

Present Time

July 2011

No. 164 (Vol. 43 No. 3)

Reality is wonderful, and it includes all of the harsh, horrible things going on, and all of the challenges. It's the best it's ever been. The main thing that's wrong is that we're held away from reality by our distresses.

Tim Jackins

Among many other topics, you'll find in this *Present Time* a lot about classism, the recent crises in Japan, and working on the effects of the Holocaust. Thanks to all who wrote, and sent in their artwork.

Do you have a story, drawing, or photo you'd like to share? Please send it to us! For the October issue we'll need articles and poetry by Monday, August 15, and changes to the back-page lists by Monday, August 22.

Lisa Kauffman, editor

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CONTENTS

Counseling Practice—3-12

- Set Up a Structure for Working on Racism*, Tim Jackins, 3-4
A Class on the Nuclear Accident in Japan, Dorothy Tristman, 5
Finding Discharge When Overwhelmed, Bryan Nelson, 5
Discharging on Disasters and Catastrophes, Roewen Wishart, 6
Not Something to Be Forced, Harvey Jackins, 6
No Blaming, S.J. Shashikala, 7
Pensamientos, and Keeping in Touch, Andrés Serrano and Alison Ehara-Brown, 8
Strength Pulls Up Fears, Harvey Jackins, 8
Something Has Shifted, David Rawlinson, 9
Poem, Fredrik Eklöf, 10
Short quote, Harvey Jackins, 10
We Are Doing Fine! Allan Hansen, 11
Always Send Encouraging Words, Harvey Jackins, 12
Play All the Time, Benjamin J. Altman, 12



Liberation—13-46

- Classism*, Tim Jackins 13-16
Irish Colonisation and Emigration, Pascal McCulla, 17
How Have You Worked on the Holocaust? Diane Balsler, 18
Persisting with Discharge, Karen Rosauer, 19
The Holocaust Is Present Every Moment in Israel, Varda Ginossar-Zakay, 19-20
Anti-Jewish Oppression in Uruguay, Susana Witte, 21
What Does This Have to Do with the Holocaust? Joan Ostrove, 21-22
Directions for a Musician, Harvey Jackins, 22
Claiming My German Heritage and Discharging on the Holocaust, Terry Fletcher, 23-24
Finding the Safety to Face the Hurts, Cherie Brown, 24
The Holocaust, Men, and Violence, Daniel Schaffer, 25
Birthday Song, Russell Hayes, 25
A Parent's Holocaust Success Story, Joelle Hochman, 26
Early Fears About How I Look, Aliza Becker, 27
Technology, Harvey Jackins, 27
The Holocaust, and War, Tami Shamir, 28-29
Not Running Away Anymore, Jen Steiner, 29
The Holocaust and "Mental Health" Liberation, Janet Foner, 30-31
Permanent Connection, Characterized by Love, Eileen Nemzer, 31
Being an Ally, Vicky Grosser, 32
Don't Respond with Button-Pushing, Harvey Jackins, 32
It's Time to Move, Seán Ruth, 33-36
Showing Ourselves Fully, David Joyce, 37
Connection, and Moving Ahead, Karen Wishart, 37-38
The Diversity of the Middle Class, several people, 38-39
Cleaning Up an Old Relationship, Harvey Jackins, 39
Middle-Class Women—and Sexism, Competition, and Classism, Barbara Deck, 40-41
Jewish Liberation at the Middle-Class Conference, Phyllis Beardsley, 41
Allies to U.S. Southerners, Sue Lippert, 42
From a Middle-Class Artist, Deborah Bell, 42-43
Middle-Class People Find Their Thinking, several people, 44-46



Teaching, Leading, Community Building—47-75

- 地震と津波のあとに 日本のコウ・カウンセラーに資源を送る*, ダイアン・シスク *Bringing Resource to Japanese Co-Counselors Following the Earthquake and Tsunami*, Diane Shisk, 47-50
RCの力, 日比野ゆうこ The Power of RC, Yuko Hibino, 51-53
困難な状況においても考えることはできる, テレサ・エンリコ, *Possible to Think During a Difficult Time*, Teresa Enrico, 54-57
Moving Ahead on All Fronts, Harvey Jackins, 57
恐怖は孤独感からくる, 小野 梨々杏 *My Fear Comes from Loneliness*, Lillian Ono, 58
東北の人たちへの理解と支援, エマ・パーカー *Understanding and Supporting the People of Tohoku*, Emma Parker, 59-65
Clear-Cut Lines of Responsibility, Harvey Jackins, 66
Be Thoughtful of Japanese People, Marcie Rendon, 66
Reaching (poem), Ela Thier, 67
Some Reminders, 68-69
Nigerian Teachers Share Experiences and Goals, Princess Chinwe Agwuna and others, 70
A Men's Workshop in Matasia, Kenya, Victor Kebane, 71

- La Diversidad de Lenguaje y el Cuidado del Medio Ambiente, Language Diversity, and Care of the Environment*, Juan Manuel Feito Guerrero and Wytke Visser, 72-73
Accessing Seventeen Years of Present Time, Ted Mayer, 74
Allies to Indigenous People in Australia, Cathy Picone, 74
Thinking About the Job You Want, Harvey Jackins, 75
Thank You for the On-Line Literature, Andy Stokes, 75
Appreciating Present Time, 76
Wide World Changing—77-85
Confronting My Own Classism, Cynthia Phinney, 77-78
Capitalism Can't Be "Patched Up," Harvey Jackins, 78
Seeing the Strengths of My Mixed-Class Background, Jerry Ann Yoder, 79-80
We Need to Do More Work on Classism, Micheline Mason, 81
Israel and Unity, Harvey Jackins, 81
Introducing RC to a Non-RC Organization, Lisa Blum, 82
Capitalism, and a New Economic System, Harvey Jackins, 83
We Need to Listen to All People, Beth Racette, 84
Terrorism and Violence, Harvey Jackins, 85
It Felt Better to Act, Jennifer Ramos, 85
RC on the Internet—86-88
Information Coordinators—89-91
Publications—92-98, 100-104
Translation Coordinators—99
Audio Cassettes—104
CDs—105
Videocassettes and DVDs—106-108
Ordering Information—109
Present Time Subscriptions—110
Reference Persons for Organized Areas—111-115
International Reference Persons, International Liberation Reference Persons, International Commonality Reference Persons, and the Re-evaluation Foundation—116
Teachers Outside of Organized Areas—117-122
Re-evaluation Counseling Contacts—123-124
Workshops—125-126
Index—127



APPRECIATIONS

- Layout: Amanda Martinez
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Editing: Lisa Kauffman, Katie Kauffman
Proofreading, shipping, and other help: Barbara Boring, Jesse Braxton, Alisa Lemire Brooks, Maria Franco, Hugh Geenen, Sparky Griego, Yuko Hibino, Mary Hodgson, Susan Hutchison, Gordon Jackins, Truus Jansen, Valerie Jaworski, Katie Kauffman, Lisa Kauffman, Sooja Kelsey, Amanda Martinez, Sandra McDonald, Victor Nicassio, Marion Ouphouet, Gale Picker, Ellie Putnam, Jayne Schauer, Diane Shisk, Karen Slaney, Dvora Slavin, Steve Thompson
Cover photo: Hong Kong, by Tim Jackins
Art and photography: Steve Banbury, Anne Barton, Lisa Bedinger, Alisa Lemire Brooks, Lance Cablk, Julia Cameron, Roslyn Cassidy, Jana Christopher, Beth Cruise, Theresa D'Amato, Ken Deveney, Alison Ehara-Brown, Edward Elbers, Nancy Faulstich, Julie Anne Forgione, Randi Freundlich, Aaron Galloway, Jo Anne Garrett, Anica Gavrilovic, Pat Gregory, Michael Hand, Sarah Hare, Glen Hauer, Marti Haymaker, Yuko Hibino, Ellie Hidalgo, Søren Holm, Bill Horne, Susan Hutchinson, Angela Hyland, Tim Jackins, Cynthia Johnston, Sara Kallai, Vivi Katou, Lyndall Katz, Katie Kauffman, Lisa Kauffman, Karl Lam, Shelley Macy, Amanda Martinez, Keith Osajima, Monnie Paashuis, Margie Doyle Papadopoulou, Emma Parker, Jo Perry, Ellie Putnam, Diane Shisk, Lynne Shivers, Orna Shuman, Alan Sprung, Katerina Stavropoulou-Vlachou, Brian Townsend, Wytke Visser, Lisa Voss, Julia Watt-Rosenfeld, Susanna Witte, Lawrence Wright

PRESENT TIME (ISSN 0889-2490) is published quarterly in January, April, July, and October for \$16.00 for a one-year subscription, \$32.00 for a two-year subscription, and \$84.00 for a five-year subscription inside the U.S. and \$24.00 for a one-year subscription, \$48.00 for a two-year subscription, and \$124.00 for a five-year subscription to other countries, including postage, by Rational Island Publishers, Inc., P.O. Box 2081, Main Office Station, Seattle, Washington 98111, USA. Periodicals postage paid at Seattle, Washington. POSTMASTER: send address changes to PRESENT TIME, P.O. Box 2081, Main Office Station, Seattle, Washington 98111, USA.

Set Up a Structure for Working on Racism

*From a talk by Tim Jackins, at the Connecticut, USA,
Leaders' Workshop, May 2010*

I think that we can end racism in this century, that at the end of the century racism will be something you will have to explain because it isn't around anymore. You will have to explain how people could have gotten that confused.

Racism is a big impediment to progress in the world. It is the oppression and confusion that is most used to manipulate people and keep them isolated. It keeps people thinking that their interests are at odds¹ with somebody else's interests.

We intend to end racism. It is our goal as a Community. If we don't do this, the rest of our RC work cannot go forward as quickly. We cannot accept that large an irrationality.

We are becoming more and more effective. We have the tools to do it and are getting them out more widely. We will keep doing this as long as necessary.

Racism is now being exposed often enough that it's not as confusing to people as it used to be, and that's going to continue. Things are moving well. However, people still don't understand the fullness of racism, just like they don't understand the fullness of sexism. It isn't enough to do some window dressing² and hide behind it. We have to actually look into our own minds. We have to notice and discharge the hurts that messed up our ability to think and act. The RC Community has a big role to play in making this happen.

¹ At odds means in conflict.

² Do some window dressing means make some small changes for the sake of appearance.

Ending racism is our goal as a Community, but goals don't have much effect unless individuals make them their own. We can collectively agree to something, but then it has to be implemented by individuals. And it has to involve all of us.

WORKING ON THE OPPRESSOR ROLE

We white people were pushed into the oppressor role against our wishes, and working on this is difficult. It's hard to believe that somebody will still like us if we show how confused we are. It's hard to believe that he or she will remember us as separate from the distresses. So we get scared and shy about bringing up racism. There is also tremendous discouragement. It seems hopeless. We need to understand that the hopelessness is part of the recordings and that we can go ahead anyway. It's just

another set of distresses that we get to work on.

Like any heavy distress that we're discouraged about, we can easily forget to work on it. We can feel like it will be better later, or that we don't quite have the right set of resources, or that there is something more important. There isn't anything more important.

Oppressor material³ like this also feels like it won't move. We look at it and don't know what to do. We can't seem to make something happen. It's not easily and comfortably accessible as are our feelings from having been mistreated. When we've been mistreated and we go to a Co-Counseling session, our counselors are on our side. They're sympathetic. They're with us. But when we work on having been oppressive, we don't think they'll

continued . . .

³ Material means distress.



NANCY FAULSTICH

COUNSELING PRACTICE

... continued

be there with us; we know it will be harder for them to be on our side.

WE NEED A STRUCTURE

So you and your counselor need to make an agreement—that you got hurt by this material, that it's not you, it's not your fault; that you want to get free of it; and that you will remind each other of that.

Sometimes this works with only two people—maybe by spending half of every session on it. But usually that's not enough. We need three or four minds committed to doing this work—maybe in a three-way or four-way session every two weeks. We need the constant reminder.

Where we can't easily think flexibly, we need to put in a structure.

A structure that's pointed in the right direction, that counters the frozen structure of distress that's pointed in the wrong direction, helps us to move on this.

A STRUGGLE FOR OUR OWN MINDS

At some point all of us who were raised white in this society have to decide to take this on,⁴ for the sake of our own minds. Racism spoils the lives of us white people. It spoils our minds, and it spoils our relationships with other white people. The rigidities that are part of racism mess up everything in our lives. So this is a struggle for our own minds, as well as for the minds of people we care about—whether

⁴ Take this on means undertake this.

they are in the oppressor role or have been targeted by racism.

OVERCOMING LIMITATIONS

One time racism shows itself is when we decide to make friends across the line of racism. When we decide to cross that line to build a relationship, we find it difficult in unexpected ways. We cannot treat this person in the way that we treat white people. It doesn't work. It's not enough. Our usual effort is not enough to build a relationship with them. We have to treat them as who they are, and they are different from us. They have gone through different experiences. Different things are required in the relationship—things that may feel like almost too much.

We should be able to do that much with another white person, too, but we can't. That's part of what racism has done to us—limited our relationships with each other. As we make contacts with people targeted by racism and build relationships with them, we will face the ways that racism has limited us in our relationships with other people who carry oppressor patterns.

HOLDING EACH OTHER TO THE TASK

At some point, maybe this weekend, you need to find a couple of people to work on racism with for the next six months. You can hold each other to looking in that direction, no matter what.⁵ At the end of six months you will have better ideas for how to do the work, but at this point a bit of structure, to hold you to the task against the pull of your discouragement, will be useful.

It is in all of our interests to take this on.

⁵ No matter what means whatever happens.



HURRICANE RIDGE, OLYMPIC MOUNTAINS, WASHINGTON, USA • KATIE KAUFFMAN

A Class on the Nuclear Accident in Japan

A couple of weeks ago, as news of the nuclear accident was unfolding, I decided to do my RC class on the subject. I had planned for another subject but realized I was restimulated by the news coming out of Japan and didn't want to lead on top of that. We were a small group that night, which was ideal for staying close.

We started out with a go around on what we loved about the earth. Everyone was noticing how much they loved various aspects of the natural world. For some reason, when it came to my turn, I thought of how much I also loved cities: New York City (which is close to the Indian Point Nuclear Plant), Paris (in a country that relies heavily on nuclear power), San Francisco (with its nuclear plants on earthquake faults). The thought of these cities being harmed brought up huge, deep grief discharge for me.

We then took turns telling our nuclear memories, and I was fascinated by how our age differences, and other differences, kicked up different memories. What came up for me was my memory of the Cuban Missile Crisis. I hadn't realized how much grief and fear I didn't discharge at the time. A much younger woman, who was originally from Italy, remembered Chernobyl—how as a young girl she was told for weeks that the food in Italy was contaminated. One person said she had no memories, and yawned profusely. For others the question brought up early feelings of discouragement about various situations in the world.

I think it was useful to discharge on this subject. I look forward to hearing more about what other RCers are doing.

Dorothy Tristman

Albany, New York, USA

Reprinted from the RC e-mail discussion list
for leaders in the care of the environment



MOLOKAI, HAWAII, USA • TIM JACKINS

Finding Discharge When Overwhelmed

I've recognized that with so many news reports about numerous world events, it's easy for me to feel overwhelmed by the recent tragedy in Japan.

To discharge about the earthquake and loss of human life, I've been using these questions:

- 1) What do I love about Japan, and Japanese people and culture?
- 2) What are my childhood memories of Japan?
- 3) Who do I currently know (I have a Japanese relative), or who have I known, who is of Japanese heritage?

Bryan Nelson

Minneapolis, Minnesota, USA

Reprinted from the RC e-mail discussion list
for leaders in the care of the environment

Discharging on Disasters and Catastrophes

We had an excellent care-of-the-environment support group meeting in Sydney (New South Wales, Australia). I had previously decided to spend three meetings on the topic of "discharging on disasters and catastrophes."

In thinking about the group beforehand, I looked over my notes from the recent Care of the Environment Conference and noticed three topics for discharge and action that Wystke Visser¹ had said she considered important: (1) greed and consumption, (2) discouragement, and (3) reclaiming connections with people and nature.

I noticed that part of what I had felt about the recent events in Japan was isolation: "As long as it is not affecting my family, I don't want to know too much about it." That got me thinking that each of the three topics Wytke had mentioned was connected to disasters and catastrophes. (1) Our fears of material insecurity are connected to disasters. We in First World societies end up with a distorted view of how much we need in order to be safe and secure. (2) Feelings of

being unable to escape from disasters can restimulate discouragement. (3) Patterns can make us retreat from other people when we feel scared.

There are also wonderful human qualities that work in the opposite direction. Natural disasters cause people to share, work together, strive for things that seem hard, and draw closer to each other.

If we can discharge our distresses about sudden and immediately visible disasters, then we will likely be able to think better about gradual and less visible environmental disasters, like sea-level rise or climate change due to global warming.

In the support group I talked briefly about the above. Then people worked on early memories of various disasters and on the particularly scary aspects of the recent ones. Being close physically provided lots of contradiction.²

Roewen Wishart

Lakemba, New South Wales, Australia
Reprinted from the RC e-mail discussion list
for leaders in the care of the environment

¹ Wytke Visser is the International Commonality Reference Person for the Care of the Environment and was the leader of the conference.

² Contradiction to distress



NOTTINGHAM, ENGLAND • ANICA GAVRILOVIC

Not Something to Be Forced

If you are able to tremble but not yet able to cry, you undoubtedly are still discharging fear of being attacked if you do cry. You do not need to make any special effort. The tears will come as soon as you have discharged enough fear and feel safe enough. Your Co-Counselors can add to that safety by their relaxed confidence, of course. It's not something that should be forced.

Harvey Jackins

From a letter written in 1980

No Blaming

Last week Niti¹ came and led a workshop in Bangalore (India). She has often talked, when leading in Bangalore, about blame and criticism, which has been of great help in understanding our hidden material.²

She did a marvelous job. She talked about old misinformation versus new, accurate information. Old misinformation can include blaming, which we sometimes use

¹ Niti Dandekar, the Regional Reference Person for India

² Material means distress.

as a “solution” for handling our problems. That we can discharge the hurts underlying the pattern of blaming is new, accurate information.

Niti explained the theory in simplified form. I found it easy to understand and readily usable. It has made a huge difference in my perspective on problems. I have made a commitment to handle things without blaming anyone, including myself, which I used to do often. I have tried this with small problems, and I am glad with the results. It's an easy solution, truly.

For a few months my only source of theory has been *Present Time*. Niti's leadership, RC theory, and the sessions that day reminded me how important it is to have theory and practice going hand in hand. A small piece of theory *and* discharge is useful to an unimaginable extent. I am thankful to Niti for making such a difference in my life, and for her willingness to help Bangalore RCers.



S.J. Shashikala
Ramachandrapuram,
Bangalore, India

The RC journal about the care of the environment —

Sustaining All Life —is now available.

“I have asked people what difference it made having that connection (with nature) in their lives, and they have told me it saved their lives. Nature doesn't judge us; it recharges us. Try this direction: ‘The earth is alive and wants us.’ This is a powerful contradiction to isolation.”

— Wytske Visser (page 4)

A small sample of the articles:

- Relaxed Leading*, Jan Venderbos
- Me, Sparrows, and Saving the Planet* (poem),
Micheline Mason
- Questioning Patterns that Lead to Overuse*,
Marcie Rendon
- Discharging Entitlement Patterns*, Susan Kammerzell
- Making a Decision About Global Warming*,
Madeleine Para
- A Household Conservation Project*, Glen Hauer
- Some Angles on Discharging on the Environment*,
Shashi Raman
- On Class Societies, Racism, and Ending All
Oppressions*, Wytske Visser
- Sexism and Care of the Environment*, Beth Cruise
- A Young Person Talks About the Environment*,
Mari Piggot



“There are many things we need to do, but the situation isn't desperate. We can be hopeful that human intelligence will prevail and end the irrational treatment of the environment.”

— Tim Jackins (page 6)

\$4.00 (U.S.), plus postage and handling
For ordering information, see page 109.

Pensamientos, and Keeping in Touch¹

Hey there Andrés,

I was going through boxes the other day and found a literature report that you did for our Co-Counseling class—years ago, when you were sixteen years old. I sent it to the guy who wrote the article you reported on (he is a buddy of mine). I also sent it in to *Present Time*, and they want to publish it if it is okay with you. Would you let them publish it?

We miss you. What are you up to² now? Are you done with school? How is life?

Much love,
Alison Ehara-Brown
Richmond, California, USA

Hi Alison,

Thank you for sending me the report. I was touched and pleased when reading it. I would be honored and delighted for it to be published. And I apologize if I have remained quiet over the years. I didn't realize until right now that a Co-Counseling group would have been helpful for me, instead of keeping to myself. Do you have any information on a group here in the San Fernando Valley or Los Angeles area? I would love to contact a group and get involved once again. Thank you for everything, and I miss you.

Andrés Serrano
Richmond, California, USA

could relate to—like we were all from Mexico, and the man writing and his grandfather, and I and my grandfather, all loved each other across generations.

That made me realize, after a mini-session with another student, that I really don't know that much about my grandfather, and that made me sad. All these years of his life and history, and all I really know about are the last ten years of his life. How can I love so deeply a man that I barely know about? What I do know is that he was a funny man and also an extremely loving man. Reading *Pensamientos* helped me re-connect to him. And the weirdest and coolest⁴ coincidence of all is that the man who wrote the article and I are both named Andrés⁵ and our grandfathers were both named José. It made me feel connected to the author, and my grandfather.

Co-Counseling literature can be really cool in that way. You never know what you will remember or feel, or how you will become more connected to others.

Andrés Serrano

¹ In touch means in contact.

² Up to means doing.



YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK, CALIFORNIA, USA • LISA VOSS



KK

Here is Andrés' report:

Appreciation for *Pensamientos*³

I loved the journal. While reading the story I selected, about a guy and his grandfather, I began to remember things about my own grandfather. There were so many things that I

³ *Pensamientos* is the RC journal about Chicano/a liberation.

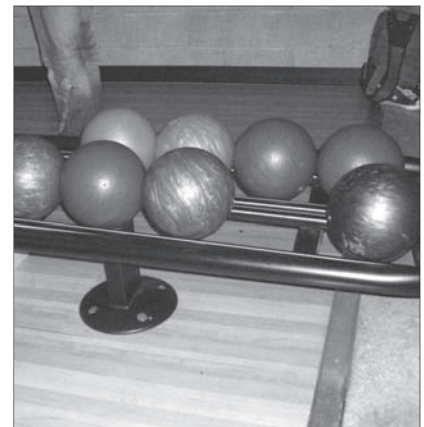
⁴ Coolest means most wonderful.

⁵ The author of the article is Andrés Mares Muro, an RC leader in New York City, New York, USA.

Strength Pulls Up Fears

Any of us with any strength tend to pull people's fears up to the surface. (They're trying to get them up to where they can feel them enough to discharge them.) But they panic when they feel the fear, and unless we step in and consistently take the role of a strong counselor, they hang the fears on us and retreat instead of going ahead and discharging.

Harvey Jackins
From a letter written in 1980



AMANDA MARTINEZ

Something Has Shifted

I am a sixty-two-year-old white working-class man. I've been in RC for twenty-six years. I thought until recently that things had gotten worse for me, in that my worst chronic,¹ that of beating myself up² for doing something "stupid," was now being acted out by beating myself up literally—slapping myself around the head and face. (My chronic exactly mirrors what was done to me.)

Slapping myself seemed like some sort of answer, like my latest act of "stupidity" had to be marked by something. There was a relief when it was over, but of course doing it guaranteed that it would happen again. In a Co-Counseling session recently, when my turn came, I borrowed my counsellor's direction: "I can change my thinking."

Simple and powerful. I yawned a lot and resolved to work with it for the foreseeable future. I don't intend going to my grave with that chronic pattern still in place.

