has come for all of us in RC to start discharging on these issues. We now have the relationships, the understanding, and the maturity to begin this work. Here are some suggestions, from my experience, for how to do it:

If you are a Westerner, try answering these questions:

* How much detail do you know about the history of a country like Bulgaria, for example? Can you name any of its kings or queens?

* What did you know about Eastern Europe when you were growing up? How much detail did you learn about people who lived on the other side of the Iron Curtain?

* Can you name a few important trends that you follow that originated in Eastern Europe?

* How many of your heroes are Eastern Europeans?

* Where did your food come from during the Cold War? Did you have plenty?

continued . . .

⁹ "Left-wing" means politically progressive.

¹⁰ "Sell their souls" means compromise themselves.

LIBERATION

... continued

* Do you know any Eastern Europeans? If they live near you, how did they get there? What is their history?

If you are an Eastern European, try answering the same questions in reverse:

* How much detail do you know about the history of a country like France, for example? Can you name any of its kings or queens?

* What did you know about Western Europe when you were growing up? How much detail did you learn about people who lived on the other side of the Iron Curtain?

* Can you name a few important trends that you follow that originated in Western Europe?

* How many of your heroes are Western Europeans?

* Where did your food come from during the Cold War? Did you have plenty?

* Where are your relatives? Do they live in Eastern Europe or in the West? For that matter, where do you live? If you live in the West, how did you come to be there?

I think we all need to start discharging on these kinds of questions if we want to build a society based on something other than capitalism. We need to free our minds to notice that several such societies were already created and then undermined by capitalism until they failed. We have a lot of grieving to do, and a lot of fear to get rid of, to be able to think afresh.

I would love to hear from you, but it would be good if you could have at least a couple of sessions before you reply. I would love it if Eastern European RCers could write back before Western Europeans do.



Violeta Vajda
Formerly from Timisoara, Romania,
now from London, England
Reprinted from the RC e-mail discussion
list for leaders of wide world change



AZADEH KHALILI

If you move . . .

and don't tell us in advance of your address change, the post office returns your copy of *Present Time* to us with postage due. (It does not forward bulk-rate mail.) We then have to pay a much higher rate to mail you a second copy. This need not happen if you will kindly let us know of your address change well in advance.

Thank you,
Rational Island Publishers

From an Israeli Jew of Eastern European Heritage

I am an Israeli Jew of Eastern European heritage:

- My grandparents were born in Poland and Hungary. My parents and grandparents spoke Hungarian and German, though not Polish or Yiddish. My grandmothers and my mother cooked Polish and Hungarian food.
- The first generation of leaders in my country, Israel, were predominantly Eastern European. Through their modeling and leadership, Eastern European culture influenced many aspects of life in Israel. They also acted out racism toward Mizrahis¹ and Arabs.
- The Russian and Polish nicknaming system was adopted into my language.

In my heart I feel like Eastern Europeans are my people, but in other ways I can identify myself as their oppressor. Here are some of the reasons:

- I live in a country that looks up to the United States as a model and considers itself to be a First World country, superior to Second World countries.
- Part of Israeli Jewish identity was built on the desire to be the opposite of diaspora Jews—meaning poor, Eastern, persecuted Jews. Connecting poor with Eastern and rich with Western is a form of classism that pushes many of us Israelis into upward mobility and wanting to be Western.
- Internalized Ashkenazi² oppression can lead me to prefer Western Jews over Eastern Jews.
- The history of the Holocaust as told to me focused on the extermination of Eastern European Jews, stereotyping them as victims, and on Eastern European Gentiles as collaborators. The history of Western countries—including that of both Jews and Gentiles—was presented more favorably. For example, most people know the story of the Danish people saving “their” Jews, whereas few are aware of the no less heroic and even more successful protection of the Bulgarian Jews by the Bulgarian people.
- Because I was born in 1967, Eastern Europe was mostly unknown to me. It was behind the Iron Curtain³ (I didn’t know what that was). I didn’t know anybody from Eastern Europe who was my age. It was my grandparents who came from there. Nobody I knew had been there as a tourist. The picture of Eastern Europe in my mind came from books; films (mostly U.S.); and the Olympic Games, which were accompanied by oppressive comments and interpretation and the campaign (to release Jewish prisoners in the Soviet Union) “Let my people go,” which scared me as a child.
- The many immigrants from the former Soviet Union who arrived in Israel in the 1970s, and again more recently, have been oppressed.

I have work to do! Thank you, Julian, for making it visible.



Tami Shamir
Shefayim, Israel

Reprinted from the RC e-mail discussion
list for leaders of wide world change

¹ Mizrahi Jews—Jews of Middle Eastern, North African, and Asian descent

² Ashkenazi Jews are Jews of European descent.

³ The Iron Curtain was the military, political, and ideological barrier that separated the Soviet bloc from Western Europe from 1945 to 1990.

Interrupting Racism in the Present

This is a testament to the amazing work my RC Community is doing on eliminating racism.

As a dark-skinned African-heritage female from the Deep South,¹ who has had the battle of internalized racism; who has a mother who's battled with well-meaning progressive white folk; who has learned, from participating in black nationalist movements, to regard (well-meaning) white people with caution, it has taken me a number of steps to feel that the battle against racism being waged in this predominantly white organization of RC is not just theory.

At our Community's workshop last weekend, we shared the site with an all-white (outwardly benign) group of senior citizens, two of whom assumed that I was part of the "help" at the site. At two different times, two different members of that group addressed me with questions about some custodial matters at the site (as though I couldn't possibly have been a guest there).

¹ The Deep South is a region of the southeast United States that before the U.S. Civil War was heavily dependent on plantation agriculture and the labor of enslaved African-heritage people.

The restimulation on my part was immediate, and I struggled with the decision to leave it alone or bring it to the attention of my Area² Reference Person. I thought that perhaps I was being too sensitive, and that nothing could or would be done. And why bring up this "small" matter? After all, it wasn't a flagrant violation. (They were ever so polite.) People might even think I was making it up. However, I pushed past my patterns of isolation and self-doubt and brought my concerns to my Co-Counselor, a teacher, and my Area Reference Person.

They didn't say much to me, so I thought, "That was the end of that," and "At least I didn't just ignore it." However, soon I was informed that action would be taken—and indeed, something was done. The organizers of our workshop approached the white group's leaders and (apparently) gave them such an effective lesson on racism that they claimed they'd even work on recruiting "people of color" into their own organization. They even offered an apology.

² An Area is a local RC Community.

There it was. In the quiet of a New York State (USA) mountain conference center, a piece of this country's historical sick love affair with a widespread, deeply damaging pattern was brilliantly exposed and challenged.

Much credit is due to the leaders of my Region.³ They interrupted racism in a real way and demonstrated that change can be made.

If only I'd had that kind of support in my youth when I was faced with such not-so-subtle forms of racism. If only everyone had backup⁴ when encountering such hurts, *and* was allowed to safely discharge them.

I left the workshop with feelings of euphoria and hopefulness. So, this process works—slowly, but surely. A journey of a thousand miles starts with a single step.

Patricia L. Mallory-Oduba
Brooklyn, New York, USA

³ A Region is a subdivision of the International RC Community, usually consisting of several Areas.

⁴ "Backup" means support.



KK

All subscriptions to *Present Time* begin with the next issue published. We can't send back issues as part of a new subscription, because we rely on bulk mailings to save money and it costs more to send a single copy.

You can order back issues as regular literature items (see pages 104 and 110).

Negative Feelings Come from Outside

Remember the basic reality: any negative feelings about yourself must come from outside. They can't be true. You must be "just fine."

Harvey Jackins
From a letter written in 1995

“Literacy Privilege”

“Literacy privilege” is the invisible privilege of people who, because of privileged education and/or class background, use the oppressor language easily and well. The people who have access to “correct” use may be unaware of this invisible privilege. Those without access understand it very well, and struggle with their internalized oppression.

There are many people in our own English-speaking Co-Counselling Community who have powerful information and re-evaluations to share

but who never write for our newsletter because they lack this invisible privilege. I hope that those of you who are not writing will consider doing so. We can discharge our way out of all forms of oppression, including “literacy privilege.”

Louisa Flander
Area Reference Person for the Melbourne,
Victoria, Australia, RC Community
Kew, Victoria, Australia
Reprinted from the newsletter of the
Melbourne, Victoria, Australia, RC Community



A new 3-CD set:

Talks from the 2011 Ottawa Workshop

(CD #1004)

by **Tim Jackins**, with
interpretation into French

At a 2011 Ottawa, Canada, RC workshop, Tim Jackins talks about:

- the importance of RC
- our importance, and fighting for ourselves
- counseling on early hurts
- oppressive societies
- discouragement and oppression
- the growth of RC Communities
- RC literature
- and more!

\$25.00 (U.S.), plus postage and handling

Ordering information on page 110

Une nouvelle collection de 3-CD :

Communications à l'atelier Ottawa 2011

(CD #1004)

par **Tim Jackins**, avec
interprétation en français

Lors d'un atelier de Co-écoute à Ottawa (Canada) en 2011, Tim Jackins communique sur:

- L'importance de la Co-écoute
- Notre importance, et comment lutter pour nous-mêmes
- Travailler sur les blessures précoces
- Les sociétés oppressives
- Découragement et oppression
- Le développement des Communautés
- La littérature de Co-écoute
- et plus encore!

\$25.00 (U.S.), plus frais d'envoi

Bulletin de commande en page 110

Alcohol as a Liberation Issue

I have spent the past twenty-five years working to stop the way that the global alcohol industry works against liberation. My colleagues and I have tried to raise awareness of the nature of the industry. We have worked with global coalitions to take on¹ alcohol as a public health issue and reduce the ability of the alcohol industry to promote and sell its products.

In Co-Counseling we require that anyone who teaches RC abstain from drinking alcohol, because of the many effects that alcohol has on health and the processing and re-evaluating of information. However, in talking with Co-Counselors I've found that they often share many of the misperceptions about alcohol that the general population holds. I am writing this article to try to broaden our understanding of alcohol's role in the contemporary world.

MAJOR EFFECTS ON HEALTH

What the World Health Organization (WHO) calls "harmful use of alcohol" is the third leading cause of death and disability in the world and the leading cause of death and disability in middle-income countries.² In all areas of the world except the eastern Mediterranean, alcohol is the leading cause of death and disability for young males between the ages of fifteen and twenty-four.³ While in much of the world women drink less than men, women disproportionately bear the consequences of men's

drinking—in the form of family violence, the impact on the family budget, and so on.⁴

Alcohol use is related to more than sixty human diseases.⁵ The "health benefits" of alcohol receive more attention in the news media than alcohol's harms, but whether these "benefits" exist is controversial. Much of the research on alcohol's "health benefits" has been funded by the alcohol industry, and even if drinking does provide any health benefits, it also brings health risks. For instance, the risks of esophageal and female breast cancer increase with any amount of alcohol consumption, which helps to explain why WHO says there is no safe amount of alcohol for humans.

NOT AN INDIVIDUAL ISSUE

Most people think of drinking as an individual choice and an individual problem of addiction. But in fact, alcohol affects everyone, in many ways.

In the United States, approximately ninety-two percent of high-risk (binge) drinkers do not qualify for a diagnosis of addiction,⁶ yet because there are so many binge drinkers, they cause far more alcohol-related problems than the small percentage of the population that is addicted.

Besides addiction, people often associate alcohol with only one other

negative consequence: driving while under the influence of alcohol. However, in the United States, this is responsible for only seventeen percent of all the annual alcohol-related deaths.⁷

There is growing evidence that the quality of life and health of non-drinkers declines as the number of heavy drinkers in their family or circle of close friends increases.⁸

But most importantly, drinking is not an individual issue because of the global alcohol industry. The annual sales of that industry are close to a trillion dollars.⁹ The transnational companies that produce alcohol are politically powerful and well connected, and their job is to sell alcohol. Lots of alcohol. They say they do not want people to abuse their product, but seventy-five percent of adult consumption and ninety percent of youth consumption in the United States is in the form of binge drinking.¹⁰ They fund front groups, particularly in low- and middle-income countries, that work to weaken

⁷ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Alcohol-Related Disease Impact Software. National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Division of Adult and Community Health; 2012. Available at http://apps.nccd.cdc.gov/DAH_ARDI/Default/Default.aspx, accessed March 6, 2012.

⁸ Connor J, Casswell S. Alcohol-related harm to others in New Zealand: Evidence of the burden and gaps in knowledge. *New Zealand Medical Journal* 2012;125(1360):11-27. Laslett AM, Room R, Ferris J, Wilkinson C, Livingston M, Mugavin J. Surveying the range and magnitude of alcohol's harms to others in Australia. *Addiction* 2011;106(9):1603-1611.

⁹ Jernigan DH. The global alcohol industry: an overview. *Addiction* 2009;104(Suppl. 1):6-12.

¹⁰ Pacific Institute for Research and Evaluation. *Drinking in America: Myths, Realities, and Prevention Policy*. Calverton, MD: prepared in support of the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Enforcing the Underage Drinking Laws Program, U.S. Department of Justice; 2005.

¹ "Take on" means confront and do something about.

² World Health Organization. *Global health risks: Mortality and burden of disease attributable to selected major risks*. 2009. Available at http://www.who.int/healthinfo/global_burden_disease/GlobalHealthRisks_report_full.pdf, accessed June 13, 2011.

³ Gore FM, Bloem PJ, Patton GC, Ferguson J, Joseph V, Coffey C, et al. Global burden of disease in young people aged 10-24 years: a systematic analysis. *Lancet* 2011;377(9783):2093-2102.

⁴ Room R, Jernigan D, Carlini Cotrim B, Gureje O, Mäkelä K, Marshall M, et al. *Alcohol in developing societies: a public health approach*. Helsinki and Geneva: Finnish Foundation for Alcohol Studies and World Health Organization; 2002.

⁵ World Health Organization. *Global Status Report on Alcohol 2011*. Geneva: World Health Organization; 2011. Available at http://www.who.int/substance_abuse/publications/global_alcohol_report/en/index.html, accessed June 10, 2011.

⁶ Woerle S, Roeber J, Landen MG. Prevalence of alcohol dependence among excessive drinkers in New Mexico. *Alcoholism: Clinical and Experimental Research* 2007;31(2):293-298.



MAURA FALLON

national efforts to control and reduce sales of alcohol.¹¹

Understanding the negative impact of alcohol companies on national development, free trade debates, human capital development, and families and cultures all over the world is a first step toward understanding alcohol as a liberation issue.

ALCOHOL AND OPPRESSION

Alcohol's role in oppression has a long history. U.S. slave traders used rum to buy humans from Africa to put into slavery. Those who survived the transport to the "new world" were put to work producing sugars, some of which went to New England to produce rum. Then some of that rum went back to Africa to be traded for slaves.

