



Present Time

July 2010 No. 160 (Vol. 42 No. 3)

Change happens
by the movement of individuals.

Dan Nickerson

Another wonderful issue of *Present Time!* Some of what's inside: an excellent article by Tim Jackins, "Human Connections, and Sex"; ground-breaking articles on both women and men prioritizing the ending of sexism; a discussion about immigration; a description of a young people's class; clear thinking about people with learning difficulties; news and perspectives from Nigeria, Kenya, El Salvador, and Israel.

We'd love to receive your articles, poems, drawings, and photos. For the October *Present Time*, please get them to us by Monday, August 16. And if you have changes to the back-pages lists, we'll need those by Monday, August 23.



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Human Connections, and Sex

Tim Jackins
International Reference Person
for the Re-evaluation Counseling Communities

OUR PICTURE OF HUMAN CONNECTION

From the years of work that we in RC have done, we have developed a consistent picture of what we think the natural connection between human beings is likely to be. Our simplest phrase has been that love is the way two humans naturally feel about each other. This is any two humans.

It appears that all newborn children arrive expecting that someone similar to themselves will be there waiting to interact with them in an aware, intelligent, and thoughtful manner. Each of us, apparently, arrives with our own intelligence intact and functioning, and with the full expectation that there will be another intelligence to interact with.

OUR LACK OF CONNECTION

Because of the lack of information about newborn humans, we almost always arrived without the waiting adults realizing the existence of our intelligence. Because of the conditions in the lives of our parents and the other adults around them, because of the distresses they had suffered and not been able to discharge, and, in particular, because of the oppressive nature of the society they existed in, we arrived at birth and didn't find another intelligence that could stay aware of us. Because we were very much physically helpless at our birth, we needed another intelligent human who had more information, who had developed to be more physically able, and who would be able to think about us, tend to our needs, and, especially, support us to discharge any distresses we acquired. This did not happen. Instead, separation and unawareness often dominated our early days. As the separation, the lack of awareness, the distresses aimed at us, and the lack of support for discharge built up in our early years, we lost

our hopefulness about being closely connected to another intelligence.

Our initial expectation of being connected to another intelligence like our own continued to be disappointed as we grew, developed physically, and learned about the world. It appears that at some point in each of our lives, the distresses that built up around the lack of connection become heavy enough that we develop chronic distress patterns that lead us off to live lives of mental isolation. In the grip of these patterns, we stop attempting to communicate much of our thinking and we cease hoping for much awareness from others. This is sometimes seen as sad, as the end of childhood, but it is also seen as normal, as nothing being wrong, as something unavoidable.

SOCIETY'S SUGGESTION THAT SEX WILL BE OUR LAST CHANCE

If we'd had someone who could have been aware of us from the beginning, our lives would have been vastly different. We would have continued to see real connection with another human as being possible and would not have given up on having such a connection. If we had also been fortunate enough to be in the care of someone who allowed us to continue discharging our distresses, we would have stayed



STEVE BANBURY

hopeful and pursued connection with other people, learning a great deal about relationships as we did that and discharging in the places where we had difficulty.

If this had happened for us, then we would have had more than a decade of learning about and developing relationships before we developed sexually. If, in addition, we had grown up with access to information, then at the point of sexual maturity we would have been able to think about sex, and about what we wanted to know and try and who we wanted to try things with. I think we would have found sex interesting, but I doubt we would have had the frozen fascinations about it that so many of us have.

Unfortunately, it was quite different for all of us. At the point in our lives when we developed sexually, we had been struggling for years with our connection to other people and having great difficulty forming good relationships. We had also been targeted for many years by other people's sexual distresses, including sexual abuse, and since we were denied access to the discharge process, we had acquired many distresses about sex—many fears and aversions, many frozen needs¹ and fascinations, and many places where we could not think well about sex.

It is in the context of having been pushed by distresses from our families and our societies into feeling very separate and distinct from other humans that society presents sex as our last possibility for human connection (especially if we are boys—girls are

continued . . .

¹ Frozen need is a term used in RC for a hurt that results when a rational need is not met in childhood. The hurt compels a person to keep trying to fill the need in the present, but the frozen need cannot be filled; it can only be discharged.

... continued

often allowed more contact with each other and so are not so vulnerable to this manipulation). When we reach the point of our sexual development, almost all of us feel very distant from other people, and given this possibility of being close to someone, almost all of us run as fast as we can to see if there's some chance of real human connection there. We have had so many sexual distresses pushed on us, however, that few of us are able to make good connections with each other at this point. Additionally, our distresses related to having real contact with other humans have gotten quite tangled with our distresses about sex, and most of us, especially if we are men, are unable to imagine a close, caring, intimate relationship with anyone unless it is a sexual relationship.

WE ARE SEXUAL

Human beings are sexual creatures. Sexual reproduction was an important evolutionary step, and it was passed to us along our branch of evolution. Sex is part of being human, and like every other part it is good. Sex is an instinctual part of being human, and like other instincts it is under the command of intelligence, which evolved much later. Sex could be and will be a good, interesting, and enjoyable part of being human and being with other humans, if we can discharge the distresses that interfere with this happening.

Unless we discharge these distresses and get them out of our way, they will continually interfere with our being close to each other and with our being able to be sexual with each other awfully. Often when we are sexually close, even with the individual we are closest and most committed to, our minds do not stay in the present with the person we are with. Rather, we get restimulated to the point that we are pulled into some frozen images from our distresses. When this happens, we are denied the real sexual closeness we are seeking.



SUSAN HUTCHISON

MEN

Because of the particular way that men are treated in society, from childhood, they tend to end up with big patterns of isolation and great feelings of aloneness, which leave them both desperate for and hopeless about contact with other people and which become tangled with distresses connected to sex. Society has long targeted men's sexual distresses in order to manipulate and confuse men. (Society has recently begun to aim at women in a similar way.) One of the effects of having sexual distresses, and not having the chance to discharge them, is feeling embarrassed about and ashamed of the frozen longings and patterned compulsions while still feeling desperate and driven by the frozen longings for sex, which masquerades as the only possibility for human contact. Being trapped in compulsive sexual behaviors, and then being criticized for them, often leaves us secretive and defensive.

WOMEN

Women are targeted with sexism from their first days of life. Many women are sexually abused early in their lives, and this, of course, has a large effect on their distress patterns in the areas of sex and closeness. At the same time, girls are usually allowed much more closeness and contact, at least with each other, than boys are, enabling them to hang on to the idea of closeness in ways that boys seldom are able to. Because of this, women's distresses about closeness and sex are far less tangled together

and sex is much less often seen as the sole possibility for closeness. Instead, women are more likely to have hurts from being forced into sexual behavior as a requirement for closeness.

IDENTITIES

Whether going along with society's distresses about sex or rebelling against them, almost all of us end up with some sexual identity, based on our distresses about human connection and sex and our hurts from oppression.

In RC we have come to realize just how wonderfully unique every individual is and how wonderfully unique each relationship between any two people can be. Undischarged distresses, as we well know, can keep us acting rigidly, not showing our full, flexible, unique intelligence. As distresses build up in our minds, we begin to think of ourselves in terms of the group of people that has been targeted by distress in a way similar to what happened to us. We think of ourselves as women, as working class, as African heritage, and so on, as if these identities were the definition of ourselves. While all these groups are constituencies to be proud of, and each has contributed greatly to human knowledge and culture, simply and permanently taking on² one of these identities can involve accepting a perspective that has been shaped by the distresses that have been aimed at the constituency and can result in a limited picture of ourselves.

In RC we have developed a three-step process to work on identity, to counsel and discharge, that allows us to know and be proud of people like ourselves without becoming limited by the distresses that are connected with the identification. The steps are (1) to proudly claim the identification and have sessions on being proud of the group, on every way in which we associate ourselves with it, and on the feelings brought up by claiming

² In this context, taking on means adopting.

the identity, (2) to discharge on the difficulties we have with the identity and any ways the group is restimulating to us, and (3) to discard the attachment to the identity, and every way we associate ourselves with it and limit ourselves by it, and continue to grow in our own unique way, while not losing the knowledge and abilities we gained from claiming the identity and from our relationships with the people in the group.

SEXUAL IDENTITIES

We have all been pushed by society to take on a sexual identity. Most of us have ended up identifying as heterosexuals. Some of us have identified as Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, or another identity not promoted by society. No matter which identity we have taken on, we have not escaped distresses about sex or about connection with others. All of our sexual identities include many distresses about sex, which confuse us and make it difficult for us to think about sexual closeness without being overrun by feelings of desperate longing or fear. Indeed, it is difficult to say how thoughtfully and with how much awareness we are able to choose any one of the sexual identities, given the weight of distress about sex that has been piled upon us.

Taking on an identity other than heterosexual can allow one to question the limitations and confusions surrounding closeness and caring that are part of a heterosexual identity. Rejecting those limitations can allow one to develop caring and connection that are considered “out of bounds” by society. This can be very important and very human. Communities based on non-heterosexual identities have given their members a place removed from society’s disapproval and attacks in which human connection can be pursued. We would all have opportunities to develop more caring and connection with anyone we chose were it not for the distresses surrounding connection and sex that are currently part of society.

These distresses are one of the bases of the oppression of anyone who does not identify as heterosexual. People not identified as heterosexual face an oppression that has been brutal, destructive, and deadly. It has also sometimes been denied, subtle, and hidden. Because we all carry societal distresses about closeness and sex, we have great difficulty thinking well about this oppression. Some of us blindly and overtly act out the oppressor role of the distress that has been installed on us. Some of us try to hide the effects of the distress on us but still have our thinking distorted by it and act covertly on that basis. Some of us attempt to stop the effects of the distress on our thinking by simply deciding to accept everything that we have difficulty thinking about, thereby adopting a liberal position. We cannot achieve an intelligent and effective-in-practice position without discharging fully on the distresses we all carry in this area.

No one should ever be oppressed for his or her sexual identity. Such oppression needs to be opposed by all people, no matter what their own sexual identity happens to be. Opposition to this oppression is in each of our self-interests, since, while it is aimed at particular groups, it is used to suppress and manipulate everyone. It is in each of our interests to actively oppose this oppression now, and to counsel on the sexual identifications and confusions caused by our distresses so that we can think more clearly and act more effectively against it. This is the work that we in the RC Communities have committed ourselves to do.

WORK FOR EVERYONE

Working on sexual distresses is useful to all of us. Our perspectives and choices are distorted by these distresses. Because they are so pervasive and so constantly restimulated, each of us needs to question everything we think about sex, everything we believe we know about sex, and everything we feel about sex, no matter who we are. If we want to be free of distress about sex,



LANCE CABLK

or anything else, we need to question and use the discharge process on everything, without making anything out of bounds. We get to question and discharge on the things we have always believed, the things we long for most, and the things we feel desperately dependent on. Any distressed pieces of these things will discharge, giving us better lives.

IMPORTANT WORK

Counseling and discharging on all of our distresses connected with sex is important for several reasons. It is important for regaining clarity about this aspect of our lives and for our general liberation from distress. It is important for our steadily becoming better counselors for each other on sexual distresses, including for those of us who are targeted by society’s oppression in this area. Because these distresses come from hurts that happened so early in our lives, they are connected to many areas of our lives and discharging on them brings broad gains in awareness, often in areas that have seemed unrelated.

Additionally, as society has more and more difficulty maintaining itself and its irrational economic system, ever increasing numbers of attempts are being made to restimulate nearly everyone in the population. An ever-growing number of these are aimed at restimulating people about sex. The efforts continue to grow more numerous, more desperate, and more

continued . . .

COUNSELING PRACTICE

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explicit. Capitalism tries ever harder to sell an ever larger collection of products by connecting them with sexual restimulation. Advertisements using sex blatantly enough to have caused legal action only a few years ago are now accepted in the mass media. One result of this, of course, is the continued objectification of women and the furthering of sexism and confusions about sexism's existence. There is also increasing objectification of children and young men.

This constant hailstorm of sexual restimulation affects all of us and restimulates our sexual distresses many, many times each day. Sexual distresses are not worse than or basically any different from other distresses, but the constant barrage of their restimulation, and our lack of opportunity to discharge them, have their effect. The number of attempts to restimulate us in this area is unlikely to decrease in the near future. Those who have been targeted by society because of a sexual identity have moved first in counseling on their distresses connected with sex. We all need to develop ways to begin consistently discharging on all of these distresses.

WORKING ON SEXUAL DISTRESSES

Early Sexual Memories

Many of us in RC have been able to counsel effectively on distresses connected with sex and significantly lessen their pull on our perspectives and behavior. We have had more difficulty



JANA CHRISTOPHER

finding ways to counsel effectively on them in an ongoing manner. This has been true because our sexual hurts are often early and heavy; because our Co-Counselors also have sexual distresses, which make it difficult for us to have enough resource in our sessions; and because of the continual efforts being made in society to restimulate everyone in the area of sex. All these things make it much more difficult for us to be thoughtful, aware, and effective counselors for each other.

The part of our work in this area that has been by far the most continually effective has been discharging on early sexual memories. People continue to take important steps in their liberation from distress by doing this work. Much of it has been done in classes and workshops. In this work, the client is encouraged to find each early memory that is connected in any way at all with sex. Even if the connection is not initially known, the fact that a memory appears in response to the counselor asking about early sexual memories is enough to decide to pursue that memory in order to find and discharge any distress connected to it.

This work is important, empowering, and useful and will continue and grow with good effect. Please get and read the RC pamphlets *A Rational Theory of Sexuality*, by Harvey Jackins, and *Counseling on Early Sexual Memories*, by Joan Karp.

Present-day Restimulations

Because of the way our sexual material³ is being continually targeted, it is also useful for us to have opportunities to work on recent restimulations of it. Most of us, however, have distress recordings of embarrassment, shame, and secrecy connected with both sexuality and our distresses about sex, making it difficult for us to consider working in this area in a Co-Counseling session. The fact that all of our Co-Counselors appear to have

very similar distresses makes it even more difficult.

These are only distresses and they can be completely discharged, but finding the aware attention we need to fully use the discharge process can be a real challenge. The most reliable and useful opportunities have occurred in small groups of experienced Co-Counselors who know each other well. Having one good Co-Counselor with us in a session has often not provided enough resource or clarity for us to work on this material. For most of us, our distresses in this area are such that we need attention from more than one person to reliably be able to discharge them.

Almost all of us have many heavy distresses connected with sex, and ongoing discharge on the early hurts will make these distresses more easily accessible to discharge. In addition to our pursuing that, I am also now proposing that experienced Co-Counselors consider counseling on the often-restimulated fascinations, inhibitions, repulsions, and frozen longings and that they do this not with a single Co-Counselor but with at least two (and preferably three) other Co-Counselors of the same gender. (As we discharge more in this area and gain more judgment and perspective, we may be able to use more flexibility in choosing our Co-Counselors, but that is for later.) As always, we wish to be (and to find) Co-Counselors who can be thoughtful and aware.

In these sessions it is important that everyone both realize and let others know that we all have many distresses connected with sex. It is not just us, nor is it just someone else. No one growing up in societies like ours can escape being hurt in this area. We each have our own collection of feelings (including numbness) due to our distresses connected with sex. In these sessions, I want each of us to end our secrecy about the way our

³ Material means distress.

sexual material plays out⁴ in our minds and how it gets restimulated. I want each of us to communicate this to the others. (Like in all of our sessions, we are committed to confidentiality.) It has been useful for the first sessions of these groups to consist of turns of ten to twelve minutes.

Possible things to begin talking about include

1. Having a body, our body parts, what our body does,
2. The five things we are most fascinated with related to sex and bodies,
3. The things we would like to try sexually,
4. The things we don't want to try sexually,
5. The things we hope nobody will ever ask us to do sexually.

Each of us knows that many of these things are connected with our distresses, but we have not been able to discharge on them and free ourselves from the pull of them. Some of them we may not yet be able to recognize as coming from distress. As we are able to discharge, our thoughts and perspectives will change. Only with enough discharge will we be able to think clearly enough to decide what we want our lives to be like in the area of sex and closeness.

WE CAN CLARIFY OUR THINKING

As we discharge our distresses connected with sex, our thinking will change and develop, our minds will become less frozen in distressed fascination or less fearfully repelled, and what we wish for ourselves in connection with sex and closeness will change. Each of us gets to see how our own mind changes, and each of us gets to make up our own mind about what we will do sexually.

Changes have shown up in people who have worked steadily to clean up this area of their lives. People whose distresses have kept them scared of and repelled by sex have become interested in but not fascinated by sex. People who have been urgently fascinated by sexual things have lost their fascinations. Gradually sex has become a topic that occupies minds much less than it did before, with some interest in sex seeming to persist but an interest in having sex with someone of the same gender tending to disappear. Longings for a sexual partner to look exactly a particular way or be a model of a particular sexual stereotype have been discharged, as has any compulsion to have sex with many people, leaving people able to think about and awarely choose what they want in sexual closeness. People have become more thoughtful about what makes sense for themselves and their sexual partners and have shown a developing ability to think about and be connected with their partners more fully during sexual activities.

This has been our experience, so far. It is important that the information we've gained from our work in this area, as in all areas, be known, but this information is not meant to replace anyone's own counseling and thinking. It is most useful when it is accepted as a challenge to free ourselves from distress so that we can each clarify our own thinking and understanding in this area, as in all areas of reality.

No one is required to accept our experience, and each of us, as always,

can make our own decisions, whether or not we disagree. But, as with everything we work on in RC, it doesn't make sense to ignore the information we acquire but rather to use it to guide and challenge ourselves to see what distresses we have in these areas. It is useful to assume, in each of our sessions, that "almost everything that any one of us has assumed to be rational or inherent in the area of our sexuality is recorded distress patterns" (Harvey Jackins, *A Rational Theory of Sexuality*, page 2, and *The Benign Reality*, page 186). Similarly, any feeling any one of us has that something is wrong with our individual sexual biology needs to be viewed as possibly coming from distress.

Everything we have discovered through our work will be developed further and will be questioned, just as we should question everything in order to think fully about it. But the real and useful challenges do not come from our opinions. Rather they come from the experience of counseling and discharging that allows each of us to think more clearly.

CLAIMING OUR CONNECTION

We are all involved in an important effort to remove the effects of distress from our lives and from the lives of every human. As we do this, we are reclaiming our full intelligence and claiming our connection with each other. Discharging any distress that confuses us about each other or about what we want with each other is an important part of this process.

Re-evaluation Counseling is an accidentally begun but laboriously pursued re-discovery of what appears to be a natural relationship between any two human beings, which permits human beings to assist each other in recovering from the effects of emotional and physical hurts.

*Harvey Jackins**

From the audio cassette *Loneliness and Learning in San Luis Obispo*

*Harvey Jackins was the founder and first International Reference Person of the Re-evaluation Counseling Communities.

⁴ Plays out means expresses itself.

Applying Co-Counseling to a Relationship

The story of Co-Counseling with my wife started after a quarrel between us.

One night about a month ago we had an unpleasant talk about something, related to each other's family, about which we have had divergent opinions for a long time. After the talk my wife had difficulty falling asleep. That used to happen whenever she got tired or worried. I was also gloomy.

The next morning we had a short quarrel again. After my wife left for work, I felt so angry and heavily depressed that I could not do anything for about half an hour. Then I had a strong wish to write an e-mail to her, to say something about my feeling and to tell her I did not want to fall into that vicious cycle anymore. So I wrote an e-mail to her immediately.

At the time, I had been learning and doing RC for three months, and I had benefited from it. I thought it might be a good idea for my wife to learn RC, so that we could try together to break the vicious cycle between us. In the e-mail I expressed my anger and depression, showed my concern for her tiredness and suffering from insomnia, told her my thinking about the cause of our vicious cycle, and invited her to join me in fixing the problem for a better life together.

In the evening we became reconciled and had a pleasant talk about how to solve our problem. I introduced RC theory to her and invited her to do Co-Counseling sessions with me. She had already read some of my RC literature and knew something about Co-Counseling, so she accepted my invitation gladly.

After dinner we decided to try a session. In order for me to model the practice we had a one-way session in which she listened to me. I simply described the RC rules for a listener, and then we went.

In the session, which lasted about forty minutes, I talked about a suffering experience during my teenage years. My wife did well as a listener. She showed good attention, care, and acceptance of me, which helped me discharge a lot. After the session I felt fresh, as if I had released some heavy load. I was so happy that later I could chat with my wife, with a lot of laughs, while doing some cleaning jobs. She was happy, too. And she said she had not seen me so pleasant in a long time.



KATIE KAUFFMAN

The next evening I listened to my wife in turn. She talked about her relationship with her parents. During the session she cried for a while. Then she had a very good sleep and felt it was amazing. She became interested in RC.

From then on we kept having sessions once or twice a week. We usually sat close, hand-in-hand, which gave each other strong support. I like hand-in-hand, because it helps a lot with discharging. (Yet I would not do it with any other RC partner, because I would feel embarrassed with a woman and uncomfortable with a man.)

In one of our sessions I talked about some issues between my wife's parents and me. My wife showed understanding and did not give any negative feedback right after the session, but the next evening, when we discussed a family issue, she mentioned something I had said in the session. I felt a little angry, but in that instant I remembered something I had read in the pamphlet *Co-Counseling for Married Couples*, so I did not say anything against her in order not to discourage her initial passion for Co-Counseling.

Meanwhile we have used Co-Counseling to handle our urgent issues in life. Three weeks ago a severe event happened between me and one of my colleagues. I needed to talk with the colleague as soon as possible but felt nervous for it was hard to handle. I immediately made a call to my wife, who was on her way home, to ask for support. She waited in a restaurant, part-way home, to meet me. I talked about the urgent event and my feeling, and she listened with understanding and support. After that I could think more clearly about how to talk with the colleague and felt confident to do it.

A week ago my wife faced an unfair decision by her boss and was heavily frustrated. As soon as she came home she asked for a session, and she cried several times for twenty minutes in all. When she went back to work the next day, she was able to manage the conflict calmly without too much negative feeling.

Re-evaluation Counseling has started to make our lives different. We feel more love and happiness in our family and are finding that we actually have a deep connection between us. Now my wife is taking an eight-week RC fundamentals class. We plan in the near future to introduce RC to our relatives and friends, because RC is a simple and easy way to improve everyone's life.

Wei-guang Zhang
Beijing, China

All Forms of Discharge Useful

I have spent at least one Co-Counseling session per week, for over three years, discharging on improving my health and have made progress on some of my health issues. It has been useful to decide repeatedly to discharge on health, even if the discharge does not seem dramatic.

I have always struggled with prioritizing my health and well-being and doing what's necessary to live a long life. I wanted to change this, so I began having sessions about it. I had to discharge on my individual struggles as well as the many confusions and oppressions in society related to health.

In some cases I knew what I needed to do but had trouble doing it (for example, maintaining a good diet, exercising). In other cases it was hard to make sense of conflicting information from "experts." I read some books about health and nutrition and found these to be a combination of good information, incomplete perspectives, and distress.

What I had been doing was not working, so even if I made mistakes, trying new (possibly wrong) things would be better than continuing as I had been. In my sessions I would often talk about my goals and what I would have to do and feel to accomplish them. Other times I would talk about what I was reading so that I could think about it better. Occasionally I would cry hard about an early hurt that had interfered with my ability to act rationally in the area of health or about financial struggles and fears that made it hard for me to seek medical attention.

I've found that some of my chronic patterns (about which I have regularly discharged) have a relationship to my health, even if the connection is not immediately obvious.

The Large Women's Health Project (LWHP) has been helpful. (Diane Shisk has brought together a group of large women, and more recently female allies, to discharge on health and the oppression of women based on size.) It started about a year after I began discharging regularly on my physical health.

The most important part of the LWHP has been building relationships with a group of women who are trying to discharge and think in this area. My LWHP buddy has been important to me, as has one of my regular Co-Counselors who has become a dependable ally. One of the most important lessons I've learned from the project is not to tackle distresses in isolation. (Of course!)

I have also learned that *all* discharge is useful. I used to think that the best sessions were the ones in which I discharged heavily (for example, cried hard). I now think that it is more important to *repeatedly* decide to put my mind in the direction of trying to think about something, and discharge in any way at all.

I have talked and yawned in almost all of the sessions I've had about health. No individual session has seemed big or important, but the cumulative effect of the sessions has been important changes in my ability to think about my health.

I now think that awarely and persistently deciding where to put our minds is critical. I like that I can choose to client about anything and it will be useful. I no longer think that the heaviness of the discharge is the primary measure of a session's usefulness.



Barbara Boring
Boise, Idaho, USA
Reprinted from the e-mail discussion
list for RC Community members

The work goes on, and one wonders if there will ever be an end to how clearly we can perceive reality.

Bas Hurkmans
Amsterdam, The Netherlands



GUDRUN ONKELS

Choosing My Man

I'd like to share with you how I got to make an important decision.

For a long time I've been trying to figure out how to get through the shell that my partner S— has been wearing. After a wonderful male ally in RC gave me a big session on going for¹ S—, I realized I had been getting scared too easily and giving up too quickly. I decided to change that.

S— and I have two children, aged four and eight, and we've been living together, unmarried, for nine years. We haven't spent much time together lately, mostly because I've started teaching an RC fundamentals class for the first time. Feelings have been starting to come up for both of us about this lack of time together. S— doesn't Co-Counsel, although he has been to an introduction and has picked up² a lot from what I do around the children.

I realised we had to have a big talk, and the chance arrived when a friend of my daughter's wanted my daughter to come over to play for the afternoon. We started the talk with a lot of silence. Then I asked S— if he wanted to say something to me. In response he asked me what I wanted from our relationship. I said things like "supporting each other in what we want in our lives." I then put the same question to him, and he replied that he didn't know and that he couldn't see anything for us there anymore.

At that point he said that he needed a break from the talk. I told him that I wanted to take the break with him, and that made him really angry. He told me that I didn't

respect him or support him in what he wanted, unlike what I had said earlier. Then he told me directly to back off,³ and I replied that I wasn't sure I was going to do that, that I didn't want him going off alone again, as so many times before.

"What if I asked you to move to another place?" he then asked. I felt clear that if that was what he wanted, I would do it—that the world wouldn't fall to pieces without him, considering that I know Co-Counseling. Then I asked myself, "Is that what I want?"

I figured, "This is it."⁴ Either you choose him or you don't. This is the session he's been waiting for."

"I want you!" I said.

"I want you more than I get right now. I can tell⁵ that when you go off to the cellar to fix my bicycle, it's a declaration of love. But there's a little space between bicycle repair and sex that needs some attention."

I told him that I wasn't going to listen anymore when he told me off⁶ for trying to get close to him when he was in front of the computer, or busy with other things, because I thought it was just a pattern of wanting to be alone and handling things all by himself. I said that I could see the S— I wanted when he was with our two daughters, because he was not able to be in his shell when he was with them. They didn't allow it.

"I want you!" And finally he burst into tears and had a good, long cry.

¹ Going for means energetically pursuing.

² In this context, picked up means learned.

³ Back off means leave him alone, stop bothering him.

⁴ This is it means this is the moment of decision.

⁵ In this context, tell means perceive.

⁶ Told me off means scolded me.

He asked, "How did we get so far away?" I replied that I thought we both had patterns that made us play "hard to get," that we acted cool and distant in the hope that the other would reach out, and that we would then end up so far apart that we had to struggle a lot to get back close again. He agreed, and we promised each other to fight a lot harder to not go off and play hard to get. I suggested giving each other an agreed-upon amount of special time⁷ every week, but he

⁷ 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. Adults can also give special time to each other, following these general guidelines.

I think the bottom line* is that you treat any condition, either an obvious physical impairment or an obvious distress recording, or a condition you haven't any way of knowing is one or the other or both, as an "interesting condition." Assume that it is well worth examination, discharge, and re-evaluation, and give it the best counseling you can give. Even a clearly physical impairment is going to be surrounded by a lot of emotional distress by now and will have been the focus of many oppressive attitudes from other people. Such work will always be helpful, and you will learn a great deal in the process.

Harvey Jackins
From *The Longer View*, page 126

* The bottom line means the essential point.

wasn't ready for that. So I told him that I wanted to know what he was struggling with, what went on in his mind,⁸ and that I would see to it⁹ that I offered him some attention for doing things he liked. I invited him to do the same with me.

It was fantastic for me to get to feel the decision so clearly in my head, and see what it did for him. Discharging made a big difference for him in what he was able to listen to and talk about afterward. It was like I found the key to a door that had been locked for a long while.

⁸ What went on in his mind means what he was thinking about.

⁹ See to it means make sure.

Later that evening he was playing around on YouTube,¹⁰ and I heard Johnny Cash¹¹ singing *Hurt*, a song with lyrics that sound a bit like Tim¹² talking about why men act like they do. There's a line that goes, "I'll hurt you in the end." It seemed like S— was testing me, like the last bits of "go away" just had to come out of him. I went and cuddled him.

Susanne Wittrup Andersen
Copenhagen, Denmark

¹⁰ YouTube is a video-sharing website on which users can share and view videos.

¹¹ Johnny Cash was a U.S. singer, songwriter, actor, and author.