That same evening, I was returning home when I realized I'd forgotten something—another act of "stupidity." The feelings quickly started to overwhelm me, but I had this new direction and used it to get back to reality. I went back, put things in order, and realised the significance of what I'd done. After a lifetime of being gripped by the throat by this chronic, I had won. And I can do it again. And I will. Something has shifted. Good.

David Rawlinson
Highfield, Southampton, England

¹ Chronic pattern

² Beating myself up means being strongly critical of myself.



ANACORTES, WASHINGTON, USA • ALISA LEMIRE BROOKS

COUNSELING PRACTICE

A couple of weeks ago I had surgery for my back. I wrote this poem in my hospital bed the day after surgery:

En vän—som är jag
Talar till mig från en plats
Jag inte känner igen
Dit jag inte vill gå
Där jag redan är

En vän och en plats som gör
ont
Men inte vill mig illa

Tala, smärta
jag ska lyssna
Och vara med dig

English translation:

A friend—that is me
Speaks to me from a place
I don't know,
Where I don't want to go,
But where I already am

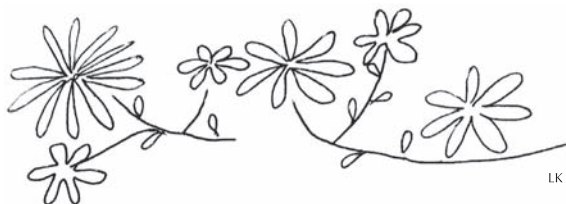
A friend and a place that hurts
But does me no harm

Speak to me, Pain
I will listen
And I will be with you

Fredrik Eklöf
Malmö, Sweden
Translated by Fredrik Eklöf



NEW ZEALAND • LANCE CABLK



Anybody who cries a long time needs to
cry a long time.

Harvey Jackins
From a letter written in 1981

We Are Doing Fine!

There is no doubt that impatience and discouragement are patterned and not based in reality. Looking at the facts makes this evident:

We humans, in the form of the species homo sapiens, have existed for about 150,000 years. For the vast majority of that time we were hunters and gatherers. Farming, urbanization, and subsequent developments started only ten thousand years ago. Pictorial writing was invented five thousand years ago, alphabetic writing only 2,800 years ago. It took us¹ 147,000 years to learn how to write! But largely due to that invention, art, science, medicine, technology, and philosophy have developed at an ever-increasing rate.

Up until the sixteenth century, people thought the universe was centered on the earth. In 1969 the first human made it to² the moon. Ten years ago a satellite helped us estimate the age of the universe. Today we are discovering many earth-sized planets in other solar systems.

A serious scientific study of the development of life on earth began only a hundred and fifty years ago. Prior to that, it was widely assumed that all life was static and created about five thousand years ago. Today scientists

¹ It took us means we needed.

² Made it to means succeeded in getting to.



Laughter and tears are meant to turn the wheels of the same machinery of sensibility; one is wind-power, and the other water-power.

Oliver Wendell Holmes

have created a living and replicating microbe from artificially assembled DNA.³ Penicillin was discovered in 1928, only eighty-three years ago. Before that, infections were often fatal or required amputations.

It was only sixty years ago that a serious scientific study of human rationality and irrationality began. We've called it Re-evaluation Counseling. You are part of that experiment. It began humbly, dealing with intermittent patterns. It is now effectively attacking oppression in all its forms.

The application of science to technology has made it possible for some humans to have comfortable lives (nutrition, shelter, protection from some kinds of harm, and so on). The application of science to human cognition has made it possible for some humans to have intelligent lives (thoughtful relationships and parenting, awareness of reality, caring for the environment, and so on). The combination will surely soon make it possible for all humans to have both comfortable and intelligent lives.

We have only just started.

Allan Hansen
Cypress, California, USA
Reprinted from the e-mail discussion
list for RC Community members

³ DNA is deoxyribonucleic acid—any of the various nucleic acids that form the molecular basis of heredity.

If you move . . .

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

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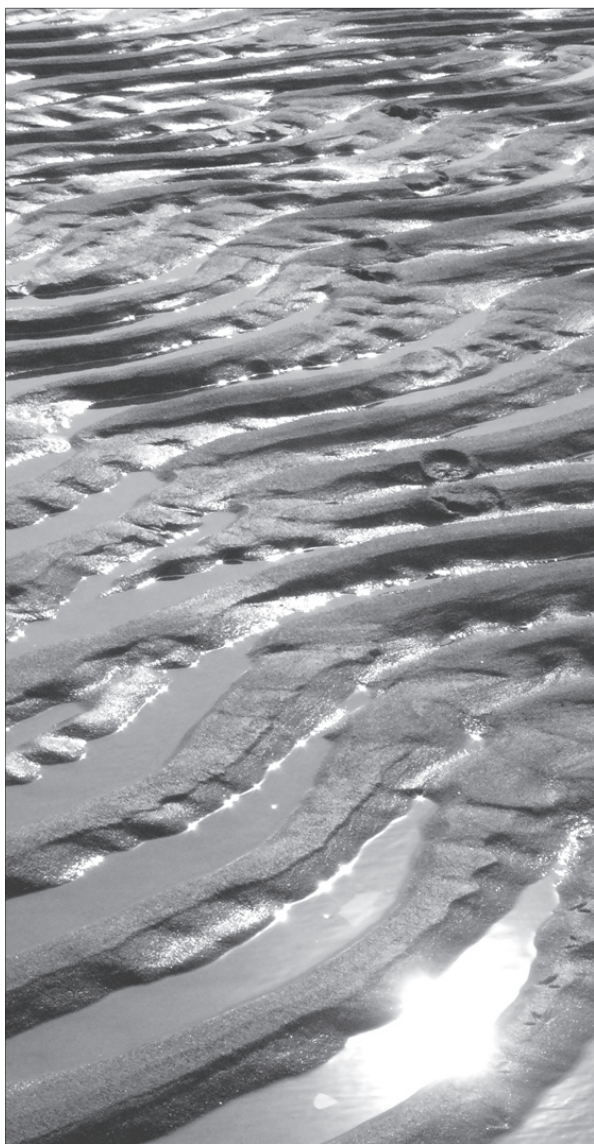
Always Send Encouraging Words

I think you need to decide, Y—, as I have had to decide, that regardless of how you are feeling at a particular time, you always send encouraging words to others, in this case E—.

It is good that she wrote to you first, but it is not sufficient for you to wait. I think you must always plan on taking the initiative. Feelings are feelings, and you save them for a session. The reality of being positive and encouraging to your friends always takes first place. It could be that E— was upon bad times and a positive letter from you would make all the difference, so always write positively.

When you write to me, always say something positive, perhaps a paragraph or two, and then, if you need to be negative and need to ask for my reassurance, go ahead. I am old enough and tough enough and confident enough that you will never discourage me.

Harvey Jackins
From a letter written in 1980



RANDI FREUNDLICH

Play All the Time

I encourage playing whenever you remember to. Play seems like such a useful contradiction to a lot of the “serious” distress we carry around. Young children do it a lot, and they seem to know how to have fun. As Harvey* said, “You can enjoy everything you do.” I see play—in all contexts, no matter how “serious” it seems we need to be—as a big part of that.

Have fun in this adventure they call life!

Benjamin J. Altman
Flushing, Queens, New York, USA

* Harvey Jackins

A Recent Introduction to RC

(CD 13)

Every other month, Tim Jackins gives a public introduction to RC, at Re-evaluation Counseling Community Resources, in Seattle, Washington, USA. One of his goals in giving these talks is to give them freshly each time, speaking directly to the audience. This is a CD of one of his introductory talks.

\$10 (U.S.), plus shipping and handling
To order, see page 109.

*(This is one of the RC Teacher Updates,
which are listed on page 105.)*

Classism

*A talk by Tim Jackins, at the West Coast North America
Leaders' Workshop, January 2011*

Every society so far has been oppressive. What does that mean? It means that in one form or another, some group of people, some class, seizes power. What sort of power? It is basically the power to determine the rules for the production of the goods that are needed for survival. It is also the power to determine the relationships of production—who works, who benefits, how much the people who work get to keep for themselves and how much is expropriated and given to the class in power—the ruling class of that particular society. The class in power maintains its position by force, by manipulating distresses, and by making people give up in many different ways. Societies are always some version of this basic form.

It wasn't like this when we humans started out, when we were scattered in the forest, on the savannah. We were spread out, and our survival was rather marginal. There was no point in trying to steal what another person produced, because that person would die—then where would we be? It was more useful to have other people around who were surviving. Everybody was always scared about not surviving. Those distresses are ancient.

At some point we humans were successful enough to increase in numbers. That expanded our options. We started figuring out how to produce enough that we didn't always have to live on the edge of survival. We could still get pushed to the edge—for example, by cold periods when not enough of the things we ate grew well. Then the population would shrink and many difficult things would happen.



JULIA WATT-ROSENFELD

We were quite vulnerable. But we kept learning more about how the world worked. We also began to get organized. We found out that when people worked together, they could make things happen in a better way, that then survival wasn't so marginal.

SOCIETIES

At some point we understood enough, could organize well enough, that we formed societies. Those societies always turned oppressive. In a society, people end up being oppressed, but their children are more likely to survive. More of us survived in societies than survived without them. Societies were miserable for individuals, but life hadn't been very good anyway. It wasn't a big step down. As a species, more of us lived, so in some crude, barely intelligent sense, societies worked. They didn't encourage minds, they didn't let us be fully human, but they worked for survival. And survival had to be dealt with before other issues could be addressed.

In all societies there has been a group, a class, that controls the means of production as well as the

relationships of production. We have had different forms of societies, including slavery and feudalism. The form changes when developing conditions make possible a more efficient form. Then some new group takes power. The people who benefited from the old form fight to hang on to it, but they don't have the power anymore because conditions have changed, things have moved on. New ways of doing things, new relationships, have developed, and a new group takes power. It's still not intelligent, it's still oppressive, but it's a new group, and society gets reorganized.

CAPITALISM

We're now in a market economy. (They don't say free market as much anymore.) We're in capitalism. We're in an advanced stage of capitalism. Advanced means near death. (It's like an advanced stage of cancer.) Capitalism is an oppressive form of society, like all the other forms have been. There is no good human position in capitalism. Especially as people become aware of oppression, they wish for some position they can occupy that isn't oppressive, that isn't part of the system. They go back to the woods and farm, make small crafts, try not to play an oppressive role. Or they hunt for a job in which they are neither the target nor the agent of the worst oppression. But we're confined by this society. There is little real choice. We can't run off to the side and live by ourselves and think that's a progressive step. We can't go back to hand crafts and think we're moving forward. We can't avoid the issues.

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LIBERATION

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TWO CLASSES

Capitalism has created two classes, based on how production occurs: the owning class and the working class. The owning class tries to dictate the way things happen. The people who work go along with it, because enough of them can't figure out how else to do things. How do you keep questioning, especially as the distresses pile up? How do you get your mind free enough to find a better way—to say, "Let's try this," and then insist on trying it? Some people have done that, but so far it hasn't been enough to change things in this period.

Some of us grew up as offspring of people who worked for a living. Others of us are the offspring of people who didn't work, who had money coming in without having to work for it, who were essentially living off of other people's labor. The justification for doing that is imbedded in our legal system. It is legal to exploit the labor of others; it is generally regarded as the normal, proper, correct way to do things. Of course the laws of any system support the existing system—one is used to justify the other, back and forth. It's unfair, it's brutal, it's unjust.

In this stage of capitalism we also have a middle class. It is not actually a separate economic class but a confusion that divides working people. The middle class consists

of working-class people who are supposed to control the other working-class people. They're the paper shufflers, the teachers, the doctors.

REFORMS

We all try to do good things in a rotten system. It's nice that we try, and it has some good results, but it doesn't change the overall effect of the system. It doesn't do much except make it a little less harsh temporarily. By itself it doesn't lead us in the direction of stopping all the oppression. It is possible to do things within the system to try to reform it. However, reforms only make the system more tolerable; they don't change it. They don't eliminate the basic inequalities or the other negative effects of capitalism, such as war.

THE SYSTEM AT A DESPERATE EDGE

People are exploited in all possible ways, including having to work more, for less pay, under worse conditions. The destruction of unions is part of that. There was an earlier form of capitalism in which some capitalists took pride in doing things efficiently enough that they could be more fair to their workers. It's almost not possible to do that now. At this point, every corner is cut.¹ If someone figures out how

¹ In this context, every corner is cut means every money-saving measure is taken.

to be harder on his or her workers and thereby gain a little more profit, maybe cut half a cent off the cost of producing his or her product, everybody else has to do it, too. Nobody dares not to. The system is at that desperate edge.

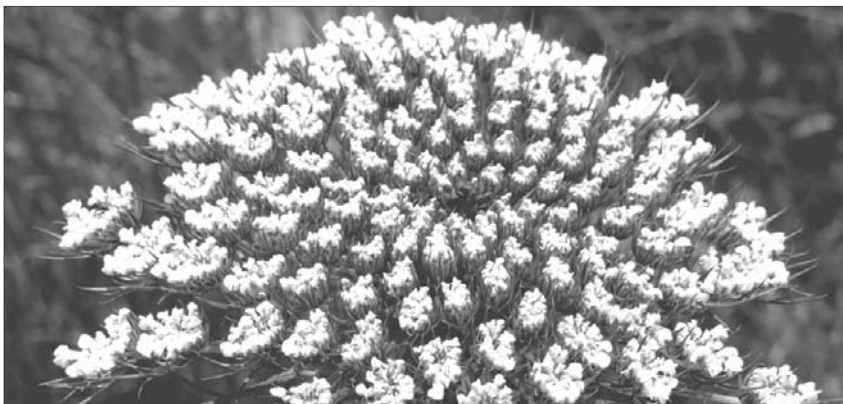
Capitalism is driven by its need for continual economic growth and accumulation. As individuals, we are driven to acquire more and more material resource. However, no amount of material resource can actually provide security.

PATTERNS FROM CLASS

The patterns we get depend on what class we grew up in, what class our folks grew up in, the neighborhood we grew up in. What class are you? Working class? Middle class? Owning class? Some of you may not yet be able to identify with a class, but you will find it possible eventually.

There are finer distinctions: for example, there are farmers, peasants, and chronically unemployed people. Capitalism requires that there be a lot of unemployed people. It's part of how wages are driven down, part of how production is shifted quickly to the most profitable method. People need to be available, people whose lives are "worth" so little that they can be grabbed quickly and then thrown away as soon as a new method of production is found. And, of course, more recent factors are shifting production from place to place—to countries where labor is cheaper, to countries with laws that can be corrupted so that fewer and fewer limits are placed on the mistreatment of workers—so that more money can be made.

Class isn't talked about much in the United States. This is different from some places where classism can't be hidden. For example, in England, for most of the period of



ALAN SPRUNG

capitalism, classes have been rigid and harshly enforced. The resulting patterns there are pronounced; people don't forget where they came from.

It's a bit different in the United States. People came here to escape the harshness of their societies. There was an illusion of freedom—an illusion that they weren't stuck in a class, that they had choices. However, there weren't many real choices. People might live somewhere for one generation, be unable to stand it, and move somewhere else, but they could not escape the oppressive structures and relationships and the resulting distresses and patterns. They had also been hurt into acting out the oppressor role. In their previous societies they had been heavily targeted, and when they came here, they tried to wipe out² the Indigenous population.

The illusion of not being oppressed by class can still exist in the United States.

You get to look at who you are. Who are your people? You get to be proud of all of them. There is a reason to be proud of your people, whatever they came through, whatever class they were in. There's also reason to go after³ all the distresses they passed on.

THE OWNING CLASS

Being owning-class is a horrible life. It's just horrible. Along with all the resource, there is such misery and isolation. And as with any other oppression, there's a longing to be out from under it. To get away from their own distresses, owning-class people are seduced into taking the oppressive role.

Owning-class patterns started a long time ago. They were passed on



NANCY FAULSTICH

from earlier economic systems. They include patterns of looking down upon others and "knowing" what is right. One capitalist phrase was "What's good for General Motors is what's good for the country." Of course, what's good for General Motors is what's good for the owners of General Motors, but only in a materialist sense.

The system and its agents extract value from labor for the owning class, but the really big money comes when an owning-class person is driven out of business. One capitalist drives another's business to bankruptcy, buys it for next to nothing, and makes tremendous amounts of money. We've seen this recently. So it's not like owning-class people are great allies to each other—the whole system sets everybody against each other.

The capitalist world revolves around owning-class people, but they are forced into tremendous isolation from reality, and from other classes, and are made tremendously ignorant about the way things actually work. You working-class people may think your relationships are tough. Owning-class young people are badly mistreated and told they are having a wonderful life. At least if you are working-class, you are mistreated and told you have a lousy life. There is a consistency there.

I don't think you would want to be a member of the group that oppresses you. Look at the people who aim their distresses at you—

would you want to be them? If the price was that you had to be them and have their distresses, would you pay that price to get out of your position? No, thank you. It doesn't benefit anyone, in human terms, to be owning class, or to be in any other oppressor role.

Of course, every child born into an owning-class family is just like a child born anywhere else. All the same goodness, potential, and wanting the world right is there. It simply gets messed with by many things, including boarding schools.

THE WORKING CLASS

We working-class people work. We work to death. We work to provide enough that the next generation can go on. We work because we don't know what else to do, because we're told we're stupid, because we can't get the opportunities, because we can't get accurate information. The schools give us enough that we can be useful in making a profit for someone, but not enough that we can flourish. We feel bad, we feel stupid, we feel incapable, and we keep going. There is persistence.

But under capitalism there is this wonderful thing: Capitalism works by organizing people into large units. That means that we have to work together. We're on the job together doing something that we hand to the next person, who takes it cooperatively. One of the big benefits of being working-class is

continued . . .

² Wipe out means eliminate.

³ In this context, go after means deliberately discharge.

LIBERATION

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that we work together. We learn what it is to do big things together—to build homes and families and households, to build bridges, to make roads. We get to be effective, and we do it with each other. We learn how to cooperate. We figure things out together. This is why the working class has an advantage. We are denied everything, but to make money off of us, society has to let us work together. This is one of the conflicts within capitalism. (Any system has conflicts—to maximize profits, the owning class has to allow something that endangers the system.) As things grow, get large, and get organized, the working class gets to understand something about what it is to be human, and what's possible, that nobody else gets to understand. That makes the working class a force. There is nothing like it.

THE MIDDLE CLASS

Some of us grew up middle-class, and some of us who grew up working-class got pulled into the middle class. We have the promise of greater material resource, easier lives, less unemployment, more stability, cleaner hands, longer fingernails, painted fingernails. (Why is that popular?) We're not as targeted, though this distinction is being eroded as capitalism



AMANDA MARTINEZ

gets desperate. White-collar jobs are disappearing just as fast as blue-collar jobs. It used to be that there was some respect, security, and stability involved. We were a more valued part of the community. We got to live a little differently, more economically secure.

Being middle-class also gets us scared. We're in a no-man's land.⁴ Those who hire and pay us don't want any more contact with us than that. And those we are no longer with, who are still working-class, can't trust us, since we left and went someplace more comfortable, for money. We couldn't stay and face the struggles. We couldn't respect ourselves, and we don't respect them in some way. We've gotten confused about something.

It's confusing to be middle-class. It isn't that it's a worse position, but we get patterns of vacillation, of trying to make sure everybody's happy, of trying to keep it all going and not let things burst out anywhere.

Many of us are likely to have an interesting mixture of class patterns, because people move, people marry, people do various things. People lose their fortunes: Great-grandpa had a lot of money and then in 1929 he lost it. Or we were middle-class in the country of our birth and then moved to another country where we had to be working-class.

DISCHARGE THE PATTERNS

We need to know our history. We need to be proud of our

⁴ A no-man's land means an ambiguous, indefinite place.

people. We need to talk about them. And we need to notice where our voices catch when we talk about what happened to a particular ancestor.

Because distresses can be passed down, we don't have to have experienced them directly. We only have to have seen the effect of them on somebody who is around us, or have them act them out at us. We need to look at and discharge those patterns, so we won't be confused by them, so we can stop acting out the patterns of the class we happen to be in. We want to have a society that doesn't have classism in it. That's the only possible long-term solution.

NO INEQUITIES

We can't reform capitalism so it's not exploitative, so it's not continually installing distresses on all classes. We can't make capitalism nice. We can't have nice exploitation. Minimizing the difference in incomes from highest to lowest, or having universal health coverage so that everybody gets at least a little, does not change the nature of the society.

We can't have inequities. We can't allow any inequity to exist. If we do, it will grow. When we allow an irrationality, we allow a pattern, and patterns don't go away unless we discharge them. We have to be clear about this.

This means looking at our class of origin, and the class we are currently in, and noticing which people we are uncomfortable with because of their class. We can face why we are uncomfortable with each other and discharge the feelings—so that nobody is out of our reach, nobody is out of bounds; so that we don't blame anybody for his or her patterns, or his or her position in a class society.

It isn't a question of where we are. It's a question of what we do with where we are.

Irish Colonisation and Emigration

The hurts and struggles of emigration happened and continue at both ends—for those who stayed at home and those who left.

I am an Irish Catholic working-class white man. I and my immediate family stayed “at home.” While I have some sense of belonging in Ireland, it is an incomplete belonging. My extended family and the friends I grew up with are part of the Irish Catholic Diaspora. They are in England, the United States, Australia, and South Africa.

I can see how those of us who stayed here have struggled. My two aunts—two sisters who were close friends for years—are no longer speaking to each other. The fractures in our families are the remnants of the earlier Irish colonisation.

As a client I’ve noticed that small everyday things, for example, getting something wrong at work, link directly to feelings that I am going to die as a result of making a mistake. It’s taken me a while to believe that these are feelings. When a whole society has been infected with certain patterns, it reinforces the patterns’ seeming normality. Getting to know the real history of one’s people can help fill in the context and break the chronics.¹

While most people in Ireland or of Irish descent have heard of the famine, can they let in the actual impact? It’s only recently that I have allowed the brutal facts into my mind. The famine (in the 1840s) caused a million deaths and forced over a million people to emigrate. About twenty-five percent of the population died or moved. Over the following century the population was reduced by over half. Leaving Ireland became “normal.”

With the 1990s’ so-called economic prosperity, Ireland has seen for the first time in centuries a large-scale inward movement of people. In 2006, 450,000 people from outside Ireland were living here, making up² about ten percent of the population. Since the European Union expanded to include Poland in 2004, Polish people have made up the largest number of immigrants, followed by immigrants from Lithuania, the Czech Republic, and Latvia. Chinese and Nigerian people, along with people from other African countries, have accounted for a large proportion of the non-European immigrants.

No national identity is static. Population movements are constantly changing the nature of societies.

My people are still recovering from colonisation. For example, our famous Irish welcome is not always forthcoming to people who arrive here. While their arrival is not a new form of colonisation, it can feel like that. Old patterns from colonisation have led to attacks on newcomers. Intergenerational patterns also follow Irish emigrants. Daniel Moynihan³ said, “To be Irish is to know that in the end the world will break your heart.”



Pascal McCulla
Belfast, Northern Ireland
Reprinted from the RC e-mail
discussion list for leaders of Catholics

² Making up means constituting.

³ Daniel Moynihan (1927-2003) was an Irish American U.S. Senator, U.S. ambassador to the United Nations and India, and member of four U.S. presidential administrations.

¹ Chronic patterns



Correction



The following is a correction to the footnote in the article, by Nancy Kile, “How I Experience White Women’s Racism,” on page 27 of the April 2011 Present Time. Our apologies for the inaccuracy.

Lakota is a linguistic distinction. Lakota is one of three dialects and is spoken by the Tetuwan people who comprise the western confederation of plains peoples, within the seven council fires of the Oceti Sakowin. Indigenous oral traditions place Tetuwan origination in the He Sapa, the Black Hills of South Dakota (USA).