In southern Africa, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, European mine owners used alcohol to convince people to leave their villages and come to the mines. A whole literature of correspondence shows how they tried to figure out the strength and quantity of alcohol that would keep the workers in the mines but not allow them to be so drunk that they could not work.¹²

¹¹ Jernigan DH. Global alcohol producers, science, and policy: The case of the International Center for Alcohol Policies. *American Journal of Public Health* 2012;102(1):80-89.

¹² Van Onselen C. *Studies in the social and economic history of the Witwatersrand, 1886-1914*. New York: Longman; 1982.

Prior to the arrival of the Europeans, Indigenous societies in the United States were among the few in the world that did not use alcohol. The Europeans provided alcohol to the Indigenous people and then used the behavior that resulted from that foreign intoxicant as an excuse to establish control over the Indigenous communities and "justify" the occupation and colonization of their lands.¹³

After decades of colonizers' paying vineyard workers in alcohol (a practice now illegal), parts of South Africa have the highest rates of alcohol-related birth defects in the world.¹⁴

The British transported workers from southern India to work on plantations in the then-British colony of Malaya and paid them in alcohol, using the resulting alcohol dependence to keep them dependent on and mired in the plantation economy. Serious alcohol problems persist to this day in Indian communities in Malaysia.¹⁵

TODAY'S GLOBAL ALCOHOL INDUSTRY

Today the global alcohol industry uses all the tools of modern marketing

to encourage alcohol consumption. Traditionally young women have drunk less than young men, but after decades of objectifying women in its marketing, the alcohol industry has been heavily targeting women, and young women in particular, as potential consumers.¹⁶ Almost twenty years after this kind of marketing began in England, that country is facing an epidemic of liver cirrhosis among women in their twenties¹⁷—something previously unheard of; cirrhosis usually occurs much later in life.

In marketing to communities of people of the global majority, the alcohol industry cynically uses cultural symbols and liberation imagery. Many Latino/a communities in the United States look to the 5th of May (Cinco de Mayo) as an opportunity to celebrate pride in their heritage. Alcohol companies have turned it into "Drinko de Mayo" and use community festivals associated with it as another opportunity to sell their products.

In Malaysia, the alcohol industry promoted a forty-percent-alcohol product to mothers who had just delivered babies, claiming it included

continued . . .

¹³ Mosher J. *Liquor Legislation and Native Americans: History and Perspective*. Berkeley, CA: Social Research Group; 1975.

¹⁴ May PA, Gossage JP, Marais AS, Adnams CM, Hoyne HE, Jones KL, et al. The epidemiology of fetal alcohol syndrome and partial FAS in a South African community. *Drug and Alcohol Dependence* 2007;88(2-3):259-271.

¹⁵ Jernigan D, Indran SK. Alcohol use patterns, problems and policies in Malaysia. *Drug and alcohol review* 1997;16(4):401-409.

¹⁶ Mosher JF. Joe Camel in a bottle: Diageo, the Smirnoff brand, and the transformation of the youth alcohol market. *American Journal of Public Health* 2012;102(1):56-63.

¹⁷ Kendall P. Alcohol epidemic is killing young women. *London: Daily Mail*; 2012. Available at <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/health/article-89084/Alcohol-epidemic-killing-young-women.html>, accessed September 22, 2012.

LIBERATION

... continued

herbs traditionally given by Chinese healers to post-partum women.¹⁸

In the United States, alcohol marketers are increasingly using the rap and hip-hop music communities as vehicles for promoting alcohol.¹⁹ They use internalized racism as a selling point, frequently pairing in their advertising light-skinned black women with darker-skinned black men to show “what a man can get” if he drinks their products.

Regarding young people, alcohol companies do all they can to get around²⁰ minimum-drinking-age laws. The evidence that these laws save young people’s lives is legion. Even poorly enforced, they reduce youth alcohol consumption and deaths; and when enforced, they are even more effective.²¹ In the United States, alcohol companies spend at least four billion dollars a year on marketing,²² much of it more likely to be seen, heard, or read by young people than by adults,²³ and numerous long-term research studies show that this marketing influences young people’s decisions to drink.²⁴ Minimum-

drinking-age laws are sometimes seen as part of young people’s oppression, but they also help protect young people from the manipulation of a giant industry that does not have their best interests at heart.

I could provide many more examples of the ways in which today’s global alcohol industry works against liberation.

THE ROLE OF CO-COUNSELORS

In this larger context of alcohol in the world and how it undercuts efforts for liberation, what should we Co-Counselors do? On the individual level, we need to look at, and discharge and make decisions about, our own drinking. I encourage all of us to think about whether we want to participate in the global alcohol industry.

Young people and young adults face more sophisticated alcohol promotion than has ever occurred. At the same time, in many countries alcohol products have become cheaper than alternative beverages—including water, milk, and juice. We all need to think about how to be allies to young people and put the individual decision to drink in a larger liberation context. In my Co-Counseling classes, I have had to take strong stands with young adults and work with them on their fears of being unpopular and “un-cool”²⁵ if they don’t drink. This is an important task for all of us as we train new leaders.

We can also participate in social movements that seek to limit the power of the alcohol industry. Alcohol prices

are low because alcohol taxes, at least in the United States, are flat taxes based on volume. They do not rise with inflation, so alcohol companies get what amounts to a tax cut every year, making their products cheaper compared to other beverages. Movements around the United States are trying to increase alcohol taxes and limit the advertising and promotion of alcohol. In the United Kingdom, similar movements are working to set minimum prices to combat the cheap alcohol being sold in bulk in supermarkets. This is, for instance, part of the overall liberation program of the Scottish National Party.

In an atmosphere of constant advertising and promotion of alcohol, it is easy to assume that everyone drinks. We Co-Counselors can “come out”²⁶ as non-drinkers and explain the many reasons why we don’t drink. We can question and take action against the alcohol industry’s efforts to dominate nearly every sphere of human activity. Taking these kinds of stands offers an invitation to the humans around us to think freshly about a behavior that this industry wants us all to believe is normal and necessary for a good life. We know it is not.

Most importantly, we need to better understand how alcohol fits into the larger framework of today’s oppressive society. It is not only a significant health hazard; it also distracts people from doing something about a collapsing and inequitable society.

“Benjamin Rush”
USA

¹⁸ Jernigan DH. Thirsting for markets: the global impact of corporate alcohol. San Rafael: The Marin Institute for the Prevention of Alcohol and Other Drug Problems; 1997.

¹⁹ Herd D. Changes in the prevalence of alcohol use in rap song lyrics, 1979-97. *Addiction* 2005;100(9):1258-1269.

²⁰ “Get around” means circumvent, avoid.

²¹ Elder RW, Lawrence B, Janes G, Brewer RD, Toomey TL, Hingson RW, et al. Enhanced enforcement of laws prohibiting sale of alcohol to minors: systematic review of effectiveness for reducing sales and underage drinking. In: Transportation Research Board of the National Academies, editor. *Traffic Safety and Alcohol Regulation: A Symposium*. Washington, D.C.: Transportation Research Board; 2007. p. 181-188.

²² Federal Trade Commission. *Self-Regulation in the Alcohol Industry: Report of the Federal Trade Commission*. Washington, D.C.: Federal Trade Commission; 2008 June.

²³ Jernigan D, Ostroff J, Ross C. Alcohol advertising and youth: A measured approach. *Journal of Public Health Policy* 2005;26(3):312-325.

²⁴ Anderson P, De Bruijn A, Angus K, Gordon R, Hastings G. Impact of alcohol advertising and media exposure on adolescent alcohol use: a systematic review of longitudinal studies. *Alcohol and Alcoholism* 2009;44(3):229-43.

²⁵ “Un-cool” means not fashionable.

²⁶ “Come out” means go public.



ANNE BARTON

The following four articles are about the White Working-Class Women's Workshop, led by Diane Balser, the International Liberation Reference Person for Women, in Boston, Massachusetts, USA, in November 2012.

White Working-Class Women and Anti-Jewish Oppression

Working-class women (unpaid and paid workers) are the majority of the world's people. They do two-thirds of the world's work, but they earn only ten percent of the world's income and own only one percent of the world's wealth. The overwhelming majority of working-class women, and all women, are women targeted by racism.

I led the White Working-Class Women's Workshop as a white middle-class Jewish woman. It was a wonderful opportunity to be an ally, to address my own classism and internalized anti-Jewish oppression, and to challenge others' anti-Jewish oppression.

An outstanding group of women attended—leaders of RC Community building, class liberation, women's liberation, Jewish liberation, and eliminating white racism. It was a pleasure to see how these women flourished in an atmosphere that was not dominated by middle- and owning-class patterns. (I was the only person both raised and currently middle class.) It was an honor to assist this group of women to come home to each other, to have a place where they could fight for themselves and each other.

ANTI-JEWISH OPPRESSION, CLASSISM, AND RACISM

Some white Gentile women said they had not known there were Jewish working-class people. Many of the Jewish working-class women said they had struggled to feel they had any place with working-class white Gentiles.

The United States and parts of Europe have had powerful working-class movements, often with militant Jewish

working-class leadership. In many cases, it was Jewish female working-class leadership (for example, Rosa Luxemburg and Emma Goldman).

Anti-Jewish oppression has been key in the destruction of working-class revolutions and of a militant, class-conscious working class. The Holocaust destroyed almost the entire Jewish working class in Europe. Anti-Jewish oppression clearly coincided with racism: a "pseudo" racist ideology in European countries was used to justify the attempted extermination of Jews.

In the 1950s in the United States, McCarthyism,¹ the electrocution of the Rosenbergs,² and the corruption of the Communist movements were all fueled by anti-Jewish oppression.

I led a Jewish group, and Diane Shisk an allies' group, discharging on Israel and Gaza. The Israeli-Palestinian conflict is very much about anti-Jewish oppression and racism.

Anti-Jewish oppression has become a tool of colonialism, genocide, and racism in much of the world.

*Diane Balser
International Liberation
Reference Person for Women
Jamaica Plain, Massachusetts, USA*

¹ McCarthyism refers to accusations of disloyalty, subversion, and treason directed at U.S. people identified as communists, or communist sympathizers. The term comes from the name of Senator Joseph McCarthy, a strongly anti-communist U.S. Senator in office in the 1950s.

² Ethel and Julius Rosenberg, a U.S. Jewish couple involved with the Young Communist League, who were convicted of espionage and executed in 1953



EMMA PARKER

A White Jewish Working-Class Woman

I am a white Jewish woman born in Israel. Most of my childhood was spent in Yavne, a poor/working-class town in Israel predominantly occupied by Mizrahi Jews (Jews of Arab descent). In Israel people would use the term *Yavnawi/t* (meaning someone from Yavne) as a racist and classist slur that meant someone who is uncultured and stupid. For years, and even after years of being in RC, I kept it a secret that I grew up in Yavne.

Our family was one of two white families on our block. My mom was the school principal in the neighborhood, so we saw ourselves as a middle-class family, even though we were poor. My mom didn't go to college; a high school degree was enough to be a school principal in Yavne. Once we left Yavne, she was never again hired to be the principal of any school. Despite (or because of?) her lack of formal education, she was an excellent principal. She was passionate and creative. I remember her carrying marbles in her pockets, so that if boys got into fights over marble games, she could break them up by giving out more marbles. Growing up in Yavne was a treasure; I could write a whole book on how rich a life I had there. But although I was intimately close with the Mizrahi children, white privilege and the middle-agent role kept our family separate from the working-class people among whom we were living.

When I arrived in the United States at age eleven, middle-class people, both Jews and Gentiles, "iced me out." They didn't talk to me. And the working-class Gentiles (mostly the girls) attacked me mercilessly. I would get ambushed in the school hallways or on the school bus; groups of girls would publicly humiliate me and tell me that I was ugly. I went to



LITTLE BEAR • RUSSELL HAYES

the guidance counselor for help, and she asked me what I might have done to provoke the attacks. I remember internalizing the oppression and trying to figure out what I did wrong.

I tried to figure out how to assimilate so I wouldn't get attacked. I realize now that assimilation was impossible because we had no money. The clothes people wore in high school, or how expensive their haircut was, determined so much about how they were treated. Middle-class Jewish girls in my school were getting nose jobs,* straightening their hair, and dressing well. These things were not options for me (thankfully). My friends were working-class Asian immigrants and working-class Jews. Of course, we had no class analysis; we thought of ourselves as the unpopular kids who were stuck with each other. I now understand that my family and I didn't assimilate well because of class.

My family, like many Jewish families, handled the oppression by covering it over with arrogance patterns. My parents told me that I was smarter than my schoolmates. The arrogance patterns kept me separate from people and set me up for additional attacks.

CHALLENGING UPWARD MOBILITY AMONG ARTISTS

I'm currently an artist—a filmmaker. I am married to a working-class guy who earns a middle-class income.

* A nose job is a surgical procedure that changes the shape of one's nose.

He earns four to five times what I do (depending on the year). If we separated, I would be poor. This was true of my mother as well; she was a poor, single mother of three, until she married the son of small shop owners. He went to college and became a computer engineer. I was always encouraged to marry a "provider." In fact, as an adult I never bothered to try to make money, because I assumed that my financial issues would be resolved through marriage. Becoming middle class through marriage is something that many women, possibly white women in particular, need to look at.

I earn money by teaching filmmaking. I teach it independently (not through an existing school), because I can get enough students to make it work financially and because running my own workshops leaves me a lot of room to be creative and contradict oppression. One thing I've been able to do (thanks to growing up in Yavne) is keep my workshops accessible to poor people and people of the global majority. I know how to reach them, and how to keep them central when they arrive at my workshops. That's very different from film school, where classes are almost entirely white and middle class.

I've noticed in my classes that many poor people who want to make movies are motivated by a false hope of becoming rich. I challenge this illusion—I stay light and make people laugh about it, while offering information about oppression—but I've always felt that some contradiction was lacking.

After watching Diane counsel a working-class woman about upward mobility, I had an epiphany about my filmmaking classes. I realized that I could challenge upward mobility by replacing it with the re-emergent

agenda of using our artwork as an organizing tool. I've always done this intuitively, but I'll be more effective now that I can put words to what my goal is: to present filmmaking not as a path to upward mobility but as a powerful opportunity to lead efforts for human liberation.

COMING HOME

I came back from the workshop directly to my RC class, which is a

class for people of the global majority (mostly African heritage). I was able to lead it from a more honest place. I was able to open my heart and not skip over my feelings about my students being Gentiles. As a client, I could talk about Israel, about my grandparents, about the Holocaust (which I hadn't done in any group I'd led). I was able to show how hurt I am as a Jew, how much I want the people in the class, and how big a

struggle it is to trust anyone. I felt the natural alliance I have as a Jew with people of the global majority. Looking around the room, I saw a group of powerful allies. And my students left that evening looking more hopeful about human connection and about their own fights.