¹² Tim Jackins

A sample of the articles in

Sisters No. 12



KK

- Sexism and Racism*, Diane Balser
"Women's Policy Year" in Oregon, USA, Nanci E. Luna Jimenez
Using the Women's Policy to Influence Party Policy in Denmark, Susanne Langer
Working on the Sex Industries—What I Have Learned, Teresa Enrico
Becoming a Women's Liberation Activist—My Story, Young Adult Leader
Motherhood, several people
We Work Together First, Victor Nicassio
What If We Had a Policy on Dyeing Our Hair?, several people
Thoughts on the Beauty Industries in Africa, Wanjiku Mukuria Kironyo
Draft Women's Policy Statement Number Four
Draft Program to Eliminate Sexism
Sexism—Forgotten, Hidden, Trivialized, Denied, Diane Balser
Male Domination, Diane Balser
No-Makeup Diary, Katie Martindale
The Large Women's Health Project, several people
Leading LBTQF Women to Be at the Centre of Women's Liberation—My Story, "Emma Peel"
Sexism and Sex, Joan Karp
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Counseling on the Women's Movement, Amy Walsh

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KK

Persisting with “Close Counseling”

This is a report about a special success we had in cooperating with each other so that one of us, Silke, was able to give a profound Co-Counseling session to the other one, Yoni, and what we learned from this.

Yoni:

At a recent Regional workshop I had a session with a Co-Counselor whom I have known for my entire life and who is good at getting physically close. He came very close by lying on top of me, pressing with his face into my neck. He was loving, caring, and attentive to me. This allowed me to discharge in a way that was different from how I had ever been able to discharge before. For the entire session I laughed and cried hard. Usually when I cry, I stop after a short time. This time I was able to continue. Also, my crying sounded different; earlier in age.

I was pleased with this work and wanted to repeat it with more counselors. I asked several counselors to try it. I told them

about the session at the workshop, and if they did not do what I wanted them to, I instructed them more specifically. Naturally it was somewhat different with each counselor. I did most of these sessions with Silke, a close Co-Counselor of mine whom I trust and feel very safe with. The first couple of times I tried it with her, she was not able to do it in a way that brought discharge for me.

Silke:

I knew that as a counselor I was stuck somewhere, but I tried to ignore it and to find different directions—partly because I felt like I did not really understand what Yoni wanted me to do; partly because I thought it was not a good idea, not a good direction; and partly because I was scared, knowing it would be difficult for me to do.

Yoni:

After a number of sessions Silke finally asked me to stop and show her (as opposed to merely telling her) what I wanted her to do. We agreed that I would show her as a counselor, giving her a chance to discharge. I was able to do it easily. We then let her try counseling me in this way, while still being client. Then in my session she was able to persist as counselor. At first I laughed a lot, and then I moved to

crying heavily (like in the session at the workshop), alternating with laughter.

Silke:

Initially Yoni told me what to do, like, “Put more body weight,” or “Say, ‘It is safe now.’” After a while I felt connected enough to the process and to him that I just did what came to my mind, without thinking too much about it—going more by intuition. I still felt awkward and often was not sure how to do things, or I did things without feeling fully in sync¹ with myself, but the discharge in my session had been sufficient that I was able to do them anyway; the feelings of awkwardness did not make me stop. It turned out that² the discharge I needed to be able to be a counselor was less than I had thought.

Giving a session, when it requires deciding not to pay attention to one’s own distress, can be a step in one’s re-emergence. Even though I was the counselor, it was also a session for me. Although I did not discharge much, it felt like a re-emergent activity.

Yoni:

I observe that most of the time we humans stay physically distant from other people. Physical touch is typically limited to shaking a hand or, in the best case, a hug or a kiss on the cheek. Beyond that, we are allowed to come close only to our spouse, and that, too, is limited.

I’ve felt a contradiction³ in being very close and noticing my not



HEIDI CHAPPELOW

¹ In this context, in sync means in touch, in contact.

² It turned out that means as it happened.

³ Contradiction to distress

being separate. If my counselor and I hold hands, it is good; if we sit close and maybe have a hug, it is better. But still, within a short time I stop noticing my counselor almost entirely. When he or she digs into my skin, it becomes much harder not to notice.

I think that as counselors we need to try to see the other person as a part of ourselves and try and get under his or her skin. This, of course, needs to be done in a thoughtful way for both client and counselor. It seems like most of us are afraid of coming too close, while at the same time we want and wait for others to be close to us. Not only do I tend to not reach out physically, I do not even offer to get close. My default is being

distant. It seems this applies to most people.

Silke:

Following Yoni's instructions about what to do as a counselor required me to overcome keeping a physical distance from him. Putting my face into his neck brought up for me associations with sexual situations. This prompted shyness and isolation and a feeling of crossing the "RC lines" of how close I should come.

As I pushed into Yoni's body with softness and intensity, it reminded me of sexual interactions. I could see there was nothing sexual about it, and I did not feel sexual, but the closeness and intensity were something I had only known

in sexual contexts. This made me wonder to what extent things that I associate with sex, and have thought I could only have in sexual encounters, could also be experienced in non-sexual situations.


We are both excited about the work we did and are pleased with how we went about it.⁴ We have enjoyed the process and learned from it. And we plan to keep at it⁵ and move even further.

Wishing you all love
and closeness,

Silke Denker and Yoni Kallai
Jerusalem, Israel

⁴ Went about it means did it.

⁵ Keep at it means continue doing it.




El Varón

(The Human Male)

BORRADOR DE UNA POLÍTICA PARA
LA LIBERACIÓN DE LOS HOMBRES

por Harvey Jackins et al

Traducido por Yara I. Alma-Bonilla



*Este folleto describe: **Las instituciones principales que oprimen a los hombres:** las fuerzas armadas; los tribunales de justicia criminal, la policía y las prisiones; los centros de trabajo: la explotación de los hombres como trabajadores; las "industrias" del sexo; las industrias del alcohol, el tabaco, los fármacos y las drogas ilegales; las "industrias" de los deportes; las escuelas; las religiones; la familia.*

*También presenta **otros aspectos sociales de la opresión de los hombres:** la homofobia y la opresión gay; el consumismo; los sistemas salud y de la "salud mental", la circuncisión y otras formas de mutilación ritual; los medios de comunicación. La contribución de las mujeres a la liberación de los hombres, y el papel de los hombres como aliados de la gente joven, son aspectos importantes para la liberación de los hombres.*

\$3.00 (EEUU)
Para ordenar, revise página 109.



LISA BEDINGER

Boatmen

According to my father,
When I was a baby
And would not stop crying,
He would pick me up and
Walk around, singing to me
"The Song of the Volga Boatmen."

And so, my counselor holds me
And softly sings me this song.
I cry and cry.
It's as if my father's arms have
become
A small, snug boat
And my tears have become a
gentle river
Carrying me towards liberation.

Peter Gruenbaum
Seattle, Washington, USA

Effective Clienting in New Directions

Dear Tim,¹

I haven't written in forever. But it makes me think of you, and I like thinking of you. So why not?

I'm wanting to send some information on how I am using your ideas and how useful they are, because I don't know how many people let you know what they do with what you teach.

I have always worked early,² trying anything I could figure out to contradict the recordings there. If I couldn't figure out where to work, I would simply tell the early story and the discharge would be available in one part or another. Going over my sexual life history a couple of months ago was quite insightful.

For over a year, in most sessions I have been the particularly well informed, capable, powerful, independent, strong adult aiding and "unlonelying" the "little one"³ in any way I could figure out. For a good while I was part of a team of Marines⁴ (with a helicopter) coming to aid the family the little one was born into so that they would be relaxed and happy when he got there. A real peace mission. It worked like a charm⁵: lots of tears and heartbreak. One of the sweeter re-evaluations was that for the first time in my life I could see myself parenting.

I used the same adult viewpoint to go on a mission to make the little one feel important again. The team of Marines worked well, and the little one had a different childhood and youth. Discharge was mostly tears but also some laughter, shaking, and yawning.

One lovely scene in those sessions was when the little one asked to be taken to heaven to

see his twin, and they had a full-force fight with each other—not at all trying to hurt each other, but trying to get something important across.⁶

When Gale Burns from London (England) got back from your workshop a few weeks ago, he reported that you wanted people to work on the early spot where they gave up. He repeated twice that you wanted folks to "fight for the little one." Repeating things is not his style, so I took note.⁷

I wondered how "fighting for the little one" in the spot where he gave up was different from what I'd been doing. So I decided to try. By now I have done fifteen or so hours this way and have found it to be a precise, well designed, logical, effective, and elegant contradiction that allows a lot of specific work to get done. It seems to be changing my clienting and somewhat my counseling, and I get the feeling it will change my life. It's interesting, worthwhile, and excruciatingly hard. It is somehow the most promising approach I have come across⁸ in RC. It's like the practical approach in sessions to what we have called "reclaiming power."

To keep on⁹ deciding to go in and try to fight for the little one is hard. Often I have no idea what I can do, just that I will do something. The key bits seem to be the adult deciding to keep fighting, and distinguishing between the adult and the little one. At one point the sessions got too tight,¹⁰ and I realised I had to tell the little one that he would win.

Throughout these sessions I have been talking with my counselors about the process and approach, simply because I don't understand them all the time. I have no clear idea yet where this is leading, but I have a very active brain all day



RAMI BEN-MOSHE

¹ Tim Jackins

² Worked early means discharged on early distress.

³ "Little one" means young me.

⁴ Marines are members of the U.S. Marine Corps, a branch of the U.S. military that specializes in amphibious warfare.

⁵ Like a charm means extremely well.

⁶ Get something important across means communicate something important.

⁷ Took note means paid attention.

⁸ Come across means encountered.

⁹ Keep on means continue.

¹⁰ In this context, tight means tense, restimulating.

after these sessions. And in some small ways I can see my power coming back to me.

So far, most of the time I am just figuring out how to client like this. I normally can't use a lot of input from my counselors, but I've been able to really hear and use any sincere encouragement.

One evening in my ongoing RC class I tried to carefully explain the concept. I remember how well people came back from a mini-session on "If you knew you could win, what would you fight for?" I did a demonstration in which the client was trying to make me do the work for him. I was gentle and careful, and I think he got it¹¹ that he could do things as the adult for the little one.

Something else I want to share is that I still love the *Fundamentals Manual*. The spectrum of techniques is such a diamond. I had a nice class demonstrating all the different stages with different clients. The noticing-the-counselor-at-the-very-beginning bit has given me some

great sessions that I normally would have skipped over. It's just wonderful how Harvey¹² designed a studyable, teachable approach for keeping people's attention from being sucked up by distress.

Another idea came to me that I think originated with you, which is to make sure in every situation I am in that I come out ahead of where I was. That's been quite helpful in daily life—that somehow I will make a situation work for me. I have used it to get my attention out when I'm with people, to have more fun with them, to get things on the agenda that matter to me, to learn new things, and so on. When I had people do a mini in class on this simple proposal, they came out quite relieved and relaxed. We must have a lot of martyr-type distresses in our cultures.

Much love from a sunny pre-spring in Amsterdam,

X—
Amsterdam, The Netherlands

¹¹ In this context, got it means understood.

¹² Harvey Jackins



ALISA LEMIRE BROOKS

One possible definition of contradiction is "any action that illuminates the pattern as being a pattern, as being non-reality." In other words, "a contradiction exposes the pattern's insidious claim . . . to be present-time reality."

Harvey Jackins
From *The Longer View*, page 87

Can We Strengthen Our Immune Systems?

In the last few years I have gotten interested in health and nutrition and have spent a bunch of my free time reading books and learning more about it. I also counsel on my health pretty¹ regularly (on food, exercise, doctors, Chinese medicine, and other topics) and ask other people what they have figured out.

It took me a while to decide to learn more about health, because I felt like my lack of professional training in health would make it hard for me to have judgment about the information I read. Here in the United States, health care is based on profit, so there is a lack of access to health care and a lot of marketing in the name of health, even by health practitioners, of things that are actually detrimental to our health. For instance, lots of food is marketed as health food that is not actually good for people to consume.

At a certain point I decided to go ahead and start learning more, trying things, discharging, and seeing what I could do with the information I acquired.

continued . . .

¹ In this context, pretty means quite.



LK

... continued

Most trained professional people I have talked to and most books I have read seem to offer a combination of useful information and what I think is mistaken thinking or distress. Every time I go to see a health professional, I listen to what he or she says, ask questions, and then go home and discharge about it and think it through. Sometimes I talk to another health professional of the same type about the same thing to see what different perspectives I get. I don't spend any time arguing with them; I just listen and ask questions. I have realized that I can think about health information, even though I am not a trained doctor or nurse or traditional Chinese medicine practitioner.

I have also noticed that I am less scared when new medical information comes out. I found recently, with information about mammograms, that I could listen to what people were saying, sort through the competing interests, and have my own judgments.

I still have lots more to discharge, but one thing that has changed is that now I rarely get colds or flu. Before I started working on health, I would get colds (a few times) or the flu (usually once) every year, whether or not I had a flu shot. I haven't had a full cold or flu for about two and a half years now. My partner gets sick in these ways fairly regularly, and the most recent time I put some effort into catching his cold (as an experiment) and no luck.² His boss at work had the H1N1 virus and I asked him if I could share a popsicle with her or something, to see if I could catch it, but he wasn't into³ the idea. Partly I just wanted to get the flu out of the way, and partly it seemed like catching it was a better idea, based on what I had learned, than taking the vaccine. Sometimes I do feel some cold-like symptoms coming on,⁴ like a tickle in my throat or a bit of tiredness, and if I just try to rest, I get through them fairly quickly.

I don't know exactly which of the things I have changed have strengthened my immune system. I eat as many cruciferous vegetables⁵ as I can (and have made some other dietary changes), I take a few vitamins (it took time and attention to figure out which ones), I exercise more, and I discharge directly on health. Maybe I have just gone through a lucky period of being exposed to fewer viruses.

What seems interesting to me is the possibility of strengthening our immune systems. What is possible with discharge, and some changes in our lives? What have other people figured out about strengthening their immune systems?

Chris Selig
San Francisco, California, USA
Reprinted from the e-mail discussion
list for RC Community members

² No luck means I didn't succeed.

³ Wasn't into means didn't like.

⁴ Coming on means starting to occur.

⁵ Cruciferous vegetables are a family of vegetables (that include bok choy, cabbage, broccoli, kale, mustard greens, turnips, and several others) considered good for preventing certain kinds of cancer.



If you move . . .

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Thank you,
Rational Island Publishers Staff

A Medical Success Story

Patients and physicians are natural allies, although the patterns of both often undermine the partnership required for true healing. This is how a well-discharged patient navigated the rigidities of the U.S. healthcare system.

I am a fifty-nine-year-old white man with more than thirty years' experience in RC. I was recently diagnosed with prostate cancer, the most common cancer among men. After many Co-Counseling sessions and a lot of research into the medical options and facilities, I decided to treat the cancer with a relatively new freezing technique. I interviewed a number of doctors and selected one, Dr. R—, who seemed to have a little more slack than the others. One way I would determine the flexibility of a doctor's thinking was by requesting that the operation be performed not with a general anesthetic (under which I would be totally unconscious) but with a regional anesthetic that would allow me to be fully alert during the procedure. Most doctors wouldn't consider my request. Dr. R— said he would have no objection if that was what I wanted.

Dr. R—'s flexibility impressed me. At the same time, I knew that actually getting the anesthetic I requested would not be easy. I have attended a number of RC physicians and allies workshops and have learned that most doctors highly value their patients' being at no risk of pain. Most doctors have been trained to believe that general anesthesia is the best way to ensure that patients feel no pain. However, there are other ways to manage pain, and general anesthesia has its risks.

In the U.S. medical system when a request, such as mine, runs counter to established practice, institutional forces work to ignore the request. I've learned from experience that verbal agreements are not sufficient. I wrote a number of letters, asking that they be included in my medical file. The hospital ignored my letters. When I came to the hospital for my pre-operation physical, the hospital computer system indicated that I would receive a general anesthetic. I called Dr. R— and sent another letter. (Not that it did any good!)

When I reported to the hospital on the day of the surgery, the orders were for me to have a general anesthetic. I firmly requested a consultation with the anesthesiologist who was assigned to my procedure. Dr. W— came to my bedside, seemingly confused. Apparently no other patient had ever asked to talk to him before a surgery. I told him that I preferred to remain conscious during the procedure and that Dr. R— had

no objection to my receiving a local anesthetic. Dr. W— smiled and asked me why I didn't want a general anesthetic. I said I believed that general anesthesia made it harder to recover and resulted in cognitive losses. He began to argue with me. I listened politely and refused to debate him. I kept asking if there was any medical reason why my request should not be accommodated. He kept arguing. Eventually a nurse practitioner took him aside. They spent a few minutes talking outside of my hearing. When he came back, Dr. W— was friendly and accommodating. I believe the nurse practitioner had advocated for me. Dr. W— administered an epidural, which eliminates all feeling below the waist but leaves the upper part of the body unaffected.

The operation was a success. I was alert for the entire procedure. It was fascinating. Dr. R— has performed the procedure more

continued . . .



ZOE COHEN

COUNSELING PRACTICE

... continued

than five hundred times. He said I was the first person to undergo it with an epidural.

Later Dr. W— visited me and wanted to know what sensations, if any, I had had. He was curious about my experience. His parting words to me: “I wish all patients were as informed as you are.”

Three weeks later when I saw Dr. R— for my first follow-up visit, he thanked me for insisting on the epidural. He said I had helped to educate his surgical team in two important ways. First, I had demonstrated that a patient could successfully undergo the procedure with an epidural, something the anesthesiologists weren't totally sure about. Second, right after I was wheeled from the operating room, he had called his team of

nurses, physician's assistants, technicians, and anesthesiologists together and asked them if they had noticed anything different about my operation. They had all agreed that knowing the patient was conscious had made the room quieter, more orderly, and, well, more respectful. Dr. R— had told the medical team, “That's how I would like the operating room to be for every patient!”

Patients in the United States are socialized to see doctors as all-knowing. It's tempting for patients to give up their power to doctors and for doctors to accept this, as it reinforces their status as healers and justifies the often brutal medical training they undergo. However, empowered patients and physicians understand that for the

best outcomes, each party comes to the relationship as an equal partner. Physicians are relieved when patients don't put them on pedestals and expect them to be perfect and have all the answers. To make the partnership a reality, patients need to discharge any ways they feel a victim in relation to their health, and physicians need to discharge any arrogance patterns that have been installed on them by classism and their training. (This is central to what happens at RC physicians and allies workshops, led by Joe Gallagher, the International Liberation Reference Person for Physicians.)

Johnny Kador

Winfield, Pennsylvania, USA
Reprinted from the e-mail discussion
list for RC Community members



JO PERRY



RC Electronic Mailing Lists

There are a number of RC electronic mailing lists for RC leaders, two of which are also open to other RCers.

(For details, see page 86.)



YUKO HIBINO

Improving My Relationship with My Parents

I have been discharging a lot in recent years on my relationship with my parents and have been able to get angry and upset about hurtful things they did. This has been useful but has not brought me closer to them, which is my goal. I have felt restimulated around them for years and haven't liked that it has been keeping me from enjoying our limited time together. I have two young children who adore their grandparents. It is clear that the more I can move my relationship with my parents forward, the better my relationship with my children, and their relationship with their grandparents, will be. It is a high priority to figure this out.

On my parents' recent visit to my home, I decided to talk to them about what was hard about being a young person in our family. They are not Co-Counselors, but they know about RC because my husband and I have been doing it for a long time. They agreed to how I set things up: they were to listen until I was done talking, and what was said was not allowed to become "about them." They seemed eager, perhaps because they are open to hearing about who their grown children really are, and because they have each done "work" on themselves, in their own way, in the past twenty years.

I chose three main things to bring up, rather than a laundry list¹ of each hurtful incident. It went well! I could show myself and cry a little as I spoke. I communicated from the perspective of what it was like being me, without worrying about protecting them. I showed my anger and was "tough" on them where I felt I needed to be. Then each of them had a turn to respond. My dad cried a little and spoke, then my mom cried a little. She said how sorry they were, how if they could turn back the clocks and do it all over again they would do so in a second. She said they had been like clones of their parents and had no idea, until they were in their forties, that they had their own minds and could think on their own. The best part of all was that they were able to tell me this without clienting about how terrible they felt about all of it.

There was a powerful contradiction² in taking a look at this together, showing ourselves to each other, and staying present until the end. My mother acknowledged how courageous I was. I've thought about how courageous *they* were to agree to sit down with me and hear all I had to say.

Something has shifted. Things feel different. I have more space for my parents and feel closer to them. When saying good-bye the next day, I told each of them that I love them and looked in their eyes and hugged them. It did not feel contrived and awful—for the first time since I can remember. I thanked them for the talk, and they thanked me. I've done years of work, but could it really be this simple? Is this all I am looking for from them—acknowledgement of past hurts? Time will tell, but I am proud of myself and look forward to thinking about my own children in this way when they are grown.

B—
USA

¹ A laundry list means a long list.

² Contradiction to distress



MARTIN URBEL

The future, arriving at the present, presents us with an endless series of . . . fresh opportunities to make completely fresh starts on completely rational futures.

Harvey Jackins
From *The Rest of Our Lives*, page 56

Success with a Food Addiction

I recently read *An Unbounded Future*,¹ which is such a useful and heartwarming publication of Harvey's thinking and experience. Regarding the list of "techniques," specifically the use of attention, repetition, and the understatement, I think they may have allowed me to finally dissolve the neural pathways that have for a lifetime caused me to never want to stop eating once I started.

One night I was worried that when my roommate went to bed and I was alone I'd totally lose control of my eating compulsion—again. Using my roommate's attention, I allowed myself to feel overwhelmed by certain elements of my situation and began planning aloud my evening snack, to be devoured as a solitary pleasure. When I asked myself what I *most* wanted to eat, I realized that I wanted to make graham cracker/confectioner's frosting "sandwiches" and eat them until I couldn't eat any more without throwing up.² "Oh no," I thought. "Why would I want to do that?" The thought came, "Your mother made them for you," and I began to feel the physical sensations that signal imminent emotional discharge. "I guess that's it," I said aloud. "My mother used to make them for us." The moment I said that, the perfect words came to me, "Well, you really do miss them." I hadn't been consciously missing anyone. In fact, as I said next, "I've never missed anyone, not even my parents or grandparents, or aunts . . ." Conscientiously I listed people I'd never missed and then asked my friend to say, in a monotone, "Well, you really do miss them." She'd say it, and I'd repeat it in a monotone. Each exchange would evoke the same response: a gasping and choking of blocked discharge. What an experience! My discharge had never been blocked. But how could I be surprised that this time it was? I had a lifetime of dead



CAROL DEVENIR

family members and friends awaiting my attention. I still do. But change has occurred, even though the discharge has hardly begun.

What happened after that session? Later that night I noticed that I didn't feel any desire for either a graham-cracker sandwich binge *or* three bowls of cereal, my usual choice after tremendously challenging or difficult days. The next day, when I passed Dunkin' Donuts,³ I didn't think, "I could buy a couple of donuts right now." When I entered Stop and Shop,⁴ I didn't feel compelled to buy Starbucks'⁵ most expensive frappuccino.⁶ And now nearly four weeks later, I can report that my relationship with food seems to have changed. Food has been one of my lifetime companions. Food has always been "in my head and on my mind." No longer. And I revel in the freed-up space.

Perhaps like most food addicts, once I begin to eat I usually want to eat more and am planning what to eat next even before I've finished eating. If I eat at a restaurant, I invariably plan a potential home munching menu long before the restaurant meal is over. This pattern seems to have vanished. And now, a stressful day or evening doesn't trigger obsessive thoughts of food.

I had forgotten that patterns can gain multiple triggers. I have discharged the child-abuse trigger. I have discharged the incubator-stress trigger. I had no idea that there was at least a third powerful trigger for my longing to eat.

Pam Maccabee
Glastonbury, Connecticut, USA

¹ *An Unbounded Future* is a collection of Harvey Jackins' writings on the developments in RC from 1995 until his death in 1999.

² Throwing up means vomiting.

³ Dunkin' Donuts is a chain of donut shops.

⁴ Stop and Shop is a chain of grocery stores.

⁵ Starbucks is a brand of coffee.

⁶ A frappuccino is a blended beverage made from coffee, flavored syrups, sugar, milk, and ice.

Women and Men Moving Together Against Sexism

Steve Thompson (one of my Co-Counselors and a men's leader) and I recently led a three-day workshop for women and men in my Region (the states of Louisiana, Arkansas, Oklahoma, and Mississippi, in the South of the United States). The first two days we led separate women's and men's workshops. The third day everyone came together to work on being allies to one another.



SUE EDWARDS

My Region is small. There were thirty people at the workshop, with most of the leadership and the years of experience in RC being among the women.

WORKING WITH THE WOMEN

In the women's workshop I first worked with the women on our caring for one another and on the internalized sexism in our relationships with each other. Then we spent the bulk of the time working on the sexism we had experienced throughout our lives, on male domination, and on the trivialization of sexism and women—taking our lead from the work Diane Balsler¹ has been doing. We also worked on fighting for ourselves as women, looking back to our childhoods and fighting against the sexism in our early years. We did some physical sessions² in which I coached the women on being counselors for each other using that form of counseling. In the last class before we got together with the men, I had each woman take a turn talking and discharging about a man who had

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

² Physical sessions are sessions in which the client pushes physically against the counselor's resistance.

been important in her life and showing how much he meant to her.

THE WOMEN AND MEN MEET TOGETHER

I led the evening during which the women and men came together. The men knew that we were going to work on sexism and were visibly anxious. To start the evening I had a number of the women (including each woman who had a male partner at the workshop) talk again about an important man in their lives and show the importance of that relationship. All the wives spoke directly to their husbands. Other women spoke about their brothers, their husbands who weren't there, or some of the men at the workshop. That lasted about forty-five minutes. Both women and men did a lot of discharging during that time. The men were surprised and pleased to be welcomed in this way.

The rest of the evening I talked about how important it is for men, as allies to women and for their own liberation, to work on sexism and male domination. I counseled two women: one on the history of sexism in her life (prior to her marriage to one of the men present) and the other on her history related to male domination. Both were powerful demonstrations, and both women and men discharged a lot.

The following is what I said as an introduction to our work together:

Women and men are inherently allies to one another. We like one another tremendously, and we want each other in our lives.

Sexism and men's oppression have greatly impaired our ability to see and know one another. They

have made it difficult for us to see beyond each other's patterns from the oppression. Though we live and work together, sexism and men's oppression have separated us. A big task before us is to fight through the oppression and separation to where we really know each other, have each other, and can be allies for one another's liberation.

Men's oppression is a real oppression. It has caused a lot of damage to men and to our society. It's important that we all work to end men's oppression.

I went on to share the following thoughts:

LOOKING SQUARELY AT SEXISM

Men, as allies to women, now need to focus on learning about sexism, on facing and discharging their sexism, and on becoming good counselors for women on sexism and male domination. As allies to men, women now need to assist men to discharge on sexism and male domination. One way women can do this is to steer an ongoing dialogue between women and men about how sexism and male domination affect our relationships and our lives in general. Sexism has been tremendously damaging to both women and men.

continued . . .

LIBERATION

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A lot of work has been done to pave the way so that men can look at sexism and begin to discharge on their relationship to it. It's been important that Tim³ has led men's workshops in which he's insisted that there is no reason for men to feel bad about themselves. He has shown men how much he loves them and values them. Without that foundation, I don't think that men would have the chance they now have to look at sexism—they have felt so bad about being in the oppressor role, and that has made them numb to sexism's effects. Along with Tim's work, the work that Diane Balsler has done recently on sexism and male domination, her inviting men leaders to the recent RC Contemporary Women's Issues Workshop, and the initiative some men (including Steve) have taken to work with one another on sexism have opened before us a tremendous opportunity. Our job now is to seize that opportunity and look squarely⁴ at sexism.

³ Tim Jackins

⁴ Squarely means honestly and straightforwardly.

WOMEN HAVE WORKED HARD TO BE ALLIES TO MEN

We women need to understand and learn about men's lives and men's oppression and be allies against that oppression. However, I don't think that's the central work we need to do in this period as allies to men. We have worked hard to understand men's oppression and to back⁵ men, but to some extent we've set our own battles aside to do it. We've done much of it without undertaking our own fight against sexism. As a result, our work as allies to men has been contaminated by internalized sexism—by our patterns of caretaking, accommodation, and submission. It's been interfered with by our undischarged anger at sexism and male domination and our undischarged fears from male abuse and violence. We will be more effective allies to men, and our work against men's oppression will be much stronger, once the work on sexism and male domination has a central place in our re-emergence.

⁵ Back means support.

We will be more effective allies to men, and our work against men's oppression will be much stronger, once the work on sexism and male domination has a central place in our re-emergence.



BOB ROMERO

I'm not saying that sexism is so awful or that men have been so sexist that men have to do this work *for* us and that we are not going to do any work for them. All alliance work requires that both the oppressed and the oppressor think about and work for the other's liberation. One-way alliance work doesn't make sense. We need each other's minds as we struggle against every oppression.

BOTH WOMEN AND MEN NEED TO WORK ON SEXISM

Both women and men will move forward as both women and men work on sexism. I think we women will be excellent allies to men if we can effectively engage men in an ongoing dialogue about sexism.