Nancy Kile
Sturgis, South Dakota, USA



*The following fourteen articles are from a discussion
about the Holocaust on the RC e-mail discussion list for leaders of Jews.*

How Have You Worked on the Holocaust?

I was born in 1943 to Ashkenazi¹ parents whose parents came from poor Orthodox Jewish backgrounds in Poland. I had numbers of relatives who stayed in Poland and died in concentration camps. Hurts related to the Holocaust are the context of my early distresses and have defined much of my life.

Since I began RC, in 1971, I have discharged on the Holocaust and its impact on my life—my prenatal life (having parents who may have talked about the Holocaust, in Yiddish, when I was in the womb), my struggles to be fully alive and connect with others, my sexual life (my earliest sexual memories are of stories about what the Nazis did to Jewish women), my political life, and so on.

Here are a few of the specific ways I've worked on the Holocaust:

- I've worked on how I feel like I am in my own concentration camp—not able or willing to leave. Then I've imagined all the children who died coming to life again, and all of us leaving together.
- I've gone back for the little Jewish girl (me) and told her that I will protect her, nourish her, and so on. I've fought for myself. I've fought to feel good about myself as a Jewish girl.
- I have done a role exchange and told my Gentile Co-Counselors, "I am going to Holocaust you."
- A non-Jewish ally of mine, in the most respectful and sweetest of tones, once went over the names of my family and others I could have known. He said them slowly (when they were Yiddish, there was no hint of ridicule in his voice), and I could cry. Sometimes I have been able to say Kaddish² in sessions, or in small groups.
- I have tried to face all the hard things that happened and have realized how the oppressive society had to threaten and kill many of us Jews to keep us from playing a transformative role in society. That reflects the power of the Jewish people.
- I've watched the movie *Life Is Beautiful*³ and realized that no matter how oppressive something is, I can always take charge of my mind, my perspective, and my connections.
- I've worked on reclaiming my courage. I've looked the oppressive society in the face: "I reject your terms."

Harvey Jackins wrote about how to discharge on the Holocaust in "Can Distress About the Holocaust Be Discharged?" on page 313 of *The Reclaiming of Power*. I also suggest "Re-emergence for Former Nazis and Collaborators?" on page 239 in another of Harvey's books, *A Better World*.

I would love to hear how other people have worked on the Holocaust—in Co-Counseling sessions, at Jewish workshops, at Julian's⁴ workshops—and how it has affected them and those around them.

Diane Balsler
Jamaica Plain, Massachusetts, USA

¹ Ashkenazi refers to Ashkenazi Jews, who are Jews of Central and Eastern European descent.

² The Kaddish is a Jewish prayer said as part of a mourning ritual.

³ A movie about the Holocaust in which a Jewish man in a World War II concentration camp manages, with great creativity, to keep his son (who is also in the camp) feeling safe and eventually saves his life. He shows his son that one can keep a benign perspective and that no one, even under the most oppressive conditions, can take a person's mind away from him or her.

⁴ Julian Weissglass, the International Commonality Reference Person for Wide World Change, who has led a number of workshops on healing from World War II

Persisting with Discharge

My parents and grandparents were survivors (in Poland and Czechoslovakia). I have been in RC for eighteen years. I am consistently, year after year, discharging a heavy feeling that I should not exist. I am always finding new, inventive ways to keep my mind interested in the project.

In the context of my grandparents and parents having now all died, I've been saying in a light, relaxed tone, "They are all dead now, and I'm

the last one left. I am alive, and I, too, will die, and so will you. But right now I am alive, and you are alive." This has brought much laughter and a shift in perspective. It has allowed me to notice how much pain I am normally carrying around and trying to get off me by doing exciting things.



Karen Rosauer
Melbourne, Victoria, Australia

The Holocaust Is Present Every Moment in Israel

The Holocaust is present in every moment of our lives here in Israel. Our whole existence as Israelis has to do with the Holocaust. It is the reason we are here. If it had not been for the Holocaust, we might not have had a country. Sometimes the messages are blunt, and in other ways they are subtle.

One sentence from a well-known song in Hebrew, about the Holocaust and the soldiers who were killed in the wars, says it all: "I don't have any other country, even if my land is burning."

From an early age, from kindergarten, we stand up for the sirens on the Holocaust Memorial Day. The whole country stops for two minutes. Cars stop, and people are standing in the middle of the road in memory. It's like a sacred moment, a moment that separates us clearly from the Palestinians around us.

When we are young, we read poems we hardly understand. A line from a poem that got stuck in my head for years

talks about a baby who reaches for the cold nipple of its dead mother.

Even before we understood what was happening in our lives as young people, we understood that something was wrong with the world.

My father lost all his family in Poland. They were killed in the concentration camps. He never talked about what happened to them. He never wanted to go back there or to speak Polish again. I used to be jealous of children who had grandparents

on both sides. My grandmother, whom I am named after, my aunt whom I reminded my dad of, two uncles, and a grandfather whom my brother is named after—these were just the shadows of my childhood.

I don't know how my father continued to live. I am sure that raising a family was part of what made it possible.

I was supposed to carry the light and the hope. I feel that I am carrying the legacy of the Jewish people, and it shows in my leadership in RC and in the world. I have a hard time giving up on people. I fight for people to understand the importance of listening and compassion, so that children will grow up in a benign world.

When I was in the early years of school, I wrote a story—about a brother and a sister who were running from the Nazis and joining the Partisans. They watched the Germans taking all their family away, but they managed to survive

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COSTA RICA • THERESA D'AMATO

LIBERATION

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and fight back. It's a story that contradicts helplessness and powerlessness. I think I needed to write it as a contradiction to the biggest question I had as a child: How could it happen?

I remember that when I was a child, Menachem Begin¹ used to say in every speech something about the children who were going to die and how we needed to protect them. Every time there is some issue about Israel's safety, it feels connected to the times we were not protected in the Holocaust.

In our life in Israel we get constant messages about our being threatened by everyone around us. It makes us confused, because the threat is also real.

I did a small piece of research. I collected the newspapers every day for a whole year and noticed that almost every day there was something about the Holocaust—a story of a survivor, of a discovery of a lost family member, of a reunion after sixty years. These kinds of messages have a tendency to influence us without our noticing.

¹ Menachem Begin was the sixth Prime Minister of the State of Israel.

When I went to the Healing from World War II Workshop in Poland² and for the first time went to Auschwitz,³ it was like going to a known place. Only then did I notice how burnt into my system the pictures were. I knew exactly what I was going to see and how it would look. I needed to touch the wires in Birkenau,⁴ so I could imagine real people standing there and so I could feel something.

In my work to build an RC Community of Palestinians, I found myself discharging a lot about the Holocaust. I discharged fears of annihilation (which I felt in every relationship), fears of dying, and heavy stuff about competition and existence.

Fifteen years ago I found in the newspaper the story of a young woman of seventeen named Leah. In a train wagon with virtually no oxygen, she survived because of a small crack left by the Germans. She pushed herself up to get to the air. She stood on others' shoulders and bodies to get

² An RC workshop led by Julian Weissglass, the International Commonality Reference Person for Wide World Change

³ Auschwitz was a World War II Nazi concentration camp.

⁴ Birkenau was a World War II Nazi concentration camp.

there. She survived, and then a British soldier saved her. In her letter that was published in the newspaper she asked for help in finding him. Her story got stuck deep in my mind and gave me heavy sessions for years.

When I went to Auschwitz, I found myself struggling with the question: Would I be able to do that in order to save my life? Could I step on somebody in order to reach for survival? I could tell⁵ that this question was connected to issues of competition and trust.

We Israeli Jews grow up with the message that in our moment of need, people won't be there—that at the end of the day, people will take care of their own needs and interests. Everything is connected with the expectation of betrayal.

In a way, all of us are unaware walking survivors. We have tried to create a "new" Jew, who is supposed to be powerful and not defeated, but it has been without discharging the feelings we are still carrying underneath.

Varda Ginossar-Zakay
Givat Elah, Israel

⁵ In this context, tell means notice, see.



TIM JACKINS

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.

Anti-Jewish Oppression in Uruguay

I am the daughter and granddaughter of German Jews on one side and Russian-Lithuanian Jews on the other. Both my parents immigrated to Uruguay. My mom immigrated right after World War I, when she was three. My dad grew up as Hitler was rising to power. His parents sent him to Uruguay a couple of years before World War II, when he was sixteen.

My childhood is filled with memories of meals at which *all* that was talked about was the Holocaust. Every detail of horrible stories, told over and over. (I did not hear stories of Judaism, just the Holocaust; so today I have no religious knowledge.)

It did not end with stories. By the time I was in fifth grade, in 1965, the “ex”-Nazis from Argentina had formed a group called the Tacuaras and had crossed into Uruguay. They followed, threatened, and harassed Jews. I remember particularly that they marked swastikas, with razor blades, on the bodies of Jews. My dad bought a gun. I was no longer allowed to walk alone to school.

By the early 1970s the Tacuaras, with their “know-how” and infrastructure, were at the foundation of the paramilitary groups and death squads that hunted down and “disappeared” my generation of student activists, union leaders, freedom fighters, and revolutionaries. The majority of the activist leaders were Jews, mostly descendants of working-class Jews. I write this because Harvey* talked about how the oppressive system that organizes around anti-Jewish oppression is used to oppress all. From experience I know this to be true.

Susana Witte
Berkeley, California, USA

* Harvey Jackins

What Does This Have to Do with the Holocaust?

I have been asking myself, especially when working on humiliating chronic material,¹ “What does this have to do with the Holocaust?”

I have worked on a chronic recording of feeling either completely worthless or like I am better than other people. It is connected to desperately wanting to be special in some way (for example, wanting to be my students’ favorite teacher, or my teachers’ favorite student, or the “smartest” person in the class, or the “prettiest” girl or woman around, and so on). I usually work on it as a recording of classism and racism (which it is) and as being related to feelings of desperation and jealousy from when my younger brother was born (which it also is).

It has become clear to me that it is also a Holocaust recording: being seen as stronger, smarter, prettier (and so on), than other people was indeed a matter

of life and death as Jews were divided into groups when they arrived at concentration camps. Some went directly to death; others were allowed to live. I have been able to discharge heavily with the perspective that it is a Holocaust recording. It is

continued . . .



CAPE COD, MASSACHUSETTS, USA • AARON GALLOWAY

¹ Material means distress.

LIBERATION

... continued

such a relief to see this chronic material (that I feel humiliated about, that messes me up, that doesn't feel easy to work on) as something connected to a concrete historical event that damaged our people.

Anne Frank² was the heroine of many Jewish girls of my generation (I was born in 1965). I strongly identified with her when I was growing up. I still have to fight recordings of staying quiet and wanting to hide out when things feel hard (or even when they don't!). Recordings of needing to stay quiet and be "good" also came from pressures to be upwardly mobile and assimilate that were heavy in my family

² Anne Frank was a young Jewish girl, whose diary, written while she was in hiding during the Holocaust, became a famous book.

and many other Jewish families post-Holocaust. It is useful to remind myself that hiding didn't ultimately save Anne Frank's life. Harvey³ once gave me the direction "That attic has already been hidden in." (It was a variation on a direction he often gave Catholics who had martyr patterns: "That cross has already been climbed.") It was and is a powerful direction for me, when I remember to use it.

I am much less quiet than I used to be, but I still have a long ways to go. This posting is a good step in the direction of not staying quiet and hidden!

Joan Ostrove
Oakland, California, USA

³ Harvey Jackins



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Directions for a Musician

It sounds as if your playing is still too rigid because you are "doing it the hard way" still. I worked at being a musician once, long before Re-evaluation Counseling, and was good enough to hold first chair but did everything rigidly. I was too tense to listen to the music; I just played on other cues. Now that counseling has made me a great deal more relaxed, I can "play by ear" and enjoy myself a great deal more, although by now I have other goals than being a professional musician.

You say you have times when you play far beyond your usual ability, and I suspect you are finding glimpses outside the "do it the hard way" patterns, which I assume you are still operating in. If we can find a way to substitute confidence for determination and relaxedness for fierce concentration, I suspect that you will be able to achieve your goal. (It may also turn out* that when you get enough outside of this distress, you may change your goals, but that is your business.) The directions I think of offering you (both of us should realize that I know very little about you) are, "I'll just relax and let the music flow," or, "Who said this was hard?" or, "I'll do it a little more elegantly and relaxedly each time."

This is very speculative on my part, since I don't know anything about you except the few clues in your letter. But I would like to assure you that you can do whatever you want to, and though all of us have frustrating periods in Co-Counseling when we can't find a direction for the too-familiar pattern, persistence usually finds a way around that. If I can be of any more help, let me know.

Harvey Jackins
From a letter written in 1980

* Turn out means result.

Claiming My German Heritage and Discharging on the Holocaust

My mother was born in Berlin, Germany, in 1928. She lived from ages four to ten under Nazi rule and then left on the Kindertransport¹ in December of 1938. As far as I know, her family had lived in Germany for centuries, if not millennia. I was born in 1959 in California (USA).

In the 1990s I began Co-Counseling with a Gentile woman who was the daughter of German immigrants to this country. To my surprise, I noticed similar patterns in our families. It became apparent that some of these were related to being German. With her encouragement and support, I began to have sessions on claiming my German identity. She gave me directions like, "I'm the real German here" or "I'm more German than you are," which brought up loads of terror. Then she escalated things by having me say the directions in German, a language I had never spoken. I began to realize how many of my feelings about the Holocaust had gotten pinned on German Gentiles, German accents, and the German language.

I sought out more counseling relationships with German-heritage Co-Counselors, both Jews and Gentiles. I found that I could counsel the Gentiles well on their shame about being German. When I was client, all I had to do was ask them to speak in German and I would shake and shake. Soon I started calling German-heritage topic groups at workshops. For a couple of years I even led a German-heritage support group in my Area.² In the support group, always at least half of us were Jews.

I found I had to discharge hard on applying to Germans and Nazis everything we know in RC about human beings. I had many sessions applying to them Harvey's³ statement that every human being has done his or her best under the circumstances. I remember a great session with a German Gentile man in which, as client, I repeatedly screamed at him, "That was the best you could do?"

¹ The Kindertransport was the evacuation in 1938 of Jewish children, without their parents, from Nazi Germany, Czechoslovakia, Austria, and Poland to safety in British foster homes.

² An Area is a local RC Community.

³ Harvey Jackins'

To claim my German identity, I had to discharge my way out of the victim role. I couldn't keep believing that Germans were bad, awful people if I was now claiming my rightful place as one of them.

I read books about German history, trying to figure out how Germans had been hurt so badly. *For Your Own Good*, by Alice Miller, was particularly useful.

Eleven years ago I decided to go to Germany and convinced my mother to go with me. (She had not been back to Berlin since she left in 1938.) I spent a month in Germany (only a week was with my mom) and discharged hard there and for many months after I got back. I learned some German, which was a great way of contradicting the feelings I had about the language. Though my mom is not in RC, the trip changed her life for the better as well.

JULIAN'S WORKSHOPS

My next big leap forward in discharging feelings about the Holocaust was to attend two of Julian Weissglass'⁴ Healing from War Workshops in Poland, as well as one here in the United States.

A lot of my Holocaust-related distress is based on the feeling that no Gentiles cared that Jews were being mistreated and murdered. Seeing Gentile allies sobbing during the visits to Auschwitz and Birkenau⁵ was a contradiction to that distress. Julian set up Sharing Our Stories groups, which purposely

continued . . .

⁴ Julian Weissglass is the International Commonality Reference Person for Wide World Change.

⁵ Auschwitz and Birkenau were World War II Nazi concentration camps.



VENTNOR, ISLE OF WIGHT, ENGLAND • JULIA CAMERON

LIBERATION

... continued

included people from diverse backgrounds. Julian was thoughtful enough to include in each group at least two Jewish survivors or children of survivors. Getting to tell the story of my family to allies who were listening with attention and who cared about what happened has led to lots of discharge. Julian suggested that we spend many sessions simply telling the story, and that has proved useful.

At the Poland workshops, we also chose a support group. Both times I chose Children of Holocaust Survivors. That provided a wonderful safe place to discharge on how the Holocaust had affected my life—among people who I knew “got it” (understood) and shared similar struggles.

KNOWING THAT I BELONG HERE

Cherie⁶ asks, “What was hidden?” In my family, information about the Holocaust was not hidden, but my mother’s feelings were. She would talk about what happened to her in a non-emotional way, acting

⁶ Cherie Brown, the International Liberation Reference Person for Jews

like everything was fine. This was, of course, what she had to do to survive. So my struggle has been to show myself, my feelings, and my struggles.

Also, my family tried hard to assimilate, give up Judaism, and act “American,” meaning Protestant. We failed, of course, which is good. I’ve realized that assimilating is another form of hiding, and I have worked for years to be visible and proud as a Jew, with much success.

My life has changed dramatically as a result of discharging on the Holocaust. Not only am I bolder and able to take leadership in many areas of my life, but I am also getting rid of the tentativeness I used to have about my right to exist and thrive in this world. I am knowing that I belong here and that the world is a better place because I am in it. I am discharging away the feeling that my right to exist on this planet depends on my being useful to others. I have gotten much more able to boldly think about myself, and fight for myself, as a woman and as a Jew.

Terry Fletcher
Berkeley, California, USA

Finding the Safety to Face the Hurts

For those of us who got bombarded with Holocaust information, particularly when it was told to us in tones of terror and dread, it can help to take a direction like “That is not me” or “That didn’t happen to me.”

At the same time, I think we also want to keep finding the safety to face the hurts fully and discharge on them—so that we don’t unintentionally, by denying they happened to us, walk away from what did happen; so that we face it, discharge on it, and commit to working against it ever happening again.

Cherie Brown
International Liberation
Reference Person for Jews
Silver Spring, Maryland, USA



KK

Working Together to End Racism

A pamphlet introducing RC from the perspective of ending racism

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

Ordering information on page 109

The Holocaust, Men, and Violence

I was fired recently from a teaching job, for blowing up¹ at a student. I had been dealing with his punching me for a few days, but this time I snapped.² Two days later I was fired.³

In the five or six weeks since that happened, I've had many heavy sessions. The biggest re-evaluations have been about how violent my father was, and our family's history in relation to the Holocaust.

Violence has followed the Jewish people from country to country and from century to century. My grandmother's family (on my father's side) were beaten to death by their neighbors in Lithuania during the Holocaust.

My father beat me badly when I was little. He lived with an enormous rage and a quick

temper. He enlisted in World War II when he found out what was happening to his family, and during the war became infected with a disease he was told would eventually kill him. He never spoke about it until the end of his life, and he did die from that illness. I wonder if he raised us knowing that he was a fatality of war.

Eventually I discharged about my own child and how I've dominated her life by not letting her out of my sight. In sessions it has helped to put my arms out as if to protect her from the Holocaust. I've cried hard doing that. If I continue to cry in that spot, my arms close in on her and I squeeze tighter and tighter. I often feel like I am killing her before "they" can. Needless to say, these sessions are heavy, but they leave me with a great sense of relief. I think one of the messages that came at us Jews is that we (and our children) have no right to exist.

In these sessions I squeeze my offspring out of existence. That is exactly what I acted out at my student, who, not surprisingly, was the student I cared for and spent the most time with.

As much as I've worked hard to be a "nice" man, I have the literal recording of my father bullying me. I live my life hoping it will never leak out, and this time it did. My father is gone and my childhood is long over, and it's up to me⁴ now to get rid of the pattern forever. I know I am good and that all of this is just hurt. I also know I am recovering from the effects of genocide.

During these past few weeks my life has been quietly improving, bringing me closer to the people around me and pointing me toward my strengths.

Daniel Schaffer
Brooklyn, New York, USA

¹ Blowing up means acting out anger.

² Snapped means lost control.

³ Fired means forced to leave the job.

⁴ Up to me means my responsibility.

Birthday Song

We are so happy
It is your birthday
That you were born
[However many] years ago.

You came to greet us
Unique and precious
Brim full of wonder
Excited to grow.

We are here gathered
In celebration
We come to honor
The gift that is you.

Now what we wish for
This new beginning
Is that you treasure
Yourself as we do
Is that you treasure
Yourself as we do.

© *Russell Hayes*
Lexington, Kentucky, USA

If you would like the sheet music for this song, you can contact Russell Hayes at <rshayes@windstream.net> or 301 Picadome Park, Lexington, Kentucky 40503, USA.



ISRAEL • LYNDALL KATZ

A Parent's Holocaust Success Story

I am a Jewish mother raising a Jewish daughter, A—. A few months ago, when A— was seven years old, I told her about the Holocaust. It was a subject I had dreaded telling her about.

My own experience had been less than ideal—a series of films shown at Sunday school at my synagogue; black and white footage taken when the Allies came into the concentration camps. The vivid and horrific scenes still haunt me. The “thinking” at the time was that if Jewish children learned about the Holocaust early in their lives, their generation would “never forget” and therefore never let it happen again. This had the effect of scaring me, without giving me any access to discharge to heal from the fear of those atrocities happening to me. I wanted something different for my child.

I decided to wait, if possible, for her to have learned enough about the nature of human beings and how oppression operates before she first heard about the attempted genocide of her people. And I didn't want her to learn about it in an accidental way—from a casual comment by an adult, from a joke, or from a friend or relative. There were many close calls,¹ but somehow I was able to shield her for over seven years.

A— had heard some people talking about World War I, and she asked me if there had been a second

¹ Close calls means times it almost happened.



JAPAN • YUKO HIBINO

World War. Since I had been preparing, I realized that this could be the time. I said yes, there had been a second one, and she asked me what the fighting had been about. I told her there had been a man who had been very, very confused; that he must have endured terrible mistreatment during his early life since as an adult he acted in ways that hurt many people. She wanted to know his name, so I told her “Adolf Hitler” . . . and she laughed! She thought it was the funniest sounding name she had ever heard, so I kept saying it, and we laughed and laughed together. When it wasn't funny anymore, I resumed. I said that he was so confused he thought that the only people in the world who deserved to live were people who had blond hair and blue eyes and were able-bodied, Christian, and heterosexual. “Isn't that silly?” I said. She agreed with me wholeheartedly: “Very strange.”

I said that he was particularly confused about one group of people. They were the most wonderful people ever! They were smart, beautiful, loving, and lovable people, and still this Adolf Hitler (ha, ha, ha) was confused about them, and he convinced many other people to be confused about them as well. “Wow,” she said. “Can you guess who these people were?” I asked. “The Jews?” guessed A—. “Yes.” “Why?” she asked, completely incredulous. Truthfully, I can't remember my answer. I think I had reached the end of my attention.

At that point my Gentile husband piped in² that there were many people who knew that Adolf Hitler (ha, ha, ha) was wrong, and that they fought against him and eventually they won. And that what he did would never happen again.

Then A— turned her attention to something else, and taking a deep breath of relief I followed her lead. It seemed as though she had taken in as much as she could handle at that moment. She hasn't brought it up again since then. My guess is that we will have many of these short conversations over the next few years, as we help her to piece together this part of her heritage.

Joelle Hochman
Somerville, Massachusetts, USA

² Piped in means added a comment.

Early Fears About How I Look

I was born a bit over a decade after the Holocaust and grew up in an upper-middle-class suburb of Chicago (Illinois, USA). I remember lying in bed wondering where I would hide when the Nazis came. I somehow got the message that Jews, especially children, who had blue eyes and lighter hair, could be hidden in a Gentile family but that those who had darker coloring and more traditional Ashkenazi Jewish¹ features, like me, could not. I had three younger siblings with lighter coloring and saw tremendous relief among the adults when they were born. I knew that, as the one with curly dark hair and brownish eyes, I would never pass, so I continually planned my escape. I would search throughout the house for places I could hide when the Nazis came to get

¹ Ashkenazi Jews are Jews of Central and Eastern European descent.

me. (In the movie *Schindler's List*,² children hid in closets, inside a piano, and so on, and I was stunned that these were all places where I, too, had plotted to hide.) I often thought about cutting a hole in the box spring of my bed and lying there.