Ela Thier

New York, New York, USA

White Gentile Working-Class Women

The following are some of the distress recordings I've observed among us white Gentile working-class females:

- *We disappear in familiar, comfortable ways.* We "prefer" other people talking and making decisions. When they do, we don't get targeted. Then we can snipe at them. We sometimes go quiet. Some of us were forcibly silenced as girls, over and over again. We sometimes resent it when other people aren't silent.
- *We've become "tough" in order to survive abuse.* This can be both a strength and a trap. We can't understand how any girl survived any other way. We dismiss and target women who aren't tough in "our way."
- *We feel there is "no room for me."* We are hurt into putting ourselves aside in a crisis. We often "live" in current or restimulated crises.
- *We abandon our own fights in an effort to help others,* and end up feeling resentful and abandoned.
- *We have recordings of powerlessness.* "We've had to assimilate (lose our heritages and languages), why can't you?" (for example, aimed at Jews).
- *We protect "our" working-class men.* "You think our men are more sexist than yours, and it's not true." We hide how sexism has hurt us.
- *We think, "If only I could marry a rich guy, get a degree, find a 'good' job, and so on, I (and my family) could escape the effects of capitalism."*
- *We are confused about whether to stay in or get out of the working class.*

Diane Balsler made anti-Jewish oppression very visible at the workshop. This gave us white working-class Gentile women the space to show how we get restimulated by anti-Jewish and class oppression.

We can discharge the early hurts that set us up to blame Jews for our distresses. Historically, our movement to end classism has been derailed by anti-Jewish oppression. We have been used over and over again by the ruling classes. We have been "allowed" to vent our anger at Jews, and we have done that, instead of focusing on ending the class system that set us up. We have to firmly decide and re-decide not to take the bait offered to us of targeting Jews. We must fight for correct positions on everything we face as humans.

To our allies: Honor what it took for us to survive the way we did. Notice the tremendous strengths and intelligence we gained. Notice if you benefit from our hurts or strengths. Notice how you have tried to escape classism. Challenge us when we get rigid.

K Webster

New York, New York, USA

White Catholic Working-Class Women

Beth Edmonds,¹ Dvora Slavin,² and I led 7:00 a.m. topic groups for Protestant, Jewish, and Catholic women respectively. It was important for us to meet and discharge on how these additional oppressions shape our experiences as white working-class women. Unresolved internalized oppression pulls us, and every oppressed group, to act out oppressor recordings.³

I worked with the Catholic women on harshness, defensiveness, and pulls to sacrifice themselves (selflessness). When these patterns are left unchallenged, they flip easily and compulsively into white racism.

HARSHNESS AND KINDNESS

As working-class Catholic women, our early lives were often riddled with economic, physical, and emotional harshness. We had few opportunities to discharge. Early and unresolved harshness, in combination with the trivialization and brutality of working-class women's oppression, made us tough. We handle hard things. We can also turn on others when restimulated. We are pulled to reenact harshness, and we expect others to handle it despite its inhumanity. Our toughness leaves us disconnected.

Our religion was co-opted to serve the status quo and ruling-class interests and is a culture of obedience, control, and guilt—another layer of harshness. We are harsh toward ourselves, toward other white people, and toward any oppressed group. Unchallenged internalized harshness fuels our racism. In the absence of discharge, we are vulnerable to acting it out. We erupt in anger. We “blowtorch” others.

The contradiction to this is to act with *kindness*. We can discharge and reclaim compassion for ourselves, for others in our group, for the global majority, and for all people. (I did a demonstration on reaching for kindness.)

DEFENSIVENESS AND DOMINANCE

We need to give up acting defensive, dogmatic, and dominant. Hurts from our oppression as females, working-class people, and Catholics, in which we were dominated (by men, the middle or owning class, or a rigid and authoritarian religion) will pull us to want to be right, to be know-it-alls, to want to have the exclusive right answer.

As white working-class Catholic females, we often feel victimized when others take dogmatic positions. However, we, too, must give up being rigidly “right” and controlling.

¹ Beth Edmonds is the Regional Reference Person for Maine, USA.

² Dvora Slavin is the Regional Reference Person for South King County, Washington, and Hawaii, USA.

³ Distress recordings



FUNDY NATIONAL PARK, NEW BRUNSWICK, CANADA • BRIAN TOWNSEND

(I did a demonstration on exposing and challenging defensiveness.)

We have come to understand that males will not be as clear about sexism and male domination as we are. They will need to follow us *before* it makes complete sense to them to do so, and until they “get”⁴ the impact of male domination on their lives.

Similarly, we white (Catholic) women will not fully understand the devastating impact of racism *until we follow* global-majority women. We will have to give up our attachment to control and dominance. We will have to follow first, and fully, before we feel comfortable doing so.

FIGHTING FOR OURSELVES

Working-class Catholic females are expected to nurture and care for others and eradicate ourselves and our needs. “Selflessness” literally means *to have no self*. We need to honestly face where we are unable to care for and fight for ourselves. None of us can do this yet with clarity and consistency. We need to recover our full sense of self-worth.

Doing the above will give us the slack we need to stand with global-majority women—women who face sexism and male domination amplified by racism and class oppression.

Joanne Bray
International Liberation
Reference Person for Catholics
Greenwich, Connecticut, USA

⁴ “Get” means understand.

Redefining Grandmotherhood

I am a sixty-three-year-old raised-working-class U.S. woman. I love being an elder. I love my mind—sharp, active, and with so much experience to draw on. Lately I am eager for big, new challenges and for shaking things up in my life!

I love my body. It's "talking" to me more so that I can't thoughtlessly take it for granted as I did for so many years. In the last couple of years I have gone from a sedentary lifestyle to biking, mountain climbing, and a generally more active life. My body appreciates the change and is stronger and feels so much better.

I love the wide range of ages, viewpoints, and lifestyles among my friends and loved ones. There are many challenges when growing older, and yes the oppression is alive and far too well, but I am excited to be alive at this time in history and to have over forty years of RC experience to guide me.

One piece of the oppression I am currently facing, discharging on, and thinking about is in regard to grandmotherhood. I have one grandchild, and by this time next year

I may have two more. In Co-Counseling sessions I balk at the expectation that I be satisfied with the small, "sweet" stereotype of women whose adult children have children. I am hanging on to the knowledge and delight that "the future is in my hands." I am as determined as ever to have the biggest impact I can on this world, to end oppression and build a peaceful and just society, and to have more fun than ever as I make new friends and take on¹ new physical challenges, such as hiking, biking, playing.

I find it is useful to think of and talk about myself as an ally to families and to children. Yes, I am my two-year-old granddaughter's Grammy; she and I have a close, loving, committed-forever relationship that she can rely on; I am committed to seeing that her life goes well. And I also know that this means seeing that the *world* goes well. So "ally" is a better descriptor. It reminds me what the job really is and the importance of making life go well for *all* families and children. I am fortunate to be leading RC parents'

¹ "Take on" means undertake.

work in the Maine, USA, Region.² It's a great training ground.

In sessions I rail against the smallness of the stereotypical expectations of us older women and how one of the few uses the society has for us is to be grandmothers—more unpaid labor supporting children and families.

I view being a grandparent primarily as a *job* rather than as a relationship. I get to choose it or not. I *do* choose it. I decide and re-decide to take on the job in the teeth of the oppression. It is a *decision* to do important work—work that I value. I get to define how I will do it. That takes a lot of discharge—on giving up shoulds, believing that I have real worth in this world, and making difficult choices. I get to chart new territory, and be the woman I want to be for the rest of my life. As I remember Harvey³ saying, "Have at it!"⁴

Jerry Ann Yoder

Yarmouth, Maine, USA

Reprinted from the RC e-mail discussion list for leaders of elders

² A Region is a subdivision of the International RC Community, usually consisting of several Areas (local RC Communities).

³ Harvey Jackins

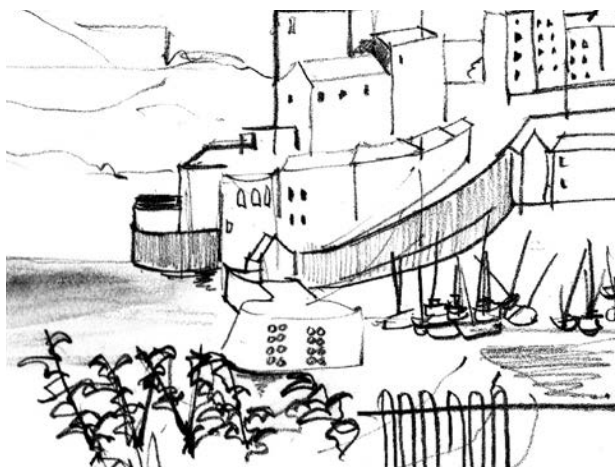
⁴ "Have at it" means start doing it.

Same Amount of Patterns

Both groups (the owning class and the very poor) have about the same amount of patterns and the same amount of difficulties, and neither group is either superior or inferior. There are just *different* patterns, and the fact that you have different ones will make it much easier for you to assist each other.

Harvey Jackins

From a letter written in 1995



TENBY, PEMBROKESHIRE, WALES • KATHY TAYLOR

Ending Male Domination in Melbourne, Australia

We changed our weekly leaders' class this year, after Diane Balsler's¹ Australian visit. We decided to try having the men counsel with the men, and the women counsel with the women. Also, for a few months, only the women had the chance to discharge in front of the class.

Louisa² refused to be distracted by the men in the room. She counseled the women with inspiring love and precision. She refused to allow women to be blamed for the effects of male domination. She reminded us all to discharge about our own parents growing up in a world of male domination.

The men in our class have been a limiting factor, because of sexism. It is to everyone's benefit that we are getting to where there is no more comforting of us men and to where we take up much less space. What a redeemed world: men occupying no more space than other humans, and women backing³ each other to have bigger lives!

If it is left to women to point out where men's sexism is stinking up the place or to make us men feel the discomfort and confusion of admitting to our privilege, it will be easy for us to keep blaming women and remain stupid. We need to challenge each other in the safety of our men's groups. We need to discharge about where we can't think, where we feel criticised, and where we feel that men are "beyond criticism."

We remain well thought about, well loved, and in admiring orbit around the mighty women who are reclaiming their lives and cleaning up the effects of male domination.

Stephen Costello
Thornbury, Victoria, Australia

Louisa said that we women are not confused. This truth is a big contradiction to male domination. Mistakenly believing that I am confused when I have lots of feelings is a result of male domination. When I was small, I knew what I wanted. I was interrupted and distracted by sexism and male domination. Taking the direction "I am not confused" gives me much more access to my intelligence.

Victoria Kemp
Thornbury, Victoria, Australia

¹ Diane Balsler is the International Liberation Reference Person for Women.

² Louisa Flander, the Area Reference Person for the Melbourne, Victoria, Australia, RC Community and the teacher of the leaders' class

³ "Backing" means supporting.



LYNDALL KATZ

It was a challenge to realise how much my father's distress has run my family yet my mother has been the one who is blamed.

Bruce Clezy
Northcote, Victoria, Australia

I've been noticing the "anyways" that I and other women throw in when we attempt to discharge something that has been trivialized.

My attention for older women has grown. I now embrace complaining, grumpy women as my allies. They haven't given up.

I've decided never to criticize. Criticism was a way male domination got internalized for me. Dad judged everything, including himself. I chose to identify with Dad's oppressor patterns, preferring them over the victim ones. (I got both.) I've been discharging from the oppressor position the very patterns I most vehemently hated as a teen, with one foot in remembering that this stuff just got stuck to me. None of us choose our patterns, yet we get to clean them up. That is great.

Rachel Steinman
Brunswick, Victoria, Australia

I moved from thinking that male domination has nothing to do with me to realising and accepting that male domination has everything to do with me—yes, poor and marginalized me! It was modeled for me by my father and grandfather.

My grandfather was the absolute ruler of the household and would sometimes act with great cruelty to reinforce

his authority over my grandmother. And it was passed on down through the generations—all innocently come by,⁴ as Louisa kept reminding both sexes.

It's difficult for me to own my behaviours related to revenge, uncooperativeness, passive aggression, and lack of generosity. It is all good grist for the discharge mill. Thanks for a life-changing series of classes.

Bartley McGowan
Port Melbourne, Victoria, Australia

I was taught to ignore sexism and just try and go around it. As a result, I have been bitter about and toward men, as well as bitter and harsh toward myself and other women. In our class, I have reopened my eyes to many aspects of my life. Outside of class, I've shared my thoughts about sexism more openly and lightly with colleagues, friends, and family and in a way that is more relevant to their lives. I've found that most people are pleased to notice and think about the issues. They are not as defensive as I thought they might be. This is all very hopeful.

Vicky Grosser
Geelong, Victoria, Australia
Reprinted from the newsletter of the
Melbourne, Victoria, Australia, RC Community

⁴ "Come by" means acquired.

The Roots of Unfounded Expectations

I am always startled to notice how often I and other people, where and when we are in an oppressed role, can have a naive, frozen hope or unfounded expectation that the people in the oppressor group will think well about us. We expect this even though we know that the "oppressor" is by and large "stupid" in regard to that oppression.

Our first experience with oppression is young people's oppression. I just realised that on the distress recording that this oppression installs, everything that is going on at the time gets recorded—including our natural expectation and need to be thought about, as well as our parents, teachers, and other adults telling us that they know what is best for us and acting as if their behaviour toward us always comes from wise human choice. Perhaps that way the notion that "oppressors" are able to think about us becomes part of the whole chain of recordings related to being oppressed.



Bas Hurkmans
Westerpark, Amsterdam,
the Netherlands

NEW!

Language Liberation on the RC Web Site

We now have a new resource on the RC web site (www.rc.org)—a section called **Language Liberation**. Below are its three subsections and their contents:

Translations

- Priorities for Translation
- Official Guidelines for the Translation of RC Theory and Literature
- How to Publish Translations
- The Job of the Translations Coordinator
- Being a Translator: A Reminder for Myself as Translator
- Rethinking Community and Interpreting and Translations
- Languages

Interpreting

- Being an Interpreter at Workshops
- Guidelines for Interpreting at RC Workshops
- When to Use Interpreting at RC Workshops
- Rethinking Community and Interpreting and Translations

Language Liberation

- "Language Liberation Is Crucial" and other articles on language liberation from the October 2009 *Present Time*

This **Language Liberation** section updates and replaces the pamphlet *Language and Liberation*. Everyone is encouraged to visit it, whether or not they are directly involved in the important work of making RC theory and practice available to every language group.

“I Will Not Be Bribeed Anymore”

Seán Ruth¹ came from Ireland to New York (USA) to lead us middle-class folks in our liberation. To me, middle-class liberation is about getting to know and trust in our goodness again—and all that our goodness supports, including working for a system with a just distribution of wealth and kind treatment of all “classes” of people.

MIDDLE-CLASS OPPRESSION

Middle-class oppression includes the following:

Bribery. We are bribed into doing certain jobs, playing certain roles, and having more (often substantially more) income than working-class folks. We need to give up our patterned attachment to the “comfort” of “having more.”

Threats. We are loved if we clean our room, if we do well on our exam, and so on. We get a promotion if we —. We are made to feel that our goodness and whether we are loved are completely conditional and determined by how we perform. (“Be smart.” “Be funny.”)