Sexism is a huge hurt for men. It totally messes up their relationships with women (and it messes up their relationships with each other). You men have excellent women in your lives who are doing things that make no sense to you because you don't understand sexism. You have women whom you love but can't be close to because of sexism, whom you can't enjoy spending much time with because of sexism.

WOMEN HAVE STRUGGLED TO LOOK AT SEXISM

Since working on sexism is central to women's liberation, you would think that we women in RC would have all done a lot of that work. We made some important statements about sexism early on in RC with the women's policy statement (including that men are not the enemy), but in truth we've been struggling for a long time to look squarely at sexism and fight it. Diane Balsler has pushed us for years to do it, but we've struggled. We're trained to accommodate to sexism and to take care of others—not to fight for ourselves, not to fight for liberation. Looking honestly at the sexism in our lives and being vocal about it and

fighting against it do not come easily. I don't think that men understand this. I know a lot of men who feel like they've been hammered by feminism and don't understand that we women still struggle to prioritize our liberation from sexism. In some ways our work on sexism is just now taking off.⁶

It's been hard for us women to face how damaged we are by sexism. We love men. We live with them, we have sex with them, we have children with them, we raise families with them, we work with them. They are our brothers, our fathers, our husbands. We are intimately involved with men, at least on a surface level. (I don't think that men and women really know each other yet, really know yet what goes on⁷ in each other's minds. I think that the separation of men and women has so far been too great for that to be possible.)

It's been hard for us in the fight against sexism that the word on the streets⁸ is that sexism is over, that women have won that battle. It's been hard that many men deny that sexism exists, or agree in the abstract that it does but insist that what they do isn't sexist, and so on. Most of us women haven't figured out how to effectively address sexism in our relationships. We are engaged in a lot of struggles just to be close to somebody, and sometimes our relationships feel too fragile to survive another fight. Also, because of the internalized sexism, the battle against sexism doesn't feel like a very important fight. That it's a core struggle doesn't mean that we've been able to make it an important fight in our lives. Because of sexism, our issues aren't viewed as the important issues.

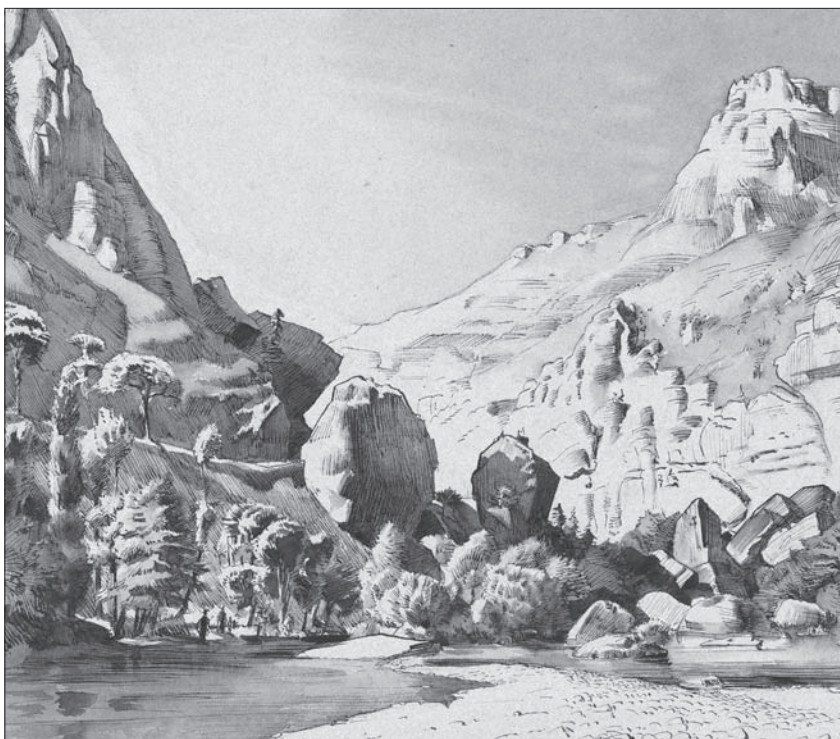
Also, other oppressions often look more important. Many of us face multiple oppressions, and within these

⁶ Taking off means getting started, beginning.

⁷ Goes on means happens.

⁸ The word on the streets means the message out in society.

We [can] no longer go silent about sexism and male domination just because it is hard for men to hear about. It is critical for our liberation that we speak up about the oppression and move boldly against it.



RIVER AND ROCKY VALLEY • © RAYMOND SHEPPARD

oppressions we've felt like we had to protect our men—again making it hard to find space for our fight against sexism.

APPROACHING MEN AS ALLIES

It will help men face their sexism if we women can approach it as their allies and friends, as women who love them—not as women who are angry and blaming them. Fighting for ourselves doesn't mean that we have to be hard on men. We women sometimes get messy and leak our distress outside of sessions, but you men are not our enemies. We are not mad at you. We don't want you to go away. We will try to keep our upsets to our sessions and remember between sessions to treat you as the treasured

human beings that you are. Our upsets and anger about sexism and all the ways we've been abused because of it don't belong outside of our sessions. You are important to us, we love you, and we want you in our lives. And we want you to work to end the sexism you carry.

As we women work to reach men on the issue of sexism, things will move faster if we understand their struggles. If we are going to approach a man we love with a complaint about his sexism, it will help if we can remember that he is expecting to be thrown out at any time, that he is sure the relationship is about to end and that it will be his fault. This doesn't mean that we don't go to him about his sexism; it means that we approach him with an awareness of his struggles.

continued . . .

LIBERATION

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We will want men to be our counselors as we rage against sexism. To have big sessions it can be useful to use them as targets when we are clients. These kinds of sessions can be precious and important. An ally who can give them is valuable. We look forward to having them with you.

CHEER US ON

It will make a tremendous difference to have men cheering us on to fight sexism. I can tell you that it's almost inconceivable to us that this could happen—that you men would want us to fight hard against sexism. It feels like you are too wedded to the “benefits” you gain from sexism.

We women face a lot of discouragement about men being our allies. Until doing the recent work, it seemed to me that I would get through my own hurts from sexism whether or not you men worked on your oppressor role. It seemed like if you didn't do that work, I would just go on without you. Recently it came to me⁹ that I don't want to go on without you. I want you to move through the distress so that we can have more and more of each other and go forward together. And I will help you.

⁹ It came to me means I realized, it occurred to me.



LISA BEDINGER

 **STOP!**  LK

GO! NOW! to the lists in the back of this *Present Time*.

LOOK! at these lists. (It won't take more than ten minutes.)

LET US KNOW! if you find any inaccuracies.

SEND! e-mail corrections to <publications@rc.org> or mail them to Rational Island Publishers, 719 2nd Avenue North, Seattle, Washington 98109, USA.

MUCH APPRECIATION!

Rational Island Publishers

CREATING A FRUITFUL DIALOGUE

On Sunday morning Steve led the class, and his report is below. After he finished, I led a discussion between the men and the women about how we could create the conditions for a fruitful dialogue about sexism. The men spoke first about what the women could do to help them hear and discharge about sexism in their lives. Then the women spoke about what they thought would be important in such a dialogue. It was a good start.

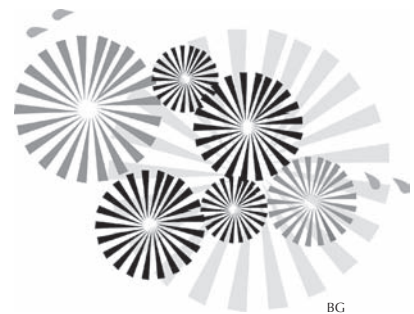
WE WILL SPEAK UP AND MOVE BOLDLY

The last thing I said was that we women would try to be thoughtful in engaging men in a dialogue about sexism but that we could no longer go silent about sexism and male domination just because it is hard for men to hear about. It is critical for our liberation that we speak up about the oppression and move boldly against it.

We all have a lot of discharging and communicating to do, separately and together, as we move together to end sexism.

Diane Shisk

Alternate International Reference Person for the Re-evaluation Counseling Communities Seattle, Washington, USA



BG

I am a slow walker, but I never walk backwards.

Abraham Lincoln

Men Working Together on Sexism

At the Women and Men's Workshop, in March 2010, near New Orleans, Louisiana, USA, we began by meeting as two separate workshops, one for women and one for men, before joining forces Saturday evening through Sunday afternoon to see what we could do together. Because most of the men had female partners or committed Co-Counselors at the workshop, there was a sense that the work we were headed toward was going to be real work, on real things, based on the connections we had.

It was amazing to be so welcomed and wanted as a man in the effort to end sexism. I got to lead the workshop hand-in-hand with my regular Co-Counselor, Diane Shisk. Each evening Diane and I would get together to talk about what we'd done—she with the women, I with the men. We'd take turns thinking about the next day and discharging. Throughout the workshop we stayed close, worked on our relationship, and cared openly for each other. I think this played an important role in the workshop going well.

During the two-day men's workshop we prioritized the following:

- 1) Our use of Co-Counseling—in particular, using our connections with each other,
- 2) The perspective offered by working on early distress and its importance in fighting for ourselves and reclaiming the discharge process,
- 3) Bringing ourselves to the center of our RC Communities so that our lives get bigger, our hearts get more open, and we can play a good role with each other,
- 4) Fighting for ourselves and challenging the ways we've been made to feel bad about ourselves, discouraged, and defeated,
- 5) Looking toward joining with women against sexism.

What follows is some of what I communicated, during the men's workshop and afterward in the joint workshop, about our work as men in looking at sexism, male domination, and the trivialization of women's issues.

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

This last year Diane Balser¹ led the second RC Contemporary Women's Issues Workshop. I was one of fifteen men and a hundred and thirty women who attended. I got a picture of taking on² sexism *for myself*. In the past I've been able to wrap my mind around doing it as a father of daughters—“What wouldn't I do if it made a difference for them?” Since the workshop I've also been able to look at ending sexism for myself.

Why not me? Why shouldn't this be my fight? Why wouldn't I want to play a role in ending this thing that limits my life and the lives of people I love dearly? Why not me?

What is the work I have to do? What is the work for us as men? What does it mean to turn in the direction of my distresses in this area and square off³ against them? What holds me back? What keeps me defensive or trying to be “good” instead of facing what I have to face?

Our past efforts as men in RC to look at sexism have appeared to me to be pretty⁴ unproductive. For a long time at workshops our sessions on sexism sounded a lot like a room full of people playing cards. We were trying to do what we thought was right but without the ability to do it productively, and it often left us discouraged. Sexism felt like something we couldn't look at without getting lost in how bad we felt about ourselves and shutting down the discharge process.

Recently things have begun to look different. We've started to have a sense of possibility when we look in the direction of the oppressor material⁵ we carry as men. You can hear the difference in the room when we work on it, and it's begun to show up⁶ in men's highlights at the end of

continued . . .



LISBON, PORTUGAL • JOE M. RODRIGUEZ

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

² In this context, taking on means engaging in the fight against.

³ Square off means prepare to fight.

⁴ Pretty means quite.

⁵ Material means distress.

⁶ Show up means appear.

LIBERATION

... continued

men's workshops. Something is changing in terms of what we can do.

MANY THINGS HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO OUR PROGRESS

We men have come a long way in our ability to use RC. Men's workshops look a lot like any other workshop now when it comes to⁷ discharge. That's a big change from twenty years ago.

Tim's⁸ relentless focus on our refusing to feel bad about ourselves, going after⁹ our connections, fighting for ourselves, and discharging discouragement has made a big difference.

As a Community, the work we've done on racism has made it possible for us to turn our attention to other kinds of oppressor material and feel hopeful that something will move if we work on it.

Diane Balser's efforts to push everyone to look at sexism and the role it plays in the world and, in particular, at male domination and the trivialization of women's issues have focused us.

It's helped to have both Diane Balser and Tim saying that we men cannot accept the idea that we have to be in better shape,¹⁰ feel more connected, or feel better about ourselves before we can take on sexism. Our sense of ourselves and our ability to be deeply connected are not separate from the hurts we've been forced to play out¹¹ at others. Unchallenged, our oppressor material sits in our minds as evidence that we deserve to feel bad about ourselves and remain separate. Challenging it is going to challenge what left us separated and feeling bad.

WHAT HAS KEPT US CONFUSED?

As boys, what hurt us was belittled and treated as insignificant. At the same time, we were subjected to a society-wide prohibition on discharge and showing that we were hurt. This left us desperate for a way out from under feelings that we had no way to free ourselves from. The option offered by society was to crawl into the oppressor role. By adopting that role, we got the illusion of an escape from the unbearable feelings and were frozen into a recording that said that our only relief from our own oppression was

⁷ When it comes to means in terms of.

⁸ Tim Jackins'

⁹ Going after means pursuing.

¹⁰ Shape means condition.

¹¹ Play out means act out.



LORI JOUBERT

dependent on maintaining ourselves in the oppressor role.

One of the ways we were hurt was by being dominated by other men, so both ends of domination are connected to our identity of being male. We are pulled to escape from the victim end by occupying the oppressor end, but what we really want out of is the hurt.

Have you ever noticed that when we act out oppressor patterns, the feelings we're lost in are of being small and powerless? At that moment things feel unfair and we feel justified in dominating whomever is "making" us feel whatever it is we can't stand feeling. I think we're largely unaware of this dynamic when it's happening. We feel defensive, scared, and desperate—like we're trapped and drowning in unbearable feelings and have to get out.

This is the intersection of sexism and men's oppression. We men are mistreated by society, offered no possibility of freeing ourselves from the feelings that result, and then offered an avenue out from under the weight of the unbearable feelings: dominating another group. We're allowed "relief" from the victim role but only at the terrible cost of inhabiting the oppressor role.

Every man I know struggles to listen to the women in his life talk about sexism. Although we want to encourage these sessions, for the most part¹² we can't stay pleased and welcome that kind of upset.

¹² For the most part means mostly.

Almost all of us were raised by women—women who had the full force of sexism aimed at them—and the impossibility of their situation meant that it sometimes leaked in our direction. We all know the sound of that. When we hear it, we're immediately reminded of being small, and scared, and dependent on the woman recovering her perspective.

When a woman gets mad, when we hear that tone, our first thought is not that we're listening to a thousand years of oppression and, thank God, it's finally found a way out. Our first thought is, "How do I make it stop?!" We feel small, alone, and powerless—everything that came with watching someone we loved and were dependent on being smashed by sexism and our being unable to stop it. We pray that the woman will stop and return to the warm, caring person we needed back when we were little.

HOW DO WE WORK ON OUR OPPRESSOR ROLE?

We men need to work on these feelings together. We need each other, and we need to do this work to have each other. Part of why we feel alone has to do with our having been forced to occupy an oppressor role in relation to women. This makes it hard to feel good about ourselves. It keeps us confused. We need each other to take this on. It's not something we can do off by ourselves and get very far. Most of us, at this point, can work on these distresses in groups more effectively than we can in Co-Counseling sessions.

We need to be proud of ourselves, just because we're who we are. We have to refuse to feel bad about ourselves. Without that, we can't get very far in looking at something as confusing as an oppressor pattern. Fighting for ourselves, discharging our early recordings of discouragement and defeat, and working on closeness are all necessary and basic to this project.

All our lives we've wanted to be honorable and do the right thing, but there are few opportunities in society to go straight at being the men we want to be. Fathers get the chance more than most. This effort to end sexism is another chance. Our goal is to square ourselves against the role we have played, to not give in¹³ to the pull to minimize or sidestep it, and to work as straight as we can on how we've colluded, what we've done (or haven't done). This is not to make ourselves feel bad. It's to help us see that we are bigger than our hurts, bigger than any role we've been forced to play in the past, big enough to choose what role we play in the future.

We need to work on our early lives. They are what left us vulnerable to oppressor patterns being installed on us. We have to work on how confusing our mothers' hurts were. Equally important, we have to take responsibility for the distresses that resulted, particularly our frozen hopes and expectations that women will provide us comfort and connection. And we have to discharge the frozen feelings of being small and powerless in response to women's hurts before we're going to be much more than "well wishers," as Tim put it.

What do we already understand about being allies? One basic understanding is that we do not blame people for the effects of their oppression. As allies to Jews, we understand that any time we're pulled to blame a Jew for his or her hurts, it's anti-Jewish oppression. We need to look at our pull to blame women for the effects of sexism. I think the question is something like, "What would you have to decide and discharge to never blame any woman ever again for anything—even in your own mind?"

Steve Thompson
Seattle, Washington, USA

¹³ Give in means succumb.



MARIA FRANCO

"What shall I do with the rest of my life?"
One proposal that combats all anxieties and feelings of shortage of time and other confusing patterns is, "You are to live each moment well."

Harvey Jackins
From *The Rest of Our Lives*, page 3

More on the Women's and Men's Workshop

Here are some more reports on the Women's and Men's Workshop¹:

In the women's workshop that began on Thursday evening, Diane² encouraged us to notice the caretaking in our language as we took sessions on sexism. Our patterns pulled us to qualify our statements about the men in our lives, such as, "He's really trying," or "It's hard for him, too."

Diane's great sense of humor and light tone made it possible for us to go ahead and be angry about the sexism in our lives. We had lots of Co-Counseling sessions, support-group meetings, and demonstrations on the hurts of sexism and our suppressed anger about them. By Friday night we

were relaxedly and loudly singing aggressive and powerful songs and having a great time with it. We talked about how afraid the men must be to come together with us and laughed hard about all the ways we would be tough on them.

By Saturday evening's class we all felt ready to meet together with the men. That class was moving because of all the preparatory work done with us by Diane and Steve.³ We women were able to be tender, and each of us took a turn talking about what we loved about the men in our lives. There were three married couples there, and it was delightful to see the men soak up the caring they received from their partners. The entire workshop was in tears.

Diane talked about the history of the women's movement and how difficult it is for us women to see the sexism in our lives. When she changed the language to "male domination," the oppression jumped right out at us and there was no confusion at all about its presence. Diane and Steve both talked about the hurts that men experience as young boys that set them up⁴ to be oppressive to women. We got a clear picture from that, and from the demonstrations on Sunday morning, of the brutalization of young boys. Steve gave a lovely talk that explained the feeling of being a victim an oppressor has when he's acting out abuse toward the victim of his patterns. It was clarifying for me.

We spent the rest of Sunday's class with the men and women working out together the conditions under which we women could begin a dialogue with the men in our lives about ending sexism. Each man had a turn to talk about what conditions would make it possible for him to enter into such a dialogue. The discussion was a powerful first step for all of us, and Diane and Steve orchestrated it brilliantly. I believe that everyone from our Area⁵ who attended the workshop left with a new perspective on this work, a renewed commitment to end sexism, and great hope for our world.

Thanks again, Diane and Steve, for your minds and your hearts.

Dorothy Marcy
Springdale, Arkansas, USA

¹ See previous two articles.

² Diane Shisk, one of the leaders of the workshop

³ Steve Thompson, the other leader of the workshop



CHINA • TIM JACKINS

⁴ Set them up means predispose them.

⁵ An Area is a local RC Community.

The following quotes from the men's workshop have given me a basis for directly challenging the chronic feelings of isolation and disconnection that result from my early experiences of being defeated and that have shaped every moment of my life and my thinking about myself and the world.

- The distresses that affect us the most have a big effect on what we can think about and how we can think about it. We want to see what we can do with Co-Counseling so that we get the biggest shot⁶ we can at a life beyond the constraints.
- For us guys, a big part of what makes Co-Counseling work or not work is how connected we are with each other. We're headed toward trying to use each other's resource much more directly.
- Very early on we were defeated in being ourselves, and our experiences were recorded as defeat.
- We accepted some modified version of being fully alive. This is why our sessions don't look like those of young people. We need to challenge any place where we have accepted distress as reality. It's about turning in the direction of the distresses we carry and challenging them.

What usually comes up for me at the beginning of Co-Counseling sessions is a feeling of isolation and disconnection that manifests itself as "instinctive" distrust and suspicion and a strong reluctance to show anything at all. Following that wonderful direction of going with⁷ first thoughts, I have taken to⁸ blurting out, "I don't trust you people," or "I will reveal nothing," and

⁶ Shot means chance.

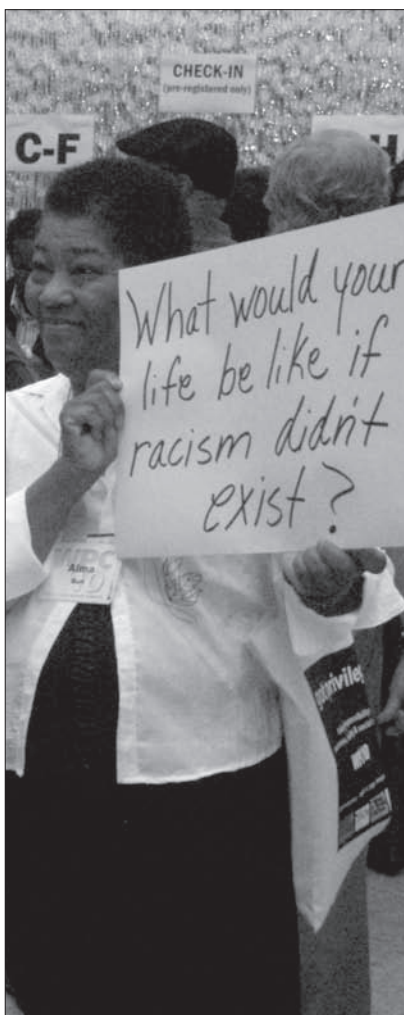
⁷ Going with means using.

⁸ Taken to means begun.

have gotten a lot of discharge. I have then gone on to work on something else.

Now, with the perspectives from the workshop, when I notice the feelings of disconnection and isolation, instead of airing or showing the distress I go straight for the connection with my counselors, for the connection that my distress says can't possibly be there. And I don't move on to another topic because I am determined to move this piece of distress that all my life has limited my thinking and my ability to notice connections. The discharge is as intense as that of young people.

Bob Romero
Houston, Texas, USA



DVORA SLAVIN

I have been in RC for more than twenty years, in a strong Community, and it surprises me how little I have worked on sexism—very telling. Not working on sexism has been to trivialize the huge effect it had on my life.

The other thing that struck me at the workshop was that it is important that I talk to my male friends about sexism instead of being pissed⁹ that they take up so much space and then not calling them back because I don't want to deal with it. I want these men in my life, so I have to work on telling them about sexism, on being straight up.¹⁰

Lucy Lynch
Atlantic Beach, Florida, USA



The women and men met separately for the first forty-eight hours. The men's group was small, seven or eight guys, which gave it the feel of a support group. We actually did a lot of hanging out,¹¹ not working. Work, after all, is an area in which men are oppressed pretty¹² heavily. We laughed a lot, and the vibe¹³ was really safe.

I noticed a building anxiety about halfway through. The feeling was that when we finally met with the women, we were gonna¹⁴ get chewed out¹⁵ and have to sit through a big

continued . . .

⁹ Pissed means angry.

¹⁰ Straight up means honest.

¹¹ Hanging out means spending relaxed, unstructured time.

¹² Pretty means quite.

¹³ Vibe means atmosphere.

¹⁴ Going to

¹⁵ Chewed out means scolded.

LIBERATION

... continued

display of women's rage. That was something I felt like I ought to do but that I really didn't have the stomach for.¹⁶

When we finally did get together, the women were all in a great mood. We had joked about going to the slaughter, but when Diane talked, she said how much the women loved us, how much they wanted to be closer to us, how much they wanted to know about our struggles. A few of the women talked about all the things they loved about their male partners. When Ama¹⁷ spoke, I cried my eyes out. Steve did a demonstration with one of the men that had a whole different meaning because there were women in the room.

It was useful for me to hear that apart from the anger (and other feelings) that women have as a result of male domination, they really love us a lot.

Ben Schenck
New Orleans, Louisiana, USA

¹⁶ The stomach for means tolerance for.

¹⁷ Ama is the author's partner.



LANCE CABLK

The Women's and Men's Workshop was one of the best workshops I've experienced in over twenty years of RC.

Afterward, I thought of many examples of how sexism is trivialized in our culture. Here's one: the U.S.-based restaurant and bar called "Hooters." It's outrageous that there's a chain of restaurants whose name is a derogatory slang term for women's breasts and whose appeal is overtly based on the objectification of its waitresses, who wear short shorts and low-cut tank tops. The training of the young women employees explicitly specifies that they are to put up with¹⁸ sexist words and actions from customers. Sexual harassment is built into the job. That the sexism is invisible, and taken for granted as "normal," is evidenced by how parents take their young children to Hooters for family dinners.

Diane insisted that we need to create spaces where it is safe for all women to discharge about sexism. Women who are on the oppressor end of other oppressions need to be thoughtful and clear. For example, white women need to remember that the message that "black men are more sexist than white men" is distress and totally false. Ditto¹⁹ for messages about Jewish men, men from other countries, and so on. In other words, we need to stay completely clear that all men are good, regardless of what distresses our female clients have about any particular group of men. All women and men must be included and supported on the path to ending sexism.

The workshop brought to mind many of the dynamics in my last serious romantic relationship with a

¹⁸ Put up with means tolerate.

¹⁹ Ditto means the same.

man. I was able to recognize some of the things I figured out and handled well, such as being clear that my boyfriend was not responsible for my feelings, reminding him of that frequently, and remembering to validate him on a regular basis for being a completely good man. On the other hand, some of what Diane shared helped me to see what tools and options I was missing at the time. In particular, I recognized myself in the habit so many of us women have of bringing up²⁰ sexism and trying to get men to acknowledge it and change their behavior when it is happening. It is such a crucial direction for us to talk to them at a specified and agreed-upon time—a time when the sexism is not happening.

By my twenties, I had a habit of keeping a mental checklist of everything my partner did wrong. Then when we were fighting or trying to work something out, I would pull out that list, like a scorecard, and enumerate all his transgressions and insist that he change those behaviors "right now." (Urgency is always a clue that some distress is involved.) As Diane pointed out, we women have so much anger about sexism, but it needs to be discharged and not directed at the men with whom we are close. As she emphasized, once they detect that little bit of anger in our voices, they shut down and find it hard to hear us. I understand that my anger is about hurts that occurred when I was young, and that is where I am discharging in my sessions. I have also been taking the direction that I'm giving up²¹ the scorekeeping, and I visualize burning a piece of paper with the list written on it.

Laura Sullivan
Memphis, Tennessee, USA

²⁰ Bringing up means talking about.

²¹ Giving up means abandoning.

On the final day of the workshop, Diane and Steve posed the following question, first to the men and then to the women:

What would work for you? Under what conditions could we talk (have a dialogue) about sexism?

Men's responses

Bob Romero: We need to know that we're completely committed to each other.

Sam Gutierrez: Remind me that today's upset is but a pin dot²² in the grand scheme of things; remind me how much history of sexism came before the upsetting act.

Eddie Hansford: We need a lot of discharge, to keep our minds clear.

Ben Schenck: We need sessions in which we take three minutes each way, back and forth, over and over.

Sean Clark: We need to do a lot of sessions in front of each other, like we're doing at this workshop.

Ben: Could I have a session as client in which you talk about the history of sexism in your life?

Stephen Hintz: It would be helpful if I could listen to your history of the time before I came into your life. And I'd have to discharge frequently, pretty soon into listening.

Ben: We men need to have sessions on how sexism has affected our lives (in relation to our mothers or sisters, for example).

Women's responses

Kate Wenzel: Work to build the closeness, and talk when close.

Ama Rogan: It's hard to raise these issues. They're a big deal—there's so much behind them. It takes so much internal muster²³ to see sexism and call it out.

Jackson Knowles: What will be key is my remembering that sexism exists when I'm not angry about it. It would be better to try to have a discussion about it when I'm not in the middle of an argument.

Jacqui Gibson-Clark: Just stop running²⁴ the sexism at me when I bring it to your attention. I'm not grading you on your humanity.

²³ Muster means gathering together.

²⁴ Running means acting out.

Elaine Clement: The dialogue should be loving.

Dawn Graham: What would work well is to have no joking and no trivializing of the sexism.

Ama: It's not going to work to have sex after these conversations.

Dorothy Marcy: When your sexism is interrupted, go to another man and have a session. (The parallel is with racism: when it's pointed out, white people shouldn't client with people targeted by racism.)

Diane Shisk: One thing that would be useful is if a man took initiative and asked me about sexism in my life. A man could say, "I can't listen—yet, but know that I'm interested in knowing about sexism and how it's affected your life."

I have just finished RC fundamentals and have written a poem, inspired by Co-Counselling:

In the presence of myself, in the now that I am,
I'm able to see the past as a journey.

Many train stations along the way to a healing place.
Shedding grief, laughing, shaking, dancing and yelling,

Singing my soul into a fearless future, to be fully me;

My past, present and future rolled into
One golden necklace—sassy, shiny and bright.

Sande Bruch
Sydney, New South Wales, Australia

²² A pin dot is a dot the size of a pin.

Claiming My Native Heritage

I am Taino from Puerto Rico, as well as Spanish, West African, and Ukrainian Jewish. I was not raised Native, though my parents always told me I had Native heritage. I've been discharging about my Native heritage and about genocide for three years. In January I attended Marcie's¹ White Natives Workshop, and I am now part of the white Native support group.