When I was a bit older, I led my siblings in the game "Hide from the Nazis," in which we would comb our house for hiding places. My brother had a little cubby³ above his closet that always looked like the safest hiding place to me.

As for my counseling, I think I've worked most on early fears about how I look. From an early age, I would never want to be

² *Schindler's List* is a film about Oskar Schindler, a German businessman who during the Holocaust saved the lives of more than a thousand mostly Polish-Jewish refugees by employing them in his factories.

³ Cubby means small space.

friends with people who were blonde and blue-eyed, fearing they were secret Nazis. At the same time, I would straighten my hair and practice in the mirror making my lips thinner. (I found it funny when women started getting injections to have full lips like mine.)

For many years I always felt safer with people who were darker complexioned. I felt like a person of color, given how I was treated in my family. It was not until I went to live in Peru at age twenty-two and a friend referred to me as blonde that I finally had to confront the fact that I was really white.

My terror was extremely heavy when I first started Co-Counseling at age nineteen, but it has definitely loosened a bit after so many years of discharge.

Aliza Becker
Chicago, Illinois, USA

Technology

Technology is a tool, and it's a good one. The problem has not been with the development of technology but with the failure to have long-range perspectives about its use. The failure has been in thinking, not in technology.

Actually, the development to such a high level is exactly what gives us the possibility of a beautifully ordered world. Without such mastery of the environment being possible, thinking long thoughts would only be speculation and daydreaming. Now it's possible to put long, careful thoughts into practice with technology, instead of despoiling the immediate environment because our technology is so primitive.

Harvey Jackins
From a letter written in 1974



INDIA • DIANE SHISK

The Holocaust, and War

Discharging for the last six years on the Holocaust has been key to my re-emergence and my leadership, in and out of RC. It has been relevant to my roles as oppressed, oppressor, and witness. It has changed everything in my life. So many of my distresses connect to the Holocaust—distresses about food, money, sex, connections, trust, safety, power, parenting, making decisions, being good, being scared, leading, disability, sickness, longing, clinging, being busy, and more.

At first my goal in discharging on the Holocaust was to not be haunted by it, preferably to never think about it again, awake or asleep. I soon realized that it was affecting every decision in my life and that all these areas would improve, as indeed they have and still are.

As an Israeli, I've heard about the Holocaust since I was born. My first memory of Holocaust teaching is at age five, but I know it started earlier. In Israel the flow of information is ongoing, all year 'round, and once a year on Holocaust Memorial Day it becomes intense—with no slack for discharge. It is often manipulated to get us scared. This in itself is a hurt.

I developed the patterned mechanism of being able to ignore what I know. As I grew up and graduated from school, forgetting what I had been forcefully taught changed to avoiding all information. That helped me to not be overwhelmed in the face of that horrible, scary information and to keep my life going, but it is now in my way of acknowledging things that are not going well in my private life, in Israel, and in the world, and of being an effective fighter for liberation.



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Survivors, to be able to continue with their lives, must have also denied memories to avoid pain. This could be another cultural source for the "I don't know" pattern. After five years of discharge I am now, by choice, slowly learning the history and gathering information about my grandparents' families. Sharing Holocaust stories with my Co-Counselors is particularly hard. Partly I want to protect them from being hurt by the information, but there is also shame about "making a big deal out of nothing." I have had some successes lately, but it is still hard.

When talking to children about the Holocaust, I think it is important to provide information about World War II, and perhaps war in general.

War is a hard thing to understand. So is the Holocaust. The two together can be very confusing. For example, not all wars involve organized extermination of people; not all acts of racism or oppression lead to wars; wars are very destructive even when they don't involve genocide; oppression still needs to be opposed even when it does not escalate to a war.

Though World War II was in some ways unique, it had a lot in common with all other wars. It was initiated with similar motives and confusions and led to similar destructive results for all involved. Especially for Jews, I think it needs to be said that the war was not initiated to exterminate Jews. Anti-Jewish oppression was vicious, institutionalized, and legalized. It was cleverly used to enable the war (for example, by scaring people and creating an identified enemy) and to keep the war going (for example, by confiscating money and property to help pay for the costs of the war). And the situation of the war (fear, danger, grief, scarcity) enabled the extreme execution of the "racial clean up" that was part of the Nazi vision. However, there were also other reasons for declaring the war that can be explained to children, such as the desire to be bigger and stronger; to take revenge and gain more power, land, and money; to feel better than others; to achieve "justice"—the same confusions that lead to wars everywhere and are the basis for so many conflicts (including between children).

The Holocaust is still used to manipulate people's restimulations in relation to wars and crisis situations. As long as we don't discharge, we are vulnerable

to these manipulations. The recent war in Gaza demonstrated this in a few ways:

- People used the words “Holocaust” and “Nazis” in reference to both sides of the conflict. When people use these words in reference to Hamas, I feel fears of annihilation and can get scared into believing that war is the only way to keep safe. When “Holocaust” and “Nazis” are used in reference to the Israeli forces, it can lead me to reject the speaker altogether and I may be unable to listen or to consider a change in any fraction of my response. The frequent comparison of current events to the Holocaust reduces my ability to see the Holocaust for what it was. At the same time, it numbs me in relation to the current occurrences. (“If it’s not Auschwitz,¹ it’s not so bad.”)
- The war highlighted our fear as Israeli Jews of being or appearing weak. Proving that we are not weak has become a goal in itself. This plays personally as well as nationally. I have a hard time allowing myself to be weak, even in Co-Counseling sessions.

- Recordings of “being a victim” continue to dominate, even when the situation is the opposite.

Discharging on the Holocaust increases our ability to take in hard things—the false protection of being “shut down” in the face of terrifying occurrences is no longer automatic for us.

The more I discharge my victim identity, the easier it becomes to discharge my oppressor identities, and the other way around. I no longer believe that if I discharge oppressor material as an Israeli, I am a traitor or uncaring toward “our own.” It becomes possible to care for all.

I have no doubt that discharging on the Holocaust is crucial for both Jews and Gentiles to be able to think about war and decide that they can end it. I am grateful for all the groups around the world that are doing this work and encourage everybody to get into a three-way, or larger group, to discharge this distress head-on.²

Tami Shamir
Shefayim, Israel

¹ Auschwitz was a World War II Nazi concentration camp.

² Head-on means directly.

Not Running Away Anymore

I was born and live in England. I am a mixed-heritage Jew.

This morning I woke up terrified. It happens every day, but I noticed it especially because of the dream I was having when I woke up. This is what I wrote about it:

The dream is of escape and disguise, a journey, a heavy feeling of “this has happened before.” The place and journey seem familiar. A few people seem to want to help me, others are escaping, and most cannot be trusted. A dream of secret hiding places that must succeed.

I often have these dreams, probably every week. I used to think they were normal. I don’t remember a time of not having them. Most of them are along the lines of “pack your things, we have to leave now.”

Something I notice in me is a desire for a “safe place,” a place to go if . . . or if When I was seven years old, our house was repossessed, because of the economic crisis in the United Kingdom, and my parents divorced. I spent the next twenty years looking for a safe place or a home. It was only last Sunday that I noticed what that might have meant to a young person with Jewish heritage. I was at the Jewish liberation workshop led by Cherie* this year, and I loved her direction of closing the doors and not running away anymore, of facing the unfaceable.

Jen Steiner
Bristol, England

* Cherie Brown, the International Liberation Reference Person for Jews

The Holocaust and “Mental Health” Liberation

I started discharging about the Holocaust shortly after I started doing Jewish liberation work in RC, in the mid-1970s. I really didn't work on it much (due to feelings of terror) until I started leading Jewish “mental health” system survivors' liberation work, in about 1980.

I felt terrified to talk about how, for many Jews, “mental health” oppression is intertwined with feelings about the Holocaust. I made up a skit that involved stuffed animals who did not want to talk about the Holocaust: “Oh, no. Do we *have* to talk about the Holocaust?” Everyone, including me, laughed a lot, which made it possible for me to teach the class and for the participants to listen.

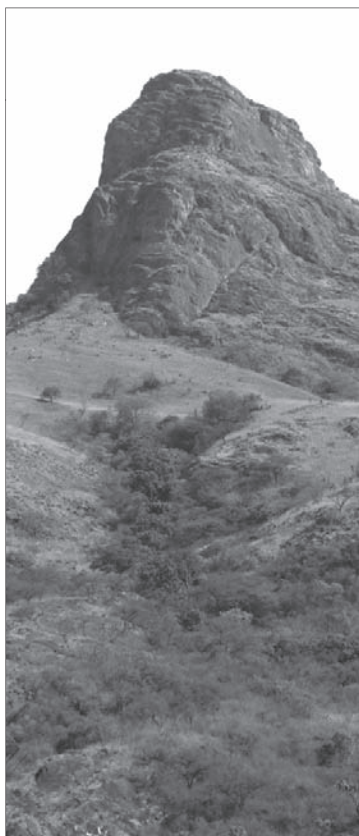
Cherie Brown¹ and I led the first Jews and “Mental Health” Workshop in 1999. During a class on the Holocaust, I had everyone shout, “Boo!” and make “grogger” noises (as on Purim, when Haman's name is said during the Megillah reading)² whenever I mentioned the Nazis, Hitler, or other horrifying things. The entire group, including me, laughed and shook its way through the whole lecture.

¹ Cherie Brown is the International Liberation Reference Person for Jews.

² Purim is a Jewish holiday that commemorates the deliverance from destruction of the Jewish people in the ancient Persian Empire in the wake of a plot by Haman. Each time Haman's name is spoken during the public chanting of the Megillah (the Book of Esther), the congregation engages in noisemaking, using a noisy rattle called a grogger, to blot out his name.

I talked about how the Nazis had killed “mental patients,” disabled people, and Gay people as a way to desensitize the German population to the later, larger-scale killing of the Jews. I talked about how the Nazi concentration camp I had seen depicted in a movie reminded me of the mental hospital I had been in, and how a number of Jewish ex-psychiatric inmates I know have associated the mental hospitals they were in with a concentration camp. I compared the denial of what was going on³ during the Holocaust with the denial of what goes on in mental hospitals. I talked about how Nazi psychiatrists helped make the Holocaust appear

³ Going on means happening.



SWAZILAND • TIM JACKINS

scientific, medically necessary, and rational, and how that relates to current “mental health” system ideology. In preparing for the class and teaching it, I discharged a *lot* of terror.

At the second Jews and “Mental Health” Workshop, in 2007, I led another class on the Holocaust. I was beginning to think about how to more effectively contradict the distress—how to help people be client on the distress while remembering the benign reality.

A recent direction of mine has been to tell myself, as a twenty-one-year-old in the mental hospital, about all the wonderful things that have happened in my later life. This has allowed me to cry deeply. I suggested to people at the workshop that we can apply a similar direction to discharging about the Holocaust. We can “talk” to the Jews in the concentration camps and tell them that our families survived, because we are here now. Our people survived. We went on to found the state of Israel. And so on. It's possible to adopt a re-emergent perspective on it all.

At the Jewish “mental health” system survivors' weekend I led in 2009, I was able to teach a much lighter class. The whole group was making up jokes about the Holocaust and laughing “hysterically.” I talked about how Hitler was unsuccessful with his plan to eliminate all the Jews. I said that the Nazis'

distresses took the macabre form of killing people. This was an outrageous attempt to get rid of their oppressor material.⁴ I said that after lots of discharge we would view the Holocaust not as a nightmarish horror but as an informative historical fact.

We don't have to live our lives in fear of the Holocaust, in fear of delving too deeply into it, or in fear that it will reoccur. We get to discharge enough

⁴ Material means distress.

that we don't feel "crazy" when we think or talk about it, or feel like we have to hide it away and not talk about it. Our relatives who "went crazy" were probably showing their terror about the Holocaust (or other aspects of anti-Jewish oppression, like pogroms). This is understandable, not "crazy." Holocaust survivors who ended up in mental hospitals merely needed a bunch of sessions. I can still remember all the non-stop joking, mostly about making t-shirts about the

Holocaust, that went on in that class. We had a lot of fun while discharging as a whole group.

At this point it is not nearly as scary for me to talk about the Holocaust as it was when I first started working on it.

Janet Foner
International Liberation
Reference Person for
"Mental Health" Liberation
New Cumberland,
Pennsylvania, USA

Permanent Connection, Characterized by Love

My mother's family came from the Ukraine at the turn of the twentieth century. The recording my mother carried was that things could look okay one week but that the next, people who had seemed close and trustworthy would no longer be so. She believed that we should live as positively as we could but that dire perils could be just around the corner.

This perspective affected the culture of our family in many ways. For example, though my mother lived in the same house through my childhood and for another thirty years, we did not hang pictures or paint any wall a colour that might decrease our ability to sell the house quickly. While she never said it was "so that we could run for our lives if we have to," I got that sense. While my parents were well loved in the community and cared about many people, we did not spend time with anyone just for the pleasure of it. That meant that we never got close to any other families.

When I was twelve, my father's work as a professor took us to Eastern Europe. We visited death camps. The stories that most affected me were those of Jews surviving the camps only to be murdered by their former neighbours when they returned home. These stories fit with our family's recordings from the pogroms.

I saw file cabinets at Auschwitz¹ and was told that people had been catalogued. That was a blow.²

¹ Auschwitz was a World War II Nazi concentration camp.

² A blow means a shock.

I did not know then about the distinction between thinking and distress. From my father, I had a love of the human mind. It looked like intelligence was being harnessed to do evil. I could imagine people doing terrible things in anger or passion, but the calculated element shook me. It was important to me to hear Harvey³ say that very young humans need to be given information about the difference between humans and thinking, and distress.

To discharge, I hold a firm direction and act on the belief that even if others get significantly confused, the connection between me and other humans is permanent and is characterized by love. This is my version of the Jewish commitment.⁴ Just writing it now has tears bursting out of my eyes.

Other contradictions: Allies and Jews who stay close even when things get hard between them. Seeing people committed to staying connected to each other no matter what. People's commitments to ending war and all forms of humans' harming humans.

Eileen Nemzer
Toronto, Ontario, Canada

³ Harvey Jackins

⁴ The RC Jewish commitment: For the long-range survival of my people, I solemnly promise that, from this moment on, I will treat every person I meet as if she or he were eager to be my warm, close, dependable friend and ally, under all conditions. This will mean that _____.

Being an Ally

The article “Being an Ally,” by Harvey Jackins, in *The Kind, Friendly Universe*, is a concise picture of taking initiative to be an ally as part of our notion of “one for all and all for one.”

Being an ally is a contradiction to the general selfishness and isolation that get imposed on us in oppressive societies.

Harvey is proposing that we become active in gathering other people together to be allies so that all humans have others with “different characteristics” at hand.* He asks, “Who are the people for whom I shall begin to organise myself to be an ally?” The article then focuses on being an ally to self; all young people; all women, men, parents, minorities; all people differing because of language, religion, or culture; and finally people who act out past hurts in ways that set

them apart from the rest of the population.

To be an ally effectively we need to start with self appreciation and a decision to be an ally to ourselves by noticing our real nature. The sense of our own goodness and connection is a good basis from which to think about other people.

Parents are the group that caught my mind. As a non-parent I read, “The most important single job in the entire society is the production of new humans.” Laying out how parents are oppressed by society, Harvey stresses the value and skills of parents as well as the level of fatigue they live with.

The final section of the article provides some pointers for being an effective ally:

- Listen to the person tell about his or her experiences.

- Offer yourself as an ally, being honest about what you can provide.
- Counsel on your thoughts and feelings about being an ally.
- Promise and carry through on some organising of other people who will act to change the situation, reduce the isolation, and interrupt the patterns of oppression. He stresses that allies need to take initiative here—not base their actions solely on the views of the people they are being allies to, as internalised oppression may be operating for them.
- Respond aggressively to every instance of oppression.

This article is a great invitation to act powerfully.

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

* At hand means readily available.



Don't Respond with Button-Pushing



One must deal with the environment, whatever it is. And back of any pattern, however sexist and gross, is a real human being who does not wish to be a prisoner of that pattern, but will appreciate help and humanness, regardless of what kind of sounds are made in the process.

I think what is important is to not dramatize your resentment at their behavior. Be pleasant and validating regardless of how they are acting. Your ability to stick to your own course of conduct and not be upset with them will be impressive enough that they will start getting into communication with you.

It's no skin off your nose¹ how they act with each other. Just don't respond to any button-pushing.²

Go on about your work, do your discharging out of their sight, and as they become curious, counsel them in the right way—that is, turn the conversation to their childhoods by asking interested questions. Given that inducement, they will become your part-time clients and your much-more-able-to-be-lived-with companions in the process.

I will be pleased to hear how it works out for you.

Harvey Jackins
From a letter written in 1976

¹ It's no skin off your nose means it doesn't really hurt you.

² Button-pushing means attempts to upset people.

It's Time to Move

From a talk by Seán Ruth, the International Liberation Reference Person
for Middle-Class People, at the Middle-Class Leaders' Conference,
October 2010, near Seattle, Washington, USA

This gathering is unique. We have pulled together a group of middle-class leaders from Australia, Canada, and the United States to think about what is happening around us. The capitalist system has never been so blatant. The structure is wobbling. There are frantic efforts to stop it from wobbling.

This weekend we will be thinking together. Because of the way middle-class material¹ sits on us, we will be pulled to try to look as if we know what we are talking about, to try to sound weighty and wise. If the material wasn't pulling at us, we actually *would* say something weighty and wise. If we could be free of the material about how we *should* look and sound, our minds could work. In the meantime, we need to risk letting people see us just as we are.

The middle class is set up to help run the system, to make sure it runs smoothly. It's a section of the working class that's been artificially separated off and made to think of itself as different, and as having different interests from the rest of the working class. This can pull us off track.

It's important to notice the world around us and the challenges we face in the coming period. Middle-class liberation work has always been relevant, but it is more relevant now than ever.

¹ Material means distress.

It is a collaborative project, like RC itself. No single one of us can figure all of it out. We will do it together. We each need to claim our leadership and consciously think of ourselves as leading this work. Remembering that we are a collaborative project makes it easier. It keeps us from getting pulled into feeling like "it is all about me, and I have to know what I am talking about." We get to think about each other as leaders. We move forward together. No one of us will have all the answers, and nothing is too big or too hard for us to think about.

We're a diverse group! We can get close to each other across all of this diversity. That goes right to the heart of middle-class oppression and forces us out of the disconnection and separation we have internalised.

HOW DO WE ORGANISE OUR LIVES?

Capitalism has a way of lurching from one crisis to another, and it will probably do that for a while, but for a variety of reasons it can't go on much longer. The damage capitalism does is becoming harder to conceal. All sorts of efforts are being made to shore up the system, but to prop it up, so much pressure has to be put on people and so many cutbacks have to be made that the quality of people's lives keeps getting worse.

In addition, we are rapidly approaching a point of no return in the damage to the environment.

We are rapidly using up the earth's resources and natural habitats. The lifestyles of many of us in the economic North are unsustainable. Our middle-class conditioning has set us up to expect comfort and security, but the amount of material resource we have had would not be sustainable even if we were the only people on the planet. And in fact, there are billions of others desperately trying to acquire the same amount of resource.

Recession tends to pull us middle-class people into thinking about ourselves and our immediate families rather than the world at large. If we go against that pull, what do we do from here on? It looks like a lot of the issues will be resolved in one way or another in the next twenty or fifty years. We have to think about what makes sense. How do we organise our lives?

Sometimes we do middle-class liberation work so that we feel better, without letting it affect anything in our lives. That's one danger. Another is that we are pulled to look for a formula, to ask, "How should my life look?" or, "What level of material comfort is it all right to have?" so as to get the *appearance* right. Instead we need to discharge our way forward.

What is enough? What would it mean to settle for enough? We need to discharge on all the implications of that. This whole economic system is coming apart

continued . . .



MARTI HAYMAKER

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at the seams. The lifestyles we have can't be sustained. How do we feel about that? What is going to be required of us, and what are the implications of that for middle-class liberation work? If we weren't doing the work just to feel good, what would we do? It seems that whatever we do, it will have to include wide-world change. What would our lifestyles look like if we let our liberation work change the reality of our lives? What would we have to discharge?

The challenge for us is to think our way through all this. And we haven't really begun to do it. If the truth were told, we are trying to avoid doing it. We are hoping we won't have to do it.

REACHING FOR BIGGER THINGS

Capitalism is collapsing. We are a group with access to resources and influence. This makes it all the more important for us to get our minds back. The media, and the general culture, tell us there is impending doom. In reality, we human beings have figured out a whole lot about the world. The biggest problem is the level of fear, and we know what to do about that.

This is a leaders' group. We are the ones who are going to exercise leadership in the middle class, if it's

going to be done. We can think about this, if we set our minds to it. The work we are doing has no equivalent outside of RC. In that sense, it's unique. Our challenge is to move it out into the world.

We need to organise to change the world, not just to get out of the places where we feel bad or lose ourselves. We owe it to ourselves to reach for bigger things. Middle-class oppression keeps us preoccupied with comfort and security, with thinking mainly about ourselves and our families. That is selling ourselves short. If we do nothing, we are colluding with the destructiveness around us, including the destruction of the planet.

How do we deal with the collapse of capitalism? We sometimes talk in RC as if capitalism will collapse and we Co-Counsellors will suddenly scurry out of nowhere and leap into action. But if we haven't done it before, we probably won't do it then. We need to start making a difference. We can start by being visible. Don't think about this as an obligation or in terms of sacrifices we have to make. Think of it in terms of having bigger lives. What would a big life look like? We need to discharge about that. We need to let this work change the details

of our lives, so there is no longer a gap between what we say in Co-Counselling and the actual lives we lead.

If we assumed that this system was going to collapse in our lifetimes, what would we do now? Where would we go with this work?

GETTING OUR THINKING BACK

(Seán works with a client.)

Seán: What are the feelings that come up for you if you think that this is all going to collapse, that the world around you is going to fall apart?

A—: It was easier to think about when I was a young adult.

Seán: What has changed?

A—: I've got more stuff. I've got more invested in it.

Seán: What did you have as a young adult that you had to give up to get so invested?

A—: I had more hope. *(cries)*

Seán: You had more hope.

A—: It doesn't seem possible now. I can't even imagine it, Seán.

Seán: Let's go back to the hope you used to have. What was your hope for the world back then?

A—: Connection was going to do it all. It wouldn't matter, because we'd be connected. I remember having a session about how I was going to end capitalism. I wouldn't dream of having a session about that now.

Seán: That's what this session is about.

A—: You tricked me! It's so hard to think about, I don't want to do it. I like my comfort, I like my car. In fact, I want a new car. *(laughs)*



Seán: Keep going.

A—: Doing the right thing? I want less stuff, but better stuff. It's a bit naked when you look at children. They don't pretend. They say, "I want that!" (*cries*)

Seán (*with his arm round A—, who is still discharging*): There's a way we don't want to do this work till we know the answer: "If I knew the answer, I would do the work. But since I don't know the answer, I don't want to work on it. There's always another session I could have that would be much more satisfying." This is the stage we are at.

I am not trying to counsel A— into anything. I want to help her use the discharge process so she can get her thinking back and not settle for formulas. We can ask ourselves, "When I look ahead, what scares me?" We need to see where this takes us, and we won't know till we do the work. The challenge is for us to be completely honest with ourselves as clients and see where that takes us.

(*end of session*)

Question: Could you make clear the distinction between formulas and rational policies?

Seán: A formula is someone else's rigid position that we follow without understanding it. A rational policy is the result of having done the thinking ourselves. Because of the way middle-class material operates, the pull is to wait till we have the answer before we do anything. We're not great at fumbling our way through. We have to have it neat. Instead, we need to decide what kind of lives we want to live and then figure out how to get there.

We often make lifestyle choices that we decide not to examine too closely, because if we did, it would make us uncomfortable. In some way or another, we need to hold our lives up to scrutiny—not out of guilt, not out of obligation, but because if we do this, and discharge, we'll get to have bigger lives. Our dilemma is how to do it without being pulled into obligation and pretence and appearances.