Misinformation. We are told incorrect things about the world, including about how safe or unsafe it is. We are also told incorrect things about people different from us. For example, “Owning-class people are better than we are and we should strive to be like them,” “Working-class people are less educated and therefore not as good as we are.” We also get misinformation about the middle class.

As a young person I was told to be scared of or in awe of the owning class. This made me agree to serve them. We are made to feel superior to the working class, which has us agreeing to “boss them around.” We assume that we are not in the same situation as they are, so we don’t join them in organizing against the oppressive capitalist system. We’re told that if we don’t behave, some other middle-class person will get our job or a competitor will take “our share” (based on the misinformation and distress recording that there is not enough to go around).

Denial of reality. Middle-class folks often won’t talk about bad (or good) things that are happening, or even admit they are happening. Someone mentioned how he’d had more toys than the other children he’d played with but that it was never spoken about in his family.

¹ Seán Ruth is the International Liberation Reference Person for Middle-Class People.

Seán said he thinks that he’s able to lead middle-class liberation because he grew up with children from a variety of backgrounds and isn’t as confused in certain ways as those of us who were separated from people of other backgrounds.

COMING INTO THE MIDDLE CLASS

It can be scary for people not raised middle-class to come into the middle class. We middle-class people tend not to show much feeling. Because of how we hesitate to show ourselves, it may seem like “there isn’t anybody there.” Apparently this is one of the hardest parts of being with middle-class people. (Spooky!) A person entering the middle class may be advised to conform to that, to not show emotion.

MIDDLE-CLASS LIBERATION

Working on middle-class liberation includes working on the following:

- *Internalized middle-class oppression*
- *Classism*—the oppressor material² we direct at working-class people
- *Ending classism.* What comes next? What is our role as middle-class RCers in the collapsing and eventually collapsed capitalist society?

For our liberation to succeed, I think we middle-class people also need to be honest with ourselves and not try to “look good” or pretend like we know what we’re doing when we don’t.

Key to middle-class liberation is getting back our own thinking. Seán encouraged us to always be thinking and not look for a formula for how to do things. I can remind myself that I am discharging so I can *think*. I’m not being counseled into *doing* anything.

I need to discharge about giving up physical comforts and going for³ physical contact and aware, regular, joyful human contact and interaction. A sign that I might hold up at a middle-class liberation rally is “I will not be bribed anymore.” A slogan for middle-class liberation might be “A thirty-hour work week!”

Benjamin Altman
Brooklyn, New York, USA

² “Material” means distress.

³ “Going for” means pursuing.

Possible to Stay and Fight After All

I'm a Bisexual woman in my mid-40s. I've discharged for many hours on what led to my taking on¹ this sexual identity—both the early loneliness and sexual abuse and the desire to live a life bigger than the limited options I saw before me in the heterosexual life I was expected to live. I wanted to be close to both men and women, and not have to pull back on caring for my female friends in favor of finding a man to marry. In this way, taking on a Gay identity was a revolutionary act, a stand against the oppressive society that tells us that we cannot be close to people of our own gender, and certainly cannot have primary relationships with them.

Also, male domination had left me feeling hopeless about having any kind of relationship with men in which I wasn't crushed by sexism, and furious at men for how the relationships I'd had with them had been hard to sustain. Watching my mother crumble under sexism and experience harsh "mental health" oppression when she showed her upset made me determined to never succumb to the role of "wife" or "girlfriend." At the same time, sexual abuse when I was an infant had left me with longings for men and feelings that I had to please them. All of this made being alone with a man in a romantic partnership very difficult to handle, but I wasn't ready or willing to give up completely on men. Part of the Bisexual identity was about having a pressure valve,

a back door of women to escape to, when it got too hard with men, even if sometimes the option was only in my mind.

Discharging on how upset I am about sexism has not been easy. It feels like I'm more angry than any of my female Co-Counselors, and that my objective should be to discharge my anger so I can go back to taking care of men and never challenge their sexist patterns in the present. Gay workshops have been a good place to go after² these feelings without getting caught up in the "there's something wrong with me for being upset about this" recordings.³

² "Go after" means pursue.

³ Distress recordings



STAN EICHNER

Last month at the Gay Jews Workshop⁴ I had a powerful session. On Saturday afternoon we divided into small men's and women's groups to work on sexism and male domination. In my turn in the women's group, I felt like I had to leave. I was walking around the room, with my counselor following close behind me, as I tried to put obstacles (mostly chairs) in her way. She moved in close and asked me to stay, while I yelled and screamed at her and felt like if I didn't get out of there I would die. I suspected that I was working on an early incident of sexual abuse but by the end of my time could tell⁵ that I was also working on the whole of male domination and how it has seemed unfaceable. During and after that session I got a bit hopeful that maybe it's possible to stay and fight after all.

"Nancy Drew"

Brooklyn, New York, USA
Reprinted from the RC e-mail
discussion list for leaders of women

⁴ A workshoped by Cherie Brown, the International Liberation Reference Person for Jews, and "Jeanne D'Arc," the International Liberation Reference Person for Lesbians and Gay Men, in Boston, Massachusetts, USA

⁵ "Tell" means perceive.

Nap Time

The blossoms swaying,
Spiders napping in their webs,
Butterflies quietly playing,
The hammock beckons.

Sojourner Truth
Seattle, Washington, USA

¹ "Taking on" means assuming.

Important RC Resources!

RC “lit”—there’s lots to know.

It can help us think and grow

Help us discharge, set directions.

Here you’ll find a few selections:

The Liberation of the Middle Class

(CD #1002)

A CD of a talk by Seán Ruth,
the International Liberation Reference Person
for Middle-Class People

Seán Ruth, the International Liberation Reference Person for Middle-Class People, presents clear, candid information about middle-class oppression and liberation. He emphasizes that the middle class has been systematically separated from the working class, not through fault of its own but because of a damaging oppression. With kindness and humor, he maps out a perspective on middle-class people that offers hope for directly challenging the effects of the oppression and moving toward the necessary transformation of society.

This is a useful talk for anyone, of any class background, interested in understanding the ways that classism divides us from each other.

\$10.00 (U.S.), plus postage and handling

New DVD: *Moving Toward Liberation*

Twenty-nine (!)
International Liberation
Reference Persons
and Commonality
Reference Persons
report on their work.

\$15.00 (U.S.), plus postage and handling

***Ruah Hadashah* No. 11**

This *Ruah Hadashah* is full of items to help Jews, and allies to Jews, meet the challenges of the next period. Each article can be used to guide us toward powerful counseling and powerful action. The articles are packed with new thoughts about how to discharge the hurts of anti-Jewish oppression that keep Jews from loving themselves, loving each other, and reaching out to every potential ally.

Discharging on anti-Jewish oppression goes hand in hand with the goal of eliminating white racism, another central theme of this *Ruah Hadashah*. Each topic relates to the others, reflecting a hopeful cohesiveness and strength.

Marya Axner, Editor
Somerville, Massachusetts, USA

\$4.00 (U.S.), plus postage and handling



Working Together to End Racism

A pamphlet introducing RC from
the perspective of ending racism

\$2.00 (U.S.), plus postage and handling

For ordering information, see page 110.

Addressing Difficulties in Leadership

Re-evaluation Counseling is a great training ground for leaders. In RC we have done well at creating an environment in which people who don't easily think of themselves as leaders can take on¹ leadership and develop into solid leaders. We also have done well at slowing down and counseling people whose patterned confidence, or enthusiasm to take on leadership, would have them lead beyond where they can function well. We've developed large numbers of leaders and supported them to good functioning. But there are times when leaders struggle in their leadership, and times when we struggle to back leaders and counsel them well on what is interfering with their leadership.

CONFUSION FROM OUR SOCIETIES

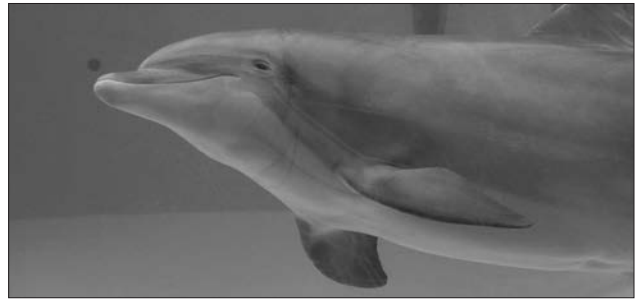
One of the confusions imposed on us by our societies is that a leader is special, superior, and therefore different from us. A lot of us have to battle this confusion to begin to see ourselves as potential leaders. Most of us don't start RC feeling smart enough or special enough to be a leader. We are challenged to see ourselves in a new way when we learn that everyone inherently has the qualities to be an excellent leader.

The same confusion from our societies can cause us to abandon our leaders. Too often, caught in our feelings of inadequacy, we struggle to think clearly about our leaders and hesitate to act on our best thinking about them. This leaves them without a counselor and without help in their leadership. (We've created some structures to help counter this—like “counsel the leader,” in which we use the resource of the group to improve the leader's access to effective counseling.)

We may be critical of or not fully supportive of many of our leaders, or not supportive of all leaders at least some of the time. Because of the criticism and attacks directed at everyone (especially leaders) in our societies, most of us come to RC with fears of attack or criticism, and patterns of attack or criticism, and those fears and patterns interfere with leadership. It's important to create an environment in which our leaders can acknowledge a struggle without people criticizing them or withdrawing support, in which they can be less defensive and look more easily at their struggles. In such an environment, leaders can also look more easily at where they feel they are better than other people because they are a leader.

BACKING LEADERS

At times leaders may make mistakes, or look stuck or not so smart—not special in the way a leader is “supposed



MATT WEATHERFORD

to be.” Then we're often disappointed or upset with them. All leaders get stuck in distresses that interfere with their leadership. People have been hurt too much for that not to be the case. We have to back² and follow leaders who don't always function well. We have to stay close to them and be part of their battle against the distresses that are causing their struggles.

I think there's a body of work that we as an RC Community need to do on backing and following our leaders (and a body of work that leaders need to do on welcoming input about their leadership). We've got to discharge our material³ about “needing” leaders to be special, “needing” them to know everything or to function in some certain way that reassures us. We've got to stop giving up on leaders who are stuck and don't seem that effective to us. We've got to be able to align ourselves with people who we know will make mistakes and get stuck and even lead poorly for a time because of their distresses. This means that we have to take seriously our role as counselors who can and will stick with people as they work through early material that doesn't shift quickly.

We know that leadership is critical to solid forward movement. We've learned this from our decades of Community building. It doesn't work to distance ourselves from leadership (struggling or not), to be critical, or to hope that we can build something solid without being effective counselors for struggling leaders.

Sometimes a leader's struggles don't seem to move, and the Co-Counselors around that person ask that he or she be removed as a leader. In RC we are usually slow to remove someone from a leadership position. In my mind there are a number of reasons for this:

* When people take on leadership in RC, it's a big commitment of their mind and time. Yes, it's great for their

continued . . .

² “Back” means support.

³ “Material” means distress.

¹ “Take on” means assume.

TEACHING, LEADING, COMMUNITY BUILDING

... continued

re-emergence to have the opportunity to lead and challenge themselves with the support of the RC Community, but it's also hard work and demanding—their leadership roles can't easily be put on a shelf when other issues in their lives require a lot of attention. The RC Community benefits tremendously from the work and commitment of every leader. It's not right to abandon our leaders when things get hard.

* It's important for us as a Community that we take on⁴ the challenge of counseling one another through struggles, even when those struggles impact us personally (or seem to). Building community requires that we stay with each other through hard times as well as good. We can't give up on using counseling in difficult situations and not have that affect our building of the RC Communities.

* No one comes into leadership without distresses that interfere with his or her functioning. Therefore, each leader will have to work through those distresses while in the leadership position. (Some distresses don't show until the person takes on the role of leader.) If we decide that we want to replace a struggling leader, who are we going to replace that person with? In my experience, most leaders who are struggling are not surrounded by people who would do any better in the leadership role; the struggling leader is usually still the strongest person for the job.

* In our societies, a lot of our leaders have similar distresses, and what we learn from counseling one leader through his or her chronic material is going to benefit us in thinking about all leaders.

* And who said that we should all be able to function well, now, in all the areas of functioning required by RC leadership? Becoming a strong RC leader takes time, a lot of experience, a lot of sessions.

When leaders are struggling, what works best is for the Community to come close to them and help them get good counseling, so that they can discharge the distresses that are limiting them. This challenges everyone involved to move through his or her own distresses. Relationships may be stretched, but if we stick together and do the work, we end up closer. And a leader moving forward brings the whole Community with him or her.

At the same time, we don't want the growth and functioning of our Communities to slow down too much when a leader is struggling, if there are others around who could play a role in keeping things moving forward. As we work on these issues and distresses, I think leaders will more often be able to say, "I can't do that well now," and look to see who can function where they can't and ask for help. Instead of seeing this as a weakness of leadership,

we can use the situation to develop more leadership and to learn how to work together more collaboratively, using all of our strengths.

Not replacing a leader but working closely with him or her won't be easy. There are reasons why leaders are defensive about admitting their struggles.

NEW LEADERSHIP

We can use some of these ideas with new leadership. We can give people a chance to try things and figure things out for themselves but not leave them alone with what they don't know how to do yet.

We also don't want the progress of potential leaders to be thwarted by their leader's distress. Sometimes a reference person can't see the strengths of someone or get behind his or her development as a leader. Unseen people can still do lots of important work: They can build a good relationship with and back the leader who doesn't back them. They can ask the leader for honest dialogue about why he or she can't back their leadership and work on the distresses illuminated. They can build the Community by playing other good roles. They can work on not giving up on themselves. But if a situation like this persists for long, and the unseen people believe that it's the leader's distress that doesn't let the leader see their strengths, they can tell the leader that they will contact the leader's reference person for help with the situation, and then contact that person. We don't want to leave these kinds of situations stuck for long periods of time.

REMOVING SOMEONE FROM LEADERSHIP

Sometimes we do remove someone from leadership, and it is almost always (always if it is a reference person) in consultation with the International Reference Person. This has happened when the leader's distress was interfering with the overall growth of the Community, or confusing the people around him or her and leading them in directions destructive to the RC Community, or when the leader was stuck in a way that was undermining important work in the Community (for example, the work on racism). In these cases, people have attempted to counsel the leader for an extended period, the difficulty has been communicated as clearly as possible to the leader (so that the leader could fully engage his or her mind in the fight to become clear of the patterns involved), and outside resource has been enlisted to try to shift the situation. But if the leader has been unable to change the patterned behavior, he or she has been removed from leadership. We'd like to be able to use the counseling process effectively enough to quickly eliminate every distress, but we're not yet able to do that.

*Diane Shisk
Alternate International Reference Person
Seattle, Washington, USA*

⁴ "Take on" means undertake.