Here's how Native liberation is going for me:

Discharging regularly about genocide (more regularly after workshops and support groups, when Marcie's in town, and since *Heritage*² came out) has had a huge impact on me. Each wave of discharging directly on genocide lets me be more powerful in expressing myself truthfully in my art. I have been standing up for myself more and doing it more cleanly. I'm raising Native aspects of things I'm discussing with people: U.S. immigration policies, Caribbean culture, Latin American politics, how a specific food or word from Puerto Rico is Taino.

Often, a few days later, a new wave of feelings will come up, and sometimes I'll forget why and think I just spontaneously woke up feeling like I wanted to die. I'm trying to stay in touch with other Native Co-Counselors by phone, so that we can stay connected and I can remember more easily why I feel the way I do. I also keep a copy of *Heritage* where I can see it from my bed.

Working on claiming Native heritage is much like the work I've done on early sexual abuse. Each tiny fragment of evidence brings huge amounts of discharge and re-evaluation as I realize again and again, "Oh, this is *real!*" Lately I've been remembering more details of how Native the community was where I grew up, in the mountains of western Puerto Rico. I've noticed how much I have always claimed my Taino heritage, kind of behind my own back, and how Taino my mother is.

I called up an elderly relative I hadn't met, something I'd been putting off³ for over a year. He's my grandmother's first cousin. When I worked my way around to asking about Native heritage, he surprised me by saying, "Of course!" Then he told me a lot about his family and how he was criticized for being the son of an "india," giving me more insights into my mother's family and how the internalized oppression ran.⁴

¹ Marcie Rendon, the International Liberation Reference Person for Native Americans

² *Heritage* is the RC journal about Native liberation. The latest issue, number 4, was published early this year.

³ Putting off means postponing.

⁴ Ran means operated.

I have been studying Taino word lists online. One thing that keeps shocking me is how many of the words I already know because they were used by the people around me. I just thought they were Spanish. Talking about that brings a lot of tears. It's a big contradiction,⁵ since official histories in Puerto Rico say that the Taino people were all gone by 1550. I realize how much Taino I spoke growing up and how much I was surrounded by Taino culture.

I have been handing out *Heritage* to non-RC Native people in my life and also key allies to Native people. I tell them about my counseling on genocide and how it's affecting me, which starts some interesting conversations. I've also been pushing *Heritage* hard within RC. I think it's an amazing document that will reach far and wide.

It makes a huge difference to me to be part of this work, to know that we have each other, and to have an explanation for heavy patterns running in my family that I didn't understand before. I'm deeply grateful to all of you.



Tai Caraya (good night)

Aurora Levins Morales
Berkeley, California, USA

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

⁵ Contradiction to distress



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A Letter to Our Allies: What Does It Mean for Me to Be an Israeli?

Someone once said that when people criticize Israel, it's like an attack on a beloved one. As an Israeli, that is how it feels. My automatic response is, "You don't understand; if you lived here under these conditions, you would know; it's easier to talk when you sit in your comfortable, peaceful country."

In my work leading groups of Palestinians and Jewish Israelis, I've noticed that most of us who do this work are walking around with contradictory voices in our minds. No matter what our political background is, we carry lots of recordings that were installed on us when we were very young. Their messages are so heavy that their presence is massive. The threat to our lives seems so real that it brings justifications for any wrong that we do.

Last weekend, just before the recent events,¹ I sat with a group of Jewish activists who spoke openly about all the stereotypes they had heard and still carried about Palestinians. It was a scary list. The conditioning to see the Palestinians as not human enables people to do horrible things. Our leaders "speak Holocaust" in every speech they make. We grow up, from kindergarten, with stories about the *Shoah* (Holocaust). It becomes our narrative, which we embrace without being aware of it.

Being exposed from a young age to constant threats; growing up with wars and threats of annihilation, whether real or part of a recording, leave us, as a society, in a traumatic state. In order to continue to live here, the need to deny any wrong and find justifications gets stronger.

¹ The author is referring to the May 31, 2010, seizure by the Israeli Defense Forces of a flotilla of six ships bringing humanitarian aid to the Palestinians in the Gaza strip. Nine of the activists aboard were killed.

Those of us who decide to work for peace are heavily attacked for being "naive," "stupid," and "traitors who betray their country."

In my work I offered myself as a "punching bag" for Palestinians, willing to hear attacks and other hard things about my role as an oppressor. I learned a lot by listening. I got to move faster on my material.² I learned to listen to voices in my head that I wasn't aware of before. I learned to notice my racism. It wasn't comfortable or nice to notice, but it was worth it.

During the last war (we stopped counting; we always hope it's going to be the last war) our oldest daughter's boyfriend was sent to Gaza. He left a bag of dirty clothes in our house and asked our daughter to take it to his mother. I couldn't send his mother his dirty uniforms in the middle of a war. When I hung them on the clothes line, I noticed myself feeling proud of him and at the same time ashamed for having those feelings.

A few months ago we accompanied our youngest daughter to the army, and I thought about how hard it is to explain to our allies why we do this. It feels like

² Material means distress.

none of you can understand. Criticism about it comes at us very easily from the world outside, including in RC. We usually have to listen to your sadness about these young people who have to go.

When my daughter comes back home from the army, I will be proud of her for serving her country—like I did at her age. At the same time, I know I will fear what it will do to her soul. Will she be able to keep her humanity?

This is what it means to be an Israeli: the dissonance, the built-in dissonance, between wanting to be human and fighting against evils against humankind and at the same time feeling that we are not protected, that we have to have a strong army. Being a soldier is seen as heroic and looked at with pride. In many ways it is still a passport into being a part of society. Army uniforms are part of our landscape. Sometimes we are born into the hands of a loving dad who just came back from serving in the army reserves.

Growing up in a Zionist home; being raised by a father who was a Holocaust survivor and lost all his family; being raised on the belief that Israel is the only place we've got, the only place where

continued . . .



RAMI BEN-MOSHE

LIBERATION

... continued

we can be safe as Jews; feeling the need to be strong as Israelis against the legacy of centuries of persecution as Jews—all that sits deep in my mind.

As parents, we become the middle agents of the society around us. We pass the messages on, unless we discharge them and break the chain.

Harvey³ wrote in his article "Jewish-Arab Unity"⁴ that both sides need to take into account the fears and anger each other carries. Occupation, oppression, and mistreatment of the Palestinian people have left them with fear and anger and with being restimulated when they try to solve the conflict. The Holocaust and other persecutions of Jews over generations

³ Harvey Jackins

⁴ See *Ruah Hadashah* No. 4 or *The Benign Reality*, page 549.

have left us Jews feeling betrayed, deserted, and like we can't trust anyone except ourselves. The continuing threat of war and terrorist attacks restimulates our old fears.

Reading what Harvey wrote in his wisdom, I think there is a difference between taking sides and taking a principled stand. It's like working with two people in a conflict—we need to remember that there are always two narratives and two hurting people. We need to take a stand against mistreatment and still be with both people in their hurting places.

What we need from you who are our allies is that you not be more pro-Palestinian than pro-Israeli. When you don't take sides, it enables us to listen to all those voices in our heads and discharge on where we need to take

a stand and change. We need to know that none of you condemn us for the contradictory inner voices that are part of how we were set up⁵ early in our lives.

We need you to show us your inner battles about who you are—as Gentiles, Jews in the Diaspora, parents, men, women; your personal histories related to war; your role in and connection to what is happening in the Middle East; and, most of all, your fears and where what you hear breaks your heart. These are the strings that connect us as human beings.



With love,

Varda Ginossar-Zakay
Givat Elah, Israel
Reprinted from the RC e-mail
discussion list for leaders of Jews

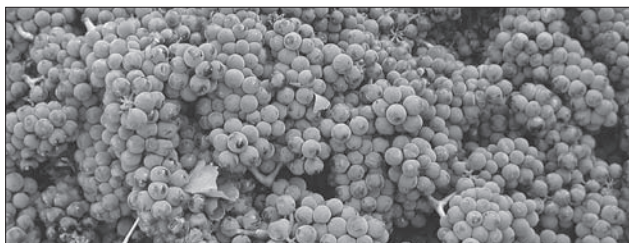
⁵ In this context, set up means hurt.

Disproportionate Criticism, But a Need for Better Policies

I would say that, in general, the wrong-doing of the Israeli government and military is disproportionately criticized throughout the world. At the same time, Israeli government policies—as distinct from the Israeli people—isolate Israel, separate us Jews from our potential natural allies, and set Israel up for* further targeting. The Israeli policies directed today at Palestinians (and not all of the policies of those who claim to represent the Palestinian people are correct) are oppressive to the Palestinians and ultimately to Jewish Israelis as well.

Diane Balsler
Jamaica Plain, Massachusetts, USA
Reprinted from the RC e-mail
discussion list for leaders of Jews

* Set Israel up for means predispose Israel to.



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We have some exciting glimpses that indicate that we humans are much greater, much more able, much more powerful than anyone has suspected.

Harvey Jackins
From *The Reclaiming of Power*, page 127

Reclaiming My Welsh

There were some interesting articles on language in a recent edition of *Present Time*. I thought I would contribute by sending this poem.

Elma is a dear friend of mine who is a first-language speaker of Welsh. She did not understand English before going to school, where almost all of the lessons were in English. (Thanks to political activism in Wales, one can now be taught in Welsh.) Because my mother was English, we spoke English at home. All of my father's family is Welsh. However, when one partner is English-speaking, the family language becomes English. I learned Welsh on the school playground.

I lived and worked abroad for many years. When I came home to Wales I felt that my Welsh was feeble, if not dead. However, I was determined to speak to Elma in her first language. As a result of just deciding to do that, my Welsh is now fluent. Hooray! The poem puts one stone back in the mosaic: *anhygoel*. *Anhygoel* means unbelievable, and it's often used to mean "Wow!" (*Anhygoel!*)



Reclaiming the Words

for Elma

Anhugol wasn't in my dictionary.
It sounded like *amazing*, *great*,
a word you use for emphasis,
flung down from castle walls
to a returning hero-knight,
or pepper on a speech
to the best singer, poet, cook.
Anhugol!

My culture lies beyond
a vast tract of sea and sand,
in the direction of those distant hills.
I have dried flowers of memory:
paraffin lamps in a living room;
daytime, sliding down a haystack,
singing, laughing
in different syllables.

I phoned you, who still live there,
threatened by rising sea
that tries to steal the land
from under you,
the waves succeeding, failing.

I think you mean *anhygoel*, you said.
You use it when you don't believe a story—
the word snatched out of blue spring air
when someone reached the top of a stile
and saw snow on the mountains,
felt the sunshine on her back—
anhygoel!

Marianne Jones
Menai Bridge,
Anglesey/Ynys Mon
Wales/Cymru



JIM MADDRY

The Oppression of People with Learning Difficulties

Micheline Mason

International Commonality Reference Person for Inclusion

At present there is no constituency in RC representing people with learning difficulties, but there are a growing number of allies, and I am one. The following thinking is based on my observation of and association with people labeled as having learning difficulties, and their families. It has taken me many years of discharge and learning to be able to get it into words.

Whilst it is true that there is no hierarchy of oppression, it is also true that for every oppressed group there is a staged journey from denial to liberation. Some groups are farther along in the journey than others. As we become aware of each oppressed group, we uncover a hidden truth about ourselves, about the nature of our humanity. Our understanding of the oppression of people with learning difficulties (also called “retarded,” “mentally handicapped,” “mentally defective”) is only just emerging from the confusion of our distress to where we can see the oppression as a mistaken ideology, as false assumptions and lies—perpetuated, like all oppressions, by the need of capitalism to keep us ignorant, powerless, confused, and fearful.

All oppressive societies consist of a ruling minority and a subordinate majority. They could not continue without the collusion of the majority, which (obviously) outnumbers the ruling elite—by something like ninety-nine to one. The myth is that the ruling elite are where they are because of their superior minds,

morals, and might. In other words, it is “natural.”

It is superiority of “mind” that I want us to think about.

It seems that every sub-division of the majority is made to feel less intelligent than its oppressors. Women have had to fight for the right to an education and to be allowed to vote. Black people have been viewed as only capable of manual labour. Working-class people (once called the “feeble-minded” class in Britain) are supposed to be less intelligent than the other classes. The thinking of children and young people is ignored. Disabled people have been assumed to be of below average intelligence. Even subordinate nations have had their inhabitants stereotyped as “thick.”¹ (Remember all those jokes in England about the Irish?)

Some people fall under the sharp edge of this myth of superiority of mind. They are the people who

¹ “Thick” means stupid.



BIRCHES • CLAIRE KUJUNDZIC

are considered mentally defective, handicapped, retarded. They are almost universally de-valued, segregated, and mistreated. In some countries they are institutionalised from birth to death; in others they are hidden in back rooms. And in many richer countries, such as Britain and the United States, many of them are killed before they are born, via state-sponsored pre-natal screening programmes that draw parents into a web of deceit to persuade them to abort their own unborn children. Many people are still not sure if anything is wrong with this. Why?

I think there is a big tendency in the world to confuse intelligence and intellect. Our intelligence is who we are, our humanity. It includes our ability to relate to each other. It includes our creativity, our enjoyment of the arts, our sense of humour, our wisdom, the crafts and skills we develop, and much else. Our intellect is a piece of our intelligence specifically to do with the acquisition and application of knowledge and with memory. When we discharge and re-evaluate, our whole intelligence is involved, not just our intellect.

We are all vulnerable to damage to any part of our brain and any function of it. This damage can be caused by physical injury, chromosomal differences, or diseases. We still know only a little about the brain's ability to heal itself from any of these.

*The oppression lies in the false connection between our intellect and our worth as human beings. How did this connection come about?*²

THE HISTORY OF “INTELLIGENCE” TESTS

In order for us to be useful and productive workers, our knowledge base is tightly defined and controlled by those who wish to exploit us. They need our access to learning to reflect the requirements of the marketplace. As far back as the early nineteenth century, it was noticed that some people could not learn all that was needed or learn as quickly as others. They were seen as blocking progress and were targeted for removal from the ordinary classroom. To avoid protest and rebellion, the capitalists produced a “scientific” rationale for the exclusion.

The first “intelligence” tests were designed in France by Alfred Binet, in 1904, at the request of the French government, which wanted to remove the slower learners from ordinary schools to train them in repetitive and menial work and stop them from interrupting the education of the others. Interestingly, Binet himself quickly saw the danger of these tests getting into the hands of eugenicists or social Darwinists (people who believed in genetically inherited levels of intelligence) and their “being used as a general device for ranking all pupils according to mental worth.” He explained,

“The [Binet] scale, properly speaking, does not permit the measuring of intelligence, because intellectual qualities are not superposable [do not fit neatly one on top of the other] and therefore cannot be measured as linear surfaces are measured.”

² Come about means happen, come to exist.

When his fears came to be well founded, he went on to say,

“Some recent thinkers [have affirmed] that an individual’s intelligence is a fixed quantity, a quantity that cannot be increased. We must react and protest against this brutal pessimism: we must try to demonstrate that [it is] founded on nothing.”

Binet’s protest was ignored, and the tests went on to have a profound effect on the development of education systems everywhere that Britain had influence. This only got worse when Cyril Burt, the first “educational psychologist,” appointed in London (England) in 1913—an energetic and committed eugenicist who wrote a lot (his books included *The Young Delinquent*, 1925; *The Sub-Normal Mind*, 1935; and *The Backward Child*, 1937)—claimed he had carried out³ studies for over thirty years on the attainments of separated identical twins, “proving” that intelligence was inherited and only marginally affected by environmental factors. Despite the revelation in the 1970s that his research had been fraudulent, these false beliefs live on.

Although “intelligence” tests have been revised and modernized, their roots and core constructs remain

³ Carried out means conducted, done.

the same. They are still used to set,⁴ stream,⁵ and segregate children and to allocate state resources. The 11+ (an examination that children in some parts of England take at the age of eleven in order to gain access to a grammar school) is such a test. In fact, most tests, qualifications, entrance exams, degrees, and so on, involve testing our ability to retain and regurgitate knowledge. (We have no similar examinations of our ability to love others or to make people laugh.) Consequently we have it drummed into us daily that some people are more intelligent than others and therefore are more valuable.

“Intelligence” scales are used constantly to work out⁶ how much a job is worth—in other words, how much money someone should be paid for doing it—reinforcing working people’s status and their value to their employers. They are also used to decide who is unemployable and eligible for state benefits.

For owning- and middle-class people, the oppression is just as vicious. They have to learn and keep

continued . . .

⁴ Set means assign, according to perceived ability, to a particular group for a particular subject.

⁵ Stream means assign, according to perceived intellectual ability, to a particular group for the whole school day.

⁶ In this context, work out means figure out, determine.



DAVID WATER

LIBERATION

... continued

up the appearance of intellectual superiority in order to sustain that myth. They are taught to pretend to know things when they don't. They have to study hard and pass their exams. They cannot be shy or indecisive. They must know the rules and be able to enforce them, or else suffer humiliation. Many of them say that they live in perpetual fear of being "found out,"⁷ of being uncovered as a fraud.

WHY DOES THIS OPPRESSION MATTER TO THE RC PROJECT?

The oppression of people with learning difficulties, like all oppressions, distorts our view of reality. It leads to a set of attitudes and behaviours that could be called "intellectualism." Intellectualism over-emphasises a small part of our intelligence and ties it up with our worth as human beings. It ignores almost all the other facets of our intelligence. It leads in the wide world to a hierarchy based on this false perspective. And it does not take into account our ability to recover from hurts using the discharge process, and the capacity

of our intelligence to increase its functioning, which we call "re-emergence."

The main tool of the oppression is the creation of vastly unequal opportunities to learn.

The oppression of people with learning difficulties makes us all doubt our own intelligence, makes us rank ourselves against other people in terms of who is the best "thinker" or the "smartest," makes us despise "stupid people," and so on. We all carry a heavy load of both victim and perpetrator material.⁸

Our oppressive behaviour, much of it unaware, makes it unsafe for many people to be in RC, especially people who were seen as "failures" within the education system.

The oppression separates us from people who are labelled as having learning difficulties and keeps us in an oppressive role in relation to them. It leads us to force upon them inhuman systems that create further learning, emotional, and behavioural difficulties. These systems also dehumanise the workers within them.

⁷ "Found out" means exposed.

⁸ Material means distress.



PAUL TRUDEAU

Many people without learning difficulties suffer the oppression of people with learning difficulties because they have physical, sensory, or neurological impairments that prevent them from performing well on IQ tests. This especially includes people with autism and other impairments that may lead to communication difficulties.

People with the learning-difficulty label are of equal worth to people without it and have a lot to teach about the true nature of intelligence and humanity—things that we all need to know.

MY ROLE IN RC

My role in RC came about after my great friend and ally, Diana Simpson, wrote an article for *Present Time*. Diana was a parent of a child with learning difficulties and an enthusiastic member of the RC Community back in the early 1990s. Like several other parents of children with learning difficulties at that time, she had been shocked by the exclusion of her child from RC events, including playdays, which she was told would be "inappropriate" for her child.⁹ Her article was very challenging to the Community.

Diana and I were part of a new social-change movement in which parents like Diana, all over the world, were no longer colluding with the oppression of their children and were demanding that they be included, valued, and served well within mainstream schools (schools being the place where young people join society). It seemed strange to us that this liberation movement was not reflected in RC. Harvey¹⁰ agreed and asked me, as an ally to people with learning difficulties, to work with others to help them start thinking about the oppression. He

⁹ While the RC Communities have struggled to provide playdays for all children in each of our Communities, it has been and remains RC's position to do so.

¹⁰ Harvey Jackins

suggested that I take on¹¹ the job, and I agreed without having much of an idea how to do it or whether I would have the attention to counsel people on their oppressive material, of which I myself had been a victim.

Since I began my journey with the inclusion movement, over twenty years ago, I have learned an enormous amount and have had to discharge many of my own prejudices and fears. It has changed forever how I see not just one group of people, but all of us, our structures, and how we do things.

For most of this time “inclusion” has seemed a fragmented and difficult thing to define. I have

had insights about some of the fragments and have been able to create some contradictions¹² and get people thinking in some exciting areas, but I think this has also left some people confused. I now realise that I need to take all of us back to the starting point, so that each of us can start on our own journey. The starting point is to acknowledge that people with learning difficulties are an oppressed group within society and to remember that we as RCers are committed to doing everything we can to end all oppression.

I have developed in Britain an RC wide-world-change support group of over forty people, all committed to ending this oppression and that of other excluded peoples, but we

need all of you on board¹³ if we are to succeed.

My role, as I see it, is to get you all started on the journey—to help you think where it has been difficult to think. It is not to immediately invite people with learning difficulties into the RC Communities—because we have not yet begun to have any attention for them, although I am certain that one day they will join us and we will welcome it. You can invite me to your Regions in order to start things off. I would hope to leave behind a group of people who could continue the work locally and could help to feed these insights into all the other liberation work we do together.

London, England

¹¹ In this context, take on means begin doing.

¹² Contradictions to distress

¹³ On board means with us.



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- A hundred and twenty-eight pages filled with interviews of Native people from many tribes
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*Thanks to the volunteers
who made this possible!*

Some Thoughts About Large Women

I led a workshop this past January, on the west coast of the USA, for large women and female allies.

For the last five or six years I've been leading several workshops a year for large women. I'm an ally who developed an interest (now passion) for large women's liberation through years of leading women, through women and physical power work (in which I learned how many women were doing that work to stay slim), and through important relationships with large women.

The oppression of large women is harsh and pervasive. It is harshest in the more advanced capitalist countries, but increasingly the standard of beauty there is being adopted worldwide.

If women carry excess body fat—an amount that contributes to health problems or limits physical activity—it is because of distress recordings the women have not had adequate resource to discharge. All women have heavy distress recordings—some that show and others that are quite hidden. We're not supposed to show our struggles in U.S. society, and there are many negative consequences to showing them, including oppression, in this case fat oppression. Many of the distresses we women carry aren't acknowledged as distresses (caretaking, frozen niceness, accommodating, preoccupation with physical appearance). Instead we are validated for them. But body fat, a visible distress, is heavily condemned and women are blamed for it as though they chose it.

Many women were targeted as "fat" in childhood even though their body size was fine—they just weren't thin. They were forced onto diets (often including medication), their bodies were criticized, they weren't seen as attractive to boys, and all this laid in heavy distresses for them about body size. The standard for attractive body size in our society is dictated by sexism (it is what has come to be attractive to men, largely because of society's manipulating of men's sexual distresses) and is quite thin. Many, many women are larger than the standard but not in a way that is unhealthy or limiting. Yet they are targeted as too large and less attractive and often internalize a negative picture of their body size. Women who are actually large are also targeted by this sexism, but in addition they experience fat oppression, a particularly vicious and unchallenged oppression.



LEAH KOCH-MICHAEL

Women are not to be blamed or criticized for excess body weight. (People are not to be blamed for having any distress.) Their distress recordings are not worse than other people's. We have learned in RC that heavy chronic struggles have roots in early hurts and that it takes significant resource and persistent discharge to free ourselves from them. As with all clients, we should assume that a large woman is doing her best in the struggle against the hold of the distress recordings.

It's been important not to view large women's liberation work as a weight-loss program. While being large has health consequences and we want women to live long, healthy lives, our fundamental focus has been on fully using the discharge process to free women from the distresses

that keep them from being in charge of their minds and their bodies. We are working to put counseling attention to a place where oppression and early hurts have damaged women in a way that's been hard to discharge.

A large woman must take on¹ many struggles in order to reclaim her health and be in charge of her mind as regards her body. Many of these struggles are common to all women. Here are a few of the significant ones we've been working on:

SEXISM

- Sexism defines which women are considered attractive and what women's bodies are supposed to look like.
- As women we find it difficult to prioritize our health and to care for ourselves. We're expected to care first for our families, our husbands, our parents, our community—everyone else. To prioritize our own needs—whether they be eating healthy food (that our family might not like), taking time for exercise, or spending money on our health care—is a struggle for most of us, especially when resources are scarce.
- Sexual and physical abuse, threats of abuse, and ongoing inappropriate and patterned attention from men have left many of us feeling like our bodies aren't our own, or we're not in charge of our bodies, or we're scared of men's attention to our bodies. These feelings interfere

¹ In this context, take on means engage in.

with our putting attention to our bodies and getting physical closeness, an important contradiction to a lot of our early struggles.

- As we grow up as girls, sexism increasingly defines what physical activities we should engage in. Activities that once were fun for us and had us naturally moving and using our bodies in many ways become not okay if they are "male activities." Sexist misinformation that says that girls are weak or uncoordinated or belong inside the house results in some girls never getting to have an active life. As adult women, many of us struggle to find physical activities that we enjoy. In addition, early distresses compound the effects of sexism, and difficult feelings come up when we exert our bodies.

FAT OPPRESSION

Fat oppression, a mostly unchallenged oppression of women (and men), is based on body size. It is vicious and damning. It blames women for their weight and pressures them to lose weight. It assumes that people "could change if they wanted to." Fat oppression wrongly characterizes large women as lazy, stupid, dirty, repugnant, and asexual. It results in their being publicly humiliated, passed over for employment, not sought after as friends, and assumed to be unhealthy and unfit. Large women need to take a firm stand, publicly and in their minds, against the internalized blame and shame.

An underlying message of the oppression is that large women aren't wanted or needed in society, that they are a disposable group. Of course large women internalize this, and the internalized oppression then interferes with their thinking about and caring for themselves. When you have internalized recordings telling you that your existence isn't important, that you're not wanted, that you're disgusting, and that it's all your own fault, it's a long struggle back to feeling good about yourself. And if you can't feel good about yourself, it's very difficult to fight against the heavy material² you have to battle in order to take care of yourself.

² Material means distress.

THE INTERSECTION OF FAT OPPRESSION AND OTHER OPPRESSIONS

Many large women are from groups already targeted by racism, genocide, colonization, raised-poor or working-class oppression, anti-Jewish oppression, or other oppressions. The hurts from these oppressions further interfere with their being able to think about themselves, and add another layer of heavy distress.

FOOD

It's not easy in this society to think well about ourselves and food. Our early experiences of nursing are associated with feelings of connection, disconnection, wanting, needing, physical closeness, and so on. In many of our families food was used as a way to stop us from showing feelings and discharging (usually unhealthy food—I've never heard of anyone being offered broccoli to stop him or her from crying). And we live under capitalism, in which food is marketed as a source of profit. In the United States, corporate agricultural and processed-food lobbies often determine the kinds of foods we eat and the nutrition education we receive. We are bombarded with advertisements for unhealthy foods and then blamed for eating them, and gaining weight and becoming unhealthy. Most of us have addictions to certain kinds of foods, to eating a certain amount, or to frequent eating that dominate our minds and don't let us think about ourselves and our nutritional needs. Also, because food is essential, we can't simply avoid it and discharge as we often do with other addictions. Nutritious foods are often more expensive, limiting access to them by the majority of the population. Specific messages about food (and limited access to nutritious food) can be part of the oppression experienced by some cultures. And it can be confusing to try to both give up³ foods that are important to one's culture and resist cultural assimilation.

CLOSENESS

As women we tend to feel alone in thinking about our bodies and our health. Because most of us have been made to feel bad about our physical appearance and have been set

continued . . .

³ Give up means stop partaking in.



TYRA TILL

LIBERATION

... continued

up⁴ to compete with one another for men's attention, we can't be very supportive of each other in this area. Large women have few allies against fat oppression. While we all struggle with an early loss of connection, isolation is compounded for large women by the lack of physical closeness most of them experience because of sexism and fat oppression.

As large women have taken on⁵ their distresses, it's been important for them to work on the oppression, on the early chronic material, and on the distresses that directly interfere with their thinking about their health, nutrition, and needs for closeness and exercise.

FIGHTING FOR OURSELVES

Most large women in Co-Counseling have been using RC tools for many years to work to reclaim their health and their bodies. The distresses that keep women large must be chronic, rooted in early material they have not yet been able to access well, or things would be changing faster. I don't think these distresses are worse than or even heavier than many other chronic distresses that people struggle with, but because they are visible distresses that are targeted with oppression in our society, people notice when they aren't moving.

It's not just large women who have distresses that don't move easily. It looks to me like most of us have some early distresses that we have not yet been able to shift. Many things in our lives change, but some things stay the same. Tim⁶ has been asking us to go after⁷ these early distresses in the context of what he calls "fighting for ourselves."

Taking the time to face all the issues that come up as we try to fight for ourselves has been fruitful. For many large women, the starting place is a big question mark about whether they are worth fighting for and whether anyone would join them in the fight for themselves. Early doubts about being wanted or valued (as a girl, as a black girl, as a poor girl, and so on) get entangled with the messages of fat oppression that say "we have no place for you here." Large women may need many sessions before they can actually engage in the fight.

In order to face our hardest, scariest early material, we all need counselors who love us, who are committed to us, who can think about us, and whom we can trust with our secrets. If people can't listen to large women about their current struggles with food, health, fat oppression, weight, relationships, and so on, how can the safety be built to go after the early struggles? And we can't listen to their current struggles. We haven't worked enough on our oppressor

⁴ Set up means predisposed.

⁵ In this context, taken on means faced and begun to discharge.

⁶ Tim Jackins

⁷ In this context, go after means pursue.

material to be able to listen without judgment, blaming, or criticism.