The temptation will be to try to *look* as though we are doing it. The material will want someone to hand us the answer: "This is how much money you should have. These are the possessions you should have." Formulas. The challenge is to continually think. We have to discharge the feeling of not wanting to give anything up.² In fact, anything we sacrifice will be small compared with what we will get in return.

BACKING WORKING-CLASS LEADERS

We're in good enough shape³ now to start actively going after⁴ our relationships with working-class people and people raised poor and figuring out how to get

close to them and back⁵ them. This is not so much about us as individual middle-class people getting behind a working-class person; it's about us as an organised group backing working-class leaders.

I'm holding this picture out even before I know exactly what it means. We're at the stage now when it's time to move. The world around us is in such poor shape at the moment that it would be a pity to miss fixing it. It would be a pity to not be part of doing something about it.

We need to start having sessions on all this. They will be murky, awkward sessions. We need to have them anyway.

SEEING OURSELVES AS CENTRAL

(*Seán works with another client.*)

B—: This is a way harder conference than I thought it was going to be. (*laughs*) The middle-class stuff that's been flying around my head has been relentless. It's so easy to get confused and believe that something particular about here and now is causing it, but actually it is what I'm acting on top of all the time. (*cries*)

Seán: Keep showing us.

B—: (*cries*) The word that comes to mind is relentless. My mum was relentless. Everything was a correction, a refinement. "Don't, don't. This way, this way." It always feels like I'm doing it wrong! (*shakes*)

Seán: Relentless. Keep showing.

B—: In the last few years I've noticed the places where I can

continued . . .




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⁵ Back means support, stand behind.







LIBERATION

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 be completely grounded and confident in myself, but there's also this little squinty spot where "I know more than anybody."







 Seán: Keep showing us that.








 B—: There's a smell of arrogance. I'm going to have an answer for everything. Anything anyone in the room can come up with,⁶ I'm so far ahead of them it's going to be a piece of cake.⁷ Sometimes I remember to ask them what they think. (*laughs, shakes*)




 Seán: It's relentless.







 B—: It never stops; it really never stops running in my head. (*cries*) I hate feeling small and quiet and little and not sure. As I got a better picture of who was here, and how much experience they had and what jobs they had in RC, I could just feel myself getting smaller, along with fear and a little anger.



 Seán: How central have you put yourself in this work?


 B—: (*cries*) I don't know. We're the A team. It's us. It's me.


 Seán: If you could tell⁸ how central you were, what difference would it make?


 B—: My first thought was that it would make all the difference.


 Seán: What would change?

 B—: If I were central, I'd have to be in the centre of something, of

⁶ Come up with means think of.

⁷ A piece of cake means completely easy.

⁸ Tell means perceive, notice.

some people. Something about being braver. I am brave, but taking bigger risks or something. I hope it's going to be more fun.

Seán: No. It's relentless.

B—: Oh yes. I forgot. (*laughs*)

Seán: So how would it be bigger?

B—: I have a huge number of middle-class people in my life. They're my people, and they're having miserable lives. I would figure that out, I would understand them better. I would make bigger, better, closer friends among them. I would act on all the ideas I have instead of just having them as ideas. I often think, "It would be so cool⁹ to get these people together and those people together." Just ideas.

Whenever I want to do something like that, I start worrying about it. It doesn't feel interesting or important enough. Maybe I could stop worrying about what to do with people and just have them. Maybe the worrying stops me from getting closer to people.

Seán: Can you decide now to put yourself right at the centre of this work?

B—: You've asked me this question before! Decide, decide. (*cries*) I'm not going to . . . I really, really want to . . . I know we talk about . . . But I'm not exactly sure. Something about keep doing, keep doing.

⁹ Cool means great, wonderful.

Seán: But you're bigger than this.

B—: (*cries*) Relentless—my mother was relentless.

Seán: You're bigger than this.

B—: I could decide to behave as if I believed that I am. Is that a good idea? I don't know. It's so slippery in here.

Seán: You are central to this work in Canada.

B—: (*shaking*) That's easier to get a hold of.

Seán: I think we have to stay in closer touch. We all have to see ourselves as central to this work. We have to make that decision. And you have to stay closer to me.

B—: It won't be pretty. It's probably going to be kind of messy for a while.

Seán (*to the workshop*): What's nice about what B—'s doing is that she's not taking the direction for the sake of taking the direction. She's being honest, and that's crucially important for middle-class people. (*Turns to B—*) But it is also true, B—, that you are bigger than this.

B—: There's this funny¹⁰ spot where I forget that I am going to discharge through it. After twenty years of RC, I forget.

¹⁰ Funny means strange.

It never occurs to me that there are things I can't do.

Whoopi Goldberg

Showing Ourselves Fully

The Middle-Class Conference helped me understand why this liberation movement is central to my re-emergence. I had not been able to get to certain kinds of discharge—I had no idea how much the middle-class material¹ of “not showing our problems” had attached itself to RC ideas, such as “attention away from distress.” Showing ourselves more fully as middle-class folks *is* fighting the oppression. It will bring up discharge and make us seem safer to working-class and raised-poor allies.

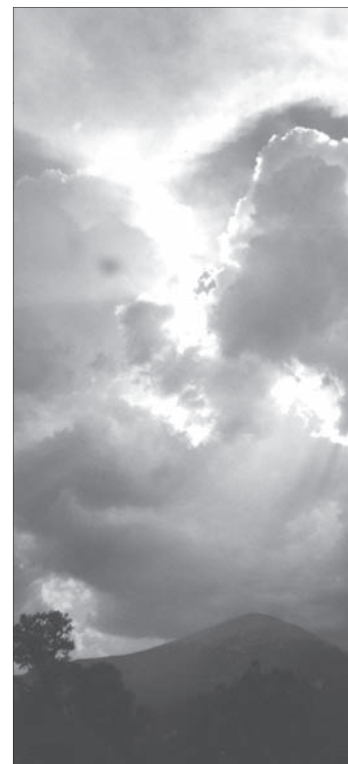
Middle-class folks have cultivated some tools for supporting leadership. However, these have often been used to bolster the oppressive status quo. Now we can use them to back² the leadership of working-class and raised-poor folks.

It’s not enough to feel better; it’s time to dismantle this classist system that undergirds the oppressive society. Middle-class liberation is key to wide world change!

David Joyce
Reseda, California, USA

¹ Material means distress.

² Back means support.



JO ANNE GARRETT

Connection, and Moving Ahead

Seán¹ has observed that, in general, middle-class oppression has left us middle-class people pretty useless² at relationships. Meanwhile, it is necessary that we work together (relate well, collaborate) in order to move middle-class liberation forward. How can we collaborate if we are useless at relationships?

I assumed that others at the conference were feeling as I did—unsure that they mattered and convinced they would only be welcome if they behaved in some particular way. It was useful to notice the activities that helped us to connect with each other:

- Being on the same conference job team
- Playing together—especially games that had us bumping up against each other
- Being outside together

¹ Seán Ruth, the leader of the Middle-Class Conference and the International Liberation Reference Person for Middle-Class People

² Pretty useless means quite incompetent.

- Talking about life and work
- Thinking together.

Once we’ve connected, then what? North American society tends to make us feel too busy, stretched thin,³ and overwhelmed. I feel like I don’t have time to stay in contact with people. Then, as time goes by without connecting, I start to feel bad about that, which again stops me from making contact—and so on! For me, this happens more often in RC relationships, especially those that are long distance. I feel like “I don’t know what to do with you,” and “What if I do it wrong?”

I long to stay connected with people—and I’m tired of doing it all in my head. Seán gave me a direction to be in contact with specific people. Instead of being completely paralyzed, I’m going to have to make contact with people and continue doing it regardless of my feelings,

continued . . .

³ Stretched thin means overextended.

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and keep discharging the internalized middle-class (and Protestant) oppression that's in the way. I still feel disbelief and humiliation that my struggle here is as big as it is.

We don't have to wait until we have discharged to start working together and moving middle-class liberation forward. Working side by side is a reliable way to make friends and deepen relationships. However, it might be a good idea to go slowly, at least for a while. Many of us

function over the top of our distresses. Let's give ourselves time to notice and discharge the feelings that come up as we try things and get closer. We can decide not to rush past the mistakes we'll inevitably make. We won't know what we're doing, but I'm starting to see that might be okay! I'm excited about getting going—but slowly, slowly.

Karen Wishart
Toronto, Ontario, Canada



The Diversity of the Middle Class

The following is taken from a discussion at the Middle-Class Conference:

Seán¹: Part of our work is to tell the story of each constituency within the middle class. What is one of your other identities? How is it related to or similar to being middle-class?

Person raised military: Follow orders, do your job, sacrifice yourself for the good of the group. You are expendable—a tool, a weapon.

Female: I must look good, implement things that aren't my own agenda, make things go well without taking any credit. I am held responsible for how everyone in my family looks and behaves.

Person with a chronic illness: If I can't work, I am expendable.

Canadian: Our national pattern is to be "nice." Don't hurt anyone's feelings, don't rock the boat,² value law and order. We don't emphasize free speech and independence.

¹ Seán Ruth, the International Liberation Reference Person for Middle-Class People and the leader of the Middle-Class Conference

² Rock the boat means create a disturbance.

New Englander³: Be invisible and quiet.

Protestant: The work ethic. To go to heaven you have to be good, help people, serve, not blow your own horn,⁴ not feel good about yourself.

Artist: I must accept that there is limited space to do creative work, to play, to daydream. We artists function as a voice for human feelings but are threatened with "mental health" oppression if we go outside certain tight parameters.

³ New England consists of six states in the northeastern United States.

⁴ Blow your own horn means brag.



LANCE CABLK

Gay man: Denial is a Gay chronic pattern, so as not to feel the oppression. It intersects with middle-class pretence. Solo functioning and isolation fit in with middle-class individualism.

Person raised Catholic: I have to do something in order to be good.

Parent: I am supposed to make my child "toe the line."⁵

Person raised Midwest USA rural: Solo functioning. It is seen as rude and interfering to try to help people.

Jew: The diaspora experience is about upward mobility, assimilation, and seeking security.

"Mental health" system survivor: Everyone is supposed to be the same.

School counsellor: I am in the middle. The administration is like the owning class, and I am supposed to keep both students and teachers in line.

Australian: Our national belief that we are a classless society amounts to a denial of middle-class identity. There is a strong pull to pretend to be working-class.

⁵ "Toe the line" means behave.

Man: Having to be independent, having to have it all together.⁶

Child of immigrants: Fitting in. I had to learn the rules, behave accordingly, and not draw any attention to myself.

USer: I am supposed to not notice what's happening in the rest of the world—not look at things, not look at greed. To get into the middle class and stay there, you have to point yourself toward greed.

Southern USer: I am insignificant.

Person of mixed heritage: Having racism come at me, but no acknowledgement that it is happening.

White person: Thinking it's normal to be white. Remaining isolated from each other.

⁶ Have it all together means not show any problems.

Seán: We're a diverse group!

When we middle-class people try to be allies to other groups, we are pulled to look as if we understand their oppression and know exactly what we are doing around them. It's useful for us to start from the position that we really don't get it⁷ at all. Unless we grew up with an oppression, we don't get it, so let's not bother pretending. Instead let's focus on getting close. Each oppressed group will figure out its own liberation; we can stay in close, show ourselves, and back them to do that. If we start from the position that we don't get it, and follow their lead, it's possible that we will come to understand it, or get pretty⁸ close to that.

We have been so desperate to look okay and not show our

⁷ Get it means understand it.

⁸ In this context, pretty means quite.

struggles that we've scared people. If we show ourselves, even if we are awkward and scared, other people can be more relaxed around us.

People in the United States generally look confident and speak confidently. If you've got internalised material⁹ about your intelligence, all it takes is for someone to look confident and you get restimulated. Being an ally to me is not about asking me questions about Ireland or telling me things about it. All I want is for someone to make friends and show me their struggles (so I don't think all the difficulties are from me). We need to show ourselves, so that people can tell¹⁰ there is somebody there. And we need to do it from a position of knowing our goodness.

⁹ Material means distress.

¹⁰ In this context, tell means see, notice.

Cleaning Up an Old Relationship

On your question about what it means to clean up old relationships, probably it's more accurate to say that you build a new relationship that is rational. To reach out in the old way is to open yourself up to being hurt again.

However, it won't hurt you to reach out in your newfound strength as a counselor, who recognizes that all of your mother's cursing, unpleasantness, and lack-of-reality are simply distresses and that underneath them she is a dear human being who always did the best she could and whom you would certainly attempt to rescue if you didn't have this bad background with her.

What should a rational relationship be with someone like that? I think it's doing what you can to help the human surface again and know that she's not alone and that someone cares about her—at least before she dies, if you aren't able to do enough to interrupt the plunge toward death.

Harvey Jackins
From a letter written in 1974

Middle-Class Women—and Sexism, Competition, and Classism

We middle-class women often feel that our class status is shaky.¹ It's not backed up, as owning-class status often is, by a history of family wealth. It is often based on the appearance, education, and behavior that got us into the middle class, or permitted us to stay there.

Classism has an underpinning of sexism and male domination. It is men who more often have status, authority, and earning power. They choose which women they will mate with, hire, and so on, and this is where the competition comes in. Under current conditions of sexism, we women are competing for a scarce resource—that is, men with position or money. Whom are we competing against? All the other women in the “selection pool”! Our job is to be more attractive than they are. Women’s magazines are filled with advice on how to achieve this and get a man.

At the conference we had a lunch table to think about appearance and how we had used it to gain and maintain our middle-class position. We shared about dieting, cosmetics, and other ways of trying to beautify ourselves. In general, the underlying goal was to look like a young, fit white Anglo-Saxon Protestant woman. We were mostly women over fifty, so we also talked about how we try to keep in the running² as we get older. Several women talked about wanting to dye their hair to look younger and be more competitive in the job market. Women who had let their hair go gray knew that they could only be successful if they stayed fit and slim. It's a lot of work to be a middle-class woman!

Financial independence often looks like the antidote to being financially dependent on a man. In order to have power and independence in a sexist, classist society, women generally

¹ In this context, shaky means temporary, vulnerable to disruption.

² Keep in the running means stay competitive with younger women.



CATOCTIN STATE PARK, MARYLAND, USA • LANCE CABLK

feel they have to get more education, a good job, and so on. The isolation of upward mobility can be the price we pay, as middle-class women, for escaping the worst of sexism.

So much has to be held in place for middle-class women to keep up the appearance of normalcy. Many things can sabotage it—sickness, “mental illness,” widowhood, divorce, loss of income, a messy house, scandal, a delinquent child, an erratic personal appearance, or any “inappropriate” display of feelings. It becomes clear that maintaining a middle-class identity is intertwined with “mental health” oppression.

QUESTIONS FOR SESSIONS

Here are some questions for Co-Counseling sessions:

How were we made terrified of what would happen to us as women if we lost our middle-class status? Whom were we competing with, and for what or whom? How desperate were we? Whom do we compete with now? What frightening things do we think we would have to face if we lost our place in the middle class?

We can ask each other about our earliest memories associated in any way with money and women, or with being rich or poor. We can review everything we ever heard about women and money, from *Cinderella*³ on. We can talk about women whom we would never want to be like, women we never could be like, women with whom we could be friends, women with whom we could never be friends (for example, women with too much make-up), and so on. The categories are almost endless. Where are our visible and invisible walls? How can we challenge them?

³ *Cinderella* is a folk tale. In one variation, the main character, Cinderella, is treated as a slave by her selfish stepfamily. She dreams of going to the prince's ball and overcomes a number of obstacles to do so. She and the prince fall in love but then are separated by mishaps and oppression. In the end, the prince finds Cinderella again because her foot fits the glass slipper she wore to the ball and lost on the way home.



An even better question, outside of middle-class internalized oppression, is “How would all this change if instead of assuming that isolation is natural, we knew that we were part of a strong ‘all for one and one for all’ community?”

By working on classism as women, we can put ourselves more fully into the work to end both classism and sexism. It would be great if men would start working on sexism and classism,

too—on their earliest experiences associated with women and class in any way. A question for middle-class men: Whom do you choose (to admire, socialize with, hire, date, marry)? Whom do you not choose? I would love to hear from both women and men!

Barbara Deck
Newton, Massachusetts, USA



United to End Racism (UER) posters and pins are available for purchase.

Four designs are available as posters, including the one shown to the right. 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.



JANA CHRISTOPHER

Jewish Liberation at the Middle-Class Conference

At the Middle-Class Conference Ruth Hartman¹ led a class on Jewish liberation. She pointed out the connection between anti-Jewish oppression and class oppression. Anti-Jewish oppression is a key mechanism for separating our various groups from each other. For this reason we cannot end classism without ending anti-Jewish oppression. Israel has been set up to be an agent of imperialism and a global scapegoat. We don’t have to choose sides—Jews and Arabs are natural allies for each other, and we get to have people from both these groups in our lives.

Seán² talked about how the other constituencies we belong to affect us as middle-class people. Working on ending any of the oppressions will help free my mind as a middle-class woman.

Phyllis Beardsley
Vernon, British Columbia, Canada

¹ Ruth Hartman is an RC leader in Castro Valley, California, USA.

² Seán Ruth was the leader of the conference and is the International Liberation Reference Person for Middle-Class People.



Allies to U.S. Southerners

I organized a table¹ for U.S. Southerners² and allies at the Middle-Class Conference. Some of my beloveds are from the South, and it has been hard watching how they struggle, particularly when they come North. They liken³ their trip to a one-step class downgrade,

meaning that if they are middle-class, they are treated as if they are working-class. Some of them become louder and more “inappropriate”; others “go small” and get defensive. Either way, they don’t get close to other folks and we don’t get them or their thinking.

included implying that they are stupid, romanticizing the South, making fun of Southern food, and assuming that racism is harsher in the South. Most U.S. Southerners have had someone ask them, directly or indirectly, why they still live “there,” as if all the sensible people have moved out of the South. This is not a small thing to Southerners.

Sue Lippert

Portland, Maine, USA

¹ In this context, a table means a discussion at mealtime on a particular topic.

² People from the U.S. South—the states in the current United States that seceded from the United States in 1860 and 1861, leading to the U.S. Civil War

³ Liken means compare.

I invited the U.S. Southerners to tell us what people do or say that is hard for them. In addition to the one-step class downgrade, hard things

From a Middle-Class Artist

I am a visual artist. I make paintings and drawings for a living. I had a great time at the Middle-Class Conference leading a group of artists as we thought about our visions for society. For an artist, thinking involves experimenting and taking risks. I encouraged group members to come up with¹ playful visions and to share the dreams they’d always had, dreams that may have been dismissed as frivolous, trite, and childlike. I noticed that people were strongly pulled to suggest visions they had settled for over time.² Giving in to this pull narrows down the bigger visioning process—one that comes from our “heart of hearts,” as Seán³ so beautifully put it.

Art is essential to humanity. Artists often show us benign reality and how we want life to be for all humans. Harvey⁴ said it: “Creativity is intelligence.” We are all creative in a variety of ways, every day. In a rational world, all people would be “artists.”

I am a white Protestant USer who came into my teens in the early 1970s, a more affluent era in this country. The relative affluence, in addition to my middle-class privileges, made it look like I had some room to take risks and make a life as an artist. I could notice that the arts made a significant difference in human lives and could imagine that society might support me to make art and have it be at the center of my life.

ARTISTS’ OPPRESSION

Feeling that we are “never enough” is chronic for artists. We are pulled to compete with one another, because there are not enough resources to go around. We often need to do other kinds of jobs to support our creative work, and this makes it harder for us to focus and to make our work bigger, stronger, and more revolutionary.

¹ Come up with means think of.

² Over time means as time went by.

³ Seán Ruth, the International Liberation Reference Person for Middle-Class People and the leader of the Middle-Class Conference

⁴ Harvey Jackins



KAUAI, HAWAII, USA • LYNNE SHIVERS

Feeling invisible is central to artists' internalized oppression. It is hard to see that what we do matters at all. In order to survive economically, we are pulled to produce, to compromise, to move away from experimentation. Meanwhile, internalized "mental health" oppression pressures us to look as if we are "okay." (Artists are often labeled "crazy.")

We provide the owning class with diversion and entertainment, and they make the final decision about our significance. Our survival as artists can depend on making them feel better about themselves by their proximity to us and our ideas—but we can't rock the boat⁵ too much. Like other sections of the middle class, we are set up to serve the owning class, but we are to do it relatively quietly and invisibly.

Like the rest of the working class, we do not benefit much from the system. Our work is

⁵ Rock the boat means be radical, controversial, in a way that challenges the status quo.

desired, but we are denied the real conditions for good survival. We can be bribed by the false rewards of being idealized, being seen as special, but the resulting separation from others is a big hurt. As middle-class artists, we are manipulated and used to keep a hierarchical class system in place—this is the condition under which we are allowed to do our important, human work.

As is happening for other sections of the working class, artists are in a precarious position as society collapses. There are fewer options for making a living, and less economic resource in general. We feel more dispensable and vulnerable. The pervasive fears surrounding the collapse push me and my peers toward greater isolation and a hunkering down.⁶ We feel left alone to figure things out.

Deborah Bell
Seattle, Washington, USA

⁶ A hunkering down means hiding, not having an impact.

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

You can order back issues as regular literature items (see pages 103 and 109).

When, indeed, shall we learn that we are all related one to the other, that we are all members of one body? Until the spirit of love for our fellow men, regardless of race, color, or creed, shall fill the world, making real in our lives and our deeds the actuality of human brotherhood, until the great mass of the people shall be filled with the sense of responsibility for each other's welfare, social justice can never be attained.

Helen Keller



NOBIRU, JAPAN • EMMA PARKER

Middle-Class People Find Their Thinking

At the Middle-Class Conference, time was set aside for us to think together. Seán¹ introduced this by saying, “We are going to think in groups. Part of our work is pushing through the confusion and getting our thinking back. Each of us will be listened to while we think. If you need to discharge, do it to help you think. The purpose is not to impress anyone, and it does not have to be finished thinking.”



PARCO NAZIONALE D'ABRUZZO, ITALY • JULIE ANNE FORGIONE

HOW ARE MIDDLE-CLASS PEOPLE AFFECTED?

Outside of RC

- Middle-class USers are working harder—often working extra hours to maintain their incomes at a former level. They have less job security. They also fear having to work indefinitely. As employees fight to maintain their middle-class standard of living, it is harder for them to act with integrity. They are afraid to speak out. They focus

On the first day, we answered these questions:

- What do you see happening in the world around you?
- How are middle-class people affected by what's happening, inside and outside of RC?

And on the second day:

- What is your vision for the future?
- How do we move middle-class liberation forward, inside and outside of RC?

The following are excerpts from the group reports.

*Caroline New
Bristol, England*



WHAT DO YOU SEE HAPPENING IN THE WORLD AROUND YOU?

- Capitalist ideology is now dominant worldwide. Religions offer the only widespread alternative world views. The rich countries are trying to deal with the recession by a massive transfer of wealth from poor people to rich people. All options are on the table² except taxing the rich.
- People are losing jobs. Many USers are without health care. The younger generation is having to

scramble to survive. Those who have jobs are doing more work with fewer resources. The luxury goods industry continues to flourish. People with corporate jobs still have high incomes, though less security than before.

- Public sector employees are an easy target and are under attack.
- Feelings of hopelessness are widespread, as is fear of stepping out of line.
- Being in a state of perpetual war is accepted as normal. The U.S. government is using terrorism to terrorise its population.
- Consumerism and profit are emphasised more than ever. USers are pulled to watch television rather than relate to each other.

- In the Canadian and U.S. elections there was racist anti-Muslim and anti-immigrant rhetoric, and no clear vision from the politicians—just polarisation and mutual abuse.