STONEHENGE, WILTSHIRE, ENGLAND • DIANE SHISK

Everyone's a Leader

I'd like to share something that is working well to contradict people's patterns of not taking leadership.

I live in Santiago, Chile—an unorganized area in which most of the leadership comes from our one leader and me. The core group of Co-Counselors is excellent and understands basic RC theory but has never had the second part of a fundamentals class that looks at the various oppressions.

We've had an overworked leader, patterns of helplessness, and a lack of information—as a result, I came up with¹ an idea. I suggested to our leader that each person in the core group choose a topic that she (we are all female) would like to become the expert on for the Community and lead one of our daylong monthly meetings on that topic. We came up with a long list of topics: racism, women's liberation, "mental health" liberation, raised-poor liberation, men's liberation, working-class liberation, middle-class liberation, early sexual memories. Each person also chose a partner with whom to exchange assistance in preparing for and discharging about leading.

The project will be ongoing. Each person will keep up² her leadership in the area she has chosen and continue to discharge, learn, and lead for her own re-emergence and for the growth and development of our Community.

We've had two monthly meetings so far, and the results were spectacular. It was evident that the two women leaders felt powerful and proud as they led. They did an excellent job of presenting RC theory on their chosen topics and showed great leadership and creativity. They gave clear information and left lots of room for sharing and discharge. Their leading contradicted old patterns of not feeling powerful, not seeing themselves as important and capable. They acted boldly against the Catholic conditioning of resignation and looking to others to lead. They discharged tremendous amounts of internalized sexism as they went after³ their thinking, searched for information, and read RC theory. I am excited for each woman to get her turn. And everyone is learning a lot!

The project has also been a powerful contradiction⁴ for our leader. She has used it to discharge exhaustion, show her struggles more, ask for help, and rest. I was able to introduce ideas about how to think well about leaders. The women were able to see how important it is for each of us to take responsibility for everything going well in our Community.

So, it's all very exciting here in Santiago, Chile. We are amazing women, and we're thinking big and acting powerfully.



En paz (in peace),

*Ellen Tait
Santiago, Chile*

¹ "Came up with" means thought of.

² "Keep up" means maintain.

³ "Went after" means pursued.

⁴ Contradiction to distress

Traducción al español del artículo anterior:

Cada persona es un líder

Me gustaría compartir con uds. algo que está funcionando bien en mi comunidad, para romper los patrones de resistencia al liderazgo.

Vivo en Santiago de Chile, una área que no está organizada oficialmente en la cual la mayoría del liderazgo está generado por dos personas, nuestro líder y yo. Las Co-Escuchas más dedicadas son excelentes y tienen un buen entendimiento de la teoría, pero nunca han tenido la segunda parte de las clases de fundamentales, en las cuales se estudian las varias opresiones.

Tenemos un líder sobrecargado de trabajo, patrones de impotencia en el grupo y una falta de información, entonces tuve una idea. Propuse a nuestra líder que cada persona en el grupo se pudiera convertir en la experta (todas somos mujeres) en la Comunidad sobre un tema, y liderar una de nuestras reuniones

mensuales de duración de un día. Se nos ocurrió una lista larga de temas: racismo, la liberación de las mujeres, la liberación de la "salud mental", la liberación de las personas que crecieron pobre, la liberación de los hombres, la liberación de la clase trabajadora, la liberación de la clase media, las memorias sexuales tempranas. Cada persona también eligió a una pareja para el intercambio de asistencia en la preparación y para desahogar sobre el liderazgo.

La idea es que el proyecto sea continuo. Cada persona mantendrá su liderazgo en la área elegida y continuar a desahogar, estudiar, y liderar para su propia re-emergencia y para el crecimiento y desarrollo de la comunidad.

Hemos tenido dos reuniones mensuales hasta el momento, y los resultados han sido espectaculares. Fue evidente que las dos mujeres

se sintieron poderosas y orgullosas en liderar. Hicieron un trabajo excelente en su presentación de la teoría de RC en su tema y mostraron un gran liderazgo y creatividad. Presentaron información clara y dejaron mucho tiempo para compartir y desahogar. Su liderazgo contradujo patrones viejos de no sentirse poderosa y de no verse a si mismas como importantes y capaces. Ellas actuaron con valentía contra el condicionamiento católico de resignación y esperar que otros lideren. Ellas descargaron enormes cantidades de sexismo en busca de su pensamiento, en busca de información y leyeron la teoría de RC. Estoy muy emocionada que cada mujer tenga su turno. Todo el mundo está aprendiendo mucho!

El proyecto también ha sido una contradicción potente para nuestra líder. Lo ha usado para desahogar agotamiento, mostrar donde necesita ayuda, pedir ayuda, y descansar. Estoy contenta de haber podido introducir ideas de como pensar bien en los líderes. Las mujeres pudieron ver que tan importante es que cada una tome la responsabilidad de que todo salga bien en la comunidad.

Por lo tanto, todo es muy emocionante aquí en Santiago de Chile. Somos mujeres increíbles, estamos pensando en una manera grande y actuando con fuerza.

En paz,

Ellen Tait

Santiago, Chile

Traducido de inglés por Ellen Tait



MAURA FALLON

Teaching by Example

For most of my life I've had a hard time with reading. The reason is that I was not encouraged or supported to read as I've heard others were. For example, some parents read bedtime stories to their children, encourage them to read for fun, listen to them read, and help them with their homework. I also didn't have an encouraging teacher who took time to work with me. When it came time to read out loud in class, I acted out¹ instead of letting people know that I didn't know how to read. I went in and out of juvenile hall.² There were some teachers there who tried to teach me how to read, but I was too angry to learn.

Years later I got involved in Alcoholics Anonymous (AA)³ and was required to read from the Big Book⁴ in meetings. Rather than let people know that I didn't know how to read, I memorized the passages that were to be read by listening to other people and going to enough meetings.

When I got involved with RC, I realized there was a lot of reading. I went to the public library, and they assigned me a tutor who was an eighty-five-year-old woman. She helped me find and check out books I liked. She worked with me for about eight months. I'd been in RC about ten months when I was asked to teach a fundamentals class. I did the best I could, which wasn't very good, but the people in the class supported me, worked with me, and sent me to workshops. I tried reading a lot, very slowly, either by myself or with one other person. I spent a lot of time trying to read the RC literature so that I could teach it. Then I realized that it wasn't about

reading. It was about learning the way I had figured out I could. So I did it backwards: I learned RC first; then I learned how to read. Then I integrated both of them.

When the *Fundamentals Teaching Guide* came out, I started using it in class. I read each topic in class and then had a question-and-answer time during which I explained what I knew about the topic. Then I did demonstrations and gave people homework to read. When they didn't read it, I asked them why they didn't do so. When I listened to them, I learned that they had all kinds of reading distresses. Even those who had gone to college had reading distresses. Later when they didn't do the reading homework, we'd do it during the class when we'd normally be doing demonstrations. They liked and didn't want to miss demonstrations, so this motivated them to do the reading.

Each time I teach a fundamentals class, I learn something and I retain more people, so my reading handicap doesn't seem to be a liability. It seems to be an asset, because everyone has some sort of reading distress and we figure this out as we go. My having my reading distress gives other people permission to talk about and discharge theirs.

I have two assistants who support me well, and people who have taken the fundamentals class more than once.

Eddie Hasan
Guerneville, California, USA



¹ "Acted out" means showed my distress.

² Juvenile hall is a youth detention center, a guarded residential facility for young people awaiting court hearings or placement in long-term programs.

³ Alcoholics Anonymous is an international mutual-aid movement in which people help themselves and each other stay sober.

⁴ The Big Book (*Alcoholics Anonymous: The Story of How Many Thousands of Men and Women Have Recovered from Alcoholism*) is a 1939 text, written by the founders of Alcoholics Anonymous, that describes how to recover from alcoholism. It is the source of the "twelve-step method," widely used by people recovering from many kinds of addictions.

A Workshop for Central and Eastern European Women

The first RC women's workshop for women from Central and Eastern Europe took place outside Warsaw, Poland, in late November and early December 2012. It was beautifully organized by Iwona Odrowaz-Pieniazek, from Poland. Olga Lenkova, from Russia, did an excellent job of organizing the interpreting. I wrote this report, necessarily from my Western perspective.

Twenty-seven women attended—from Slovakia, Romania, Bashkirya, Poland, Russia, and the former DDR.¹ I am Danish and was the only woman from the West. A woman from Romania who now lives in England also attended. Some women had a lot of RC experience, and some were new to RC.

It was an honor and a pleasure to lead this workshop. I enjoyed the welcoming, warmth, courage, passion, and power of the women there. To get to the workshop took a lot of work for many women and long, long journeys for some. That they came showed their commitment and determination to fight for women's liberation. I enjoyed how they backed² each other—for example, with the interpreting.



TIM JACKINS

There were three main topics for the workshop:

- Women, sexism, male domination, and the trivialization of sexism
- Each woman's experience of being female in a communist regime as opposed to in the West
- Ending anti-Jewish oppression and white racism

I emphasized unity from the start. I wanted us to notice that above all, and across all divisions, what unites us is that we are females. We have all experienced sexism, even if it looks different for different ages, nationalities, and cultural backgrounds.

For introductions, I asked each participant to tell us the name of one of her female heroes and why she had chosen her. Many women mentioned their mother or grandmother as a brave, hard-working woman who'd had the courage and strength to fight for her family, including her daughters. I also asked, "How do you say 'woman' in your language?" (At the end of this report, I have written all the ways we said it.)

On Friday night we observed Shabbat,³ and I explained why we need to end anti-Jewish oppression if we want to end sexism. The next morning I did a class on anti-Jewish oppression, for us to work on

¹ DDR stands for Deutsche Demokratische Republik, or German Democratic Republic, or East Germany.

² "Backed" means supported.

³ Shabbat is the Jewish Sabbath. It has become a tradition to observe Shabbat on Friday evenings at RC workshops, as a way to contradict anti-Jewish oppression.

oppressor material.⁴ I explained that Israel has been assigned the role of scapegoat—a role that rulers have historically assigned to Jews, to divert the anger of ordinary people from the rulers so that the rulers could “divide and conquer” and stay in control.

Sexism affects us all, but we do come from different worlds. We had a class on how each woman had been affected by sexism. There were harsh stories. Women spoke of rape during war, of killing, of regular gynecological examinations ordered by the state to determine virginity or pregnancy (because women were required by the state to have children, and abortion was illegal). Women spoke of not having any of their attention on being female, since surviving war and occupation was their first priority.

We spent much of Saturday on what we called “the elephant in the room”: the Russian and German domination of the other countries and how that had affected the women’s relationships as females. To make the work on oppressor material accessible for women who had been badly victimized themselves, I talked about my own oppressor material. I explained how I, a raised-poor Westerner and Catholic, had been soaked in oppressor material about Eastern and Central Europe—not because I was “bad” or wanted it, but because the prejudice, lies, misinformation, and lack of information were thick and unacknowledged in the West. My oppressor material shows more in ignorance, assumption-making, and lack of awareness than in acting “bad.” To the extent that I don’t confront it and take responsibility for eliminating it, it keeps me distant and unreal with women from the East. Eliminating it requires ongoing work that cannot be done at a “safe” distance. I must transcend my comfort zone.

My explanation made sense to the women and made the work that followed more accessible. I worked with a Russian woman on being an oppressor. Then I worked with a Romanian woman on being oppressed (she had hardly any food because food had been exported to Russia and probably also to the West). The room soared with discharge after this and other demonstrations. We talked about racism, particularly the racism directed at Roma people,⁵ since most of the women could relate to that.

On Sunday morning I talked about how as women we stop using our bodies the way we did when we were girls, and how aiming for physical power can help us access where we “settled” and gave up fighting for ourselves.

Here are the words for “woman” in the different languages:

Bashkir and Tatar: *kizlar*

Chuvash (the language of one of the peoples in Russia):

heraram

Danish: *kvinde*

German: *frau*

Polish: *kobieta*

Romanian: *femeie*

Russian: *zenszczina*

Slovak: *zena*



Susanne Langer
Copenhagen, Denmark

Reprinted from the RC e-mail discussion lists for leaders of women and for leaders of wide world change

Visibly Client and Co-Counselor

To remain a client and Co-Counselor in plain sight of all the people while you are teaching them is the best way to model the reality of the process.

Harvey Jackins

From a letter written in 1995

⁴ “Material” means distress.

⁵ The Roma people are an oppressed minority group in Central and Eastern Europe who trace their origins to the Indian subcontinent.

A Leaders' Class on the *Guidelines*

We did a leaders' class on the *Guidelines*.^{*} First we went over a bit of general information and asked questions about the *Guidelines*, with mini-sessions. Then I asked people what in the functioning of the RC Communities they would like to change or improve, and they all got a fair bit of time to explain their issue.

After that I had them look in the *Guidelines* to see if something had already been written about their issue. I helped out a little by pointing to particular guidelines that I thought might be relevant. They spent five or ten minutes

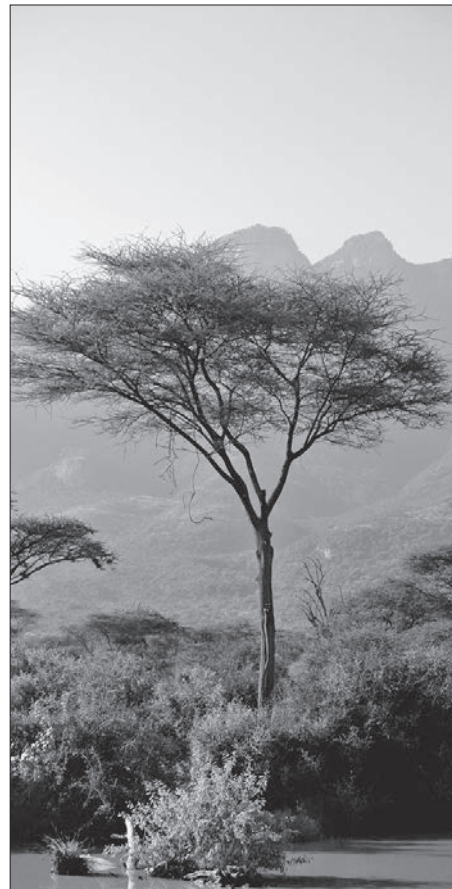
studying for themselves in each other's quiet presence.

Then we had a mini-session in which, with discharge and the attention of a counselor, they could write a proposal to change a guideline or propose a new one.

Lastly, they all read their proposal out loud, which got everyone thinking. Some interesting ideas came out. People were much more excited about the *Guidelines* than they'd been at the beginning of the class. They seemed to feel that the *Guidelines* were theirs in a new way.

Bas Hurkmans
Westerpark, Amsterdam,
the Netherlands

^{*} The *Guidelines for the Re-evaluation Counseling Communities*—the policies for the RC Communities



MAURA FALLON

Counseling Disabled People

We all carry distresses about disabilities. For some of us, this means confusing health issues with disabilities. Simplistically: a health issue implies treatment and improvement, whereas a disability is permanent. I've experienced health issues, and I am also disabled.