The large women in my leaders' group have been working for years to build caring, committed relationships with one another as a base for doing the ongoing work. These relationships have proven to be very important but also difficult to build and maintain. In addition to the chronic struggles we all have with relationships, the internalized oppression between large women has had to be faced and discharged. This has been difficult, and we're only beginning to get a good start at it.

So, large women are struggling to have counselors close in with them as they go to battle with their early distresses. Much important discharge is happening here, on concrete struggles in present-day relationships, on early chronic feelings of being left to struggle alone, and on not giving up in the fight to train allies and bring them in close against internalized sexism and fat oppression.

It's made a big difference in my leaders' group that we have an ongoing commitment as a group to fight for ourselves, for our minds and our bodies. We can remember how smart and good and courageous each other is—even when we can't remember it about ourselves—and that gives us renewed leverage against our distresses.

Diane Shisk

With help from *Marion Ouphouet*
Seattle, Washington, USA



LA GRAU DU ROI, LANGUEDOC-ROUSSILLON, FRANCE • JOS SJOLLEMA

A good definition of oppression is not just "the systematic mistreatment of one group by another" but, more correctly, "the systematic mistreatment of one group of people often, but not always, with another serving as the agent of the oppression, with the mistreatment being organized and supported by the society."

Harvey Jackins

From *The Longer View*, page 117

Disability Oppression and Being Client

Our disability support group has met twice. In our second meeting we spent time discharging and thinking about how disability oppression affects our clienting and discharge. It is obvious to me, as both a person with disabilities and a leader, that disability oppression impacts every aspect of a person's life. For a long time I thought of disability as just another physical descriptor ("I have a disability, like I have brown hair"). Since beginning to think about disability oppression, I have noticed how insidious it is and how it contributes to and defines our identity and chronic patterns. I think that to be able to discharge on disability, we (and that includes everyone) need to look at and understand how it impacts our clienting.

The people in the group gave me permission to record and publish these thoughts:

HOW DISABILITY OPPRESSION AFFECTS OUR CLIENTING AND DISCHARGE

- We are treated as the most marginalised of the marginalised.
- I find it hard to client, as I have to explain my condition and then I worry about my counsellor's reaction.
- Names of illnesses get reactions and require explaining.
- The oppression suppresses clienting and discharge. The exception is when I'm getting good attention for a new injury.
 - It's hard to client on chronic conditions.
 - People are likely to give unsolicited advice and opinions.
 - Resource is lacking for clienting on this material—people call me even though they have lots of other counsellors.
 - People get fed up with* hearing about continuing conditions; I think they're bored by the subject matter.
 - I think people feel they're a failure as counsellor.
 - People have cliented at me about my health. This has cost me counsellors, which makes me cautious.
 - I wish counsellors would discharge on death, dying, and ill health.
 - A stigma in the public arena discourages us from focusing on our disabilities.
 - The health sector doesn't make it safe to discharge; I use lots of control mechanisms when having contact with the health system.
 - It's not safe to discharge in hospitals, as you will be subject to "mental health" oppression and labelled. When you are seen as "mentally ill," your every action gets over-reacted to; for example, crying means you are suicidal. People are more stigmatized by having a "mental health" condition than by having a physical condition.
 - When mobility is affected, it is hard to get to Co-Counselling sessions, and not having a driver's license makes it harder.

Tamsin Dancer

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

* Fed up with means impatient with and tired of.



Middle-Class People— Feeling Awkward, Reclaiming Connection



Seán Ruth¹ came to Atlanta, Georgia, USA, in November 2009, to lead a Middle-Class Liberation Workshop. He mentioned several times that we middle-class people are often fairly useless at connecting with people—that a lot of us have worked hard to make sure that we *look* like we are connecting while at the same time we are actually pretty² incompetent at it. The structure of RC can be appealing to middle-class people. There are rules for everything! All we have to do is walk around and be counselor all the time unless we are officially the client in a session. Great! We have a role!

As he talked, it became clear how this works for me. If I am always in counselor mode, then my friend X— is likely to client a lot when we are together. If she is the only one who ever shows herself in our relationship, then she is obviously the only one with any problems. This reassures me that I'm fine, leaves her feeling like a mess, and leaves us both without much of a real human connection—just the appearance of one (at least from my vantage point).

If X— is targeted by an oppression in which I am in an oppressor role, then already the message is that something is wrong with her and I am fine—and I am reinforcing this by never having to show myself while I “counsel” her. I am reinforcing the idea that I don't have to meet her halfway by doing the work of a relationship and showing myself like she does, and she gets exploited in our “relationship.”

This lack of connection can exist in RC relationships, too. I often make

some assessment ahead of time about what my Co-Counselor can (or will want to) handle, and then I client within those parameters. I do this with folks no matter how long I have been counseling with them. (I can and do step out of it, but clienting in a limited way is the default position.) This means that people rarely see all of me, even in RC, because I am parsing out pieces of myself in chunks that I think they will be willing to see and be able to handle.

I know that some of these struggles are what sometimes annoy other people about middle-class folks. The important thing for our allies to remember is that we would never have given up³ being and trusting ourselves if we'd had any other choice. What was expected of us, and who we were supposed to be, were moving targets. They changed constantly, depending on who was present and what they were doing or feeling. The foundation was that we were completely inappropriate and intolerable as we were, that we would never be “good” or “right,” and so our best hope was to at least appear to be good so that we could keep some people around us.

So, what is the “appropriate” thing for us middle-class people to do? First, we can stop trying so hard to be what we think we ought to be. We can risk not being “useful” and just stay—just hang out.⁴ I sometimes feel like I have to “nail my feet to the floor” so I don't leave when I feel awkward (which is the bulk of the time). Second, I have to risk showing myself, which often equates to doing (or being) something wrong. This

means that I have to practice being completely honest with myself about what I know or don't know, or even think or feel, about things. Then I also need to practice being honest with other people about these things, even if it means admitting that I'm feeling awkward. Third, I have to give other people more credit for what they can handle and for maybe being interested in getting to know about me. As an adult, I have never had a relationship in which it turned out⁵ that someone wanted or was able to see less of me than what I shared with him or her, yet I still consistently underestimate how much of me people want to see—even folks close to me.

RC allies, you can slow down a little and love us. Our patterns can make us eager and willing to do and be what we think you want, and we will work hard to follow your directions, anticipate where you are heading, and try to get there as quickly as possible (whether we have guessed right or not). However, if we can tell⁶ that you love us, and that you are not in a hurry for us to clean up the places that annoy you most, then we may be able to show you the struggles that we assume no one wants to see. We don't have much of a picture of our inherent goodness, so if you can hold it out, we might be able to more easily show you who we are.

With love and thanks
(and awkwardness!),

Leslie E. Kausch

Greensboro, North Carolina, USA
Reprinted from the RC e-mail discussion
list for leaders of middle-class people

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

² Pretty means quite.

³ Given up means abandoned.

⁴ Hang out means spend relaxed, unstructured time.

⁵ It turned out means it was revealed.

⁶ In this context, tell means see, perceive.

“Mental Health” Oppression and the School System

At an educational change workshop in Australia, some of us met at a topic table on “mental health” oppression. We found that our school years and our hurts from “mental health” oppression were connected.

The school system is one of the institutions of the oppressive society that hurt us and separate us from others. Children are tested, labeled, and targeted for the different ways they learn. Some are given psychiatric drugs. These practices can lead children to falsely believe that they are not “normal” or even that they are severely damaged. Having a parent or sibling who has been labeled in this way can also make them feel that they are different from other children at school.

In an oppressive society and school system, children are not free to discharge in the classroom. Teachers are also afraid to show their feelings and are under pressure to hide their “mental health” system identities or those of their family members. Without discharge, they act out oppressor distresses at the children. Children of color, children raised poor, disabled children, and others experience “mental health” oppression tangled together with other oppressions.

Telling our stories over and over again is key to cleaning up these hurts. There are many distresses to discharge and re-evaluate but also wonderful moments to reclaim—deep connections to other children and to teachers, and good experiences of learning.

Marilyn* encouraged us to keep discharging on our school years, even though we often say to ourselves, “I’ve finished working on that.”

Louisa Flander

Melbourne, Victoria, Australia
Reprinted from the RC e-mail discussion
list for leaders of educational change

* Marilyn Robb, the International Liberation Reference Person for Educational Change and the leader of the workshop



MARTIN URBEL

There *is* an addictive pull to not think, to find a formula, to be contented with a set routine. Until our re-emergence is complete, we need to remain aware of that pull and awarely resist it.

From the book “Quotes,” by Harvey Jackins

“Quotes”

by Harvey Jackins

When you’re rushed and very busy
Maybe stressed out, in a tizzy,

When it’s hurry, worry, blurry—
Want a bright thought as you scurry?

Want a quick refresher thought
That will make you smile and stop?

Harvey’s wisdom, honed and brief
In this booklet gives relief

From the pseudo garbage heap
Of false ideas, piled deep.

In your pocket it will fit
Packed with insights, love, and wit.

So give yourself a joyful gift—
Purchase “Quotes” and get a lift.

Katie Kauffman
Seattle, Washington, USA

A bargain at \$6.00 (U.S.)

An "Undoing Sexism" Gather-in

I attended a gather-in at Re-evaluation Counseling Community Resources (in Seattle, Washington, USA) on why and how we are ending male domination and sexism. People came from all over Washington State (USA). The meeting was led by Diane Shisk¹ and Steve Thompson.² It was a ground-breaking evening.

I was reminded that we are not alone in our particular relationship struggles, even though they feel very personal. We are set up³ to struggle with sexism alone, which keeps us apart from each other.

Diane opened the evening by talking about women's importance in the world, the profundity of women's history, and the impact of the women's liberation movement. Gale Picker⁴ added that RC might not have gotten far without the women's liberation movement.

The liberation of women is essential if we are to create a rational world. With women's oppression in place we are severely limited in our relationships and the resource we have for each other. This is true of the relationships between men and women, and also with our own gender.

Domination is a pattern that is a big part of every oppression. It originates at the very "top," where a handful of white men are in the business of ruling everyone else, and is handed down through the ranks and finds a specific expression in women's oppression (and every other oppression).

Diane addressed how the international women's liberation movement of the 1970s and '80s was viciously attacked in a major campaign of the reactionary forces, and how this had a significant effect on women's liberation in the RC Communities, causing it to become marginalized and slowed down. Fewer women's support groups happened. This was the face of internalized sexism, as most leaders in RC were women. Women saw it as their fault that they could not figure out how to keep the momentum going.

¹ Diane Shisk is the Alternate International Reference Person.

² Steve Thompson is an RC leader in Seattle, Washington, USA.

³ Set up means predisposed.

⁴ Gale Picker is an RC leader in Seattle, Washington, USA.

As women we are targeted by sexism all the time. We have to discharge on it constantly in order to move forward. Women's support groups are essential to our re-emergence.

Two major ways in which the oppression of women plays out⁵ are trivialization and male domination. What we women think and say is not noted as important. Our struggle against women's oppression does not get much public attention, and when we speak up about it, we are often ridiculed, trivialized, or overlooked completely.

Caretaking patterns from internalized sexism have also created a gridlock in our work in RC.



ELLIE SIMON

Women counseling men as their allies in the battle against men's oppression has shifted attention away from undoing sexism. Undoing men's oppression is integral to undoing sexism, but it does not replace the work of discharging the oppressor material⁶ that keeps sexism in place

or the work of discharging internalized sexism. Discharging on men's oppression and discharging on sexism have to go together in order to have close, honest, real relationships.

How can we women be firm and committed counselors to men if we have not discharged on sexism? What do women draw from in offering a rational perspective to men?

How can men be firm and committed counselors to women if they have not discharged on oppressor material? What do men draw from in offering space and interest and in challenging women to be powerful? A position of no blame is always essential.

This leads me to a statement Steve Thompson made. He said that in working on sexism he had to first decide to not blame women for the way they've been hurt by sexism. He described his struggle to figure out what the work actually was for him as a man and referred to the work on racism that white people have been doing.

⁵ Plays out means is acted out.

⁶ Material means distress.

One image that helped him think about sexism was the following:

Imagine that aliens mysteriously remove all women from the planet at once and all that is left are men. "What have I relied on women for that I would now have to discharge my way to? Such as, where have I relied on women for comfort? For my sense of connection or the maintenance of a social network? For warmth, or food, or a sense of home?"

It is possible to arrive at a perspective from which the work against sexism is for oneself as a man and not just in order to be a good ally to women.

We listened to a panel of three women—one Jewish, one Japanese, and one white Gentile—describing the effects of sexism on their lives. A roar of discharge went through the room in mini-sessions afterward.

Then we saw a demonstration of a man counseling on sex and possibly-attached patterns of domination.

Throughout the evening we did long mini-sessions.

I left the gather-in with a new perspective on what causes the struggle in our relationships and hopeful about the prospect of change.

In the January 2010 *Present Time* are two important articles on sexism: one by Diane Balsler, the International Liberation Reference Person for Women, "Sexism—Forgotten, Hidden, Trivialized, Denied" (on page 27) and one by Tim Jackins on men undoing sexism for their own sake, "Fighting Sexism, Regaining Pride" (on page 55). I highly recommend reading these, as they give a rich picture of the current cutting edge. Not to be missed!

Gudrun Onkels
Seattle, Washington, USA

● Short Talks by Tim Jackins, on CD ●

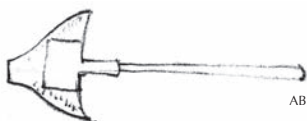
Rational Island Publishers is producing a series of CDs of talks given by Tim Jackins at recent workshops. They are intended primarily for RC teachers but can be ordered by anyone. A new CD is produced each quarter. The series is called *RC Teacher Updates*. Listed below are the CDs that are currently available.

The following CDs from 2010 are available for \$10 each:

- From the 2009 World Conference
- Deciding to Challenge Our Earliest Hurts
- Some Thoughts About Men

The following CDs from 2009 are available as a set or separately:

- An Effective Way to Work Early
- Understanding Our Present Abilities and Challenging Past Confusions
- Deciding to Challenge the Effects of Early Distress
- Some Basics of RC Family Work

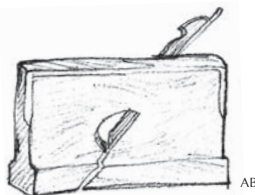


The following CDs from 2008 are available as a set or separately:

- A Recent Introduction to RC
- The Early Years of RC
- Fighting for Ourselves
- Overcoming Early Defeats

The following CDs from 2007 are available as a set or separately:

- White People Continuing to Move Against Racism
- Overcoming Early Distress
- Perspective and Decision
- RC Leaders, on Class Issues (DVD)



The following CDs from 2006 are available as a set or separately:

- Oppression and Sex
- The Uses and Limitations of Reassurance
- Participating in the RC World Conference 2005
- Moving Forward Together: RC Pre-World Conferences 2005

The following CDs from 2005 are available as a set or separately:

- Together for Larger Lives
- Ourselves and Our Societies
- A Human Perspective
- Three Steps Forward

The following CD from 2004 is available for \$10:

- Perspectives on Ourselves and Our Communities

Anyone can order any of these CDs for \$10 (U.S.) each, plus shipping and handling. The entire 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, and 2009 4-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, one calendar year at a time (but mailed out quarterly as they are released), for \$25 a year. (For ordering information, see page 109.)

From Young Adult to Ally

Recently, for the first time, I attended an RC workshop as a “grown up.” I had been in RC almost a decade and attended more workshops than I could count, always as a young adult. Many identities are “fluid”—the fluidity of age identities being particularly noticeable. All of us get older, and whether we like it or not we grow out of our constituencies.

I became invested in the young-adult identity as throughout my twenties I struggled to find my voice and truth and to live outside the matrix of what capitalism says is possible. I wanted more, and RC’s young-adult-liberation perspective challenged me to go for it¹—to reach for community, my dreams, a better world. I knew, as the “Big Three-O”² approached, that it was going to be a difficult transition. I had built around me a young-adult community of Co-Counselors and felt upset with myself for “leaving them behind.” I knew I was about to take on³ the oppressor role that I had been working against for so long.

¹ Go for it means enthusiastically move forward.

² The “Big Three-O” is age thirty, the end of young adulthood.

³ In this context, take on means adopt.

Ayana Morse, a former International Liberation Reference Person for Young Adults, had begun preparing us for the transition. At young-adult leaders’ workshops she had separated the “older” young adults (roughly ages twenty-five to thirty) from the “younger” ones (roughly ages twenty to twenty-four) and gotten us “older” folks to look at what had been hard on us in our early twenties and what had gotten easier as we’d aged. It was a way for us to begin looking at how we were oppressing the younger folks because we had already forgotten what it was like to be their age. I realized that as people get older, they don’t necessarily get clueless⁴ (as was my impression for many years). They may just want to forget about how hard it was. And because young-adult oppression is no longer hitting older adults in the face, they can forget.

It’s not like we turn thirty or thirty-one and suddenly life is grand. At every age we face and engage in new challenges, but in the process of getting older we can forget what we previously had to overcome. Metaphorically I might say it in the following manner: Once

⁴ Clueless means ignorant and unaware.

you make it to⁵ the other side of the mountain, it’s easy to forget how hard it was to climb up. And as time passes, the forgetting seems to get even easier.

I went into my first grown-up workshop knowing all this. I also knew that I wanted other “formerlies”⁶ around me, so at the first lunch of the workshop I called a topic table for thirty-somethings.⁷ There were over a dozen of us there. We did a go-around in which we shared what we liked about our age and what was hard about it. I had done that in young-adult circles, too, and I think it’s what people of all ages should be doing. This time I added another go-around: What do you want more of? People wanted to play more and to see their friends more often. They wanted their friends to get off anti-depressants. Some of them wanted to stop being pressured to have children; others wanted more support in raising theirs. When one guy answered, “I want to quit my job and travel the world,” a wave of discharge and applause swept over the table and we called it a day.⁸

I continue to reach out to Co-Counselors who were at that table, for mini-sessions and check-ins over the phone (they all live far from me). I continue to lean on them as I struggle to notice all I have achieved and to realize I am right where I should be. I continue to discharge on what it was like in my early twenties, because even though my identity as a young adult has come to an end, my role as an ally is something I hope never to transition out of.

Stephanie Abraham
Los Angeles, California, USA

⁵ Make it to means arrive at.

⁶ Former young adults

⁷ Thirty-somethings are people who are in their thirties.

⁸ In this context, called it a day means decided to end the meeting.



DIANE SHISK

Male Domination, Starting Early

Thanks, Diane,¹ for asking us to write about male domination in our lives and about caretaking patterns and how we act them out in RC as women leaders. I have known for a long time that I wanted to write and that I had something to say about these things. Yet the second a Co-Counseling session would end, it was hard for me to remember what I wanted to say and that it was important that I say it.

Male domination started early for me. I am an Italian Catholic female, and a twin. My twin is male, obviously also Italian Catholic. I was the stronger and healthier of the two of us in utero, and we also had a sister. We would have been triplets if she had survived. My brother barely made it.² He was born in bad shape.³ My dad looked at him and was heard to say, "He's not my son. There must be some mistake. No son of mine would look that way."

My being a female who was stronger, bigger, more athletic, and seemingly more intelligent than my twin brother was not something my Italian Catholic family was equipped to handle. The boy is supposed to be all of these things. Gay oppression began early, and male domination shaped my entire life. My parents made every decision about my life based on what they perceived would make my brother feel better. In their eyes, whenever I showed myself fully, acted big, was proud, or succeeded, I was hurting him; I was making him feel bad. They decided that had to stop.

I was skipped from third to fifth grade so that my brother would not have to face my successes on a daily basis. I had already been the youngest person in my grade. When I skipped to the fifth grade, I was almost two years younger than everyone else, and no one gave me any information to help me understand why I was not ready, physically or emotionally, for the things my classmates were doing. I could, however, keep up⁴ academically.

I loved sports and athletics, but any time I participated in a tournament and arrived home with a trophy, I was told angrily to get rid of it, hide it, or throw it away—that it would just be hurting my brother.

I was left feeling that I did not matter, that my life did not matter, that I was important to no one. I figured out early on that if I wanted to have any contact with any human being, I had to do what he or she wanted and be there for him or her. As was the case with my brother, my life was a tool used to make people feel better. I am often given the direction by my closest Co-Counselors, "You are not a public utility to be used up by everyone else."

When I was young, if I showed myself or what I wanted, I would be left completely alone. This fueled the caretaking patterns that run for me as a female RC leader. I have to remember that I am not here to take care of everyone else in my Community, that I get to decide what I want for my life, and that in doing so I will not be left alone. This is a daily battle I wage with my internalized sexism. My relationships with folks may change, but I will not be left alone like I was as a child—ever again. That is over!

As I grew up, the sport I fell in love with the most and wanted to be great at was basketball. I dreamed of hitting the game-winning shot, of someday even playing in the Olympics. I don't know how much of that was a frozen need⁵ to be important to someone, to matter to anyone, but it is what I dreamed of.

continued . . .

⁵ Frozen need is a term used in RC for a hurt that results when a rational need is not met in childhood. The hurt compels a person to keep trying to fill the need in the present, but the frozen need cannot be filled; it can only be discharged.



PENROSE POINT STATE PARK, WASHINGTON, USA • ALISA LEMIRE BROOKS

¹ Diane Balsler, the International Liberation Reference Person for Women

² Made it means survived.

³ Shape means condition.

⁴ Keep up means stay at the same level they were at.

LIBERATION

... continued

My mom hated that I played the game. She hated everything about basketball. She would ask me why I wanted to throw that stupid orange ball into that stupid hole. When she thought I wasn't listening, she would ask my dad how much longer I was going to play, as she spewed her fears about me being a Lesbian. I didn't know what that word meant, but I knew that according to my mom it was not a good thing. My dad would calm her by telling her that I wasn't good enough and that I wouldn't be playing much longer. No one in my family could understand an Italian Catholic female wanting to be great at something, let alone something athletic—wanting something other than to be a wife and a mom.

By the age of thirteen I had already internalized the message that I was not a real female. The sometimes spoken, sometimes unspoken, fear in my family was that there had been mix-up in the womb and that I had received the male genes and my brother had received the female genes.

For many reasons connected to sexism and male domination, I did not get the opportunity to play on a basketball team with women until I arrived at college at the age of sixteen—far too young emotionally for me to be in college. The women's varsity team was ranked third in the nation, and having never played on a team, I was obviously not ready for that. I did make⁶ the junior varsity team.

I would look in awe at the varsity players. How could I ever become as good as they were? I was terrified of them. They were huge, muscular, and to me looked and acted like men. It seemed to me like the women who played on the varsity team were Lesbians and the women who played on the junior varsity team were heterosexuals.

One day I walked into the locker room area and said to myself, "Fine, if everyone thinks I am a Lesbian, I will be a Lesbian." I thought I had to be a



YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK, CALIFORNIA, USA • THERESA D'AMATO

Lesbian in order to be the great basketball player I wanted to be. That decision lasted about five minutes. In those five minutes I felt the internalized Gay oppression envelop me and decided that I could not handle it. And with that I felt like I gave up⁷ my dream to be a great basketball player. Sexism, male domination, and Gay oppression had me confused into believing that real women could not become great basketball players. What a heartbreaking conclusion!

How has all of this affected how I lead women?

It has taken me many years of discharging to believe and feel, some of the time, that I am leading women as a woman—

that I am a real woman in every fiber and cell of my being, as Diane says.

Sexism and male domination, including sexual violence directed at me at a young age, caused many of my frozen needs to be pinned on⁸ women. I have discharged massive amounts of these frozen needs and have built a gang of women around me. I have close, strong, loving relationships with these women and can tell⁹ that they love me and will not leave me. This is huge for me. My relationships with these women have given me a place from which to discharge the terror from the sexual violence, the threats of violence, and the heavy targeting of me because I stepped outside the box of what women were supposed to be. I believe it is terror that has held my internalized sexism in place.

I lead believing that we all carry some form of terror from whatever version of sexism, male domination, and Gay oppression we each experienced; from the violence, the threat of violence, and the heavy conditioning to be what we were supposed to be as women. It was terrifying to be robbed of our inherent human selves—whether we were forced inside the small box or we attempted to step outside of what we were allowed to be as women. Our particular individual hurts may have driven us toward men for

⁶ Make means get accepted onto.

⁷ Gave up means abandoned.

⁸ Pinned on means attached to.

⁹ In this context, tell means perceive, notice.

closeness, cover, and safety, or away from men (really away from the sexism and male domination that we confused with men) in a defiant, angry, and false belief that we could go it alone,¹⁰ that we didn't need anyone, and certainly not men! But we were all terrorized.

I began in RC by telling my women's leader that sexism didn't affect me because I was an athlete, that by being a competitive athlete I had escaped the oppression. I cried this morning, on Mothers' Day, about how the choices I made to pursue basketball came at the cost of having anyone close to me, including my mom. When I was thirteen years old, it looked like the choice was between having myself or having my mom. I chose myself. The cost was huge, and the isolation has been what I have most had to contradict in RC.

I lead based on my long-term belief in the discharge and re-evaluation process, and in myself. Peeling off the outer layers of distress to get to the core chronic material¹¹ has taken an incredible amount of time, compassion, discipline, and relentless determination and a willingness to feel bad and uncomfortable in sessions (while trying to figure out how not to feel those things outside of sessions).

My women's support group works monthly, through the lens of its leader, on sexism and male domination and their connections to Gay oppression and homophobia. We are continuously working to deepen our relationships with each other so that we can actually discharge the terror. How do we get close enough to each other, physically and emotionally, to contradict the isolation and discharge the terror? How does homophobia keep us from getting as close as we need to be to be able to do this work?

I lead women in my Region with the understanding that most of us can't bear to face and feel the impact of the oppression on our lives. I am relentless in continuing to point us toward the effects rather than away, yet I never feel like I have actually made a difference. It all looks like such a small drop in the vast, unending ocean of sexism and male domination. (That would be my feelings, eh?)

I lead my Italian Catholic women's support group, made up of women who feel like home to me. We meet in a bimonthly international conference call. Our group includes an Italian Catholic woman born in Italy, presently living in England, and other Italian Catholic

women who live across the United States. It is in this group that I can feel the terror from being so heavily targeted as a female—from the violence and threats of violence, from living in a home in which even the kindest conversation was a screaming match.

My next step is to continue to reach out to men and figure out how to have good relationships with them, in and out of RC. I have been terrified of men and have often tried to get close to them on top of all the terror. It was what I was supposed to do if I was a "real" woman. I can now move toward men with my gang of women right there with me, and with a little less terror. Hopefully I can continue to prioritize women as I get close to men. I will keep you posted.¹²

Jeanette Armentano

Portland, Oregon, USA

Reprinted from the e-mail discussion list for leaders of women

¹² Posted means informed.



RUSSELL HAYES

One of the principal means used by classist societies to maintain their oppression and exploitation of people has been to secure the cooperation of different groups of people in *oppressing each other*.

Harvey Jackins

From *The List*, page 167

¹⁰ Go it alone means survive alone, on our own.

¹¹ Material means distress.

Appreciating PRESENT TIME

Wow. This is amazing to have PRESENT TIME with me. I keep calling PRESENT TIME a lovely treasure. Each time I read it, my love for living gets encouraged. I feel proud to be an RCer. No other reading makes me this happy and proud.



S. J. Shashikala
Ramanchandrapuran, Bangalore, India

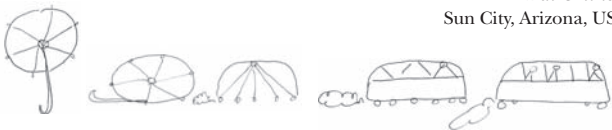
I think PRESENT TIME is going from strength to strength. It's a wonderful resource.

Caroline New
Redcliffe, Bristol, England



I had misplaced my October issue of PRESENT TIME and recently had the opportunity to read it. I was delighted and moved by the reports from the World Conference. The work done on the *Guidelines* impressed me with its thoroughness and the participation by conference participants. I was also moved to read about the Tule Lake visit and the work done by the RC Community to assist the Japanese Americans who had been held there to share their stories and discharge about those excruciating times. The section on language was fun to read, particularly because our Community has been doing some eliminating-racism work on the topic of language. Thank you to everyone who shared his or her thinking and experiences.

Pat Orlinski
Sun City, Arizona, USA



UMBRELLA TRANSFORMS INTO A BUS • KK

I enjoy PRESENT TIME a lot, especially those pics.*

Sangwoo Kwon
Seoul, South Korea

* Pictures



XO

Thank you very much for an interesting new copy of PRESENT TIME, as always a pleasure.

Jos Sjollema
Nonette, France

I love getting PRESENT TIME each quarter. It has been good getting two copies. I've been giving them to my Co-Counselors. Each issue is rich with useful ideas and fertile ground for further discharge.



© AARON GALLOWAY

Lance Cablk
Auckland, New Zealand

Big thanks to everyone who worked on the April issue of PRESENT TIME. In addition to the articles that offer so much, I have enjoyed the joyful, re-emergent sketches and pictures.

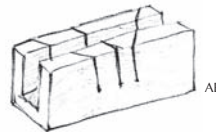
Pam Roby
Santa Cruz, California, USA



FK

Thank you for keeping PRESENT TIME so well presented.