- Addiction—to drugs, including alcohol and prescription drugs, and to television and unhealthy food—is on the rise, as a way to numb out. Sex is more widely used to sell products. When we feel afraid, we are told that we should take a pill or buy something to cheer ourselves up.

- Electronic communication has changed relationships and the concept of friendship.

- Funding sources pressurise all organisations, including non-profits, to adopt a corporate model.

on day-to-day survival and take fewer initiatives on behalf of themselves, or others. Middle-class men feel crushed by increased workplace demands; their “mental health” is often precarious. Many middle-class university students try to do a full-time course and work at a job as well.

- Unreasoning trust in the government has disappeared, but many still want someone else to come up with³ a solution.

- U.S. white Protestant middle-class culture continues to dominate. Patterns of individualism, meanness, and greed are taken as normal.

- Even though they're scared about the economic situation, middle-class parents will buy their third grader an iPhone⁴ and try to look relaxed, as if things are fine.

- The middle class is now facing challenges that the working class is accustomed to.

- Many young people are questioning the idea that college education is the ticket to a middle-class lifestyle.

- For the first time, a generation of middle-class people are not expected to make more money than their parents.

Inside of RC

- Middle-class people often come into RC hoping to feel better, and have

¹ Seán Ruth, the International Liberation Reference Person for Middle-Class People and the leader of the Middle-Class Conference
² On the table means under consideration.

³ Come up with means think of.
⁴ An iPhone is a fancy cell phone that functions like a mini-computer.



difficulty looking at the bigger picture. They discharge to improve their lives, but most aren't making the leap to wide world change.

- Teaching RC is more difficult than it used to be. More middle-class fundamentals students are having to come off psychiatric drugs.

- Outreach funds are needed more often than before in middle-class Areas.⁵

- People are leading narrower lives, deciding it is all too big to think about and settling for whatever comforts they can get. For example, "I have to prioritise going to yoga three times a week, so I can't go to an RC class."

- Time and work pressures can make middle-class people less likely to take leadership in RC and less generous with their time.

- Some fundamentals students, affected by consumerism, look for the best "service" they can get for their money. I have to tell my class, "This is not a customer service situation."



WHAT IS YOUR VISION FOR THE FUTURE?

- We will end all forms of oppression.

- Babies will be born in ways that empower women. Young people, from their earliest moments, will be paid attention to and be part of the community as "official humans."

- There will be mechanisms for ensuring that each person gets an equal voice.

- The world will be organised around meeting rational human needs. Everyone will have access to food, shelter, water, and freedom from toxic chemicals. We will figure out what is enough, and how to distribute enough to everybody.

- Communities everywhere will be more connected with each other. People will understand that we are all interdependent.

⁵ An Area is a local RC Community.

- The information we get will not be based on fear or on making a profit.

- Women and men will think together and have equal power.

- There will be no hierarchy of jobs.

- We will live in intentional communities, where we know the leaders personally.

- Decisions will be made by the people most affected by them. Discharge will be part of all decision-making processes. An individual or group will not be able to manufacture something that hasn't been agreed upon to be necessary.

- We will think about the effect of what we do on people seven generations on.

- We will take the time to talk until agreement is reached, and value the process more than minimising the time it takes.

- Instead of people living in isolated places, there will be villages and efficient ways to travel between them.

- We'll have a process for thinking about how people move around rather than letting people decide independently to get into cars and aeroplanes.

- We will have principled but necessarily often less personal relationships with people who live far away.

- Work will be organised differently. Less time will be spent working. We will cooperate and discharge more.

- We will all learn from and live in accordance with First Nation values and practices.

- Whoever has or gets something will think about who might need it more.

- Parenting will be supported as the most important job.

- The idea of respecting ourselves and one another will require discharge to grasp fully.

- We will need to make collective decisions about what we make and grow—decisions made in face-to-face groups.

- Police may be needed to handle certain situations, but there will also be an "RC emergency service" that will swoop in, listen, and say, "Sweetie, you can't do that anymore."

- Living cooperatively will be widespread. People will share resources. They will look after⁶ each other, each other's children, and the environment, and think well about elders. Everyone will have a connection to the land.

- Shopping malls will be places for interesting and health-giving activities.

- Cultures and languages will be highly valued, restored when necessary, and maintained.

- There will be lots more singing, playing, dancing, and making of art.

- All people will have a home among whomever they feel are their people.

- Billboards and media will show people thinking, not sitting on a beach with a drink.

continued . . .

⁶ Look after means take care of.



DIANE SHISK

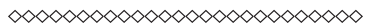


LIBERATION

... continued



- Our births and deaths will be sane and rational.
- Difficult manual work will be done in rotation.



HOW DO WE MOVE MIDDLE-CLASS LIBERATION FORWARD?

Outside of RC

- Influence and make policy. Plan and strategise as well as serve.
- In order to think and move, people will need affordable health care and freedom from worry about retirement.
- I need to discharge my fear of talking to people who don't want to give up anything. I need to find different ways to describe middle-class liberation (for example, without using Marxist language that restimulates people).
- We invited friends to a discussion potluck called "One Small Change" and had a different topic every time: jobs, economic decisions, retirement.
- Middle-class activists can be instrumental in naturalising RC in the wide world and getting wide-world-changers into RC.
- We can be more open about our struggles (for example, "Hey, money has been really tight since the recession!") and then keep quiet and listen.
- Encourage RCers to participate in politics.
- Write to the media about middle- and working-class interests not being divergent.
- Prioritise winning allies for ourselves as middle-class people.
- Give talks in libraries and book groups on class issues and include RC information.
- Put middle-class liberation on the agenda of the World Social Forum.
- Build teams of different backgrounds to do work on class.

- Challenge hopelessness and slow things down. (Urgency and hopelessness make us less attractive.) Have lives that other people would want.

• Learn from people who know how to live well without middle-class material resources.

• Change our idea of poverty. Middle-class people tend to suffer poverty of time and community.

• Many middle-class people are thinking about food security, buying local products, and supporting local farmers.

• People are talking to their neighbours and leading by example. Do we really need to work this hard? I tell people I have decided to work three days a week, and I see them thinking about it.

• Good things are going on⁷ in Canada with social media. There is an international organisation that can get a million signatures on-line.

• Maybe we aren't as in touch as we could be with groups and people who are resisting what is happening.

• Most of the people at this workshop are from the economic North. A lot of the answers for change are not going to come from us but from the South. We can be hopeful about that.

⁷ Going on means happening.



ORNA SHUMAN

• We are not alone. We don't have to come up with answers on our own.⁸

• What would it take for the middle class and the working class to reach for each other in this current situation?

Inside RC

• Take ourselves seriously. Middle-class liberation is of central importance.

• Use support groups to identify how middle-class distress affects our current lives.

• Remind ourselves regularly that we have each other as middle-class leaders. Avoid acting on internalised isolation. Stay in touch.

• Organise ourselves. For example, we could meet as a North American leaders' group.

• For Australians the challenge is to stay in touch and not feel that we have to "go it alone."

• Develop new and younger leaders.

• Encourage the owning class to learn to counsel the middle class.

• Set up "United to End Classism."

• Bring in all constituencies—be rowdier, more passionate, bigger, and bolder, and risk making mistakes.

• Write for the middle-class RC e-mail discussion list.

• Work together with our allies—they see our patterns more clearly.

• Instead of leading workshop topic groups on middle-class liberation, lead them on ending classism, on the middle class and the working class as allies, and on middle-class people working for wide world change.

• Work on the early distresses that get in the way of building alliances with everyone.

• Explore ways of making workshops more accessible financially.

• Prioritise getting close to working-class people, inside and outside of RC. We need working-class people close to us.

⁸ On our own means alone, by ourselves.



地震と津波のあとに 日本のコウ・カウンセラーに資源を送る

3月11日に起きた日本の東北での地震と津波の一週間後、私たちはRCの国際コミュニティから日本のコミュニティに大至急に資源を送る事を決めました。この地域に住んでいた何人ものコウ・カウンセラーが直接的な被害を受けました。その上、初めの2、3週間は原発事故とそれによる放射能漏れが続いて、より大きな爆発や日本中に放射能が広がるような事態になるかどうか、はっきりとわかりませんでした。

私たちは既に電話でのサポートをオーガナイズしていましたが、この災害による莫大な破壊の規模、地震と津波で命を落とした人々、そして、引き続き原発事故の危険性ということを考えて、日本に直接リーダーを送りたいと思いました。初めから、原子炉はかなりの被害を受け、放射能が漏れているということ、そして、その被害を最小限にとどめる事はかなりの挑戦だということとは明らかでした。

私たちは、みんなが早い段階で集まって、この危険な状況と、それによって再刺激されるとも幼い時の恐怖をディスチャージして、このような危機的な状況下で自分にとって一番良い考えが使えるようになってほしいと思いました。恐怖でまひしてしまい、家族や友達だけとしか近くに居続けられなくなり、即急にみんなで集まりディスチャージする事の大切さを忘れてしまうのではないかと心配していました。それと同時に、日本政府や原発の所有者（東京電力）が、被害や危険性の深刻さを正当に伝えないことを知っていましたし、

日本人にかかっている抑圧を考えると、雇用者や政府の方針に従う事なく自分の考えを持つために闘う事が難しい事も知っていました。

5つのワークショップ

日本のRCコミュニティは突然のワークショップをオーガナイズしてほしいというリクエストを受け入れ、3月29日にテレサ・エンリコ、日比野ゆうこ、そして、私たち二人、（ダイアン・シスクとチャック・エッサー）¹が日本に飛び、5つのワークショップをリードしました。ワークショップは九州、大阪、東京、山形、そして北海道

¹ テレサ・エンリコはアメリカ合衆国、オレゴン州、ポートランドのARP（地域照会者）であり、またフィリピン人の国際解放照会者です。日比野ゆうこはシアトルに住むRCのリーダーです。ダイアン・シスクはRCコミュニティ国際照会者のオルタです。チャック・エッサーはファミリーワークの国際共通照会者です。

で行われました。テレサと私（チャック）がチームになって大阪と北海道に行き、ゆうこと私（ダイアン）がチームになって、九州、東京、山形に行きました。

およそ210人の人がワークショップに参加しました。ほとんどの人がその地域に住んでいる人たちでしたが、中には東北から避難していた人や、（何人もの人が福島や、仙台、その他の大きな被害を受けた地域に住んでおり、安全に自分の家に帰る事が出来なくなっていました。）今後、更なる被曝の可能性が高い地域から避難してきていた人もいました。

ディスチャージするのを助ける

私たちの一番の目標はみんながディスチャージをすることで、集まった人たちはそうする準備ができていました。みんな、3月11日の事やその後の影響について、自分がどこにいて何が起こったか、または何をテレビで見たか、東北地方にいる自分の家族や友達から何を聞いたかというところから始め、ディスチャージしました。亡くなった命と、決して同じように元に戻る事のない町や美しい田舎の風景などについて沢山の悲しみがディスチャージされました。

現在の悲しみや恐怖から再刺激されている古い傷の記憶や、幼い頃の恐怖や敗北感について取り組む機会が必ずあるよう心がけました。今までに経験した他の大きな地震の記憶や、広島と長崎の原爆について取り組んだ人もいました。ディスチャージをして何が安全かに



JO PERRY

ついて自分自身の考えを持ち、たとえ他の人が同意しなかったとしてもその考えのために立ち上がるという事にも挑戦してもらいました。

「地震」や「津波でサーフィンする」というゲームや歌を作って、ワークショップの間中それを使う事で、みんながディスチャージし続けられるように雰囲気軽くすることを心がけました。危機的な状況の中、ほとんどの大人は若い人へのアテンションが少なくなってしまう中で、どうやって若い人のことを考えるかにも取り組み、この件についてパティエ・ウィッフル²が書いた文章をシェアしました。

避難するかどうか

ティムが日本のコウ・カウンセラーに向けて書いた手紙(2011年4月のプレゼントタイムの3ページ参照)は、ディスチャージして、危険性を査定して、政府からの勧告がなくても避難する事を考える事を励まし

²パティエ・ウィッフルは親の国際解放照会者です。

たもので、それからとても大きな影響を受けた人もいました。何人かの人は福島原発の周辺から避難しました。最初の数週間は原子炉の状態が安定していなかったため、東京や他の場所からさえ避難した人もいました。この避難の問題はとても大きなもので、そのことについて考えるためには、自分自身の恐怖の他にも沢山の事をディスチャージする必要がありますがありました。

- * ほとんどの人は避難するための資源がなかったため、避難が出来る状態にいる人は自分自身の身を守ることに罪悪感を感じました。
- * 自分の家、仕事、避難をしたくない家族や友達を残していく事は難しいことでした。
- * 津波や原発の地域の外では、何も悪い事は起こっていないという風に行動するようにとても大きな圧力がかかっていました。もし危険があるという風に行動しようものなら、その人がまる

でどうかしているかのように扱われました。

- * 雇用主からは、避難をしないように、そして早く家に戻って仕事に復帰するよう圧力をかけられる人たちもいました。

まだ(もしくは一生)自分の家に安全に戻る事が出来ないコウ・カウンセラーにとって避難、そして自分の生活を再建する事は大きな課題となって残っています。そして今まだなお続く放射能汚染もまた、日本全体の問題として残っています。

私(チャック)は、引き続きのワークショップをやるために6月に日本にもう一度行きます。

ダイアン・シスク
アメリカ合衆国、ワシントン州、シアトル
チャック・エサー
アメリカ合衆国、ペンシルバニア州、
フィラデルフィア
翻訳 荒尾日南子



AMANDA MARTINEZ

English translation of the preceding article:

Bringing Resource to Japanese Co-Counselors Following the Earthquake and Tsunami

A week after the March 11 earthquake and tsunami in Tohoku, Japan (the area to the north and east of Tokyo), we decided to bring resource from the International RC Community to Japan as soon as possible. A number of Co-Counselors lived in the area directly affected. Also, in the first few weeks it was unclear whether the initial nuclear accident, and resulting radiation leaks, would be followed by even greater explosions and a spreading of radiation throughout the country.

We had already been organizing telephone support, but we wanted to offer in-person counseling leadership, because of the immense destruction and loss of life from the earthquake and tsunami and the ongoing danger of the nuclear accident. It was clear early on that the reactors were seriously damaged and leaking radiation, and that it would be a huge challenge to contain the damage.

We wanted people coming together and discharging immediately on the danger and the early fears that would of course be restimulated, so that they would have access to their best thinking in what was a crisis situation. We were concerned that they would be numbed by fears, tend to stay close only to family and friends, and “forget” the importance of coming together for discharge as soon as possible. We were also aware that the Japanese government and the owner of the nuclear plants (TEPCO) would play down¹ the seriousness of the damage and potential danger, and that given the oppression of the Japanese people,

it would be hard for them to fight for their own thinking instead of following the lead of their employers and the government.

FIVE WORKSHOPS

The Japanese RC Community responded to our request to organize workshops on short notice, and on March 29, Teresa Enrico, Yuko Hibino, and the two of us (Diane Shisk and Chuck Esser)² flew to Japan to lead five workshops. They took place in Kyushu (the southern islands of Japan), Osaka (in the southern part of Honshu, the central island), Tokyo (in central Honshu), Yamagata (in Tohoku, in northern Honshu—the area most directly impacted by the earthquake, tsunami, and nuclear accident), and Hokkaido (the northern island of Japan). Teresa and I (Chuck) traveled as one team to Osaka and Hokkaido, and Yuko and I (Diane)

² Teresa Enrico is the Area Reference Person for Portland, Oregon, USA, and the International Liberation Reference Person for People of Filipino/a Heritage. Yuko Hibino is an RC leader in Seattle, Washington, USA. Diane Shisk is the Alternate International Reference Person for the RC Communities. Chuck Esser is the Regional Reference Person for New Jersey, USA, and the International Commonality Reference Person for Family Work.

traveled as the other team to Kyushu, Tokyo, and Yamagata.

About 210 people came to the workshops. Most were people who lived in the regions of Japan where the workshops were held, but some had evacuated from Tohoku (a number lived in Fukushima, Sendai, and other heavily affected areas and couldn't safely return to their homes) or other parts of Japan where the potential for further radiation exposure was unacceptably high.

HELPING PEOPLE DISCHARGE

Our main goal was to get people discharging, and people came ready to work. Everyone discharged on their story of March 11 and the aftermath, beginning with where they were and what happened to them, or what they saw on television, or what they heard from family and friends in the Tohoku region. Much grief was discharged over the loss of lives and the towns and beautiful countryside that would never be the same again.

We made sure there were chances for people to work on the underlying

continued . . .



JULIA CAMERON

¹ Play down means present in a minimized way.

... continued

early fears and defeats that were restimulated. Some worked on memories or stories of other large earthquakes they had experienced, or the nuclear attacks on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. We challenged people to discharge their way to having their own thinking about what was safe and standing up for their thinking even though others didn't agree with them. We made up³ some games and songs, like "Earthquake" and "Surfing the Tsunami," and used them off and on throughout the workshops to try to find a light enough tone for people to keep discharging. We worked on how to think about young people in crisis situations, when most adults have little attention for them, and shared an article that Patty Wipfler⁴ wrote on that topic.

³ Made up means invented.

⁴ Patty Wipfler is the International Liberation Reference Person for Parents.

THE QUESTION OF EVACUATION

The letter (see page 3 of the April 2011 *Present Time*) that Tim Jackins sent to the Co-Counselors in Japan, encouraging them to discharge, assess the danger, and consider evacuating even if that wasn't the government's recommendation, had a big impact on some people. A number had left the area around the Fukushima reactors. Some had also left Tokyo and other locales, because the reactors were not in control for the first few weeks. The question of evacuation was huge for people, and they had to discharge on many things, besides their fears, to think about it:

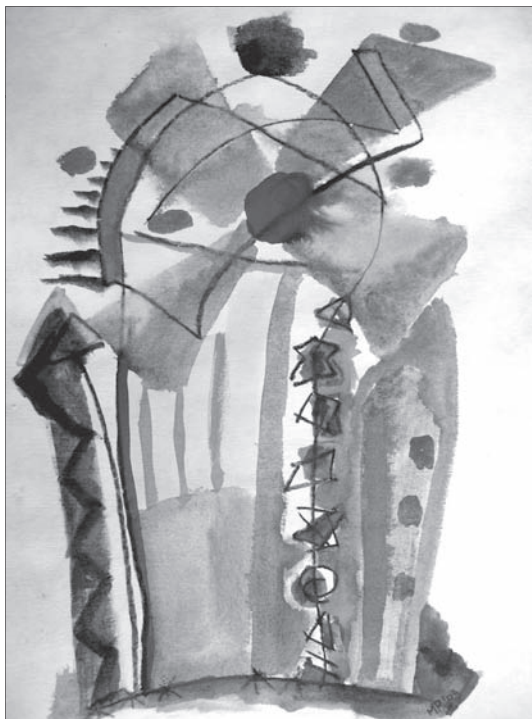
- Most people lacked the resources to evacuate, and those who could evacuate felt guilty about "saving themselves."
- Leaving their homes, their jobs, and family members and friends who did not want to evacuate was difficult.

- Outside the zone of the tsunami and reactors, people were under tremendous pressure to act like nothing bad was happening. They were treated as if something was wrong with them if they acted like there was danger.
- Employers were pressuring people not to leave and to quickly return home and get back to work.

Evacuation and rebuilding their lives remain huge issues for a number of Co-Counselors who still cannot (and may never be able to) safely return to their homes. The ongoing radioactive contamination remains an issue for all of Japan.

I (Chuck) am returning to Japan in June to do a follow-up workshop.

Diane Shisk
Seattle, Washington, USA
and Chuck Esser
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, USA
Japanese translation by Hinako Arao



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Always Teaching RC

Harvey wrote in *The List*, "When does one teach RC? *All the time*. If you are not teaching RC (read 'humanness'), you are teaching something else, something you would rather not be teaching if you were aware of it. Teach RC sometimes in class, surely, sometimes in spontaneous listening or counseling, but *all the time* in some form or another."

The RC Teacher No. 28 and 29
can assist *all* of us
in all of our teaching.

*Each of these issues is \$3.00 (U.S.),
plus shipping and handling.*

To order, see page 109.

RCの力

3月11日に日本で起きた地震と津波、そして原発の事故は私の人生の中でも最も怖いことのいくつかに入るような出来事でした。今現在はアメリカに住んでいますが、私は日本の東京で育ちました。家族のみんなそして友達もたくさん日本に住んでいます。日本のRCコミュニティもつながりがたくさんあります。

大切に思っているひとたちに何かあったらどうしよう、という気持ちについてたくさんセッションをして、現在と過去、両方からくる恐怖に取り組みました。頭のどこかで、ティム（ジャキンス）がワークショップで話していた「（この先に）どんなにつらい出来事が起きても、セッションをたくさん使うことで、その出来事が起きた以前よりも再生して、そこから戻ってくるができる」という考えを持ち続けながら取り組みました。

ディスチャージをした後に、自分が長い間いろいろな意味でまひして生きてきたことが分かった時がありました。そして不思議なことに、深いディスチャージをした後で、日本でどんなことが起きていようと、ただ何かについて嬉しいと感じたり、喜びを感じた時がありました。何が起きてきてもきっとすべて大丈夫だ、という確かなものを感じました。日本にいるみんなとさらにつながっている感じもしました。

日本にいるみんなを支えるためにたくさんのひとたちが素早く行動をとってくれたことは、私にとってとても大きなことでした。ダイアン、テレサ、チャックと行くことができた日本のワークショップからはたくさん学ぶことができました。（47ページの文章参照）

信用できない気持ちを断つ

今回、興味深い課題がいくつもありました。まだ取り組んでいない私たちの傷すべてが、震災のせいで再刺激されていました。日本のみんなの話を聞く中で、私たち日本人にとって、日本人ではない人たちに信用するのがどれだけ難しいかを改めて実感しました。

私たち日本人が、外国の人たちと歴史上持ってきた関係は（抑圧したりされたりするせいで）平等ではなく、信用・信頼し合えるものでもありませんでした。（もちろん個人的にはそうではない関係をたくさんつくってきた人がたくさんいます。）そして日米の関係は特に難しいものです。日本人の私たちは、表面上では誰でも信用しているように見えるかもしれませんが、でも表面下には孤独が存在します。努力をすることなしに、ただ自分だけ外国の人たちから大事されるとは思いにくいし、他人に迷惑をかけずに、自分のことは自分でできると思ってしまう面があると思います。

日本に発つ前に、セッションの中で激しく泣いた日がありました。もしかしてアメリカ人の多くが私たち日本人

を本当に大事に思っているのかもしれないという可能性について、そして今なら日本人とアメリカ人がお互いを自分の仲間として本当の意味で受け入れることができるかもしれないという考えについてでした。周りを見回すとそれが本当のことだということは明らかでした。間違った考え方と分断・孤立を長い間、現実として受け入れてきたのだな、ということに気づきました。

ワークショップでまず始めにダイアンが話したことは、日本のみんなをどれだけ大事に思っているか、ということでした。そしてみんなが世界中に広がるRCのコミュニティに属しており、不可欠な存在であるということでした。それから、前回日本人が放射能に脅かされた経験は、アメリカが広島と長崎に原爆を投下した時だったという話をしました。アメリカ人としてダイアンは謝り、たくさんの人が泣きました。

避難と自分の考えを信じるということ

もうひとつ大事な課題として、避難についてがありました。日本はとてもうまく組織化されている社会で、日本人は集団の中で生活していくやり方を知っています。でも単独で自主的に物事（特に自分のこと）を考えることはいいことだとは思われていませんし、時には自分勝手だと言われる。また、上下関係が厳しく、自分の「上」になるひとに対して意見の不一致を表現したり、同意しないということも受け入れられにくい社会です。

ほとんどに人たちにとって自分より「上」の存在である日本政府が、避難区域以外の人たちは避難をしなくても大丈夫だと言いました。でも政府がすべての情報を公開



ALISA LEMIRE BROOKS

しているようには見えず、実際の危険を見極めるのは難しい状況でした。避難区域外から避難した人たちは、精神的に不安定、頼りない、無責任、自分勝手という風に見られたり、疎外されたりしました。これだけいろいろな混乱の中でみんなは、常にわき上がってくる恐怖にも考えることを妨げられそうになりながら試行錯誤していました。避難するべきかどうか、判断するのは無理に近いような状況でした。

ダイアンは自分の考えを信じるということ、そして周りの人と自分の考えが違ってても、自分の考えを声に出して言っていく、という方向性でみんなをカウンセリングしました。それから、今まで物事が変わってきたたったひとつの理由は、人びとが声を出して「変えるべきだ」と言ってきたからだと話しました。また資本主義がどのように人よりお金を優先するか、そして原発事故はそのいい例だという話もしました。起きてしまったことは本当にひどいことです。でも今私たちには、私たちが望む社会を造りあげていく機会があるのです。人を優先する社会です。ダイアンが口先だけでこういった考えを話しているのではなく、本当に知っていることを話している、ということは明らかでした。それはダイアン自身が、長い間社会を変えようとして闘ってきたひとだからです。

ワークショップの終わりに、何人かのひとたちの顔の表情に気づきました。ホッとして、希望を取り戻したような表情でした。自分の考えを信じようと闘っている人た

ちと共に時間を過ごすことは心強いことだったのだと思います。

改めてRCに夢中になる

人を大事にするリーダーがいるRCというこの団体を今回改めてうれしく思いました。今までにない程、私は今RCをずっとやっていきたいと思っています。RCが本当に役に立つことを目の当たりにしたからだと思います。今回の震災のような事態になった時に、他にできることは何もなく、怖すぎて考えられず、まだ取り組んでいない感情すべてが湧いてくる。だからそれをディスチャージして、その瞬間でベストな考え方を見極めてやっていくしかない、ということがよく分かったのです。

私にとって、日本のみんなにとって（そしてたぶん世界中の人びとにとって）今ある課題のひとつに、感じないようにならざるを得ないことがあるのではないかと思います。つらいことを見続けるのはきついことで、そこから離れるのは楽です。でもあの深いディスチャージをした後に感じた、すべて大丈夫だという気持ち、つながり、自分にはできる、という気持ちを忘れずに、そしていつもあんなふう感じて生きられたらどんなにいいだろう、と思うのです。

日比野ゆうこ
アメリカ合衆国、ワシントン州、シアトル
翻訳 日比野ゆうこ

English translation of the preceding article:

The Power of RC

The Japanese earthquake and tsunami on March 11, and the nuclear plant accident, were among the scariest experiences of my life. I live in the United States now but grew up in Tokyo, Japan, and all of my family and many of my friends live in Japan. I am also well connected to the RC Community there.