When I first meet people I am going to Co-Counsel with, I usually ask, "What, if anything, do you need to be physically comfortable?" I may also ask, "Is there anything you want to share with me?" If they talk about a health issue or a disability, I maintain a relaxed interest and sometimes ask them to "give it to me," or I ask them, "How would I feel if I had X—?" This often leads to much laughter.

When working with a new disabled Co-Counselor, I have found it useful to research information, and part of that is to actually talk to people with disabilities about their needs.

Kath Silard
Rosewater, South Australia, Australia
Excerpted from the newsletter of the Western
Adelaide, South Australia, RC Community

IMPORTANT NOTE

All Rational Island Publishers publications are copyrighted. If you wish to copy all or part of a publication, you need permission from the International Reference Person, Tim Jackins. If permission is granted, you must pay to Rational Island Publishers a fee of ten cents (U.S.) for each copy you make of an article. (See Guideline K.I. on page 43 of the 2009 *Guidelines for the Re-evaluation Counseling Communities*.)

Gordon's Retirement

Dear reader of RC literature,

Gordon Jackins, who has run Rational Island Publishers and handled all of your orders ever since you first ordered something, has decided to remove himself from the day-to-day operation of Rational Island and almost retire. He will be helping out now and then with rush projects, and working on organizing files stored long ago.

All of us in RC have benefited from Gordon's dedication to Re-evaluation Counseling and to the production and distribution of our literature. I know that thousands of you have had contact with him over the years, and many of you have built relationships with him through that contact.

I am very pleased with and proud of what he has done, what he has accomplished, and the manner in which he has treated all those who have ordered literature. We have been fortunate to have him with us in the role he has played.

Tim Jackins
(his little brother)



MATT WEATHERFORD

A Great Opportunity

We get to help tip the scales in the direction of human liberation, to set the record right, to help clarify for all humans that the main culprit is our individual and collective distresses. We get to work toward freeing our minds, to organize, as we are seeking useful and liberating knowledge—if we choose. I so choose.

Lorenzo Garcia
Albuquerque, New Mexico, USA

Introducing RC in Northern Ghana

I am a youth leader in northern Ghana. I have a passion to see young people, especially young women, leading change and breaking the tide of poverty in our families. Hence, I used the opportunity of being a Co-Counselor to build a Community of Co-Counselors among my peers.

In November 2012, I met with twenty-five young women affiliated with an organization called Campaign for Female Education. I took the opportunity to introduce Re-evaluation Counseling to them, and we shared personal stories. Everyone expressed interest in joining the RC Community.

Rafiatu Lawal
Tamale, Ghana

Many thanks, Rafia, for the wonderful report on RC activities in Tamale. In addition, in August 2012, there was a Youth Forum in Dalun (Ghana) at which we presented RC ideas. Ten individuals registered to be members of the Tamale RC group. Plans are now in shape to start sessions with this group. The first meeting will take place in February 2013.

Gmabi Philip
Tamale, Ghana



福島プロジェクトの開始

2012年7月14日に山梨にてダイアン¹をリーダーに迎えてクラシズムのワークショップが開かれました。私は、去年の3月11日以来飛ぶように忙しく、また恐怖に震えている自分を少しでも楽にしたいと参加を決めました。

私は、福島で生まれ、福島から一度も居を移すことなく過ごしていました。2011年3月11日の東日本大震災による福島の原子力発電の爆発それに伴う放射能汚染は、政府の避難地域に指定されていない私の住んでいた福島市にとってもまだまだ汚染は1年以上たっても通常値の10倍はあります。

福島からの自主避難者は多く、残った人との軋轢やまた避難した人同士や残った人同士の中での放射能に対する考え方の相違、除染に対する考え方の違いやこれからの放射能による影響の考え方の違いや食料の生産者(福島は農家の人が数多く暮らしています)のことで、分断する材料は山ほどあります。個人個人が自分の道を模索しているような状態の中にいます。その中で私は、小さい孫のために嫁と一緒に隣の県の山形県で暮らすことを決め2011年5月1日からそこで暮らしています。

名古屋の友人からの強い勧めもありワークショップに参加することに決めた私ですが、久しぶり4、5年ぶりのワークショップ参加だし、震災後不安感も強くなりましたから、自分を元気づけるために最低でも一人の人は私に『福島大変だったね』とハグをしてくれると信じて参加しました。ところが期待は見事に裏切られました。1日目を過ごした後、様々な人の助けを得て、ダイアンにも話すことができ、デモンストレーションでみんなに聞いてもらうことができました。

この再評価カウンセリングは聞きあうことで平和をもたらし、聞きあうことで人と人が本当の意味で仲良くなれると本気で言っているようです。だったら福島の本場にひどい現状をニュースや新聞や雑誌で見ているなら、『福島の話を知ろう』って誰かが言ってくれるだろうと思っていました。あの3月11日後に海外からワンウェイで話を聞くと電話があったと聞いていたから、聞いてもらった人たちが私たちの話を聞くと聞いてくれてもいいんじゃないかと思いました。福島はあの状況の中で少なくとも私は、自分が今後どのように生活するか、どうするかで精一杯で海外と電話でつながる余裕もなかったけど今ならみんなに助けてって言えるから、電話で1分でもいいから『聞かよ』って声がかきたいと思った。

ダイアンがデモで話を聞いてくれた後、本当にひどい状況が分かる中にいるときは、電話じゃなくて人に来てもらって会って聞いてもらったほうが良いと言ってくれて、福島プロジェクトがスタートしました。

福島プロジェクトにクライアントとして参加するのは私と福島のリーダーシップを取っているよっち²と山形在住だけど福島の避難者支援をずっとやり続けているひろびいとあっこ³の4人です。あっことひろびいは毎日のように福島からの避難者の話を聞き続けているので、この2人には支援が必要であると思ったのです。それに最初から福島でやるというのは私自身怖かったかしれません。なぜなら福島はいまだに通常の線量の10倍はあり、またどこにホットスポットがあるか分からず、福島の人々が嫌われたり差別を受ける話も聞いていたので福島にはみんなに来てもらえないのではないかとという恐怖が私の中にありました。

あっこやまこ⁴のすばらしいオーガナイズで9月22日23日関東から8人のカウンセラーが山形に来てくれました。2日間で4人が6人のカウンセラーから45分を1日に3回もらいました。

災害が起きたときに何とか助けようと炊き出しや支障物資を送ったりもするでしょう。でもただ話を聞きに来てもらうというのは飢えているわけじゃないしなんと贅沢なことだと感じていました。自分で助けてと言っておきながら、本当に来てくれたことに感動していたのです。確かに聞きあうことで助け合う社会のほんの一粒がそこにあったから。大変な状況の中にいる人の声に耳を傾けようとした人がいてくれたのです。しかも自分のお金を払って…。

目の前にいるのはもちろんすばらしいカウンセラーであり、優しく愛すべき人間ではあるけれどその中に恐れや恥ずかしさ、戸惑いが見て取れました。そのことにも感動しています。本当に私と同じ人間として寄り添おうと来てくれたと思うから…。

私は、それでも泣き続け自分の中では大きな再評価が生まれました。一瞬だけ福島に戻っても(毎週帰っても)、胸がえぐれるように悲しく辛く思わないで福島の子どもたちを見たり、福島の友人の話を聞けるだろうなと思えました。一瞬でも自分の辛さや苦しさとは別だと感じれたことも良かったです。

1週間後福島に帰りました。除染や帰還困難区域からの避難者の支援の話を友人がしていました。まだまだ福島は毎日のように原発や放射能と隣りあわせて暮らしています。福島を終わりにしないで、福島を忘れないで、福島に住む人達から目をそらさないで、福島から避難した人たちの思いに思いをはせて福島を支援し続けてほしいと切に願っています。

神野愛子

日本、山形

英訳：エマ・パーカー、安積遊歩

¹ ダイアン・シスク、再評価カウンセリングコミュニティの国際照会者代理

² 春山芳子

³ 佐藤ひろし、遠藤暁子

⁴ 雨宮まこ、北関東エリアの地域照会者代理

English translation of the preceding article:

The Launch of the Fukushima Project

On 14 July, Diane¹ led a workshop on classism in Yamanashi.² I went to get some relief from the hectic pace of my life since 11 March³ and from the fear that had made me shake ever since.

I was born in Fukushima and never moved away. After the explosion at the Fukushima nuclear power plant, caused by the Great East Japan Earthquake and Tsunami of 11 March, 2011, the radioactive contamination reached Fukushima City, which was outside the evacuation zone designated by the government. Even now, more than a year later, the contamination is over ten times the normal level.

There are many “voluntary evacuees”⁴ from Fukushima. And people have been divided from each other by a mountain of factors: by friction between those who left and those who stayed, and even within these groups, and by different ways of thinking about the radiation and its possible future effects and about food and those who produce it (many farmers live in Fukushima). In this fragmented situation, it seems that each person is searching for his or her own path. In the midst of it, I decided to move with my daughter-in-law, for



MOUNT RITTER, CALIFORNIA, USA • LISAVOSS

the sake of my young grandson, to neighbouring Yamagata Prefecture and have been living there since May 2011.

I decided to participate in the workshop after a friend from Nagoya (Japan) firmly encouraged me to do so. Because it was the first time in five years that I'd gone to a workshop, and because I'd been feeling very anxious since the disasters, I was sure that at least one person would come up to me and give me a hug and say, “It's been really hard in Fukushima, hasn't it?” However, my hopes were completely disappointed. After the whole of the first day, with the support of several people, I was finally able to talk to Diane and to have everyone listen to me during a demonstration.

Re-evaluation Counselling seems to hold out that people listening to each other will help bring about peace, that people can get along with each other through

listening to one another. I thought that since people knew about the terrible situation in Fukushima from the TV, newspapers, or magazines, they would have come to us in Fukushima and said, “I will listen to you.” I had heard that after 11 March, Co-Counsellors overseas had offered to listen one-way over the phone to Japanese Co-Counsellors, and I thought that they, in turn, could have offered to listen to us, too. For me, at least, caught up in the situation in Fukushima, it initially took all I had to think about how I was going to live and what I was going to do next and I did not have any leeway to talk to someone overseas. Later I thought that I had reached the stage where I could ask everyone for help, and I wanted to hear people tell me, “I will listen to you,” even if it was only for a minute over the phone.

After Diane listened to what I had to say, she told me that when

continued . . .

¹ Diane Shisk, the Alternate International Reference Person for the RC Communities

² Yamanashi Prefecture, in central Japan

³ 11 March, 2011, the date of the earthquake, tsunami, and nuclear disaster that hit the Tohoku region of Japan

⁴ People living outside the government-designated evacuation zone who made their own decision to leave

... continued

the situation is really difficult, it is better to have people listen face to face rather than over the phone. In this way, the Fukushima Project was born.

Four people participated in the project as clients: Yocchi Haruyama, a leader in Fukushima; Hiropy Sato and Akko Endo, who live in Yamagata but have been supporting Fukushima refugees for a long time; and me. Akko and Hiropy have been listening to refugees on a daily basis, and I thought that they needed support. Besides, I was scared to hold the project in Fukushima the first time. Because the radiation levels there are still ten times more than normal and we still don't know where the hot spots are, and because I had heard stories of people from Fukushima being disliked and discriminated against, I feared that the participants would probably not be willing to go to Fukushima.

Thanks to great organising by Akko and Mako,⁵ eight Co-

⁵ Mako Amemiya, the Alternate Area Reference Person for the North Side Tokyo (Japan) Area

Counsellors from the Kanto⁶ region came to Yamagata on 22 and 23 September. The four of us clients each had six forty-five-minute sessions—three each day.

People try to help in the aftermath of a disaster by bringing meals or sending supplies, but to have people come simply to listen to me, when I wasn't starving or anything like that, felt indulgent. Though I had asked them for help, I was moved that they actually came. I got a glimpse of a society in which we support each other by listening. I saw that there were people who would try to listen to the voices of those who were in a really hard situation. And they paid their own way.

Of course, they were great counselors and caring, loveable people, but I could tell⁷ they were also afraid, embarrassed, or hesitant. That also moved me: that they were humans just like me who had come to get close to me.

⁶ The Kanto region, on the island of Honshu, Japan, includes the Greater Tokyo Area and encompasses the prefectures of Gunma, Tochigi, Ibaraki, Saitama, Tokyo, Chiba, and Kanagawa.

⁷ "Tell" means see, perceive.

I was able to keep crying and had big re-evaluations. I felt that I could return to Fukushima (as I do every week) and see the children of Fukushima, or listen to my friends talking, without suffering—at least for a moment—as though my heart had been gouged out, that I could experience the present situation as separate from my own pain and suffering.

One week later I went back to Fukushima. Friends talked about the decontamination process and about supporting refugees from areas to which they were unlikely to be able to return. People in Fukushima are still living on an everyday basis with the nuclear reactors and radiation. My fervent wish is that we will not act as though Fukushima is over, that we will not forget Fukushima, that we will not avert our eyes from the people living there, that we will think of the refugees and their feelings, and that we will continue to support Fukushima.

Aiko Jinno
Yamagata, Japan
English translation by
Emma Parker and Yuho Asaka

Individual Leadership

RC leadership policy has evolved to the point that we depend on individual leadership, individual responsibility. Any RC leader is expected to consult with all responsible Co-Counselors concerned with a particular decision, as far as possible, before he or she makes the decision. All RC leaders are subject to periodic review of their policies and positions by the Co-Counselors they lead. We have control of the leadership by the membership, but we do not have the usual creaky interference by patterned competitiveness, nor do we attempt to work by committee leadership, which made many of us old long before our time through the hours we spent in other organizations, reaching unworkable solutions with great fatigue.

Harvey Jackins
From "The Working Class, the World, and RC"
on page 490 of *The Benign Reality*

Dancing!

The workshop leader was about to come in, and we were getting ready to gather. Two lovely young adults started to do a beautiful partner dance with some funk. All of a sudden someone shut down the dance, told the young adults that they needed to help people gather, and said to me, "You're on songs. Can we get something going to gather people?"

Dancing was part of the gathering! As we age, we get confused about dancing and using our bodies at workshops. By not dancing, we are oppressing young adults! As I led the songs for the rest of the workshop, I made sure to have the young adults come up and dance—front and center. We gathered just fine and in record time.

Young adults haven't forgotten how to move and play in this way, and it needs to be supported by older folk who may be restimulated. The next time you are at a workshop, don't forget to move and dance. Support the young adults around you by participating in a great way to be alive—dancing!

Jennifer Berry
Glendale, California, USA



Appreciating RCCR

Dear RCCR¹ staff,

Thank you for all that you do and for the good and broad effects of your efforts. I appreciate my Intensive² counselors, both individually and as a team, for excellent counseling and for fighting for me. I also appreciate the whole RCCR staff (individually and collectively). I know that the resource of Intensives doesn't happen in a vacuum. It is greater than the counseling resource of any one counselor. Partly it's a

coming together of the minds of the counseling team, but it's also what clients' minds and counselors' minds can do in the context of RCCR, where so many good minds are committed to and working hard on so many fronts every day—all in the direction of human liberation from distress patterns.