Pam Bellinger
Leicester, Leicestershire, England



AB

With love and continuing ongoing appreciation of the RC literature—it is a joy. I love to hear from people around the world about their struggles and especially their successes, and the uplifting tone supported by the editing never fails to remind me of the upward trend.

Fiona Adamson
London, England



ST

Thanks for PRESENT TIME—I adore it!

Vicky Grosser
Manifold Heights, Victoria, Australia



AM

Dear Tim,*

I just received the April PRESENT TIME. How wonderful! I am leading an early sexual memories workshop this weekend for my Region and would like to make copies of your opening article, "The Importance of Physical Contact."

Sharon Peters
Brooklyn, New York, USA

* Tim Jackins



Bringing Men into RC



LK

From a talk by Tim Jackins at a men's workshop in the midwest United States, April 2010

The first RC fundamentals class had about thirty people in it. There were two young people: my older brother and I. It was taught with a large chalkboard at the front and my father in a blue suit and tie drawing diagrams from *The Human Side of Human Beings* on the board. He and Mary McCabe, one of the early co-workers in developing RC, were both there. It was the first time they had tried to systematically communicate RC to a large group of people. And there was an *Elementary Manual* that my brother and I mimeographed on one of those old mimeograph machines. The no-socializing policy¹ was on blue paper, different from all the other pages so that it stood out.

People had a hard time learning. It was slow. They had Co-Counseling sessions. Things did move. Some people could discharge a little. But an overall perspective was not yet developed. (It was 1958.) Still, my father and his associates had made the decision that if they could do it, anybody could. They had to figure out how to get other people able to do it, so they went ahead. People stayed around a while, and things worked, but without the overall perspective, without all the things we now take for granted in RC, everybody leaned very heavily on the people who were teaching the class. The teachers learned a lot, and the classes got better and better. We are

¹The no-socializing policy of the RC Communities states that Co-Counselors should not set up any relationships, other than Co-Counseling, with other Co-Counselors or with people whom they first meet in a Co-Counseling context.

here now because of it. It was a big piece of work to take on.²

Now the question is—looking at what happens to men, and knowing that men can get here (because we did)—how can we make it more possible for guys? What is it we can do? I think the first thing is to recognize that it's a big battle, and it's not because of some small mistake or misunderstanding on our part that things are that way. Certain aspects of our societies make life hard on men in particular ways that make it difficult for them to open up, to allow themselves to feel openly. So many guys cannot feel. It seems dangerous to feel anything. Their whole lives are spent trying not to—by working hard enough, or drinking hard enough after the job, or taking enough sedatives or sleeping pills, or being busy enough. To feel is not going to seem safe. It just isn't.

² In this context, take on means undertake.



ANDY SMITH

I think it would be useful, for each of us guys and probably for everyone in RC, to go after³ a guy, not with the intent of getting him into Co-Counseling or taking care of him, but with the intent of improving his life using what we know in Co-Counseling. The goal would be to figure out how to do that, rather than to get him here. In general, men are not here because we don't yet know how to help them well enough. We get scared when things get too heavy.

I've tried to take on⁴ men who gave up at every place I made myself go forward. The places where I pushed myself or was hard on myself so that I didn't stay stuck, where I drove myself forward, they gave up. It feels miserable to see one's distress material, in its worst form, on someone else. I didn't get stopped by it, but it hasn't been fully human. It's been rigid. One guy I know has been asked on job applications, "How good are you at doing this?" and he has said, "I'm lousy. I can't do that at all." Every past defeat is written down as the way he must be forever, as if there is no possible way out of it. This helps my sessions, because I have to look at it, and I can't be satisfied with how I survived it. I actually have to discharge and heal. I have to fully win those battles so that I can help him win. He can't simply do it the way I did it. It has to be more alive and human than that. I will learn a lot in this struggle, and he will get to develop

continued . . .

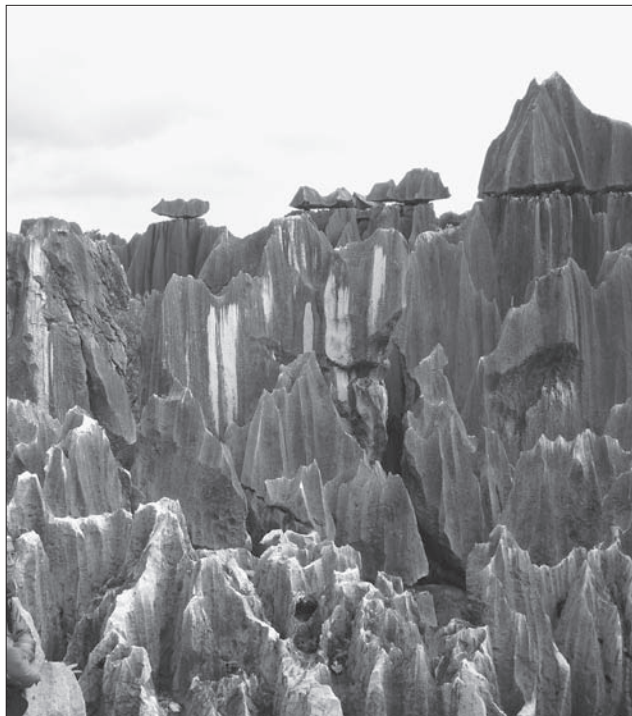
³ Go after means pursue.

⁴ In this context, take on means help.

... continued

a bigger life out of it. But just for me, I will learn a lot by daring to fully discharge these distresses.

I suspect that we all have to do some of this work—not with the intent of getting somebody into Co-Counseling. I think that misleads us a little, and lets us give up on the person. We bring people into Co-Counseling, and when it gets too difficult and they walk away, we say, “Oh well.” At some point we need to be able to go after people, guys in particular, and not give up on them even when they walk away. We actually



STONE FOREST, KUNMING, CHINA • DAN KWONG

have to not just watch them walk away. This means that we may have to stand in opposition to their heavy material⁵ and argue with it. As near as they likely will be able to tell,⁶ we will be arguing with *them*. I’ve yelled back at guys when their distresses made them want to run. We’ve sat there and yelled at each other, and then, after that, things could go on again. But without that fight—without the yelling and their showing how terrifying it was to open up anything, and me standing my ground against their fears—it couldn’t have happened.

I think we can reach anybody we are willing to fight for. We are fighting against their material because they can’t do it, yet. For a while they don’t know that it’s possible, but if they see us fight against their material long enough, it begins to appear possible.

⁵ Material means distress.

⁶ In this context, tell means perceive.

They get the idea that maybe they can fight against it, too, and then things can change. I think that long-range that’s the solution.

Short-range we have to show more of ourselves, we have to be more human, more alive. We have to show that we care about people. We have to bring with us pictures of the people we love and show them to other guys. We have to do all of the things we get really uneasy about doing. We have to be more human out in the open. It may make certain guys want to run away, and it will make a lot of guys uneasy. And a certain large set of guys will think, “Oh, I didn’t think that anybody cared as much as I did,” and they will take it as reassurance, and it will make certain things possible for them, including listening to us.

We understand what the struggles are, and we know how to change things in good directions. But what demonstrates most clearly the things

we know is us. If we want another man to understand RC on the basis of being a man, rather than by being helped by a woman whom he has reactively hunted for all his life to help him, then it has to be us. It has to be us being human and warm and yet able to stand there against his harsh distress. I suspect that’s our path.

Question: You said you yelled back. What did that do? What were you doing there? Was it a contradiction?

Tim: It worked. As near as I could read the situation, the guy was feeling terrified and trying to get away into numb isolation, and I would not let him do that. I stood in opposition to that distress and yelled back and said, “You can do this. We have an agreement. I’m going to hold you to that agreement.” It was about twenty minutes of yelling.

Why should men get into RC? Because they get to be like you. That’s the main reason: because they get to be like you. They get to have a larger life, like you. They get to think bigger, they get to feel more alive. They get to be more of the way they want to be. They get to be like you. You’re the reason they should be in RC. But if you are hiding yourself, how are they going to figure that out? You’re bringing them medicine instead of showing them what’s possible, and not everyone likes someone who brings them medicine. They know it’s going to taste bad, and they’re not sure it’s going to work. You are the proof of why they should be here,

⁷ Contradiction to distress

and if you hide that fact and try to convince them to get here on some other basis, you're not going to be effective, and in some way you are misleading them. You really are the reason they should be here. You are exactly the reason. And if they knew that they could have the liberation you have already accomplished, they would love to be here, and they would be willing to face big battles.

It's the same with our leadership on larger issues. We are too quiet. We are still afraid. We are still feeling the effects of our thinking having been

shushed,⁸ of not being supported, of teachers shouting us down and oppressive forces making us be quiet. Nobody is making us be quiet now. We do it to ourselves. An oppressive society cannot hire enough guards to have one at every door. We have to do it to ourselves. We have to be hurt enough that we shush ourselves. This is part of the struggle. We have to decide that our thoughts are worth considering. If we can show ourselves and our thinking more and

⁸ Shushed means hushed, quieted, suppressed.

more openly, we won't have such a struggle with men coming into RC. And people will ask us what we do, and we will have a chance to play a leading role.

Society is going to fall down. Everything is probably going to fall down in our lifetimes. That wasn't so clear before. It's pretty⁹ clear now. To guide that big change so that it isn't too destructive is going to take people who can think, like you.

⁹ Pretty means quite.



CHARLIE ROSENBERG

Nothing prevents communication, agreement, and cooperation between any humans except distress patterns. Given knowledge of their nature, these distress patterns can be coped with, handled, and removed.

Harvey Jackins
From *The Reclaiming of Power*, page 329

Raring to Go¹

Mumias, Kenya, has a relatively new RC Community. For the past two years the RC teachers in Nairobi (Kenya) have been visiting St. Mary's Girls' Secondary School in Mumias to hold workshops. And the school has now fully established RC.

During the November 2009 workshop in Mumias, we left several copies of the *Fundamentals Teaching Guide and Class Outline* for pioneer RC Communities. The school not only fully studied the literature but they shared RC with other schools in the district. In mid-February of this year we got a call from the Mumias RC Community saying that since the November workshop they had been organizing themselves and would like to have a workshop including the new members from the other schools.

Back in Nairobi, we held several meetings with Wanjiku Kironyo, the Apprentice Regional Reference Person for Kenya and Surrounds, after which I prepared a team of RC teachers to travel with to Mumias. Since it's about nine hours by bus one way, we needed to get days off from school and work. The team was comprised of Samuel,² Jane Lucy,³ Tabitha,⁴ and me.

continued . . .

¹ Raring to go means enthusiastic and eager about proceeding.

² Samuel Kiriro Wairimu, an RC leader in Nairobi, Kenya

³ Jane Lucy Wambui Gachihi, an RC leader in Nairobi, Kenya

⁴ Tabitha Nyokabi, an RC leader in Nairobi, Kenya

TEACHING, LEADING, COMMUNITY BUILDING

...continued

We left Nairobi at half past eight on the morning of 27 February. The route has breathtaking scenery. Upon arrival in Mumias it started raining heavily. The mode of transportation from Mumias town to the guest house was by a motorcycle cab that had a cabin to carry three passengers. We had to squeeze in with two other passengers, totaling six, and by the time we got to the guest house we were soaking wet. We had fun discharging on that.

THE WORKSHOP

The host school, St. Mary's, and the other schools got to the hall on time. We did a review of RC theory, a counseling demonstration, and support groups in the afternoon.

Samuel led a support group for men in which they discharged on the challenges faced by young men in high school. I led one for the female students and talked about rising above our distresses, sexism, and young adult oppression as we work toward becoming leaders in every aspect of our lives. We worked on a list of things that are not true about us but have been told to us over and over. We got a list of twenty-six things and discharged heavily on it. Jane Lucy and Tabitha led a support group for school teachers in which the teachers had a chance to counsel on the difficulties they are facing as people in leadership and as allies to the young people. They requested a teachers-only workshop for all the districts, and we will work on that. Nicholas⁵ led a support group for students with special needs. One of the highlights of the workshop was inclusion. The students with special needs at first were feeling left out because they had to sit strategically where they could see their sign-language interpreter. The room also presented challenges. We worked around this, and they expressed their appreciation. This led to discharge in their support group. After the support groups we presented RC literature to the schools, which they fully appreciated.

CHALLENGES

Having a large number of students at the workshop was challenging. We changed the sitting arrangement and had them do sessions often, which made the workshop flow smoothly.

CONCLUSION AND APPRECIATION

This Community is growing, and we feel ready and motivated to give it all the support we can. The fundamentals teaching guides that we carried away from the 2009 Pre-World Conference in Johannesburg (South Africa) have come in handy. There was a lot of teamwork in sharing the expenses of the workshop. I am grateful to each and every RCer who worked toward making the workshop the success it was. We recognize and appreciate the fact that students are the future of this nation. That they have embraced RC and have even taken it to other areas outside their communities is a step in the right direction.

Janet W. Kabue
Nairobi, Kenya

⁵ Nicholas Oiko, an RC leader in Kwisero, Mumias, Kenya



ANDY VERNON-JONES

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 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 110 of this issue.



Salvadorans Building a Community, Discharging on War



KS

I recently spent a week in El Salvador and want to inform you about the good work being done in the RC Community there.

Some background information: El Salvador has a long history of genocide, oppression, and suffering, from both Spanish and U.S. imperialism dating back to the Spanish conquest in the sixteenth century. All Salvadorans have been affected by this history and most recently by the twelve-year civil war (1980 to 1992), which was fought between a coalition of leftist groups known as the FMLN (Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front), backed by Cuba and the Soviet Union, and the right-wing military dictatorship backed by the United States. Approximately 75,000 (of 6.2 million) people were killed in the civil war. Almost everyone I met in El Salvador had a relative who was killed.

After peace accords were signed in 1992, all armed FMLN units were demobilized and their organization became a legal political party. In 2009 the FMLN won the presidential elections with former journalist Mauricio Funes as its candidate. U.S. imperialism is still a powerful force in El Salvador, but it has taken new forms.

This was the third workshop I had led in El Salvador. The first one, in 2000, was a powerful learning experience for me. I had to discharge a lot about the suffering caused by U.S. imperialism. A few years after the 2000 workshop, the leader of the RC Community in El Salvador left RC and the Community went through some difficult times. María Lorena Cuéllar Barandiarán¹ decided to rebuild the Community. In 2008, and again this year, she invited me to lead a workshop there on healing the hurts of the civil war. This year Ellie Hidalgo² and Nelson Simon,³ from the United States, came to interpret, along with Lorena. Their efforts were indispensable to the success of the workshop.

There were eighteen Salvadorans attending the workshop (including five young adults and six men) and one woman from Chile. Every demonstration was connected to the war. I stressed the importance of

people telling their stories but also did demonstrations on leadership and what it is like to be a young adult in El Salvador. In the last demonstration a young man started by discharging a lot of embarrassment and ended by talking and crying about the separation between him and his parents because of different politics and how his parents had been hurt by the war.

On Saturday evening we had a memorial march in memory of Monsignor Romero, a Catholic Archbishop who had spoken out forcefully against the injustices of the military regime and was assassinated thirty years ago. Everyone had a chance to talk about what Monsignor Romero meant to him or her, or to honor someone close to him or her who had been killed in the war.

It was rewarding to see the growth in the Community over the last two years—in their understanding of RC theory and practice and in their attention for each other as they discharged on war. I could see great caring and thoughtfulness between them and a powerful commitment to continue this work. In addition, the Community has expanded to the countryside.

The RC Community in El Salvador is based in a Catholic parish in one of the poorest areas of the city of San Salvador, which was deeply committed to the guerillas and suffered greatly during the war. It is challenging to build an RC Community in the aftermath of war, in conditions of extreme poverty, and in which everyone has common distresses from the civil war and the current economic conditions. Lorena has done a magnificent job in building and leading this Community.

On Monday afternoon I, with about twelve Co-Counselors, conducted a public presentation at the parish to about sixty people on “Healing from the Hurts of War Without Forgetting Our History: An Introduction to Re-evaluation Counseling.” It was quite moving, as several people had the opportunity to share their stories publicly (everyone did in mini-sessions) and discharge. For many people it was the first time they had told their story.

¹ María Lorena Cuéllar Barandiarán is an RC leader in San Salvador, El Salvador.

² Ellie Hidalgo is an RC teacher in Los Angeles, California, USA.

³ Nelson Simon is an RC teacher in Brooklyn, New York, USA.



Julian Weissglass
International Commonality Reference
Person for Wide World Change
Santa Barbara, California, USA

Traducción al castellano del artículo precedente:

Gente Salvadoreña construyendo una comunidad, desahogando sobre guerra

Estuve recientemente por una semana en El Salvador y quiero informarles acerca del buen trabajo que se está haciendo en la comunidad de RC allí.

Alguna información de referencia: El Salvador tiene una larga historia de genocidio, opresión y sufrimiento por parte de ambos, el imperialismo español y el imperialismo estadounidense los cuales tienen sus orígenes en la conquista española en el Siglo XVI. Todos salvadoreños han sido afectados por esta historia y más recientemente por los doce años de guerra civil (1980-1992), la cual fue peleada entre el FMLN (Frente Farabundo Martí para la Liberación Nacional), una coalición de grupos de la izquierda respaldado por Cuba y la Unión Soviética y la dictadura de la derecha respaldado por los Estados Unidos. Mataron aproximadamente 75,000 (de 6.2 millones) personas en la guerra civil. Casi todos los que conocí en El Salvador tienen un familiar muerto en la guerra civil.

Después de la firma de los Acuerdos de Paz en 1992, todas las unidades armadas del FMLN fueron desmovilizadas y su organización llegó a convertirse en un partido político legal. En 2009 el FMLN ganó las elecciones presidenciales con el ex-periodista Mauricio Funes. El imperialismo estadounidense es todavía una fuerza poderosa en El Salvador pero ha tomado nuevas formas.

Este fue el tercer taller que yo lideré en El Salvador. El primero en el 2000 fue una poderosa experiencia de aprendizaje para mí. Tenía que desahogar bastante acerca del sufrimiento causado por el imperialismo estadounidense. Pocos años después del taller de 2000, el líder de la comunidad de RC en El Salvador dejó RC y la comunidad



STEVE THOMPSON

atravesó momentos difíciles. María Lorena Cuéllar Barandiarán¹ decidió reconstruir la comunidad. En 2008, y otra vez este año, ella me invitó para liderer un taller allí sobre el tema de sanar las heridas de la guerra civil. Ellie Hidalgo² y Nelson Simon³ de los Estados Unidos vinieron para hacer la traducción oral junto con Lorena. Sus esfuerzos fueron indispensables para el éxito del taller.

Fueron mas o menos de dieciocho salvadoreños asistiendo el taller (incluyendo cinco adultos jóvenes

y seis hombres) y una mujer de Chile. Cada demostración estuvo conectada con la guerra. Enfatizé en la importancia de contar sus historias pero tambien hice demostraciones sobre el liderazgo y lo que significa ser uno joven adulto en El Salvador. La última demostración comenzó con un hombre joven desahogando bastante su vergüenza y terminó hablando y llorando sobre la separación entre él y sus padres debido a las diferencias políticas y cómo sus padres habían sido heridos por la guerra.

El sábado en la noche tuvimos una marcha conmemorativa en memoria de Monseñor Romero, un arzobispo católico que denunció enérgicamente las injusticias del régimen militar y que fue asesinado hace treinta años. Cada uno tuvo un tiempo para hablar sobre el significado de Monseñor Romero para él o ella y para honrar la memoria de alguien cercano a él o ella y que murió en la guerra.

Fue muy gratificante ver el crecimiento en la comunidad a través de los dos años—en su entendimiento de la teoría y práctica de RC y en su atención entre sí mientras desahogan sobre la guerra. Pude ver entre la gente un gran cariño y cuidado, y un poderoso compromiso para continuar este trabajo. Además, la comunidad se ha extendido hacia el campo.

La comunidad de RC tiene su sede en una parroquia católica situada en una de las áreas más pobres de San Salvador y que estuvo

¹ María Lorena Cuéllar Barandiarán es lideresa de RC en San Salvador, El Salvador.

² Ellie Hidalgo es maestra de RC en Los Angeles, California, Estados Unidos.

³ Nelson Simon es maestro de RC en Brooklyn, Nuevo York, Estados Unidos.

profundamente comprometida con la guerrilla y sufrió enormemente durante la guerra. Exige mucho esfuerzo construir una comunidad tras una guerra y en condiciones de extrema pobreza, donde todos tienen angustias comunes de las memorias de la guerra civil y las actuales condiciones económicas. Lorena ha hecho un magnífico trabajo en construir y liderer esta comunidad.

El lunes en la tarde, dirigí junto a otros doce co-escuchas, una presentación pública en la parroquia para mas o menos de sesenta personas sobre "Sanar de las heridas de la guerra sin olvidar nuestra historia: una Introducción a Re-evaluación y Co-escucha." Fue totalmente conmovedor ya que varias personas tuvieron la oportunidad de compartir públicamente sus

historias (y todos en mini-sesiones) y desahogar. Para muchas personas esta fue la primera vez que habian contado su historia.

Julián Weissglass
Persona de Referencia Internacional
Para Cambio del Mundo
Santa Barbara, California,
Estado Unidos
Traducido por
María Lorena Cuéllar Barandiarán



I think we understand the no-socializing [policy] better now. The essence of the safeguard is that this way people will not hang their patterns on each other in an attempt to fill frozen needs, but will instead remain true to helping each other get out of patterns.

Harvey Jackins
From *The Rest of Our Lives*, page 198



The RC Teacher No. 29!



The RC Teacher No. 29 complements Issue No. 28, published in 2009. Together the two issues update *The New Kind of Communicator* and are invaluable tools for all RC teachers.

The RC Teacher No. 29 contains 128 pages on teaching ongoing classes, building the RC Community, leadership development, using RC literature, and organizing and leading RC workshops and includes sections on Goal 2 (young people), Goal 3 (care of the environment), and Goal 4 (growth). (A section on Goal 1 [ending racism] appeared in *The RC Teacher* No. 28.)

Throughout the issue are articles on the many ways RC leaders are working to build and diversify our Communities, develop and support leadership, and focus on our goals as they teach.

The RC Teacher No. 28 includes the following sections: Teaching Fundamentals, RC Policies, RC Community Goals, Our Work on Racism, Techniques, and Counseling with Attention Away from Distress.

Whether you plan to teach RC in a class setting or one-to-one, are getting ready to lead a workshop or would like to be ready to tell your friends and family about RC, you want to have both of these issues of *The RC Teacher* in your RC library.

Each issue is \$3.00 (U.S.), plus shipping and handling.

To order, see page 109.



TIMNA RAZ

The Laughter in Lagos

Mama Melphy¹ in the driver's seat,
then Onii² stood to conduct
while Chioma,³ and all passengers,
got ready, fastened seat belts . . .

Like a charging locomotive,
Off it went—chaka cham-gwom gwom . . .
Gradually pulling and pushing,
steadily moving and musing,
speedily splashing and spreading.

Like a wildfire, flaming without control,
touching all hearts and hands,
lighting even dead woods into life again.
Shaking and quaking bodies,
flying even Chief's flowing gown
'round and about.

What a contagious "disease,"
healing souls, freeing minds,
wiping out those blockages,
setting hearts and heads free.

Faces ravish and blossom.
No stopping the waves,
Even when "serious"
discharging wastes⁴
pushed all "offshoots,"⁵
"crisscrossing" ages and pages⁶
with no crises.

If this laughter is the soul of discharge
and re-emergence,
Please do give me more . . .

What a great Saturday of
laughter in Lagos.

Chris Akubuiro
Port Harcourt, Nigeria

¹ Melphy Sakupwanya, the Regional Reference Person for Sub-Saharan Africa and the leader of the RC workshop in Nigeria referred to in this poem

² Onii Nwangwu-Stevenson, an RC leader in Lagos, Nigeria

³ Chioma Okonkwo, an RC leader in Lagos, Nigeria, and the organizer of the workshop

⁴ In this context, wastes means distresses.

⁵ "Offshoots" means small, new RC Communities.

⁶ There were four people named Chris at the workshop, of different ages and backgrounds.

The First-Ever National Workshop in Nigeria

One thing about Re-evaluation Counseling workshops is that one often emerges refreshed, reinvigorated, reenergized, and ready to go! That is why I have consistently described Re-evaluation Counseling as a therapeutic encounter, any day.

The three-day Nigeria Re-evaluation Counseling National Workshop was no exception. Led by Mama Melphy,¹ the May 2010 workshop, held in Lagos, attracted people from across the country. A total of forty-two participants from twenty-one Communities were in attendance.

Melphy guided the workshop through basic RC concepts, including but not limited to distress patterns, internalized oppression, leadership, and re-emergence.

To re-emerge and be liberated, we should identify the distress patterns and discharge them. Participants were reminded of the alternative, which is to have so internalized the oppression that we think it is normal, that we believe the oppression is right! The truth is that we need to re-emerge, and this is where regular Co-Counseling sessions come in handy.

To derive the best from sessions, Melphy reminded us that counselors give support, not a solution; that they encourage the client to discharge, they don't give advice; and, importantly, that the client must feel safe.

The participants had ample time to ask questions. This revealed loads of distress patterns and offered practical learning opportunities to everyone present.

¹ Melphy Sakupwanya, the Regional Reference Person for Sub-Saharan Africa



BUDDHA PARK, THAILAND • AGANITA VARKENTINE

Other highlights were the support groups, the men's and women's groups, and a review of last year's Africa International Conference in Kenya and Pre-World Conference in South Africa.

My special thanks and deep appreciation to Tim,² Diane,³ and the rest of the team in Seattle (USA) for the opportunity to hold this first-ever national workshop in Nigeria. My thanks also to dear Melphy who led the workshop and to my able Chioma⁴ who organized it. To my fellow RCers who turned up⁵ in numbers, I say, "May you enjoy regular sessions, re-emerge, and stand out."

With love and affection,
Onii Nwangwu-Stevenson
Lagos, Nigeria

² Tim Jackins

³ Diane Shisk

⁴ Chioma Okonkwo, an RC leader in Lagos, Nigeria

⁵ Turned up means came.

The first national workshop in Nigeria was a gathering of seasoned RC teachers from different Communities nationwide. It took off⁶ Friday evening with a game of playing with a ball, which began breaking the walls of defenses we had around ourselves. This was followed by singing and dancing, then pairing up to talk about our childhood experiences. We laughed till tears were gushing out of our eyes. All this helped us to relax enough to begin to introduce ourselves. Introductions were followed by singing and dancing again, like children. Then Mama Melphy parted us into support groups after which we retired for the night and slept soundly.

The second day took off with singing and dancing once more. This, and playing with the ball, continued to punctuate each part of the workshop.

The bulk of Mama Melphy's teaching revolved around helping us understand the importance of discharging our emotions. She stressed making discharging our way of life and not waiting for another RC workshop.

We shared what we had been doing in our Communities as leaders and told of our challenges and hopes.

I could easily see how helpful it would be if this national workshop were held annually and if some of our leaders were sent to replicate it at least every quarter in the states of the federation where our Communities are located.

With lots of love,

Princess Chinwe Agwuna
Abagana, Nigeria

⁶ Took off means started.



Hearing Assistive Devices



LK

Since September 2004, Re-evaluation Counseling Community Resources (RCCR) has been renting out hearing assistive devices for use at RC workshops and other RC events. They work only in the United States and Canada. (Other countries use different radio frequencies.)

We've received good reports from people who have used the devices. No matter where they are sitting in the audience, people are able to clearly hear the speakers in the front of the room.

The leader/speaker wears a microphone and transmitter, and the people with impaired hearing wear headsets attached to pocket-sized receivers.

Organizers of events may rent a set for \$60 (U.S.). A standard set includes one microphone/transmitter and two receivers with headsets. Depending on availability, additional receivers/headsets may be added to accommodate up to eight people.

Due to increased demand, organizers who wish to rent this equipment will need to notify Re-evaluation Counseling Community Resources at least three weeks before the event (earlier requests are given priority) to be sure of availability and to allow for shipping time. The equipment must be returned to us within two days of the event so that it will be available to others.

For more information, and to check availability, e-mail us at <rcoffice@rc.org> (put Hearing Helper in the subject line). Please include the title of the event, the event dates, the organizer's name and e-mail address, and how many people with low hearing you need to accommodate.

Re-evaluation Counseling Community Resources



RC

Web* special . . .

A bundle of twelve CDs of talks given by
Tim Jackins at workshops he led in 2006, 2007,
and 2008 (four CDs for each year).

(Part of the RC Teacher Update series)

See page 104 for the titles of the talks.

\$40 (U.S.) plus shipping and handling.

Available only on the RC web site

<<http://www.rc.org>>.

* RC web site

Present Time
Cover Quotes
Needed!

Your cover quote
Could get our vote

A thought that's pithy
(but please, not "iffy"*)

Deserving prominence,
placement dominance,

from RC sages
or from the ages.

Look around,
It will be found.

Send it here,
We'll give a cheer!

* "iffy" means questionable.