I had many Co-Counseling sessions on all the fear, current and old, about what could happen to my people. Somewhere in the back of my head, I kept the idea that Tim¹ talked about at a workshop—that we can come out of a hard event in better shape² than before, using many sessions.

After some discharge, I realized how numb I have been in many ways. It was interesting how happy

¹ Tim Jackins

² Shape means condition.

and alive I felt after big sessions, no matter what was going on³ in Japan. I felt some sense of confidence that things were going to be okay no matter what happened. I also felt much more connected to the people in Japan.

It meant the world to me⁴ that the tremendous efforts to support the people there were organized so quickly. I also learned a lot from the trip with Diane, Teresa, and Chuck.⁵

OVERCOMING DISTRUST

There were some interesting challenges. Every distress that people had not had a chance to discharge was restimulated by the current situation. By counseling the people in Japan, I realized how hard it was for us

³ Going on means happening.

⁴ It meant the world to me means it meant a great deal to me.

⁵ See article on page 49.

Japanese people to fully trust non-Japanese people. The relationships we'd had with non-Japanese people in our history had not been equal or trusting, whether we oppressed or were oppressed (though of course there were many individual successes). The Japan-U.S. relationship has been especially difficult. We Japanese may look like we trust people, but there is real isolation underneath. It is hard for us to tell⁶ that people care about us just for who we are. We "know" how to take care of ourselves.

Before the four of us left for Japan, I had a big session in which I cried about the possibility that maybe people in the United States genuinely cared about my people, that maybe we could really claim each other as our own people now. Looking around, it was obvious that this was true, and I realized that I had accepted, for a long time, a distorted view and a separation.

The first thing Diane talked about at the workshops was how much she cared about the people in Japan and how they were part of the International RC Community. She also said that the last time people were scared about radiation was when the bombs were dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki.⁷ She apologized as a U.S. Many people cried when she talked about that.

EVACUATION, AND TRUSTING OUR MINDS

Another interesting issue was evacuation. Japan is a well-organized society, and people know how to work collectively. Thinking independently, especially about oneself, is not encouraged and is often seen as selfish. Also, there is a hierarchy in the culture and people are not supposed to disagree with those who are "higher" than they are.

The government, which is supposed to be "higher," said it was safe for people who were outside of the evacuation zone to stay, but it was not clear if the government was telling everything and it was hard to assess the actual danger. People who had evacuated from areas outside of the evacuation zone were seen as emotionally unstable, unreliable, irresponsible, or selfish or were treated as if they did not belong to their communities anymore. On top of all this were all the fears they had to navigate through. Whether or not to evacuate was almost impossible to figure out.

It was powerful to watch how Diane counseled people on trusting their minds and saying their

thoughts out loud, even if their thinking was different from everyone else's. She said that the only times things have changed have been when people have spoken up and said that they wanted them to be different. She talked about capitalism and how it prioritizes money over people, and how the current situation was a good example of that. What happened was horrible, but we have the opportunity to build the society we want—a society about people. It was clear that Diane was not just saying these things but that she really knew these ideas, because she herself had fought for a long time for change.

At the end of the workshops I noticed the looks on some people's faces. They were relieved and hopeful. Coming together with other people who were also fighting to trust their minds was reassuring I am sure.

EXCITED ABOUT RC

I am glad to be a part of this organization with leaders who are committed to thinking about people. I am excited about RC—probably more than ever before. I got to see how it works. There is nothing else you can do when a crisis like this happens. You have to be able to think, but you cannot because you are too scared. Every big feeling you have not worked on comes up, so you have to discharge and then figure out your best thinking at that moment.

The most recent challenge for me and the people in Japan (and all over the world) seems to be the pull to be numb. It is hard to keep looking at all the hardships, and easy to go away. I want to remember how alive, connected, and in charge I was after some of the big sessions I had. I want to live like that all the time.

Yuko Hibino
Seattle, Washington, USA
Japanese translation by Yuko Hibino



LISA BEDINGER

⁶ Tell means perceive.

⁷ In August 1945 the United States dropped two nuclear bombs on Japan—one on Hiroshima and one on Nagasaki.

困難な状況においても考えることはできる

長年の間、わたしは日本でワークショップを行い、日本のコウ・カウンセラー達と関係を作る機会に恵まれてきました。また、わたしの仕事である太鼓のつながりのおかげで日本と関わってくる事ができました。

わたし自身の再生と解放は日本の人たちと切っても切り離せません。米国生まれのアジア系アメリカ人として、アジア人の姉妹・兄弟とも言える日本の人たちとのつながりを、わたしはとても大切に思っています。フィリピンの文化や伝統との違いはありますが、日本には親しみを感じる事がたくさんあります。それは地域性を大事にしたり、ひとを気遣う姿勢などです。またアジアの様々な国では、個人よりも家族や地域体などが優先されることが多いです。フィリピンの歴史や日本との関係を考えても、フィリピン人女性であるわたしが日本人の解放に関わる事はわたしにとって大きなコントラディクションです。

3月11日の地震と津波はわたしに大きな影響を与えました。日本に知っている人がたくさんいることをふまえて写真を見たりニュースを聞く事は本当に恐ろしいことでした。とにかくディスチャージをたくさんしました。そしてダイアン、ゆうこ、チャックが日本に行くというのでそのチャンスに飛びつきました。日本のコミュニティのためにわたしの愛や資源を役に立てるためでした。(47ページ参照)

日本に行く前に日本の人たちをカウンセリングした経験から、そして日本の文化を知った上で、日本のみんなにとって、自分の周りで何が起きているかに気づく事、それについてどう感じたり、何をしたらいいのかを気づく事が難しくなっているのは明らかでした。私たちと同じように、日本人

のみんなもまた、自分たちが他の人にとってかけがえのない存在であり、大事に思われている事をなかなか覚えていられません。日本のみんなは、他の人にとって物事がうまくいくようにとても一生懸命働きかけてくれます。でも、もし自分に個人的に必要な事があったり、感情が湧いてくる時にはそれは抑えるように要求されるのです。

以下がこのプロジェクトに参加した中で学んだ事と気づいた事、また自分にとって良かった事です。

まず日本のみんなをどれだけ大切に思っているかを直接伝える事ができたのがよかったです。わたしがひとりひとりを、そしてみんなを思っていること、日本の人たちは全員大事だということです。私たちみんなにとって、孤立



ISRAEL • RANDI FREUNDLICH

感を打ち破るのはいい事でした。抑圧的社会は、とてもたくさんのつらい事にそれぞれ一人で対応するように仕向けてきます。だからみんなで集まって、一人ではないこと、そして助けはあるということに気づくのはとてもいいことでした。

今回4人でチームとなって日本に行けたのは素晴らしい事でした。私たちはそれぞれに日本や日本の人たちに対して深く関わってきており、日本での経験や知っている事がたくさんありました。みんなで協力し、知っている事や何をやるべきかを共に考え、そしてお互いを支え合う事ができました。

ワークショップ以前にスカイプや電話を使って海外のRCer達が日本の人たちの話しを聞く取り組みがなされていました。それに参加し、皆と一緒にやっていると感じられたのもよかったです。

チャックと一緒にやったワークショップは楽しくもあり、挑戦もありました。知っている事すべてを使い、柔軟性を持ちながらその場で考える事が必要でした。チャックはユーモアにあふれていて、みんなを笑わせてくれるので雰囲気重くなりすぎずに助かりました。チャックは日本語が話せますが、わたしは話せません。「泣いていいよ」「大好き」などカウンセリングに役立つような日本語を教えてもらいました。実際に言ってみるのは楽しい事でしたし、うまくいきました。

恐怖に取り組むのは難しいということを今回改めて実感しました。危機に直面する時に、ただその状況を乗り切るのではなくて、ディスチャージをすることを覚えているのが難しかったりします。これは幼い頃、危機に直面した時にディスチャージできなかったからです。国全体が危機にさらさ

れ、恐怖でそれに気づく事もできない状態が目の前にありました。そのせいで、みんなで集まることやどうやって深い恐怖を感じてディスチャージするかを考えることさえ難しい状況にありました。でも一旦集まってみると、みんな全く問題なくディスチャージをしていました。

ダイアンはワークショップでどんな話しをしたり、どんなことを考えたらいいかなど、事前にいろいろと考えていました。その中に「私たちの目的は常に考えられるようになる、そして考えに基づいて行動できるようになること」というのがありました。危機的状況においても、それが終わるのを待ち、それから考えるのではなく、その最中も考え続ける事ができるようにしたいのです。困難な状況においても考えることは可能だからです。

日本人の多くの人が、何年もかけて学校で地震や津波に備えた訓練を繰り返すうちに、そして実際に地震を経験するうちに（恐怖感に対して）だんだんとまひせざる

を得なかったのではないかと思います。幼い頃の恐怖やそれぞれの家庭で起こる危機に加えて、このまひ状態が今回考えることを難しくしたのだと思います。

自分のために、そして自分のことを考えるというのは大きなことです。日本を含むアジアの国々の集団的文化は、人々が自分の考えを持ち、それに基づいて行動することを応援しません。そして日本のRCコミュニティに属する人のほとんどは女性です。そのせいで自分のことを大切にし、自分の感情に気づき、自分のために考え、ベストな考えに基づいて行動したり、リーダーシップをとることは、するべきではないと教えられてきました。

このような危機状態の中で何がいちばん理にかなうかを見つけ出し、実際にそれをやってみることはほとんど不可能に近いように見えました。政府、または家族や夫の主張することに反対する意見を持ったりしたら余計にです。みんなにとって、ワークショップに来るだけでも大きなことでした。そ

れでも、自分の考えが何かを見つけ出す方向に挑戦しようとする事、そしてその過程で人とつながっていることは 価値のあることでした。ダイアンも書いているように、避難はあの時、そして今も大きな問題なのです。

このような状況を使ってコミュニティ全体がひとつになって前進しようとして働きかけるのを見るのは素晴らしいことでした。日本のみんなは今まで以上にお互いとつながり合い、新しい形でカウンセリングをし合っていました。継続する危機状態の中で、コミュニティは前進し続けています。そして人々はどうやって生活していったらいいかを見つけ出し続けています。この危機状態は長い期間に渡って続いていくでしょう。その中で人々が成長していくでしょう。それに関わられた事、うれしく思います。

アメリカ合衆国、
オレゴン州、
ポートランド
テレサ・エンリコ
翻訳 日比野ゆうこ

English translation of the preceding article:

Possible to Think During a Difficult Time

Over many years, I have had the opportunity to lead workshops in Japan and build relationships with Co-Counselors there. In addition, my wide world work has given me ties to Japan—through *taiko* (Japanese drums) connections.

My re-emergence and liberation are intertwined with the people of Japan. As a U.S.-born Asian American, I love the connection with my Asian sisters and brothers in Japan. Although different from my Filipina culture and heritage, many things about Japanese culture

It was good to be able to communicate directly to people how much I cared about them, as individuals and also as a group, and that Japanese people matter—each and every one of them. It was good for all of us to break through the isolation.

and traditions feel familiar to me, like the importance of community

and the well-being of people. In many Asian cultures, the family and community come ahead of oneself. Considering the history of my people and their relationship to Japan, it is a big contradiction¹ for me as a Filipina to be a part of the liberation of Japanese people.

I was deeply impacted by the earthquake and tsunami in March 2011. Knowing so many people in

continued . . .

¹ Contradiction to distress

TEACHING, LEADING, COMMUNITY BUILDING

... continued

Japan and seeing the pictures and reports was stunning. I discharged a lot. I jumped at the chance to go with Diane, Yuko, and Chuck to lend my love and resource to the Communities there.²

From counseling people before going, and knowing Japanese culture, it was clear to me that for many people, noticing what was happening around them and how they felt, and knowing what was okay to do, would be difficult. Like many of us, Japanese people often can't remember that they are treasured and cared about by others. People in Japan work hard at making things go well for others—and if the individual has needs or feelings, he or she is expected to suppress them.

Here are some things that I learned or noticed or that were good for me in being part of this project:

It was good to be able to communicate directly to people how much I cared about them, as individuals and also as a group, and that Japanese people matter—each and every one of them. It was good for all of us to break through the isolation. The oppressive society

sets us up to deal with so many hard things on our own,³ so to be able to bring people together to notice that they were not alone and that there was help was really good.

It was great to do this as a team (all four of us going to Japan). We each had a commitment to Japan and its people and lots of experience and familiarity with Japan. We could put our minds together about what we knew and what we thought needed to happen, and back⁴ each other.

Prior to our workshops, a team of folks from outside of Japan had been counseling people via Skype⁵ and the phone. It was great to have a sense of being on that team as well.

Doing the workshops with Chuck was fun and challenging. We were definitely thinking on our feet,⁶ with lots of flexibility, and using everything we knew. Chuck has a great sense of humor. It helped to keep things light and keep people laughing. Chuck speaks some Japanese, and I don't. It

was fun for me to try and use some of the phrases that had been given to us for counseling people,⁷ for example: *Naite ii yo* (Go ahead and cry) and *Daisuki* (I love you). They worked.

I was reminded that, for many of us, working on terror can be difficult. And when we are facing a big crisis, remembering to discharge and not just get through it can be challenging (since we didn't get to discharge during crises when we were young). Here was a whole country of people in crisis, and terrified and not able to notice it. This made it difficult for people to get together and to know how to access and discharge the terror. Once we were together though, they had *no* problem discharging.

Diane had done lots of thinking about useful things for us to share and think about in the workshops. One thing she said was that our goal is to be able to think all the time, and act on our thinking. In a crisis situation, we want to be able to think our way through it and not wait until it is over to then decide and think. It is possible to think during a difficult time.

For many Japanese people, a numbness has developed from years of having earthquake and tsunami drills in school as well as having experienced actual earthquakes. This, along with the early terrors and

² See article on page 49.

³ On our own means by ourselves, without help.

⁴ Back means support.

⁵ Skype is a software application that allows users to make voice and video calls over the Internet.

⁶ Thinking on our feet means thinking freshly, moment to moment.



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⁷ • Go ahead and cry: *Naite ii yo*
• Go ahead and be angry (at me): *(Watashi ni) okotte ii yo*
• You're doing really well: *(Sugoku) yoku yatte iru ne*
• I'm so sorry: *Hontou ni tsurai ne*
• This is a big deal: *Taihen na koto dayo*
• You matter/you are important: *Anata wa taisetsu desu*
• I love you: *Daisuki*
• I'm glad you called: *Denwa kurete ureshii yo*
• Tell me everything: *Zenbu kiku yo*
• Please keep discharging: *discharge shi-tsuzukete*

crises in people's own families, made it difficult for people to think.

Thinking for and about oneself was a big thing. The collective culture of many Asian countries (including Japan) does not encourage people to have their own thinking and to act on it. In addition, the majority of the RC Community members in Japan are female—so taking care of themselves, noticing what is going on for themselves (their feelings), thinking for themselves, and acting and leading others based on their best thinking have been discouraged.

Figuring out what it made sense to do in a crisis like this, and then doing it, seemed almost impossible for people—especially if it went against the government, or their family or husband. It was a big deal⁸ for people to make it to⁹ the workshops. And it was useful for them to try to push in the direction of figuring out what their thinking was, and to be connected while doing that. As Diane said, evacuation was and is a big issue for folks.

⁸ A big deal is something very important.

⁹ Make it to means succeed in getting to.

It was exciting to see how a Community could use a situation like this to move the whole Community forward together. People got more connected and got to counsel each other in new ways. The Community is continuing to forge ahead, and people are figuring out how to live their lives in the midst of the ongoing crisis. This will be a long-term crisis, and there are many opportunities for people to grow. I'm glad I got to be a part of it.

Teresa Enrico

Portland, Oregon, USA

Japanese translation by Yuko Hibino



BARREA, ITALY • JULIE ANNE FORGIONE

Moving Ahead on All Fronts

I don't think that you can solve the political problems you have been so concerned with unless your Co-Counseling is working well. And I don't think the Co-Counseling can work well unless you are concerned with and taking responsibility for building a Co-Counseling Community. These factors seem to interact with one another strongly, and it's only when we're working strongly on all of them that any one of them goes well.

Harvey Jackins

From a letter written in 1976

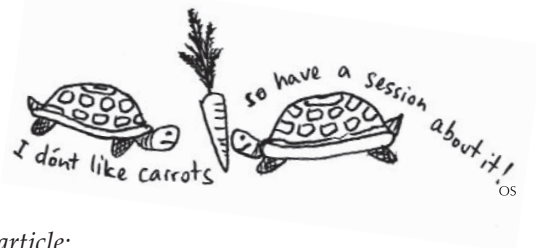


恐怖は孤独感からくる

テレサ・エンリコとチャック・エッサーがリーダーシップをとって行われた大阪と札幌のワークショップに参加しました。私のハイライトは、どんな恐怖も孤独感からきていると気づいたことです。

地震、津波、そして原発の爆発事故の後、私の中で恐怖が大きくなり過ぎて、しばらくディスチャージをできないでいました。でもワークショップに行って、アテンションのあるひと達と一緒にいたら、安心して深いディスチャージをし始めることができました。

大きな事故が起きるようなときでも、独りではないと感じられると、私たちは支え合って、つながり続けられ、まわりがどんな状況でも、力強く、どうしたら人生を楽しめるのかをうまく考えられるのだと気づきました。



日本、北海道、札幌市
小野 梨々杏
翻訳 日比野ゆうこ

English translation of the preceding article:

My Fear Comes from Loneliness

I attended the workshops in Osaka and Sapporo (Japan), led by Teresa Enrico and Chuck Esser.* My highlight was noticing that my fear (of all kinds) comes from loneliness.

After the earthquakes, tsunami, and nuclear explosion, I felt too scared to feel much about anything. Then I went to the workshops and was with people who had good attention. I felt safe and started to discharge hard.

I've realized that even when big accidents happen, if I feel I'm not alone, we can support each other. I can also be powerful and think well about how to enjoy my life.

Lillian Ono
Sapporo City, Hokkaido, Japan
Japanese translation by Yuko Hibino

* See previous article.



Appreciative words are the most powerful force for good on earth!