The work you do at RCCR has profound effects on so many people. Thank you for all the ways you have contributed directly and indirectly to creating the resource that has made such a significant difference in my getting to fight for myself.

Ayana Morse
Oakland, California, USA

If you shut your door
to all errors, truth will
be shut out.

Rabindranath Tagore



LYNDALL KATZ

¹ Re-evaluation Counseling Community Resources, in Seattle, Washington, USA

² An Intensive is twenty hours of one-way Re-evaluation Counseling, for a fee, at Re-evaluation Counseling Community Resources.

Important RC Resources!

Short Talks by Tim Jackins, on CD

Rational Island Publishers has been producing a series of CDs of talks given by Tim Jackins at recent RC workshops. They are intended primarily for RC teachers but can be ordered by anyone. A new CD is produced each quarter. The series is called *RC Teacher Updates*.

For a complete list of all the CDs produced up until now, see page 105 of this *Present Time*.

Anyone can order any of the CDs for \$10 (U.S.) each, plus shipping and handling.

The entire 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, and 2012 four-CD sets are also available to anyone, for \$25 per set, while supplies last.

If you are a certified RC teacher, the upcoming four CDs per year are available on a subscription basis, and mailed out quarterly, for \$25 a year. You can order up to three years at a time.

Web special: The 12-CD set for 2006, 2007, and 2008, and the 12-CD set for 2009, 2010, and 2011, are each available for \$40 per set—if you order them on the RC web site <<http://www.rc.org>>.



INDIA • MAURA FALLON

A new edition of *A New Kind of Communicator*

The fifth edition of *A New Kind of Communicator* (a collection of key articles on teaching, for RC teachers) was printed eighteen years ago. Since then Re-evaluation Counseling has continued to grow and develop. RC ideas have spread, and we are better at communicating them. RC Communities continue to multiply and develop worldwide.

The sixth edition of *A New Kind of Communicator* includes four of Harvey's* articles from previous editions as well as fourteen new articles describing what we have learned since those earlier editions were published.

I am confident that you will find this new edition both enjoyable and helpful.

Tim Jackins

\$5.00 (U.S.), plus postage and handling

* Harvey Jackins'

The RC Teacher No. 30



A sample of the articles:

- "I've Learned to Teach the Students, Not the Topic"
- What Should You Teach in a Fundamentals Class?
- Moving Forward at Our Own Slow Pace
- Thinking About African American Men
- Taking the Plunge to Teach About Racism
- The *Guidelines* Exist to Make Sure You Think
- The Challenge of Developing and Sustaining Leadership
- The Value of Leading from Behind

\$4.00 (U.S.), plus postage and handling

For ordering information, see page 110.

Care of the Environment in Northern Uganda

At an RC workshop in Gulu, Northern Uganda (Uganda), in December 2012, about eight of us gathered for a topic group on care of the environment. Interest was high. Here is a compilation of what we said:

Deforestation: Cutting trees creates heat and leads to decreased rainfall. People are cutting trees for firewood, timber, and cultivation. They are cutting them to make charcoal or selling them to make other things. Political instability and war destroy trees. Trees are important as windbreaks and in the oxygen-carbon dioxide balance. In our culture, people use particular trees to make certain things: mortars, mingling sticks, stools, tables, statues, musical instruments. People used to value the forest and believe that the spirits of ancestors lived in the big trees. Those trees were always isolated and kept, but now they are not valued so much. Energy-efficient stoves could reduce the number of trees being cut.

The pressure of population growth: Increased population has put pressure on the land. People used to have enough land, so the trees were not in danger. Our ancestors practiced a more shifting cultivation that helped with fertility. Natural resources were not over-exploited. The government protects wetlands, but people cultivate and destroy them because they need land. The uncontrolled burning of bushes also burns valuable grasses and trees. Part of the solution is population control.

Privatization and waste: The privatization of government-run industries brings lack of control. Industries are bringing chemicals from outside, and industrial waste is damaging lakes and destroying wildlife. When plastic is thrown anywhere, it affects the environment.

Corruption and lack of enforcement: Foreign aid is coming to help conservation, but corrupt officials are taking money off. Police are failing to enforce reforestation laws. There is a law that specifies the acceptable size for fishing nets, but people aren't following it. If someone were arrested for breaking these laws, it would help.

Solutions in nature: I'm a lover of the environment. People where I grew up had a lot to do with the environment. My grandmother was a traditional healer, and remedies for our sicknesses were in the forest. She could go and look for herbs to cure a sick person. Most of our drugs came from the forest and

the mountains. The environment has solutions for our physical needs. Being in the mountains can help with stress. Food from the waters and soil of the forest has more negative ions that help fight bacteria.

Progress: Our culture, which was disappearing, is now reappearing. Our culture respects elephants and rhinos. They were being killed; now they are coming back. The National Environmental Management Authority is advocating for the environment, communicating on radio. The National Forestry Authority promotes conservation. Tourist income helps with wildlife preservation. There is a new law that if you cut a tree, you should plant three new ones.

Reaching out: People have started to realize the consequences of environmental damage. They are becoming sensitized, but not everybody has access to mass media. We need to reach out to people who are deep in the villages. Villagers need to learn the negative implications of damaging the environment. We want everyone to realize the importance of all the living and non-living things that surround us. Everything was created for a purpose. Conserving nature is important. If we conserve nature, all things from the past will start to come back—slowly, slowly—so that future generations will have them. Misusing or destroying the environment is bad. As Co-Counselors, we must let people know this.

Reprinted from the RC e-mail discussion list for leaders in the care of the environment

Intelligent People Can Make It Work

I do not think there is any question that intelligent people can make a non-exploitative society work, and work extremely well.

Harvey Jackins
From "The Present Situation
for Working-Class People,"
on page 156 of
The Kind, Friendly Universe

Ending Racism Can Be Fun!

After thirty-eight years of taking on¹ racism within unions and companies, it has become a lot more fun. I have become quite an expert on what I need to do. At Amtrak and Mass Bay Commuter Rail, I helped with three successful lawsuits against racism. While discharging my way through my own racism, I've continued to do great work.

I retired in 2008. Now what to do with my life? So I volunteered for the Malden (Massachusetts, USA) Senior Center. Wow. I knew what I wanted to do: end racism here in Malden. One day they wouldn't feed a black man lunch. I went to the mayor's office and made a complaint. Elder Services called me the next day and said, "We need to apologize. We made a mistake."

Three thousand Asian people live in Malden, and a lot of them go to the senior center. So I asked the director if I could teach an English as a Second Language class, and she said yes. It was a big challenge for me. Today I have twenty-five people in my class. I learned how to speak some Mandarin, and I get people to laugh.

White people were saying, "Chinese people are taking over,"² "It's the League of Nations," and "Why are you helping these people?" They wanted to take the pool table away. They said that the Chinese people were too noisy and wouldn't let the white people play.

They wouldn't fix the shades in the Ping-Pong room because all the Ping-Pong players were Chinese. (If the room was dark, people couldn't see the ball.) The director told me to my face that she wanted everyone to speak English. So we got a petition with thirty-eight signatures. We had a meeting with the mayor, with nine of us of all different races. Our new mayor said, "We will make accommodations for the Ping-Pong table, and we'll fix the shades, find a room for the pool table, and put out communications in both Chinese and English." Now everything is fixed, and they put information out in six languages.

Getting Co-Counseling sessions and almost daily five-minute mini-sessions has helped me.

I am doing public speaking in libraries, churches, and wherever I can on hate crimes and xenophobia (fear of people who look different). I belong to Toastmasters, an organization that teaches public speaking. Oh my God, I'm gonna³ faint. Ha ha ha. My legs start shaking sometimes. As a working-class man, class oppression has hit me pretty⁴ hard. My patterns tell me "get out of there," but my rational thinking says "stay." It's been tough, but I've hung in there.⁵

If you act out a pattern, some people are a little confused. You can do better work when you're not running⁶ your material.⁷ I

remember hearing Harvey⁸ say, "If one person can get outside of the oppression, he or she can end oppression."

One thing I'm realizing is, I'll never go hungry. I treat people well in the complex where I live and they are always bringing me something to eat. I don't even know some of them that well. Some of them speak very little English. I get a knock on my door, and there's a pie. I have more friends now than I know what to do with. It's sometimes hard to accept (when I am in my chronic material). People tell me, "I know you like us."

We RCers work a lot on feeling insignificant. I don't even think about that now. I know I'm significant. It gets a little overwhelming. Only feelings. So I call J— for five minutes.⁹ There is always a fear that I'll make a mistake and ruin it all. That hasn't happened yet. So I shiver. When I notice my own patterns, sometimes they're pretty scary. So I keep getting sessions.

Arming myself with Buddhist philosophy and the tools of RC, I have the best life I've ever had. What more can I ask for? Harvey has been an inspiration to me. I have his picture on my desk. He's the best man I've ever known and I'll carry on his work. There's nothing more rewarding than finding your humanness.

Bill Regan

Malden, Massachusetts, USA

¹ "Taking on" means confronting and doing something about.

² "Taking over" means taking control, becoming dominant.

³ "Gonna" means going to.

⁴ "Pretty" means quite.

⁵ "Hung in there" means persisted.

⁶ "Running" means acting out.

⁷ "Material" means distress.

⁸ Harvey Jackins

⁹ Five minutes of attention

Military Service in Israel

My name is Racheli. I am a young adult Israeli Jew living in the United States. I served in the Israeli military for two years as a medic on a small base close to Jenin (a Palestinian city in the Occupied Territories). In January 2012 I participated in an RC Veterans' and Allies' Workshop led by Julian Weissglass¹ and Jim Driscoll.² It was great!

My highlight was seeing Julian counsel R—, an Israeli combat veteran who had participated in war. I had never seen an Israeli man speak about his experience in the way that man did, and the love and tenderness Julian showed him was a huge contradiction³ for me.

I realized that although military experience is deeply entrenched in daily Israeli life, a big part of it is hidden and not spoken about. Secrecy and ambiguity surround what is actually happening to soldiers and what they are required to do. That may be the most effective way to conduct warfare, but even after soldiers are released they are not encouraged to tell their stories. They are left alone to bury their experience somewhere in the back of their mind.

In Israel, to be a soldier is considered normal, a regular and necessary part of life. Released soldiers (we have no word for "veteran" in Hebrew) are expected to carry on with their lives without giving any attention to things they did, or things that were done to them, as soldiers.

Many Israelis feel conflicted about their military experience. During the workshop, I had a mixture of feelings that reflected the role that Israel plays as both an oppressor and an oppressed nation. I felt anger at myself and other Israelis for agreeing to participate in war. Simultaneously, I felt despair and pain because the anger was separating me from my people. I felt a need to forgive myself and other Israelis for occupying Palestine. It is hard to discharge on our responsibility as oppressors while keeping in mind our goodness. It's a tight place. I often feel bad about taking the oppressor role, but simultaneously I feel that I have no choice, that I am in this "soup" with all my people.

¹ Julian Weissglass is the International Commonality Reference Person for Wide World Change.

² Jim Driscoll is the Information Coordinator for Veterans.

³ Contradiction to distress



LISA KAUFFMAN

THE ISRAELI MILITARY

In Israel, soldiers in uniform carrying a weapon are everywhere—on trains, buses, and streets; in restaurants. Pictures of soldiers appear in advertisements. *Serving in the army is mandatory.* You have to go unless you have special circumstances—a physical or mental disability, certain religious beliefs or ethnicity (the Arab people in Israel are not required to serve). *It is against the law to refuse to join the army.* And depending on the circumstances, *young people go to jail if they try to get away or refuse.*

Going to the army is perceived like going to school—you just do it. It's a ticket into the Israeli society. It's normal. It's necessary. It's your duty to your country, family, and friends. Most likely other members of your family were part of the army. Since you were born, you were familiar with the idea of the army and that someday you would contribute to it as well.

In Israel almost everybody is, has been, or will be a soldier. This includes my family, friends, Co-Counselors, acquaintances, lovers, teachers, business partners, and random people I meet on the street. It feels like everybody is guilty and there is no way out. It's scary to question mandatory recruitment for the army—people will often attack you for even questioning.

Representatives of the army come to high schools and speak to the young people about the army. In my school, we were required to go through a week of mock military training, called *Gadna*.

continued . . .

WIDE WORLD CHANGING

... continued

I grew up on a kibbutz⁴ and studied with young people from other kibbutzim in the area, and everybody went to serve in combat units. In a school ten minutes away, where I went for drama classes, several young people were considering not joining. That school had young people from kibbutzim but also from the city. At the time, I saw those young people as *mishtamtim*: selfish and lazy people who “shake off” the responsibility of army service and refuse to participate in the “war efforts.”

These days some young people figure out how to get out of service. Many go to a psychologist to get “diagnosed” as mentally unfit. So you basically have to be “crazy” to not want to go to the army. (Isn’t that “crazy”?)

Some positions in the army pay okay, especially if people sign on for more than the mandatory period of service or if they are in the *Gdudim* (the sections of the army that handle ground combat) or the air force. But most soldiers hardly get paid, and they receive little or no financial help for schooling after their service.

WOMEN IN THE ARMY

In Israel women are required to serve two years in the army. Women are essential for keeping the military going. They are teachers and trainers for soldiers’ preliminary and specialized trainings. They teach shooting, driving, and the handling of ammunition and heavy machinery. They are army police officers, guards at checkpoints in the Occupied Territories, nurses, combat paramedics, combat pilots. They handle a lot of bureaucracy and administrative work. They work for information (*modi’in*). They are engineers, therapists, and more. They are everywhere! Some women also do *miluim*—after being released from mandatory service, they serve in a military position for a couple of weeks or more every year. Some women are required to do *miluim* until their thirties or forties or until they have a baby.

Many women are still not allowed to join the *Gdudim*. There is only one *Gdud* I know about, which defends the borders, in which both men and women serve together.

⁴ A kibbutz is a collective community in Israel.

Although most women do not serve in the *Gdudim*, a lot of women in the military are subjected to violence or required to inflict it—for example, women who serve in the army police, the *Magav*. A lot of women must carry a weapon and practice using it. A lot are stationed on bases that are under attack by bullets or bombing. I feel that if it were not for sexism, many more women would decide to fight in order to be on the front line. I don’t know the percentage of women who suffer rape or sexual harassment during their service, but it would be a good thing to look into.

Thank you, Jim and Julian, for doing this work for so many years. Thank you for having an Arab-Jewish panel on Shabbat.⁵ That was the contradiction of a lifetime!

Racheli Mendelson
Boulder, Colorado, USA
(born and raised in Israel)

⁵ Shabbat is the Jewish Sabbath. It has become a tradition at RC workshops to observe Shabbat on Friday evening, as a way to contradict anti-Jewish oppression.