DIANE SHISK

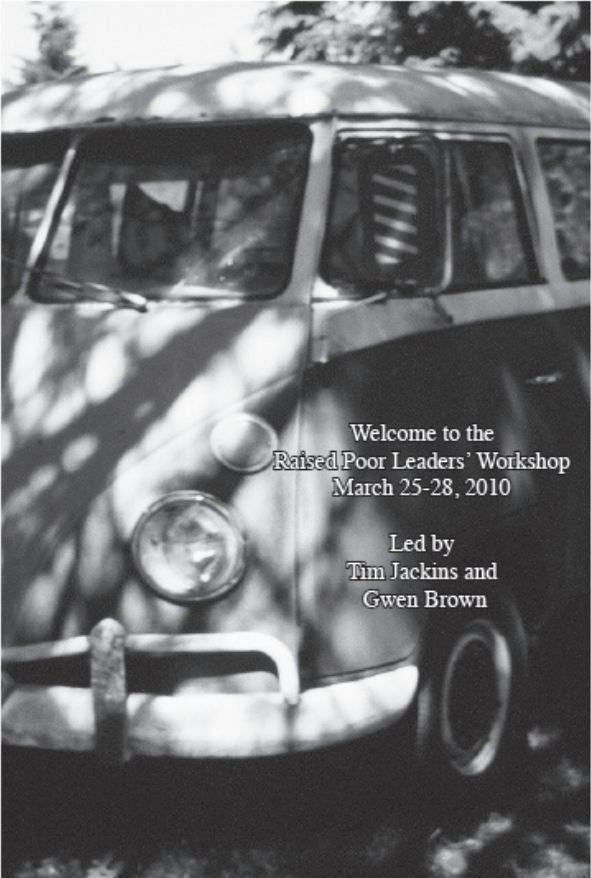
Workshop Workbooks in Postcard Format

At workshops recently, I have been using a postcard format to relay to participants all of the essential information. Printed on it is the schedule, and a list of recommended reading provided by the workshop leader. I add a label that includes the participant's name, sleeping room, support group, support-group meeting room, and workshop job.

There have been several motivating factors for this minimalist postcard. The main one for me has been to reduce clutter during a workshop. Another has been to save paper by providing a reading list instead of photocopying articles. The referenced publications have been available for purchase at the workshop, for those who do not already have them at home.

I have printed the photo side of the postcard on a color copier, to pick up all the gray tones, and the schedule side on a black-and-white copier. I like to use 24# laser paper, because images print well on it and the card can be folded easily into a pocket. I use an 8.5- by 11-inch page, cut it in half, and trim an inch from the short side. Each card measures 7.5 by 5.5 inches.

Sandra McDonald
Edmonds, Washington, USA



Welcome to the
Raised Poor Leaders' Workshop
March 25-28, 2010

Led by
**Tim Jackins and
Gwen Brown**

Thursday	Sunday
6:30 Registration	8:00 Breakfast
7:00 Gather/Meeting	8:15 Support Group leaders with Gwen
9:00 Three-way Sessions	9:00 Class
10:45 Snacks	11:00 Support Groups
12:00 Quiet in Dorms	12:15 Lunch
	1:15 Sessions
	2:00 Clean common spaces together
	3:00 Farewells
Friday	
7:00 Discharge Groups	
8:00 Breakfast	
9:00 Meeting	
10:30 Break	
11:00 Sessions	
12:30 Lunch	
1:30 Meeting	
3:00 Break	
4:00 Sessions	
6:00 Dinner	
7:00 Shabbat	
7:30 Class	
9:30 Support Groups	
10:45 Snacks	
12:00 Quiet in Dorms	
Saturday	
7:00 Discharge Groups	
8:00 Breakfast	
8:15 Support Group leaders meet with Gwen	
9:00 Class	
11:00 Support Groups	
12:30 Lunch	
1:30 Sessions	
2:30 Play/Naps	
4:00 Class	
6:00 Dinner	
7:00 Support Groups	
8:30 Class	
10:00 Creativity	
11:00 Snack	
11:30 Quiet	

RECOMMENDED READING

"The Mechanics of Classism" by Micheline Mason
Present Time No.144, July 2006, page 36

"Southern Liberation" by Barbara Love
Present Time No.149, October 2007, page 18

"Steps in Co-Counseling on Racism" by Tim Jackins
Present Time No.151, April 2008, page 3

"RC Literature and Learning Re-evaluation Counseling"
Tim Jackins, *Present Time* No.153, October 2008, page 3

"More Contacts, Steady Contact, and a Picture of Reality" by Tim Jackins
Present Time No.154, January 2009, page 18

"Community Building" by Tim Jackins
Present Time No.158, January 2010, page 59

We Who Were Raised Poor - Ending the Oppression of Classism, by Gwen Brown

These journals are available at the literature table.

place label here

name
sleeping room assignment
workshop job
support group
support group meeting room



Find your place on the planet. Dig in, and take responsibility from there.

Gary Snyder



Literature Review: *Why Lead in RC*, by Gwen Brown

The pamphlet *Why Lead in RC* is Gwen Brown's story of how she came to lead in RC and her thoughts about why we should all be leading and teaching RC. Gwen's story can inspire those who ask, "Why should I face the feelings I'd have to face to be a leader in RC?"

Gwen writes about growing up poor; seeing sweet, loving human beings crushed by the oppressive society to the point of giving up¹; and how she could see it wasn't their fault. Her description of when she found RC and how unbelievable it seemed sets the tone of hopefulness and joy that runs through this pamphlet.

Gwen is so clear that everyone who knows about RC is needed as a teacher of others, that teaching and leading in RC will lead to a thrilling and meaningful life, and that this is an efficient way to have a large impact on the world.

To give a hand² to those of us with patterns of timidity and discouragement, she writes about how she felt when she started teaching RC and how every week she had to discharge before she could present the theory. She talks about her own leadership fears, in order to let others with similar feelings know that the feelings need not stop them—that leading is the biggest contradiction³; it brings up the biggest feelings and contradicts internalized classism and sexism.

So that people can see the value of using RC consistently, Gwen offers her experience of becoming the International Liberation Reference Person for Raised-Poor People and of counseling people and challenging her chronic distress through RC leadership. Success, she writes, comes from the decision to rise to challenges and discharge on the way—to go after⁴ re-emergence as fully as one can. Her reasons for why we should lead appeal to our full humanity: RC leadership helps us keep our hearts open, speeds our re-emergence, and makes the world a kinder, gentler, more thoughtful place.

A theme throughout the pamphlet is her call to be our full, powerful selves. For example, she talks about how we sometimes feel disappointed that our leaders' actions aren't always in accord with our excellent

theory. Hanging frozen needs⁵ on leaders can lead us to act out victim patterns. Gwen encourages the reader to move past feelings of victimization toward full power and writes, "We need all our leaders, and we have to give up⁶ our powerlessness, insist that they drop thoughtless patterns, and counsel them to do so."

Gwen's definition of real power:

- 1) Confidence to be ourselves,
- 2) Fully paying attention; showing caring and building relationships,
- 3) Seeing what's real and correct in all situations,
- 4) Being willing to stand for and take action in the direction of what is right for all.

She is an eloquent champion of the *Guidelines*.⁷ For her they are a powerful tool that over time she has come to respect and use more and more; they are behind successful Community building and individual re-emergence.

Gwen tells the story of how one listener changed her father's life and so changed hers, and how she has thus changed large numbers of others' lives. Though we generally can't see that far down the road, this is the power to change lives that we all hold in our hands—we should never underestimate what we do.

continued . . .

⁵ A frozen need is a hurt that results when a rational need is not met in childhood. The hurt compels a person to keep trying to fill the need in the present, but the frozen need cannot be filled; it can only be discharged.

⁶ In this context, give up means relinquish, let go of.

⁷ The *Guidelines for the Re-evaluation Counseling Communities*—the policies that guide the work of the RC Communities



BOB ROMERO

¹ In this context, giving up means becoming so discouraged that they stop trying.

² A hand means help.

³ Contradiction to distress

⁴ Go after means pursue.

TEACHING, LEADING, COMMUNITY BUILDING

... continued

Her absolute belief in what she knows is inspiring. She knows we have a program that works; she wants to use it and win with it. I love her time-tested winning strategy:

- 1) Get good support around you,
- 2) Pick a powerful perspective on yourself and set goals accordingly,
- 3) Prioritize,
- 4) Act forthrightly and assess the effectiveness of your actions,
- 5) Get straight with the *Guidelines*,
- 6) Build a good life for yourself,

- 7) Discharge often,
- 8) Make time to teach RC to others,
- 9) Take good care of yourself.

As she suggests, I am going to ask myself every day, "How can I have fun today changing what I want to change in my life and in my world?"

Gwen's invitation to lead is a loving imperative. In spite of our feelings, we can make a huge difference. Re-evaluation Counseling is a gift; leading and teaching bring additional growth. It's the right cause, at the right time, and each one of us is the right person.

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

My father came to me as a robin one day
I knew it was him because he stood there and
looked at me
Without moving for a long time

For sure this was no ordinary robin

He did not duck his head and run from
place to place
He did not stop and raise his head and look
Like robins do
He just stood there in my back yard

The other day he sat down on a bluestone flag
It's my father visiting with me
Wanting my company
The kind of company we had
Especially in the months before he died



KATIE KAUFFMAN



I am wanting it too
And I would come to him if I were in his shoes
To visit
To have company
Like the kind we had

He is in his shoes
The comfortable ones
Jeans and a flannel shirt
With his windbreaker and a belt . . .
and feathers I guess

He comes regularly
And his is the first song on the melting air of spring
I love that he comes
I love you Son
I love you Dad
I miss you
I miss you too
I miss the company we had
Especially in those precious months
The ones before you died

Gregg Wagner
Sunnyside, New York, USA

A Model of Young People's Work in RC

The three RC Regions of Boston (Massachusetts, USA) have been holding a young people's class for six years.

Some adult allies had noticed that when young people go off to college, it is often hard for them to continue using Co-Counseling. They wanted a class to start early enough that young people could begin two-way Co-Counseling before the hard teenage oppression began and could hold on to counseling when they left home.

The class started with about ten young people, with an age range of nine to fifteen years, and no adult allies. Joel Nogic, the Regional Reference Person for one of the Boston Regions, led the class with an older young person assisting him. The class has always met about once a month, with a parent as the organizer.

We faced many difficulties in figuring out how to make the class work best and how to make the transition from family work¹ to adult Co-Counseling. We wanted the class to be a place that was different from the oppressive school system. In the beginning, when it was organized with a typical RC-class format, many of us found it difficult to maintain our attention throughout the class. We wanted more games, more times to play and hang out.² We wanted it to feel more like family work.

¹ Family work consists of RC gatherings of young people and adult allies, including parents, in which the focus is on young people and counseling young people in the context of play. These gatherings are designed to empower young people, to give them a setting in which they largely determine what happens (in contrast to the usual adult-young person dynamic). The focus is not on "Co-Counseling," as it is in the usual adult RC.

² Hang out means spend relaxed, unstructured time.

We have figured out how important it is for the group to connect and hang out before the RC theory and sessions begin. In our society, hanging out is trivialized as being unimportant and a waste of time and is thought of as something only for young people. As we get older, we are made to hang out

exciting things about the class is the way that we have grown to be able to think about each other. The close relationships we have built and our increased practice with RC have also allowed us to better use our turns as client.

Emily Bloch (the International Liberation Reference Person for Young People) started coming to the class and playing a semi-ally role. She soon began assisting Joel in leading the class and then became the co-leader. It has been useful having a young person visibly taking on³ leadership in the class. When Emily hasn't been there, other young people have had a chance to help plan and lead the class.



THE BOSTON YOUNG PEOPLE'S CLASS • NINA EICHNER

less and less. When we arrive at class, we spend the first forty-five minutes talking and laughing as a group. We usually have snacks during this time. Especially at the beginning, when more of the young people were making the transition from family work, the snacks helped to break some of the awkwardness. We also have mats and a bag of pillows, so that wrestling, pillow fights, and physical play can happen.

After about a year we started adding allies. The allies already had close, committed relationships with many of the young people in the class. We started with about one ally for every two young people. The allies have played an important role in assisting the young people with the Co-Counseling model, especially when the class breaks into small groups. As we young people have built stronger relationships with each other, we have figured out how to support each other more and so reduce the number of allies. One of the most

Whenever a group of young people gets together, internalized young people's oppression needs to be thought about. The leaders of the class have made sure to take time for the young people to work on what gets hard with internalized young people's oppression, in general and within the group. The allies have supported the young people to work on the internalized oppression that comes up.

Over the six years of the class we have grown to a regular group of about twenty people. Our ages range from twelve to twenty-one, which is something many of the young people have appreciated and found to be unique about the class.

Typically we start with a round of "news and goods," which help keep us connected to what is going on⁴ in each

continued . . .

³ In this context, taking on means assuming.

⁴ Going on means happening.

TEACHING, LEADING, COMMUNITY BUILDING

... continued

other's outside-of-RC lives. Having to report one new and good thing also challenges any restimulation that makes us feel like nothing good is going on. We then do a short mini-session to work on whatever we need to so that we can be fully present.

There is usually a topic for the class. Sometimes it is a piece of RC theory, such as something about sexism, racism, or school oppression. Sometimes we focus on RC practice, for example, how to be an effective counselor and client. Everyone in the group is at a different stage of transitioning from family work to adult Co-Counseling. Hearing about basic RC practice builds a stronger understanding of RC for those who are newer, and it's useful for those who are more experienced to hear it again and to get to say what they know about it.

After talking about RC theory and practice, we try out the practices we have just talked about or discharge on the theory we have discussed. We often use go-arounds, demonstrations, support groups, and three-way sessions.

A go-around, in which everyone gets a chance to say his or her thoughts on a specific issue in front of the group, is useful because it teaches class members to listen. (This was particularly useful in the early years of the class, when it was hard for people to pay attention and listen to others.) It also challenges patterns of shyness and is a contradiction to the feeling that one's thoughts are not important enough to have the whole group paying attention to them.

Demonstrations are useful because they bring up feelings of shyness and embarrassment about being a client in front of the whole group. Having the whole group paying attention also provides increased safety. Sometimes a demonstration is used to give extra time to a young person who is trying to figure out something hard in his or her life.

Leading a support group in a safe class environment is a way for us young

people to try out RC leadership. It pushes us to work on our feelings about leadership and to think about making things go well for others in the group. Having young people take leadership in a supported and thought-about way is key to making young people central to our Communities and to making the RC Communities accessible to young people.

Three-way sessions work well because sometimes a two-way session feels like a long time. Three-ways take some of the pressure off and provide the added safety of a third person's attention.

Often before a young people's workshop with all three Boston Regions we devote the class to sharing our thinking about the upcoming workshop and discharging any feelings we have about being there. This helps us feel more connected to other young people as we go into the workshop.

At the end of our class we do a closing circle in which we each say one thing we liked about the class and one thing we are looking forward to.

At one of our recent classes we gave everyone time to talk about his or her experience in the class. For a large number of the young people, the class was where they first did RC. For those of us raised in RC, it was where we first did two-way counseling. Many of the young people noted how important it was to have a place where they felt safe counseling about things they didn't feel comfortable talking about in other places. Several said it was still challenging to open up to their Co-Counselors and work on the hard, deeper issues. One person said that the class had shown that RC could be cool⁵ and fun. Some people raised in RC who hadn't been introduced to Co-Counseling through a fundamentals class said that hearing RC theory every month helped to solidify the ideas of RC.

This class has provided a home base of safety, connections, and experience from which the young people take RC leadership in other contexts. The connections built in the class provide support for them at RC workshops, which aren't always set up with young people in mind. They have learned a lot about RC at the workshops and have brought the knowledge and excitement back to the class. That the class includes both people who are leading in Co-Counseling and others who aren't seems to work. Those who are leading take a leadership role and think about the group as a whole. Those who haven't yet taken on leadership in RC get to see older young people leading in the class and in the RC Communities.

The class is set up with the interests of us young people in mind. One member commented that the leadership of the class has trusted us and valued our thoughts. Another said how great it is that we have dominated the class and have had the power to make it go how we wanted it to. Many of us were struck by what an inspiring model the class is of how close people, particularly young people, can be. It is a useful contradiction to the isolation driven in between young people as part of young people's oppression. The connection and deepening of relationships are important to our overall goal of building a group in which we can genuinely think about and support each other.

In building the class we have tried and changed a lot of things and have come to an excellent model of young people's liberation work in RC. We encourage other Communities to draw on this in working toward making RC accessible to young people. For us the class has been a cherished, connected, and significant place for young people to be together.

Alana and Nina Eichner
Somerville, Massachusetts, USA

⁵ In this context, cool means alive and interesting.

Teaching RC to Prisoners and Homeless People

I am about to teach RC at a church that services homeless people and people who are trying to get off drugs. The hopelessness in the room really fills it up.*

The pastor is a former RC teacher. He would like to require RC for people who get tested for drugs in order to be considered for housing. I will have one or two assistants. Some people from outside the church who believe in what the church is doing might also take the class, along with a few church members.

Who has done this type of work before and can advise me? Even little ideas would help. Someone suggested going very slowly, with one concept per class written on a large piece of paper. Any help would be appreciated.

Janet Raines
Birmingham, Alabama, USA

* About to teach means soon going to teach.



In teaching an RC class in a prison, I found that the most powerful concepts were

1. You are good. The difficulties you face are the result of distresses that were acted out around you and at you, and you did the best you could under those circumstances.
2. I, the RC teacher, am not here to judge you, or diagnose you, or give you advice. I am here to listen and to teach you all how to listen to each other effectively. Each of you can figure out the answers to the problems you face, if you are listened to non-judgmentally and sufficiently.
3. If someone listens well and pays attention to you, feelings may come up to be discharged, in the form of tears, anger, trembling, yawning and stretching, or just rapid talking. This is fine. It is a key part of healing from the distresses that were forced upon you.

These are such simple concepts—now that we understand them. But they are so powerful and so different from what the rest of the world practices. They can't be stated too often!

John Braxton
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, USA
Reprinted from the e-mail discussion list for RC Community members

The 2009 Guidelines for the Re-evaluation Counseling Communities

Revised and updated to

- * address new conditions in society,
- * address new developments in RC theory, practice, and organization,
- * clarify content that was confusing or incomplete.



Also rewritten and re-organized

- * with easier-to-read language
- * a clearer design.



Thanks to the volunteers who made this possible!

\$3.00 (U.S.)

To order, see page 109.

Song for Barack Obama

In April of 2009, Diane Shisk¹ led a leaders' workshop in Nairobi, Kenya, for teachers and leaders from RC Communities in East and West Africa. Co-Counselors from each country represented at the workshop made a presentation during culture sharing on Saturday night. Marion Ouphouet² and I were at the workshop to assist Diane. The three of us wrote the following lyrics together and sang the song when it was time for the USers at the workshop to share.

Apryl Walker

¹ Diane Shisk is the Alternate International Reference Person for the Re-evaluation Counseling Communities.

² Marion Ouphouet is an RC leader in Seattle, Washington, USA.

A New United States Anthem: Celebrating Barack Obama

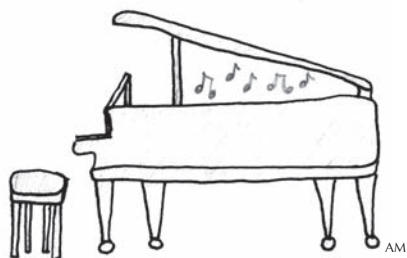
(To be sung to the tune of *The Star-Spangled Banner*,
the official national anthem of the United States)

O! say can you see Barack Obama,
Who so proudly we elected as our first black president

Whose father is Kenyan, Son of Africa,
Whose message is hope and who will fight with us for change.

And the billions who cheered from throughout the world
Give proof through our lives that racism is doomed.

O! say does that star-spangled banner now wave
Hope for freedom and peace throughout the world.



Marion Ouphouet
Seattle, Washington, USA

Diane Shisk
Seattle, Washington, USA

Apryl Walker
Belcamp, Maryland, USA

RC Teachers, Communicate Anew

We have just begun an RC e-mail discussion list for RC teachers. This list will provide excellent opportunities for RC teachers to share their knowledge and perspectives about communicating RC. Members of the list will be able to ask questions of and check their judgment and share their experiences with many hundreds of other RC teachers.

If you are an RC teacher, please consider joining this list, soon.

To join, you need to be a certified RC teacher and (if English is your first language) have a subscription to *Present Time*. Then you simply need to e-mail us at <ircc@rc.org> with your current e-mail address, phone number, and home address, so that we can update our records.

Tim Jackins
and Diane Shisk

Co-Counseling Reports

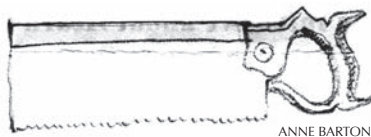
From a discussion on the e-mail discussion list for RC teachers

Hi everyone,

I'm teaching an RC fundamentals class, and I would like to know what questions you ask your students about how their Co-Counseling sessions are going. I know that my students are having sessions, and I've asked about them a couple of times but they don't respond much. I would like them to think more about their sessions, as both client and counsellor, and I think they could learn a lot from session reports. Maybe they find it difficult to talk about how a session went because they don't want to break confidentiality.

How do you do this in your class?

Thanks,
Karen Corbel
Jersey, Channel Islands



Hi Karen,

I change my questions from time to time as folks progress in their practice of Co-Counseling. Here are a few that I use early in a fundamentals class.

For the client:

Length of session?

How did you decide who went first?

One thing the counselor did that was helpful to you as client?

What would make it even better?

Overall, how do you feel about the session? How did you end it?

For the counselor:

How did you feel about being the counselor?

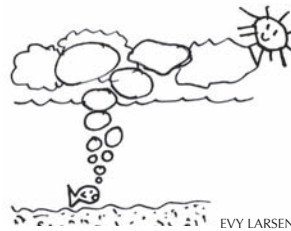
One thing you did that you were pleased about?

What were the problems? Challenges? Or little difficulties?

Any questions about what you did or didn't do?

Overall, how do you feel about the session?

With love,
MacClurg Vivian
Rochester, New York, USA



Hi Karen,

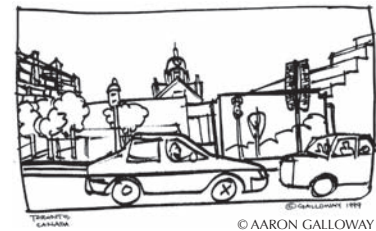
Great question. I have had success in encouraging sessions by having people do session reports and give feedback. I have encouraged my fundamentals students to say, after every session, one thing as counselor they thought was helpful and one thing as client they thought the counselor did that was helpful. In most class meetings I leave time for session reports; I ask each person who he or she counseled with in the last week, something he or she did well as counselor, and if there are any questions. It seems to work well to keep everyone learning from one another.

Love,
Jim Cummings
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, USA

Hi Karen and teachers,

I have been working to help people feel safe enough to give real information. The two questions I have been using lately for the client are, "What did your counselor do that worked well?" and "What would you like your counselor to know about you that would be helpful in counseling you?" I find that asking in this way can take the pressure off any feelings that they are "evaluating" each other.

Warm regards,
Emmy Rainwalker
Greenville, New Hampshire, USA



Hi Karen and all,

I simply and routinely ask each person what went well for him or her as counselor and what went well as client. I also model for the class after each demonstration by thinking out loud about what went well and what I might do differently. I make it safe to make mistakes, since that is part of the learning process, even if it gets a bit messy on occasion. If someone mentions the content of a particular client's session, I have him or her focus on sharing his or her experience as counselor, or ask the client's permission to share specifics if they seem useful for clarification. I have encouraged class members to

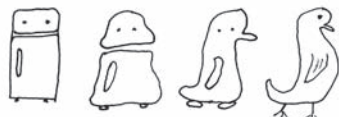
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write their successes in journals, so that they can review them prior to a session and remember what has worked.

Hope this is helpful,

Sonia Morrison
Santa Cruz, California, USA



REFRIGERATOR BECOMES A DUCK • HUGH GEENEN

Hi everyone,

Over the last two or three years I've been teaching large ongoing classes for experienced Co-Counselors, and one thing I've done to keep up on¹ people's sessions is to ask them in the opening circle, "What is one 'new and good' from inside a session and one 'new and good' from outside of RC?" I've made it clear that the "new and good" from inside a session can be either as counselor or as client, and that we can move forward in our re-emergence in both roles. I learn a lot by hearing what is exciting to people in their sessions. I get information about who they love counseling with, what their struggles are, and where they are being able to make a difference for themselves or others in the class.

¹ Keep up on means stay informed about.

When I want to do more in-depth reports I add, "What is one question you have from your sessions?" I can't always answer the questions, but I can ask the class to try to answer them, and then the class member who asked gets lots of thinking from the rest of the group and we have a good discussion on the part of the theory that is crucial to his or her re-emergence. Sometimes we get out some RC literature, like *The List* or the *Guidelines*, to verify the accuracy of our thinking. Over a year or two this process has brought our class together into a tight team that has backed² each individual to have more powerful sessions.

On a number of occasions the work in opening circle has led to demonstrations, since the reports and discussions are often about sensitive areas of people's lives and people can't talk about them without discharging. I've assured them that the discharge is always good, and I've forced myself to relax about time and be flexible about the agenda, since we are learning about the issues that are central to people's lives. Since I started doing this, I haven't been as worried about what topics to bring up³ in class because class members are taking charge of their

² Backed means supported.

³ Bring up means talk about.

own learning about RC. It has also provided an opportunity to give people targeted by racism more visibility in the group by extending their time or asking them more detailed questions.

People's answers to the other question, "What is one 'new and good' from outside of RC?" often reflect the successes happening inside of their sessions. Answering this question seems to be important for ongoing Co-Counselors, because they get to think about setting up their lives as contradictions to the chronic distresses they are struggling against. Class members take great pride in reporting first that they are fighting hard for themselves against a particular distress and then, "Look at what I did outside of RC!" People learn a lot from these reports and figure out how to tackle things that are going to bring up lots of feelings for them. They're also inspired to tackle oppressions that are common among the group and to cheer each other on. This has continued in Area support groups and has helped get people to more workshops and to set up more sessions with each other.

Thanks for the opportunity to share,

Daniel Schaffer
Brooklyn, New York, USA



HONG KONG • TIM JACKINS

Trust your own thinking. Listen to your guide. Run your own life.
Trust your own thinking and it will work out fine.

Harvey Jackins
From *The Reclaiming of Power*, page 2

Working Together to End Racism

An introduction to RC
from the perspective
of ending racism

\$2.00, plus postage
and handling

Ordering information on page 109

Immigration, Racism, and Imperialism

From a discussion on the RC e-mail discussion lists for RC Community members and for leaders of wide world change

On Tuesday, May 11, the governor of the state of Arizona (USA) signed House Bill 2281, an anti-ethnic-studies bill, after previously signing Senate Bill 1070, which makes the failure to carry immigration documents a crime in the state of Arizona and gives the police broad power to detain anyone suspected of being in the United States illegally. These laws are clearly aimed at Chicanos/as, Latinos/as, Mexican people, and all Indigenous-looking folks.

I have not seen any posts regarding this on the RC e-mail discussion lists. I have read many wide-world comments, but I'm looking for thinking that comes from having discharged on the issues. I would also like to ask Chicanos/as, Latinos/as, Hispanics, and all other Indigenous folks to tell us how we can be the best allies possible during this time of great discrimination and ugliness aimed at people we love.

Thank you so much,

Marcie Rendon
International Liberation Reference
Person for Native Americans
Minneapolis, Minnesota, USA



Thank you for encouraging us to share our stories and insights about immigration policy and the intentional targeting of undocumented immigrants.

First, a story: I am close to a parishioner in my Catholic parish who is a single mother of six children. She does not have legal documents. Her husband was deported several years ago back to Central America. He was undocumented. All six children are U.S.-born. In my neighborhood the police try to apprehend undocumented immigrants who are driving without a license and impound their cars. My friend has had three old cars impounded in the last year and a half. She would gladly take a driving test and get a license, but this requires legal documentation and the immigration laws do not allow her to become a legal immigrant, even though she has six U.S.-born children!

Where I can discharge the most is on seeing the impact this version of racism has on children. Millions of Latino/a, Hispanic, and Indigenous children live in fear that one of their parents will be incarcerated or deported for not having legal immigration documents. Blended families (some family members documented and others not) are being brutally separated every single day because of the targeting of undocumented parents.

I assisted several families to share their stories on the web site designed by Cardinal Roger Mahony of Los Angeles (California, USA) at www.facesofimmigrants.org. There you can see my friend's daughter talk about what it's like for her to have a mother who is undocumented.

Abrazos (hugs),

Ellie Hidalgo
Los Angeles, California, USA



I am married to a man from Oaxaca, Mexico. He crossed into the United States in 1991. We met in Seattle, Washington (USA), in April 1995 and married in September 1996. We were together for twelve years and have been separated for three.

At the time we were married I assisted him to get his green card.¹ No, you don't just get married and automatically get a green card. There is a long process you have to go through. You need to get a lawyer (one who speaks Spanish), and pay the lawyer. In Alaska you have to fly to Anchorage (which is nine hundred miles from where I live, in Juneau), pay for a hotel, pay for a cab or rent a car, search for the building where the immigration office is, and get a date for the next meeting, which might be in Juneau if you are lucky. And I was told that as a U.S. citizen I needed to carry around my birth certificate, because I could very well be deported.

In Seattle we were visiting friends, and they had to go to the store. They told us to wait outside in our car. A policeman was driving by, and he asked us what we were doing parked

continued . . .

¹ A green card is an identity card verifying the permanent-resident status of an immigrant to the United States.

WIDE WORLD CHANGING

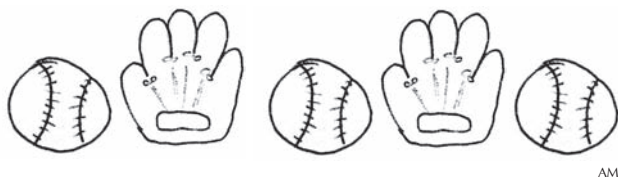
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in front of the house. I told him we were waiting for a friend to return home, but we had to answer a hundred and one questions.

The prejudice I encounter as a Native woman is bad, but I think Mexican people encounter more. Vigilantes stand around at the border with rifles in hand, ready to shoot at immigrants.

My husband and I are still friends. I warn him of any prejudice I'm aware of—like a few years ago some people had “Kill a Mexican Day” instead of Cinco de Mayo.²

Leona Marie Santiago (Kaaxkwei)
Juneau, Alaska, USA



What I have noticed, as things get harder for everyone, is how scared people are about their own personal survival. As things close in on those of us in oppressor roles in ways that are new to us (but not new to those who've been oppressed), some of us feel really scared. I try to help people remember how hard things are for those in oppressed groups, who get hit the hardest; how the root source of everyone's struggles is the economic system, greed, and isolation; and how more than ever people cannot be separated from each other or ignore the real cause of their struggles.

Hard things—in terms of health, jobs, homes, families—are landing on more and more people in ways that are extremely harsh. If we are from any privileged group (racially, economically, educationally), we must not get confused and forget that people from oppressed groups are facing much harder lives than ever. In an eliminating-white-racism discharge group I led the other night, I told stories of people I am close to, inside and outside of RC. The stories were baldly harsh, and they helped people to bust through to reality.

While we have to fight for ourselves (against early fears and isolation), we cannot get self-absorbed, defended, protected, or isolated from each other or from reality. We cannot get confused into thinking that

² Cinco de Mayo is a Mexican holiday commemorating the Mexican army's unlikely victory over French forces at the Battle of Puebla on May 5, 1862. The holiday is observed in the United States and other locations around the world as a celebration of Mexican heritage and pride.

making it³ (personally, individually) is going to work. No matter how insignificant or scared we may feel, it's a good time to reach for each other.

Joanne Bray
Greenwich, Connecticut, USA



I was shocked to hear my two housemates, who are strong liberals on many issues, talk one evening about how something had to be done about the “invasion” of California (USA) by people from countries south of the United States.

I said that I thought it might be good for the United States to be invaded and that, in fact, there were some countries I would like to be invaded by. I nominated a few and mentioned the things I thought could be gained by their “invading” us, and shared good things that were going on⁴ in their countries. It was kind of a joke and kind of serious, but it changed the whole tone. They asked me about other countries I had been in and things I had learned about the people there.

Dan Nickerson
Freeport, Maine, USA



Maybe Co-Counselors who happen to be U.S. citizens could counsel other U.S. citizens about the privileges and benefits of having that special, much-desired identity—U.S. *citizen*—and about why they are scared of the sojourners in this land.

Perhaps allies to Mexicans and other Indigenous folks could speak out publicly on the immigration matter and defend the right of people not to be persecuted, jailed, and deported in Gestapo-like fashion. Perhaps they could also start thinking about defending immigrants and standing up to immigration authorities, and strategizing a solidarity movement that might involve breaking unjust laws.

We Mexicans are simply traveling across ancestral lands that have always been ours. The United States

³ Making it means succeeding.

⁴ Going on means happening.

acquired seven states in a war of conquest. We don't need to honor that legacy that came out of white racist distress.

I think that if U.S. capital and other foreign capital can freely invade Mexico, then workers, farm laborers, and immigrants of all kinds should have the right to freely migrate wherever they want to.

Children have the right to be with their parents, wherever their parents may have originated.

Borders are distress-based and meant to be interrupted and contradicted.

Andres Mares Muro
New York, New York, USA



We have been discussing on my campus the Arizona anti-ethnic-studies bill, which I copied from the Internet. It has been a good contradiction to our tendency to search for someone else's thinking, to go ahead and read the bill for ourselves and use our own intelligence to understand and interpret it.

I have pointed out how the bill is a classic "divide and conquer" tactic. In this era of scarce dollars for public education, Native Americans will be allowed to continue their classes whereas other groups will not. In resisting the bill, how can groups whose programs are targeted for elimination refuse to be pitted against their Native American allies? How can white allies expose and condemn this divide-and-conquer tactic?

Another good place to focus (there are many!) is the explicit individualism advocated in the bill. Prohibited will be programs that "advocate ethnic solidarity" instead of treating people "as individuals." This contrast hides the fact that a person's identity and sense of self may be deeply affected by his or her ethnicity. For example, being white has colored all of my experiences and is attached to all my distresses.

Other places to discharge in order to break the silence about this bill, inside and outside of RC, include

- * Where might we be hesitant to speak up?*
- * Where might we be confused by the bill?*
- * If we are white, have we ever felt "left out" by ethnic studies programs?*

** How can we communicate the difference between the person and the pattern? (How can people targeted by racism express their legitimate anger about white supremacy without blaming white people as persons?)*

Judy Kay
Tacoma, Washington, USA



I think that this is an obvious patterned response to economic crises. A million Chicanas, Chicanos, Mexicanas, and Mexicanos were deported during the Great Depression. And the cycle is repeating itself.

What is not being said is that "you will be deported the more Indigenous you look." (We would not be stopped⁵ for looking like Europeans.) It is also a way to reduce voter turnout. It is common political knowledge that the fewer the people who vote, the more likely it is that right-wing⁶ candidates will win.

What concerns me most is the possibility of an escalation to violence. We are not ready for it. We haven't discharged enough for the RC Community to be helpful in that kind of situation. The Seattle WTO⁷ meeting could have been an opportunity to engage people in discharge. That opportunity was missed.

Enrique Cardiel
Albuquerque, Nuevo Mexico, USA
continued . . .

⁵ In this context, stopped means stopped and questioned by the police.

⁶ Right-wing means politically reactionary.

⁷ WTO stands for World Trade Organization. In November 1999 a meeting of the WTO in Seattle, Washington, USA, was met with a massive protest. Although it was mostly peaceful, some violence erupted between the police and a few of the protesters.



LUKE DANIELS

WIDE WORLD CHANGING

... continued

Several years ago I taught a series of RC classes on genocide, slavery, and immigration. Everyone in the classes was white. We counseled on how we had benefited from and were hurt by genocide, slavery, and immigration and spent a good chunk of time telling and discharging on our own immigration stories.

I think most white USers have hurts from immigration, passed on from generation to generation, about leaving family and community, fighting for survival, and so on. These old hurts add to the confusion and get tangled up with racism.

Last semester when I was teaching a high school art class, a white student made a piece of art work with negative words about immigrants written on it. I challenged him about it and managed (barely) to have a conversation with him about how *our* families were immigrants, too.



Betsy Hobkirk
Knoxville, Tennessee, USA

I've been working on rage, and the strong feeling to restrain it that follows. The pull to restrain rage goes back a long time, way before me. What makes it feel unbearable is the difficulty I have in discharging it. It is

the moment of taking in a full breath and opening my mouth wide to unleash the fiercest roar but feeling that my safety is at stake⁸ if I make a sound.

Here are some suggestions for Co-Counselors of Mexican immigrants:

- Listen to their immigration stories—what the journey was like for them and their families, what the means of travel was, how long it took, their point of entry.
- Discharge on borders, walls, fences—human-made structures built to keep people apart.
- Know that all immigrants carry some version of having to go silent. Ask them about it. What were they not allowed to say, when was it crucial for them to be silent? If it had been safe back then, what would they have said?
- U.S. citizens, discharge on the privilege that being a U.S. citizen provides. I had siblings who were citizens, and they could lead their lives in very different ways from me. Think of all the forms you've ever filled out that asked, "Are you a U.S. citizen?"
- Discharge on the language used to refer to immigrants, for example, alien, resident alien, illegal, undocumented, and so on.

⁸ At stake means at risk, in question.

E-mail Discussion List for RC Community Members Involved in Eliminating Racism

What began as an e-mail discussion list for people in United to End Racism has developed into a list for all RCers who are active in using RC to eliminate racism. This list is a way for us to exchange our thinking about and experience with using RC in eliminating racism.

If you would like to be a member of this list, please e-mail us at <uer@rc.org>, telling us of your interest and including a short description of your eliminating-racism activities. Please also ask your Area Reference Person or Regional Reference Person to e-mail us with his or her support of your membership.

*Tim Jackins
and Diane Shisk*



LISA KAUFFMAN

All subscriptions to *Present Time* begin with the next issue published. We can't send back issues as part of the 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 102 and 109).

- Discharge on racism aimed specifically at Mexicans.
- Work on language oppression specifically, and how you feel when you're in a place where you don't speak the language, and on xenophobia in general.
- I would suggest that white Co-Counselors not counsel immigrants who are targeted by racism on rage without having a close relationship with them and without having done similar work themselves as clients.
- Discharge on the practice of scapegoating a group of people when the larger society goes through harsh economic times.
- Discharge on U.S. "free trade" policies that leave few options for Mexicans but to leave their communities and become immigrants.
- Try having immigrants discharge on reclaiming the goodness of their countries of origin. (Life as an immigrant in this country tends to make people terrified of being sent back.) The direction that's worked well for me is, "Mexico is a really great place to live."
- If you have European heritage, discharge on your family's immigration story.

With great appreciation to you Marcie,

Rocío Camacho
Oakland, California, USA



I am thinking that the real purpose of the new law in Arizona is not to remove illegal immigrants from the state but to intimidate and threaten the Hispanic population in order to continue to exploit their labor for the benefit of the rest of the population. Arizona depends for its economic well-being on the labor and talents of its many workers who are Hispanic. Without them its economy would not work in its present form.

Only a small number of immigrants need to be deported to intimidate and frighten other immigrants and to show them the power and control

the state has over their lives. The new Arizona law formalizes this kind of exploitation in a particularly threatening, well organized, and harsh way. It could be used to target not only recent immigrants but all people with Hispanic origins, whatever their immigration status is. Again, racism is being used as a tool of economic exploitation.

Wende Wood
Seattle, Washington, USA



As a retired elementary school teacher in Arizona, I could see the signs of this kind of action coming.

I work with an organization that organizes institutions like churches, schools, and unions to stand against these kinds of legislative actions. As the first bill was being discussed, we spent many days at the state capitol working to educate legislators about the consequences of passing it. Needless to say, we were unsuccessful. We heard many stories of families that had been targeted by raids. Parents and children had been separated, families were afraid to even go to church.

White people who are illegal immigrants will not be stopped and questioned. Those who are brown skinned will be the ones who are stopped, even if they are legal. It is a sad and shameful time in Arizona.

We will not quit working to have this legislation brought to court.

Pat Orlinski
Sun City, Arizona, USA

continued . . .



LEAH KOCH-MICHAEL

WIDE WORLD CHANGING

... continued

Thanks for asking this question, Marcie.

These are the things that have been most useful to me:

1) A black ally and Co-Counselor of mine spending a lot of her session time being outraged about this. She has also made public statements against it on her blog.⁹ Both have been huge contradictions¹⁰ for me and have given me much more space to discharge my feelings.

2) Remembering that the border, and both the U.S. and Mexican national identities, are rooted in imperialism, genocide, and racism. As an Indigenous Chicana, my connection to this land and the people who live here, and have lived here for thousands of years, is stronger

⁹ A blog is a weblog, which is an individual person's web site on the Internet containing that person's personal journal of reflections and comments, and often links to other web sites.

¹⁰ Contradictions to distress

than political borders and boundaries, and laws based on oppression, greed, isolation, fear, blame, and arrogance.

3) In my sessions, fighting against the recordings that say I'm invisible, that my people are invisible, that we are defeated, that we should go silent. Working on the places where I and my ancestors have made compromises, pretended to be invisible, gone silent, and appeared to assimilate in order to survive. And working on changing the compromises and considering new decisions.

4) When allies can see how the Mexican identity is a national identity that is part of Native oppression and can understand that Mexicans are Indigenous peoples. When I have read public statements by Indigenous groups that have addressed this, it has been a huge contradiction.

Ayana Morse
Oakland, California, USA

UER Posters and Pins Available

United to End Racism (UER) posters and pins are available for purchase.

Four designs are available as posters, including the one shown below. You can download color versions of all four posters (in limited-quality PDF file format) from the web site <<http://www.rc.org/uer>>. Click on "Fund-raising" and then on "UER Posters."

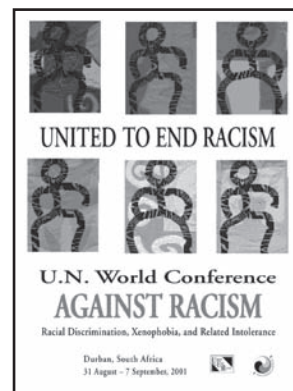
These images can remind us of the hopefulness of our work. They can also be used to help get other people thinking and involved.

United to End Racism pins provide an excellent opening to talk about United to End Racism and to listen to people's thoughts and feelings about racism and the possibilities for eliminating it. People can also buy the pins as a way of supporting the work of United to End Racism.

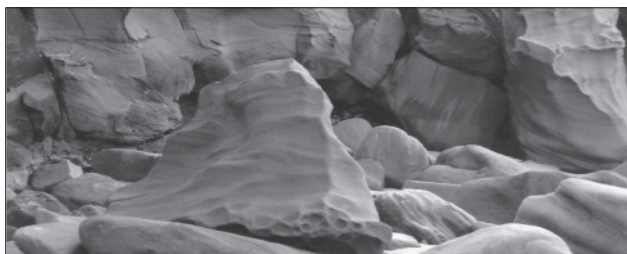
Please bring the posters and pins to your UER going-public events.

Each poster costs \$3.00 (U.S.), plus shipping and handling. (Washington state residents pay \$3.29 to include sales tax.)

Each pin costs \$5.00 (U.S.), plus shipping and handling. (Washington State residents pay \$5.48 per pin to include sales tax.)



For ordering information, see page 109.



JO PERRY

You not only can successfully defy the bad forces; you can be relaxed and comfortable about them while you defy them. If they do their worst to you, everything will still have been all right.

Harvey Jackins
From *The Rest of Our Lives*, page 249

Economic Crisis, Great Opportunities

The current economic crisis is very threatening and also offers great opportunities.

What opportunities? It is revealing the unworkability of capitalism.

This unworkability has been obvious to the people who have not received much economic benefit. Now more and more people are noticing it as the benefits to society become fewer and the wealth becomes more and more concentrated in the hands of a few.

It is increasingly clear that the problem is the core economic system itself, not the other “reasons” that have been offered to hide the actual unworkability (“internal contradictions”) of the class system.

Reclaiming a sense of our own individual significance is essential. It makes no sense to wait for someone smarter to figure something out. We have tried that, and it has not worked.

Acting on our own significance, and taking any action based on our own best thinking, no matter how trivial the thinking or action may seem, will move us through our fear and allow us to act more intelligently each time we do it.

We can encourage other people to do the same, and give them the best sessions we can. And together, all of these small, or maybe not-so-small, actions will add up to a great shift in our general attitude toward the problems we face. It will also create the conditions for the best possible things to happen.



ANDY VERNON-JONES

No matter what we each believe the solution to the problem of capitalism is, clearly fear is one of the biggest obstacles in our way of taking steps toward any solution.

It would be good to replace the time we spend in Co-Counseling sessions feeling bad about the things we have not done, with discharging our fear of doing something even bigger than the last thing we “failed” at.

The oppressive system thrives on manipulating people’s fears. We can become expert clients on fear. Our lack of fear will be noticed as confidence. It will be a great help to the people around us who are trying to think clearly but are being assaulted by their fears.

As clients and as counselors, “scorning fear” works well. (It has been written about in our literature.) It is possible to enjoy the feeling of the discharge of fear as much as one enjoys a good cry. Fear recordings usually include a heavy feeling that “something is wrong, run away!” This can be ignored, and the feelings can be welcomed and even invited. Showing them that lack of respect seems to speed their discharge. The same attitude is recommended outside of sessions as well. Most people won’t even notice our shaking.

Many of our efforts that we have thought of as failures have turned out to be intelligent actions that have actually moved things forward. But in the middle of our feelings of insignificance and self-invalidation we could not tell.* What if we just assumed that all of our actions, and perhaps our whole lives, were significant and leading to an ultimate successful resolution of the world’s problems?

Because of distress patterns, we do not have good judgment about the significance or value of our thoughts and actions. (Our patterns will never wake us up in the morning and say, “Good job yesterday, Dan. Just keep being yourself today. You are doing great!”) Given that, I think we should assume that our thoughts and actions are significant and good until proven otherwise.

continued . . .

* In this context, tell means notice.

WIDE WORLD CHANGING

... continued

Humans have lived for ten thousand years under oppressive class societies and have made many attempts to overthrow them. In the last four hundred or so years, capitalist society has improved people's situations and the communication between the peoples of the world enough that more and more liberation movements are growing, moving forward, and connecting with each other. Each one reduces the collective fear and builds increasing unity and vision. The recent period has been one of rapidly accelerating liberation of humans from oppression. For example, the U.S. invasion

of Iraq had open and almost universal lack of support. A very small number of people pushed it forward.

It is helpful to remember the successes. For example, it was less than two hundred years ago, out of that last ten thousand, that the buying and selling of people, supported by racism, was made illegal by the most dominant oppressive powers of the world, and slavery is now generally discredited and unsupported. Less than a hundred years ago women did not have the right to vote in the "advanced" society of the United States. The enormous

change from that is now so taken for granted that there is no chance it will ever be overturned.

This is not to say that either racism or sexism has been eliminated, but each victory over oppression brings more intelligence to bear on our situation as humans. It is probably safe to say that certain past vehicles of oppression have been ended forever.

This leaves the oppressive society with fewer and fewer oppressor patterns it can restimulate, fewer buttons it can push that will slow down our movement toward liberation.

Continued movement against all oppressions will make class oppression untenable.

To be hopeful, we do not need the reassurance of any certain or particular outcome. It appears to me that this "need" is solely a result of discouragement. Discouragement is a result of hurts from previous experiences that can be discharged. It is never a rational reaction to reality.

Infants learning to walk are a good model. They keep trying and discharging until they succeed. They do not need to know it is possible. As long as no one interferes with them, and they have the chance to discharge, it never occurs to them that it is not possible.

Dan Nickerson

*International Liberation Reference
Person for Working-Class People*

Freeport, Maine, USA

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



CHINA • TIM JACKINS

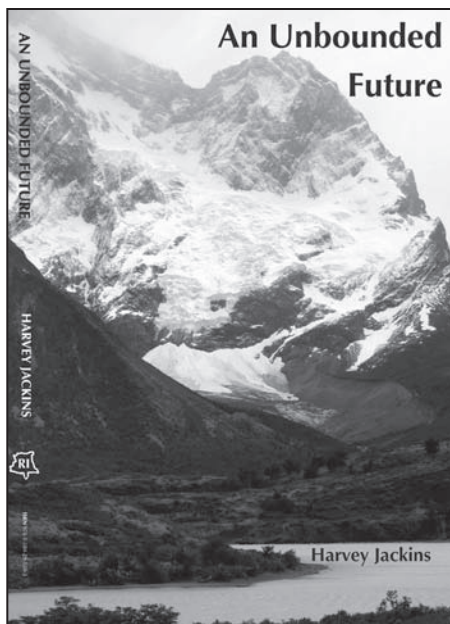
“ Aren't we privileged to live in a time when everything is at stake,* and when our efforts make a difference in the eternal contest between the forces of light and shadow, between togetherness and division? Between justice and exploitation? ”

Activist "Granny D" Haddock, on her 93rd birthday

* At stake means at risk, in jeopardy.



LK



The ideas and developments of RC as written about by Harvey Jackins from 1995 until his death in 1999

“I was a revolutionary long before RC came along. Then something happened. I accidentally discovered RC. . . . I remember a time when I had to decide if I should try to get back into revolutionary activity and fight the bad ideas I could see creeping into all the revolutionary parties, or if I should stick to this new development that I was beginning to call RC and see how important it would turn out to be. I decided, well, there are a lot of people who are supposed to be pursuing revolutionary policies, but nobody’s bothering with RC except me. So I decided to stick with RC. I had no idea at that time that RC and the people who would gather around me doing RC would turn out to be the most important revolutionary movement that has ever come along. . . . So, rounding a circle, I am now back leading a revolution, a revolution of ideas.”

From “*Live Up to and Practice Our Theory*,” pages 15 to 16

\$13 (U.S.)

See page 109 for ordering information.

DRAWING

Many times
I trace again the story
I reproduce again the pain



Many times
I tongue again the tooth
In the sore, sore gum
And my pencil scores the page

Many times
I redouble again that loss
I rebuild again the ghost
Then dart ahead to create my life of joy

DANCING

It’s a turning point
On which to pirouette
Building spider-like with silk
Floating foetus-like in water



I re-emerge elegantly
Mysteriously
Encircling ever wider
New friends, new challenge
It’s world-change in action
No haste or pressure
Slow, trailing silver
Snail, slug or spider
Tracing patterns encrusted with light



Fio Adamson
London, England



Honoring a Life, Changing a Medical System

Being Catholic, for me, is not about attending church or saying prayers. It is about caring deeply about people and standing up for them, especially when it is difficult for them to do so for themselves. To me this is the essence of my people and tradition. I share this story because it reminds me of the countless times good Catholic people have “gone to bat” for¹ others, without fanfare or recognition.

In June of 2008 the senior leadership of a mid-sized hospital in the midwest of the United States met with my husband and me to talk about our recent experiences surrounding the death of my mother and some practices we felt it was important to bring to the attention of the hospital leadership. The meeting was a follow-up to a letter sent by us to the president of the hospital and to the CEO² of the widely respected network of fifteen hospitals that this hospital belonged to. In our letter we had expressed an interest in working with the hospital leadership to bring about³ change.

The meeting opened with introductions of the eleven senior officers of the hospital, and my husband and me. Then I was asked if I would like to say anything to the assembled administrators.

I said that over the last ten years, the people at the hospital had repeatedly saved my mother’s life, perhaps a dozen times; that my mother had been shown kindness and caring in big and small ways by her general physician, her cardiologists, the emergency room staff, and the nurses; that the hospital staff and medical personnel had been generous with their time and extended themselves

¹ “Gone to bat” for means advocated for, helped.

² Chief Executive Officer

³ Bring about means accomplish.



ALASKA, USA • MARTI HAYMAKER

in difficult and demanding situations. I also noted the skills of the outstanding surgeons. I wanted them all to know that not one kindness or medical skill had been taken for granted, that we understood what enormous efforts had been made on my mother’s behalf.

I said it was precisely because of all they had done that we wanted to bring to the attention of everyone responsible for hospital policy some practices that had contributed to the difficulties my mother faced in the days before her death. I said that I understood that everyone around the table had mothers and fathers, children, and loved ones. I said that something like what happened to my mother could hurt one of their loved ones when they were not there and that person was vulnerable. I said that sometimes we each have to rely on the compassion and skill of total strangers when those we love are most in need. I also said that I knew I was addressing a group of leaders in what is called the “Rust Belt”⁴ of the United States and that I wanted to speak to them as a generation of leaders who stood on the shoulders of their parents, and the generosity their parents had shown throughout their lives. I said that my mother, who died at ninety-seven, had been a cleaning lady until she was eighty-four and that I guessed that they had parents and other family

members who were more similar to mine than not. I said that I knew that that part of the country was largely working class, that a big population of Hungarians and other Eastern Europeans had lived and worked there for most of their lives, and that the parents of many in the group, like my father, had worked

⁴ The “Rust Belt,” also known as the Manufacturing Belt, is an area in parts of the northeastern, mid-Atlantic, and midwest United States. The name “Rust Belt” came from the decline of industry in the 1970s, when many of the region’s factories were closed, and shuttered behind rusting gates.

in steel mills or related rust-belt industries. I added that my grandmother never spoke English, only Hungarian, and never left her house because of that. While her husband was working several states away in the coal mines, she was left with eight children to care for on her own.

I asked the group how many of them had similar backgrounds. Many people raised their hands and volunteered comments about their backgrounds: “My grandfather came at thirteen from Croatia and never spoke English,” “My family is Hungarian,” “My family is Czech,” “We lived in an Eastern European area,” “We grew up speaking . . . ,” and so on. I said that some of them may have had to speak on behalf of their parents and grandparents concerning their medical care as they may not have been able to speak for themselves. Then I shared a few heartbreaking and inspirational stories from Mom’s life.

After that I described some of what had happened in the hospital over the last ten days of my mother’s life, following her stroke, and said it was critical that we review exactly what had interfered with the success of her final care.

I described several incidents. One of them was walking into the hospital to find my mother, who weighed ninety-four pounds, in cloth restraints, tied to her bed, on drugs, and isolated in a room. She was confused, afraid, disoriented, and slow to respond. I asked the assembled team (1) What was the hospital policy? (2) Who was the leader at the table responsible for supervising the policy? (3) Why was the policy in place? (4) Were there intentions of changing the policy? Finally I offered some proposals for changing the system.

Some of the leaders spoke: “As the Vice President of Nursing, I am heartbroken that our hospital nursing staff failed your mother and you,” “I am the Director of Therapies, and I read your letter and cried for an hour and a half,” “I was devastated when I heard what had happened,” “As Vice President of Medical Operations I want you to know that the same thing happened to my mother at a nursing home and I was outraged.”

All the administrators had to understand the impact of what had occurred. Since the leadership was all in



MELONY SWASEY

one room, no question regarding staffing, funding, training, or coordinating could be avoided. No issue could be side-stepped.

After we listened to the thinking of the hospital administration, my husband, an RCer, offered some proposals. I am grateful that he and I worked together (it was an emotionally draining, though uplifting, three hours) to hammer out ways forward.

The entire staff closed with appreciations for our leadership and persistence. The president of the hospital said that the only thing he regretted was not capturing on video my opening talk so that the entire hospital staff of two thousand could be reminded of what they were all about. He added that he hoped to make a video that could reach across the hospital network and outline patient-care and family needs. One by one, hospital administrators approached my husband and me with thanks, hugs, family stories

continued . . .

WIDE WORLD CHANGING

... continued

that linked us, and commitments to bring about change.

Three months later we met again with the president and Quality Care Management. The following changes had occurred:

- Focus groups had been meeting with the hospital administration about patient and family communications, resulting in an ongoing monthly patient and family meeting with the hospital leadership.
- Nurses had been receiving training in communicating with families about patient needs and in the correct use of medical procedures (for example, the administering of liquid food through a feeding tube) that had been misused in our case.
- Policies had been established hospital- and system-wide regarding alternatives to restraints, and best practices for restraints when they were absolutely needed in extreme cases.
- Changes in staffing had been made so that professional medical services were available to

patients throughout the weekend instead of only on weekdays.

- Manuals had been developed to inform families about specific needs related to strokes.
- Speech aids had been made easily available to family members who had loved ones who were stroke survivors, to support their communication.
- An ombudsperson⁵ and the hospital leadership, including the president, had been regularly circulating through various areas of the hospital, asking families about patient needs.
- A bronze plaque commemorating my mother had been placed outside the hospital chapel stating, "Anne Bray, whose life and love made possible the improvement of patient care at this hospital."

Joanne Bray
Greenwich, Connecticut, USA

⁵ An ombudsperson is someone who investigates reported complaints, reports findings, and helps to achieve equitable settlements.



BLOWN GLASS • DIANE SHISK

Any individual or group can act rationally first without waiting for rational action on the part of someone else, and can take control of the situation by so doing.

Harvey Jackins
From *The Reclaiming of Power*, page 329

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Re-evaluation Counseling

Re-evaluation Counseling is a process whereby people of all ages and of all backgrounds can learn how to exchange effective help with each other in order to free themselves from the effects of past distress experiences.

Re-evaluation Counseling theory provides a model of what a human being can be like in the area of his/her interaction with other human beings and his/her environment. The theory assumes that everyone is born with tremendous intellectual potential, natural zest, and lovingness, but that these qualities have become blocked and obscured in adults as the result of accumulated distress experiences (fear, hurt, loss, pain, anger, embarrassment, etc.) which begin early in our lives.

Any young person would recover from such distress spontaneously by use of the natural process of emotional discharge (crying, trembling, raging, laughing, etc.). However, this natural process is usually interfered with by well-meaning people ("Don't cry," "Be a big boy," etc.) who erroneously equate the emotional discharge (the healing of the hurt) with the hurt itself.

When adequate emotional discharge can take place, the person is freed from the rigid pattern of behavior and feeling left by the hurt. The basic loving, cooperative, intelligent, and zestful nature is then free to operate. Such a person will tend to be more effective in looking out for his or her own interests and the interests of others, and will be more capable of acting successfully against injustice.

In recovering and using the natural discharge process, two people take turns counseling and being counseled. The one acting as the counselor listens, draws the other out, and permits, encourages, and assists emotional discharge. The one acting as client talks and discharges and re-evaluates. With experience and increased confidence and trust in each other, the process works better and better.

For more information, you can go to the web site: <http://www.rc.org/>.



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