This grand show is eternal. It is always sunrise somewhere; the dew is never all dried at once; a shower is forever falling; vapor is ever rising. Eternal sunrise, eternal sunset, eternal dawn and gloaming, on seas and continents and islands, each in its turn, as the round earth rolls.

John Muir

Allies to Jews: It's Time to Take Action

How can we non-Jews be allies to Jews?

Jewish oppression, the short version: Since the Jews were forced to leave Israel (their homeland, then and now) by the Babylonians some 2,600 years ago and again by the Romans some six hundred years later, they have been targeted as scapegoats by the ruling class of the states to which they have fled. When the ruling class has felt threatened by the working people in those states, a simmering of misinformation about and envy of Jews has been elevated and the anger of the workers has been redirected toward a section of themselves (the Jews). This has happened many times in many countries and has always been to the detriment of all working people.

Israel was established in 1948 following a United Nations resolution (adopted on 29 November, 1947) that also called for a Palestinian state. Since then Israel has played a scapegoat role in the Middle East, deflecting attention away from the oppression carried out by the governments in the surrounding Arab world and elsewhere, and an undercurrent of misinformation about Jews has again set people up¹ to be fooled.

An example of how the undercurrent of anti-Jewish oppression is spread is the 2004 movie *The Passion of Christ*. It perpetuated historical misinformation used against Jews throughout the ages and, in spite of much controversy, was hugely popular in many countries.

The world is currently in economic turmoil due to the staggering amounts of wealth stolen in the last couple of decades from the working class by the owning class. This plundering has been carried out via wars (hugely profitable), real-estate scams, tax-evasion, automation of stock market deals. It has left hundreds of millions of people without jobs, homes, health care, and food. In the United States it has given rise to the Tea Party movement,² which has been hijacked by the extreme right³ and deflected into the scapegoating of public employees and immigrants. It is also the reason for the Occupy Wall Street movement,⁴ which is more accurate in identifying where the economic problems have originated (not with the working class) and is thus more threatening to those in power. This is where anti-Jewish oppression enters the picture. It is already being used to confuse people. Recently in California (USA) a Los Angeles schoolteacher publicly made anti-Jewish statements that would have fit right in with the Nazi propaganda of the 1930s and '40s.

What can we do as allies? It is time for us to take action and be visible. One of the great myths about the Danish King Christian X is that he started wearing a Star of David⁵ after the Nazi occupiers ordered the

continued . . .



HELEN PARKIN

¹ "Set people up" means predisposed people.

² The Tea Party movement is a conservative U.S. political movement that supports reducing taxes, reducing government spending, and reducing the national debt and federal budget deficit.

³ "Right" means reactionary forces.

⁴ The Occupy Wall Street movement is a progressive U.S. movement against economic inequality and the influence of corporations on government.

⁵ A Star of David is a hexagram made of two equilateral triangles that is generally recognized as a symbol of Jewish identity.

WIDE WORLD CHANGING

... continued

Jews in Denmark to wear them. He didn't actually do it, but it's a great and inspiring story. The real story of what some Danes did in October of 1943⁶ is even greater but is less well known. Today allies to Jews need to be visible, in the same way the Danish king is said to have been, in our support of Jews and our rejection of the nonsense and ignorance of anti-Jewish oppression. We need to learn all we can about Jews: about Jewish history, Jewish culture, Judaism, Israel, and anti-Jewish oppression. We must understand how the policies of the Israeli government have come about and why the world is so preoccupied with them. We need to go to Jewish celebrations, particularly Passover Seders,⁷ and ask questions, learn, ask, learn. We need to read past issues of *Ruah Hadashah*,⁸ in which the RC Jewish liberation policy has been developed. They are nothing less than excellent and a great place to start to learn.

I don't need to mention making friends with Jews, but I'll mention it anyway. What are the ways it is difficult for you to reach out in friendship? Discharge on your fears of being targeted if you make friends with Jews. Discharge on how misinformation about Jews has fooled us non-Jews into blaming a large group of people for problems they've had nothing to do with. What are your earliest memories of being around or being told about Jews?

We need to interrupt anti-Jewish oppression when it comes up (and it will). It's not the job of Jews to interrupt it. It's not a Jewish problem. It's an allies problem. It's a pattern that we non-Jews have been saddled with and must get rid of. The best ways to overcome it are to interrupt the oppression when we see it and to pass on accurate information.

We don't have to wait until we have all the information (nobody has it all). We can act on the information we already have. We must get to where we can support the liberation of Palestinians and the liberation of Jews at the same time and understand that this is not a contradiction. We need to discharge enough to dare to be "politically incorrect" in political, social, and religious environments in which anti-Jewish oppression is "politically correct." We need to be able to reject the teachings of our parents, teachers, and religious leaders when those teachings do not encourage us to be dependable allies to Jews and fully against anti-Jewish oppression.

What else? We can be creative. Let me share a personal example: For a while now I have been wearing a Star of David on a chain around my neck, knowing that it will make people think that I'm not only Jewish but proud of it. It has forced me to discharge more of my own anti-Jewish patterns. When people ask if I'm Jewish (few do), I tell them I'm not but that I am Danish. Then I tell them about the Danish king (even though it's a myth) and that I am proud of the Danish people for standing up against anti-Jewish oppression (which is not a myth). I tell them that we all need to do that, now.

I invite you to join me in this, or to find your own creative way of being a visible ally to Jews.

Yom tov ve shalom la olam! (Have a good day, peace to all!)



Allan Hansen
Cypress, California, USA
Reprinted from the e-mail discussion
list for RC Community members

⁶ On October 1, 1943, Nazi leader Adolf Hitler ordered that all Danish Jews in Nazi-occupied Denmark be arrested and deported. Despite great personal risk, the Danish resistance movement, with the assistance of many ordinary Danish citizens, evacuated about eight thousand Jews by sea to nearby neutral Sweden, allowing the vast majority of Denmark's Jewish population to avoid capture by the Nazis. Over ninety-nine percent of Denmark's Jews survived the Holocaust.

⁷ Passover is a Jewish holiday that commemorates the story of the Exodus in which the ancient Israelites were freed from slavery in Egypt. It begins on the fifteenth day of the month of Nisan in the Jewish calendar, which is in spring in the Northern Hemisphere, and is celebrated for seven or eight days. A Seder is a ritual feast that marks the beginning of the holiday of Passover.

⁸ *Ruah Hadashah* is the RC journal about Jewish liberation.

Deciding to Be Counselor

I am pleased with a decision I made yesterday to counsel my lunch buddies. The topic of carrying handguns came up—with most of the table, except me, agreeing that people with permits should be able to carry guns at all times.

Feeling restimulated about the subject matter, and after some fruitless attempts to state my opinion, I decided I needed to change my tactic. I asked the women, “Was there ever a time you wished you had a gun and did not?” Each one had an experience in which she or someone around her felt threatened. It was a good lunch topic, and I realized, once again, the benefits of deciding to be counselor.

Dawn Graham
Fayetteville, Arkansas, USA



Sustaining All Life

The RC Journal about Care of the Environment

“I have asked people what difference it made having that connection (with nature) in their lives, and they have told me it saved their lives. Nature doesn’t judge us; it recharges us. Try this direction: ‘The earth is alive and wants us.’ This is a powerful contradiction to isolation.”

—Wytske Visser (page 4)

“The first issue of *Sustaining All Life*, our journal about caring for the environment, is now available. Please consider getting a copy (or many). We have many things to do in this field and much discouragement and isolation to overcome. This journal will help us do that.”

—Tim Jackins

A small sample of the articles:

Relaxed Leading, Jan Venderbos

Me, Sparrows, and Saving the Planet (poem),

Micheline Mason

Questioning Patterns that Lead to Overuse,

Marcie Rendon

Discharging Entitlement Patterns, Susan Kammerzell

Making a Decision About Global Warming,

Madeleine Para

A Household Conservation Project, Glen Hauer

Some Angles on Discharging on the Environment,

Shashi Raman

On Class Societies, Racism, and Ending All Oppressions,

Wytske Visser

Sexism and Care of the Environment, Beth Cruise

A Young Person Talks about the Environment,

Mari Piggott

\$4.00 (U.S.), plus postage and handling



YUKO HIBINO

Please take a look at the lists in the back of this *Present Time* and let us know if you find any inaccuracies. You can send corrections to <publications@rc.org> or to Rational Island Publishers, 719 2nd Avenue North, Seattle, Washington 98109, USA.

Thanks very much!
Rational Island Publishers

Moving Against Language Oppression

Recently I returned from a trip to Italy where I attended a gathering of people from various parts of the country. I spoke to them about language oppression and liberation.

I talked about my grandparents, who came to the United States from Italy in the early 1900s and settled in “Italian” neighborhoods in New York City. My mother speaks Italian fluently. My father understood it but refused to speak it. When I was born, in 1948, there was already an established neighborhood custom that my generation would not speak Italian. Whether this was conscious or not is hard to say. I know there were posters on buildings during World War II telling people not to speak “the languages of the enemy”—German, Italian, and Japanese. The *storia segreta* (secret story)

about internment camps for Italians was not spoken of. I only became aware of the camps in the past ten years, when people began to write about them.

I told the group that when I studied Italian I could not speak much to my mother, because she speaks Napolitano, from Naples. Some historians consider this a way of speaking Italian and others consider it a dialect. All of my grandparents spoke “dialects.” So while I can speak a little “Italian,” it is a standardized version of the language. I cannot speak these beautiful variations.

One evening several groups of people organized themselves into the regions they came from and presented poems and songs from their areas in their unique languages. There was much laughter, because each

presentation needed a translation into standard Italian so that the groups could understand each other. I found myself discharging and have had some good sessions since then. Each group’s pride and love of the language was such a contradiction to the sadness and loss I feel about having my true native tongues taken from me.

It is clear to me that a fundamental way of installing internalized oppression on a people is to take away their original way of speaking. I have great appreciation for people who speak more than one language and who fight to keep their original tongue.

Emmy Rainwalker

Boston, Massachusetts, USA
Reprinted from the e-mail discussion list for RC Community members



PUNE, INDIA • TIM JACKINS

Speak with Confidence

Everywhere there’s a thirst for workable policies and for leadership—for the expression of these policies by a person who can speak with some confidence, some assurance. There is a great shortage of people who can say confidently, “Things can be handled,” “Go ahead, try it,” “It will work,” “You’re a good thinker. You can figure it out,” “That’s possible,” “Call a little meeting. Have a think-and-listen. You’ll come up with* something,” “It’s a good idea. Try it and you’ll get better ones,” “You can do it; you’re a good person.”

It seems to me that I write several letters a day saying mostly this.

Harvey Jackins

From *The Benign Reality*, page 381

* “Come up with” means think of.

Appreciating Present Time

Thank you very much for this wonderful (January 2013) issue of PRESENT TIME.



Shashikala (Shashi)
Bangalore, India

I have so much appreciated the visual as well as verbal (not to leave out nounal and adverbial, etc.) beauty and interest of PRESENT TIME.



Russell Hayes
Lexington, Kentucky, USA

There are so many great things about the January PRESENT TIME, starting with the cover and the quote from John Lewis. I could hear his voice speaking about how social transformation is grounded in what is true.

The article by Diane Shisk, "Being Open About Leadership," was full of ideas. It was so plain-spoken and straightforward. Very helpful.



Dreama Frisk
Arlington, Virginia, USA

As usual, I love the latest PRESENT TIME. I am devouring and savoring it slowly.



Manitonquat (Medicine Story)
Greenville, New Hampshire, USA

PRESENT TIME is so amazing to read.



Ellen Tait
Santiago, Chile

PRESENT TIME is such a compilation of conscious thinking. Such a heartening display of loving kindness and our desires to liberate one another and be fully human with one another. So much lived theory. Such terrific photos and creative writings. Such wisely selected passages from Harvey's¹ beautiful and loving writing. What an eye-appealing and easy-to-read layout. And Katie,² your watercolors are magnificent. Those are my reactions after my first reading. Now PRESENT TIME moves into the bathroom, where I will *not* skip articles.



Pam Maccabee
Glastonbury, Connecticut, USA

¹ Harvey Jackins'

² Katie Kauffman



HAWAII, USA • DIANE SHISK

The RC Web Site

There is a web site for Re-evaluation Counseling at <<http://www.rc.org/>>. At this site you will have easy access to a large amount of information about Re-evaluation Counseling, including:

- RC theory (basic theory, including an introduction to RC, *The Art of Listening*, and the RC postulates)
- An introductory talk (in audio) by Harvey Jackins (1986)
- RC practice (how to start RC, what to do in a session, counseling techniques, how to lead support groups)
- Policies, forms, and the *Guidelines for the Re-evaluation Counseling Communities*, 2009 edition
- Articles by RC leaders and Community members (quotes and selected articles from *Present Time* and other RC journals)
- Translations of articles into many languages
- New materials on language liberation
- Resources for workshop organizers
- Rational Island Publishers (contact information and literature ordering)
- Ordering RC publications on the web: <www.rationalisland.com>
- An on-line fundamentals of Co-Counseling class
- Outlines for teaching fundamentals classes, in English and Spanish
- An ever-growing collection of back issues of *Present Time* (currently 1974-1995)
- An index to all issues of *Present Time*
- "Today's Thought"—a short daily thought from a Re-evaluation Counseling perspective
- International Reference Person Perspectives

How to Contact Us On-Line

- The International RC Community: ircc@rc.org
- United to End Racism: uer@rc.org
- Rational Island Publishers (orders, and billing questions): litsales@rc.org (or order on our web site at www.rationalisland.com)
- Re-evaluation Counseling Community Resources (Intensives and office matters only): rcoffice@rc.org
- Automatic response e-mail about RC: info@rc.org
- For sending photos: photos@rc.org

On-Line Fundamentals Class

An on-line fundamentals of Co-Counseling class is available for people who are interested in learning more about RC.

Active participation in the class is reserved for those who do not have fundamentals classes in their geographical region. Learning Re-evaluation Counseling via e-mail is much more difficult than learning it in a regular class and requires a higher level of commitment to the learning process and to regular Co-Counseling sessions.

If you are already participating in a regular RC class, or are an RC teacher, you may still have access to the articles used in the on-line class by enrolling in the class as an inactive member. Please note, however, that all of the materials used are already published and available in printed issues of *Present Time* and other Rational Island Publishers publications. The on-line class organizes these materials, making them more easily accessible.

Please see the RC web site at <<http://www.rc.org/class/fundamentals/>> for more information about how to sign up for either active or inactive membership in the on-line fundamentals class.

United to End Racism

United to End Racism (UER), an ongoing program of the Re-evaluation Counseling Communities, is on the web at <<http://www.rc.org/uer>>. The e-mail address for UER is <uer@rc.org>.

United to End Racism is working with other groups involved in eliminating racism, and sharing with them the theory and practice of Re-evaluation Counseling.