George W. Crane



KK

東北の人たちへの理解と支援

3月11日に地震、津波、そして原子力災害に見舞われた日本の東北地方は、私が日本に来て最初の5年間を過ごし、今なお日本での故郷と感じている場所です。東北は長らく、抑圧の標的にされてきました。私たちがこうした背景を理解することは大切なことだと思います。それは、現在起きている事態を理解し、そこに住む人たちが地域社会の強さを維持しながら、古くからある抑圧構造を再び取り込むことなく、東北を復興させていくのを支えるためです。

現在、さまざまな「再建」構想が検討されています。の中には、原子力依存から代替エネルギーへの転換や東京から地方への権力移譲、そして住民が移住しなければならない場合でも地域のつながりを壊さず保持することに焦点を当てたものがあります。一方で、できるだけ早期のインフラ再建に力点を置き、それによって東京中心型の経済を下支えする役割を東北が再び担うようにするものがあります。

これから述べるのは、東北の抑圧についての私の個人的理解です。私は、10年前、5年間東北で過ごしたイギリス出身の白人女性です。過去数年にわたって、東北地域のアライになるうとしてきました。そして先週は、津波の被害を受けた人たちが自宅から所有物を搬出するのを手伝い、話も聞いてきました。

東北の内面化した抑圧

以下、私がみてきた東北の人たちの内面化した抑圧の一部を示します。これは、東北に住むコウ・カウンセラーへの支援をどう考えるかということに影響してくる事柄です。

- 自分を重要な人である、または大切な人である、と見なしていない
- あるがままの自分自身、自分の出自、自分の話し方を、恥ずかしいと感じている
- 外部の人が、東北の文化を知り、理解し、気にかけることを期待していない
- よそから地域に入ってきた人たちを信頼するのに時間がかかる。「内」と「外」という区別が東北ではとりわけ強固である
- 村八分にされないように同化同調を求める圧力。たとえば、自分自身の考えを信じるのが許されないこと、外部から規定された政策に応じなければいけないこと

- 愚かであるとか無知であるとか感じている
- 自分を犠牲にするまで他人の世話をする、とりわけ女性（先週、私たちが働いた家のすべての人たちが、所持品のほとんどを失ったにもかかわらず手伝いの私たちに飲み物やお菓子を提供した）
- 感情を抑える、運命主義

階級制度と地方の抑圧

東北の抑圧は主に階級制度と地方の抑圧に根ざしているように見えます。東北は日本本州の北に位置し、かつては京都そして現在は東京という政治の中心から遠く離れています。地理的隔たり、山脈、そして雪が降り積もる冬期のため、比較的孤立した地域でした。現在では交通機関が発達していますが、東北を一度も訪れたことがない人が東京には数多くいます。東北は今でも本州で最も貧しく（日本国内では、東北より貧しい地域は沖縄だけです）、そして圧倒的に労働者階級が多い地域です。私は、英国で最も上流階級者が多い地域の一つであるケンブリッジから、東北地方の北に位置する青森の漁港に引越してきました。私が経験した「カルチャーショック」が、外国に来たからという点と同じくらいに階級制度と深く関連があったことが理解できたのは、後に再評価カウンセリングを始めてからです。

20世紀の中頃まで、東北出身の男性は冬期に家族を残し東京に出稼ぎに行かなければなりません。数ヶ月にわたって農業ができなかったからです。東京で彼らは、教養のない田舎者として見なされ、差別されました。未婚の若い女性は工場で働くため南の地域に送られるか、農業従事者や売春婦として日本の植民地での強制労働に売られていきました。こうした事が極めて一般的に行われていたため、地方政府はすべての女性の強制労働者が少なくとも「適切な」契約書を作成したかを確認する事務所を設置するほどでした。一方、多くの若い男性が軍人になりました。

現在、農家や漁師になりたがる若い人たちはほとんどいません。東北でこれ以外の仕事を見つけるのは難しいために、若い人の多くが東北を離れていきます。海外のメディア報道では明らかではありませんが、津波犠牲者のほとんどがかなりの高齢者で、これは東北地方の人口形態を反映しています。

東北の人たちが南に行っても、いい仕事はほとんどありません。数年前の事件ですが、非正規雇用の臨時職員として自動車工場に働いていた東北出身男性が解雇を宣

告され、住んでいた会社の寮を強制退去させられることになり、東京の秋葉原で数名の通行人を殺害しました。この事件がきっかけとなって、まともな事前通告もなく解雇され得る非正規雇用者の状況が、少なくともしばらくは論議を呼びました。しかし、多くの東北出身の若い人たちがなぜ低賃金で不安定な職に就いているのか、という理由について議論していた人はいませんでした。

農業や漁業に従事して東北に残っても、生計を立てていくのは難しいことです。食の輸入自由化のため、今あるほとんどの食物が中国やその他のアジア各国から入ってきます。日本の農家がそれほど安く食物を育てるのは不可能です。数年前、価格の暴落によって青森のリンゴ農家のなかで自殺者が相次ぎましたが、メディアはこれを報道しませんでした。私は現地に住む友人からこの事実を聞きました。自殺は主に大都市に住むサラリーマンの問題であるというイメージがありますが、最近の経済危機が起きるまでは、最も高い自殺率を示していた県は、すべて東北地方にあったのです。

経済的抑圧によって、使用済み核燃料再処理施設はもとより日本の原子力発電所の数カ所が東北に置かれています。地方政府はお金が欲しく、住民は仕事が必要で、このため原子力発電所を受け入れる強い圧力がかかります。私は使用済み核燃料再処理施設の近くに住んでいましたが、私の近所でそれに反対する声を聞いたことはありませんでした。政府に対する一般的感情は、「しかたない」という運命主義が大抵ですが、東北ではとくに根強いでしょう。東北の人々は、権力者が自分の言うことを気にかけてくれるだろうという期待を一切持っていないのです。東北の原子力発電所が停止し、東京の電力不足が広く論議され、多くの人たちが省エネにつ



HOUSE AMONG TREES • KATIE KAUFFMAN

いて考えています。しかし、東京に電力を供給するために、なぜ東北の人たちが原子力発電所の近くで生活しなければいけないのか、について疑問を投げかける人の声を私は聞いたことがありません。

文化的・言語的抑圧

東北は東京から遠く離れ、また東北圏域内での行き来も地理的事情から困難であったため、東北にはたくさんの方言が存在します。しかし、メディアや人々の移住、そして標準語教育のため、方言色は薄まってきています。(19世紀末の明治時代は標準語、いわば東京の日本語、の導入が厳しく徹底された) 東北の人たちが他地域に移住していった場合、その話し方のせいでからかわれてきました。数年前、人気のあるお笑い番組の中で、東京に来て東京人のように話そうとする青森出身の若い男性が、物笑いの種にされていました。数ヶ月前、東北エリア¹を対象にした言語解放の集まりに参加しました。この集まりの中で、東北エリアの地域紹介者であるひろびい²は、参加者一人ひとりが持ち回り形式で、それぞれの方言で一分間話す時間を設定しました。しかし、ほとんどの参加者にはそれができませんでした。彼らはあまりにも恥ずかしく感じのたか、あるいはもう方言を思い出せないと感じたのです。参加した人たちは、「標準的な日本語」を正しく話せないし、方言も正しく話せない、と感じていました。

同様に、日本文化として見なされているものは基本的に、京都宮廷の文化や伝統です。日本の画や詩や庭園の中核を成す要素である簡素さや質素さは、東北のような田舎での生活を、上流階級の貴族の視点からとらえて、理想化したものです。先週宮城県で聞いたラジオ番組で、東北の恋愛歌がすべてどれほど労働と絡んでいるか、についての興味深い言及がありました。たとえば歌の背景は、俳句を書こうと茶室に座する貴族ではなく、港に帰り恋人に会える日を待ちわびる漁師です。東北に来た当初、私が心に描いていた寺社・仏閣や庭園のある日本のイメージがそこにはなく、がっかりしました。これは、大抵の場合、それをつくる十分な資金がなかったからです。東北の伝統は、興味深くそして珍しいものと受けとめられていますが、それはあくまでも低く位置づけられる「庶民文化」の範疇においてです。このため、東北の人たちがその文化を誇りに思うのは難しいことなのです。

「ここでなくて本当に良かった」

東京の人たちは今、東北を思いやり、東北の人たちを支援したいと思っていますが、東京に住む私たちの多くが、内心では「東北で起こったことはひどかったが、ここ東京でなくて本当に良かった」と思ったのではないのでしょうか。海外でも何かしら同じような表現がされていたの

¹ エリアとは、再評価カウンセリングの各地域のことです。

² 佐藤洋

を覚えています。東京で同レベルの被害があった場合、より甚大な経済的影響があったでしょう。よって、被害は「もっと悪く」なっていました。暗黙ではありますが、東北の人たちはもちろん分かっています。東京都知事の石原慎太郎が、東京にはあまり被害を及ぼさなかった一方で東北では多くの人命を奪った今回の出来事を「天罰だ」と公的に発言したにも関わらず、この災害の一ヶ月後に都知事に再選を果たしたという事実が多くを物語っています。

人種差別と民族虐殺

これまで、RCコミュニティ内でさえ言及されたのを聞いたことがない点ですが、人種差別と民族虐殺は、おそらく東北の抑圧の要因であるだろうと私は思っています。つい最近まで、東北には相当数のアイヌ民族³が住んでいました。アイヌ以外の他民族もいました。私も他の人と同様に、これらの民族についてはほとんど聞いたことがありません。青森のあるコウ・カウンセラーは、彼女の父親が子どもだった頃、20世紀の中頃には彼はアイヌの人たちを知っていた、と話していました。東北の多くの地名がアイヌ語ですが、日本語表記になっているため、あまり認識されていません。私が住んでいた地域の地名もアイヌ語で、それが理由で地名が「奇妙な」ものになっているのです、と言われました。しかし、私も私に伝えてくれた日本人の彼らも、その時にこのことが何を意味するのかを考えませんでした。東北がとくに荒れ果てた未開の土地として見られる理由の一つに、アイヌの存在がある、と私は思います。東北のコウ・カウンセラーの中には、認識はなくともアイヌを祖先に持つ人がいるでしょう。東北のコウ・カウンセラーに起こっていることを見ると、そのうちのある部分は、内面化した民族虐殺ではないだろうか最近考えています。民族虐殺が東北の歴史の一部にあるとしたら、そこに住む人たちが自身の身の安全と健康を守る対策を真剣に考えることが難しいと感じるもう一つの理由であり得えます。

保守的な地域

東北は日本の中でも保守的な地域の一つです。これには様々な肯定的側面もあります。地域のつながりが強いことです。お互いをよく知っていて助け合います。今回の災害では、近所の人たちや地元町内会などの自治組織が巡回して警報を伝え、避難を手助けしたことによって、津波が到達する前に多くの人が避難しました。その後は、近隣の高齢者宅へ炊き出しする体制を整えました。こうしたやり方は東京ではなかなかないでしょう。先週、私が働いた地域の住民は、土壌に残された塩分により土地が農業に利用できなくなったために移転を余儀なくされる状況ですが、地域住民が集団で移転できるように地元行政と交渉しています。

保守的な環境で暮らしていく上での厳しい面もあります。周りに合わせるプレッシャーが強いのです。多くの津

波被害者が暮らす避難所では、これがなおさらに強くなっています。全員が同じでなければならないのです。同じ時刻に起床し、同じ食事をとり、同じことをする。ある女性は、彼女が滞在している中学校のグラウンドの雑草とりをして恩返しをしようと思いました。しかし、他の住民に気付かれ噂話をされたくなかったので、みんなのためにもなる行動だったにも関わらず、秘密にしなければならなかったことを私に話しました。また彼女は、夫に仕事があることが原因で周りにねたまれ、彼が入り口玄関の席に座る役割当番を引き受けなければ、二人とも避難所を去るべきだと言われたことも私に話しました（彼女が代わりにその当番をすることは受け入れてもらえないことでした。性差別は東北では非常にあからさまです）。多くの人が、他の人は自分よりももっと苦しんでいるのだから不平や不満を言うてはいけない、と感じています。我慢しなければいけない、前に進まなければいけない、というプレッシャーのせいで、避難所の住民にとっては、感情を出すのは難しいことです。現在多くの人が、2階の数部屋でしか生活できないとしても、一部損傷している自宅に戻ろうとしています。空間の狭さやプライバシーが確保できない避難所と比べると、それでもまだましだからです。

東北の人たちを支援する

一連の災害から東北の人たちが立ち直るためにどんな支援ができるかについて、私は考えています。もちろん、彼らの話を聞く必要がありますが、これをどのようにやっていったらいいか悩んでいます。直接的な被害を受けた人たちは現時点ではまだ、目の前にある実務的な課題をこなすのに手いっぱいです。行政当局も同じ状況です。皆厳しい状況下で生活おり、ほとんどの場合、自分について話したり、感情について語ったりする十分なゆとりや余裕がありません。さらに、よそ者を信頼することに慣れていません。これまでのところ、私が見つけた最良の方法は、現地に入り、彼らの側で働き、彼らが話したいときに耳を傾けることです。



ANGELA HYLAND

³ アイヌ民族は日本の先住民族です。

災害を生き延びたある女性は、精神的に辛くなってくるのはこれからだろう、と私に話してくれました。当面の課題をこなし終え、職や生活基盤のないまま取り残され、小さな仮設住宅への転居時に多世代同居世帯が分断されるようになってから後だ、と言うのです。

東北では長期にわたるつながりがとても重要なので、現地の人たちと一緒に働きたいという人は長期的にかかわることが必要です。外部から入ってくる私たちの多くは、どのように支援したいかについて自分なりの計画や考え方を持っていますが、これは役に立ちません。なぜなら、それは東北の内面化した抑圧を強化してしまうだけだからです。

東北の人たちが直面している問題に関心を寄せ、それについて考え、彼らと一緒に取り組み続ける姿勢を示しながら、彼らが自らの解決法を考えられるような支援の仕方を見つけ出すのが、私にとって目下進行中の課題です。



エマ・パーカー
日本、東京
翻訳 志堅原 郁子

English translation of the preceding article:

Understanding and Supporting the People of Tohoku

The Tohoku region of Japan, which was hit by the March 11 earthquake, tsunami, and nuclear disaster, is where I spent my first five years in Japan, and it still feels like my home here. It is a region that has long been a target of oppression. It seems important that we know this background in order to understand what is happening now and to support the people there in rebuilding the region in a way that preserves the strengths of Tohoku society but does not reinstall the old oppressive structure.

Several different visions of “reconstruction” are currently on the table.¹ Some of these focus on shifting from nuclear to alternative energy sources, returning power from Tokyo to the regions, and preserving community ties, even when people have to be relocated. Others emphasize rebuilding the infrastructure as rapidly as possible so that Tohoku can resume its role of supporting the Tokyo-centred economy.

What follows is my individual understanding of Tohoku oppression. I am a white English woman who lived in Tohoku for five years, a decade ago. I have tried to become an ally to the Tohoku community over the last few years and have spent the last week helping people hit by the tsunami salvage possessions from their homes and listening to their stories.

TOHOKU INTERNALIZED OPPRESSION

The following are some of the things that seem to be part of the Tohoku people’s internalized oppression,

¹ On the table means being considered.

and that affect how we need to think about supporting the Co-Counsellors in Tohoku:

- Not seeing themselves as important or valuable
- Feeling ashamed of who they are, where they come from, how they speak
- Not expecting anyone from outside to know about, understand, or care about their culture
- Taking a long time to trust newcomers—the distinction between “insiders” and “outsiders” is particularly strong in Tohoku
- Pressure to conform, so as not to be ostracized; not being allowed to trust their own thinking; having to fit in with priorities imposed from the outside
- Feeling stupid or ignorant
- Looking after² everyone else at their own expense, especially for women (all the people at whose houses we worked last week had bought refreshments for us, even though they had lost most of their possessions)
- Stoicism, fatalism.

CLASSISM AND THE OPPRESSION OF RURAL AREAS

It looks to me like the oppression of Tohoku is based mainly on classism and the oppression of rural areas.

² Looking after means taking care of.

Tohoku is in the north of the main island of Honshu, a long way from the centres of political power in Kyoto and then Tokyo. Because of the distance, mountains, and snowy winters, it has been relatively isolated. Although the transport connections are now good, many people in Tokyo have never been to Tohoku. It is still the poorest region of Honshu (within Japan only Okinawa is poorer), and it is predominantly working-class. I moved to a fishing port in Aomori, in northern Tohoku, from Cambridge—probably one of the most owning-class places in England. It wasn't until I started Co-Counselling years later that I understood that the "culture shock" I'd experienced had as much to do with classism as with moving countries.

Until the middle of the last century, many men from Tohoku had to leave their families in the winter, because they could not farm for several months, and go to Tokyo to look for work. In Tokyo they were seen as uneducated bumpkins³ and discriminated against. Young unmarried women were sent south to work in factories or sold into bonded labour in Japanese colonies, as agricultural or sex workers. This was so common that local governments set up offices to make sure all these women at least drew up "proper" contracts. Meanwhile many young men joined the army.

Nowadays few young people want to be farmers or fishermen, and because it is hard to find other jobs in Tohoku, many of them leave. Although it may not be apparent from the media coverage, most of the victims of the tsunami were quite old, and this reflects the population of these areas.

Even if people go south, there are few good jobs. A few years ago a young man from Tohoku who was working as a temporary labourer in a car factory and was about to be laid off, and so forced to move out of the company dormitory where he was staying, murdered several passersby in the Akihabara district of Tokyo. This sparked some debate, at least for a while, about the conditions for temporary workers, who can be fired with almost no notice, but I do not remember anyone

discussing the reasons why many young people from Tohoku were in low-paid and unstable jobs.

If people stay in Tohoku to farm or fish, it is hard to make a living. Liberalization of food imports means that most food now comes from China and other Asian countries, and it is impossible for Japanese farmers to grow food as cheaply. There was a spate of suicides among apple farmers in Aomori a few years ago, when the prices suddenly fell, but the media did not report this. I heard about it from a friend there. The image is that suicide is a problem mainly for company workers in the big cities, but until the recent economic crisis the prefectures with the highest suicide rates were actually in Tohoku.



AARON GALLOWAY

This economic oppression is why several of Japan's nuclear reactors, as well as a nuclear waste reprocessing plant, are located in Tohoku.

The local governments need the money, and people need the jobs, so there is strong pressure to accept nuclear plants. I used to live near the nuclear waste reprocessing plant, but I never heard my neighbours express any opposition to it. I think that the general feeling toward the government of fatalism, of "it can't be helped," is more pronounced in Tohoku, where people have no expectation that those in power will take any notice of what they say. The current power shortage in Tokyo, now that nuclear plants in Tohoku have shut down, is being widely discussed and many people are thinking about saving energy, but I have not heard anyone question why people in Tohoku should have to live near nuclear plants in order to supply Tokyo with electricity.

CULTURAL AND LANGUAGE OPPRESSION

Because Tohoku is a long way from Tokyo, and internal travel has been hard due to the geography, there are many different dialects in Tohoku. They are becoming less strong, however, because of the media, migration, and standardized education. (The Meiji state in the late nineteenth century was harsh in imposing "standard," in other words, Tokyo, Japanese.) And

continued . . .

³ Bumpkins means awkward, unsophisticated, rustic people.



EDWARD ELBERS

... continued

when Tohoku people have migrated, they have been ridiculed for the way they speak. A few years ago a popular comedy programme made fun of a young man from Aomori who had moved to Tokyo and was trying to learn to speak like Tokyo people. I participated in a language liberation gather-in for the Tohoku Area⁴ a few months ago. Hiropy,⁵ the Area Reference Person, did a go-round in which everyone was to talk for a minute in his or her native dialect, but most people couldn't manage it. They felt too ashamed, or that they couldn't remember their dialects anymore. They felt that they didn't speak "standard Japanese" properly, but that they didn't speak their dialects properly either.

Similarly, what is seen as Japanese culture is basically the art and traditions of the Kyoto court. The aesthetics of simplicity and frugality that are central to Japanese paintings, poetry, and gardens are an idealization, from the viewpoint of the aristocracy, of life in rural areas like Tohoku. On a radio programme last week in Miyagi there was an interesting comment about how the love songs of Tohoku are all in the context of people working: fishermen hoping to see their girlfriends when they next get back to port, rather than nobles sitting down in tea rooms to write haiku. I was disappointed when I first came to Tohoku, because it did not look like my mental image of Japan, with temples and pagodas and formal gardens; there was not enough money to build many of these. The traditions of Tohoku are seen as interesting and quaint but in a lower "folk culture" category, so it is hard for people to be proud of them.

⁴ An Area is a local RC Community.

⁵ Hiroshi Sato

"THANK GOD IT WASN'T HERE"

Although people in Tokyo now feel sympathy toward Tohoku and wish to support the people there, I suspect that many of us in Toyko, secretly, have thought, "What happened to Tohoku was terrible, but thank God it wasn't here." I have seen something similar expressed internationally. The same level of damage in Tokyo would have had much more of an economic impact; therefore it would have been "worse." Of course people in Tohoku know this, although it is unstated. It says a lot that Tokyo Governor Ishihara succeeded in getting re-elected a month after the disaster, despite having said publicly that an event that killed so many people in Tohoku was "divine punishment."

RACISM AND GENOCIDE

I suspect that racism and genocide are factors in the oppression of Tohoku, although this is not something I've heard talked about, even in the RC Community. Until fairly recently Tohoku had a sizeable Ainu⁶ population. There were also other non-Japanese ethnic groups, about whom I, along with most people, have been told even less. One of the Co-Counsellors in Aomori told me that her father knew Ainu people when he was growing up, around the middle of the last century. Many of the place names in Tohoku are Ainu, but people do not necessarily realize this because they are now written with Japanese characters. I was told that the names of the places where I lived were Ainu words and that was why they were "strange," but neither I nor the Japanese people who told me thought about what that meant. I think that the Ainu presence is one reason why Tohoku was seen as a particularly wild and uncivilized place. Some of the Tohoku Co-Counsellors could have Ainu ancestry, without necessarily knowing it. I have been wondering recently if some of what I see happening with Co-Counsellors there is internalized genocide. Given that genocide is part of the history of Tohoku, it could be another reason why people there find it hard to take their own safety and well-being seriously.

A CONSERVATIVE REGION

Tohoku is one of the more conservative regions of Japan. This has many positive aspects. Communities are strong; people know and support each other. Many people evacuated before the tsunami came because their neighbours and the local neighbourhood associations went around warning people and helping them to leave. Afterward people organized to provide meals for elderly neighbours, in a way that would not

⁶ The Ainu are a people indigenous to Japan.

happen in Tokyo. The residents of the area where I was working last week are going to have to move, because their land can no longer be farmed due to the salt in the soil, but they are negotiating with the local government to be moved as a group.

There are also hard aspects of living in this conservative environment. The pressure to conform is strong. This is accentuated in the evacuation centres where many of the tsunami survivors are now living. Everyone has to be the same: get up at the same time, eat the same food, do the same things. One woman told me that she wanted to weed the grounds of the junior high school in which she was staying, in order to give something back, but that she had to do even something altruistic like that secretly because she did not want the other residents to notice and start gossiping about her. She also said that people were envious because her husband still had a job and that they told her that she and her husband would have to leave the centre if he did not take his turn sitting at the desk in the entrance. (It was not okay for her to do it instead. Sexism is also very open in Tohoku.) Many people feel that they cannot complain because others have suffered more than they have. Because of the pressure to endure, to keep going, it is hard for residents of the evacuation centres to show any emotion. Many are now moving back to their partially damaged houses, even if they can only live in a couple of rooms on the second floor, because it is preferable to the lack of space and privacy in the centres.

SUPPORTING THE PEOPLE OF TOHOKU

I am thinking about what we can do to support the people of Tohoku in recovering from this series of disasters. Of course we need to listen to them, but I am wondering how to go about this. At the moment, the people affected most directly are still overwhelmed with practical tasks, as are the authorities. They are living in difficult conditions, and there is often not a lot of space for them to tell their stories or talk about their feelings. Moreover, they are not used to trusting outsiders. So far, the best way I have found is to get in there and work alongside them, and listen to them if they are willing to talk.

One of the survivors told me that she thinks it is going to be harder emotionally later, when the immediate tasks have been completed, people are left without jobs or any structure to their lives, and multi-generational households are split up as people move into smaller replacement housing.

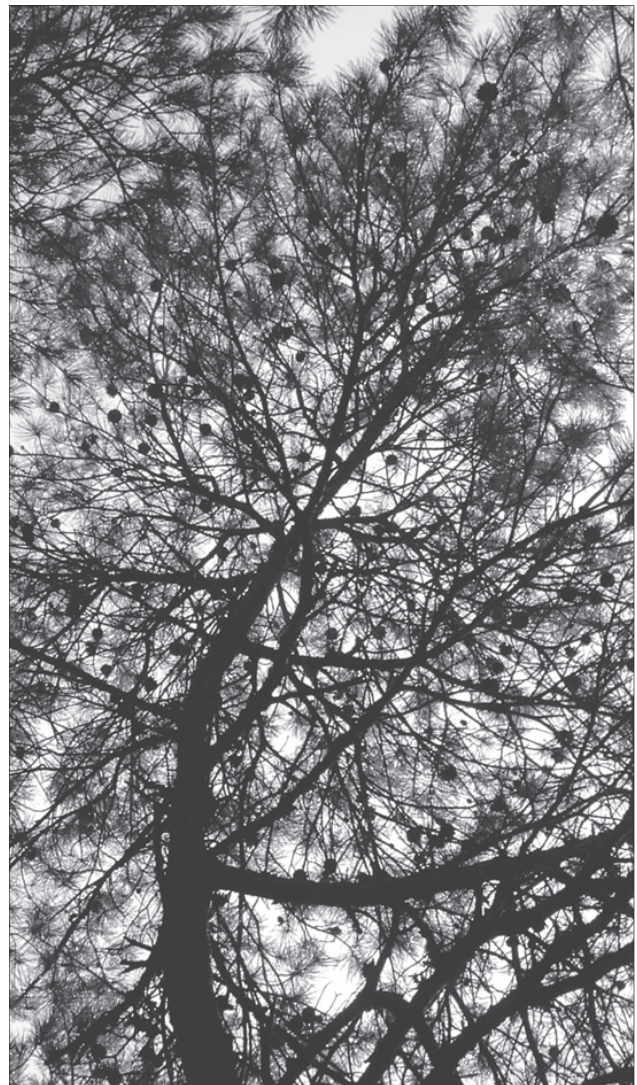
Because long-term relationships are so important in Tohoku, anyone who wants to work with the people

there also has to be committed long-term. Many of us who come in from outside have our own agendas and ideas about how we want to help, and this is not useful, because it just reinforces Tohoku internalized oppression.

Figuring out how to support the people in Tohoku in coming up with⁷ their own solutions, while also showing that I care about the issues they are facing and will go on thinking about them and working with them, is an ongoing challenge for me.

Emma Parker
Tokyo, Japan
Japanese translation
by Ikko Shikembaru

⁷ Coming up with means thinking of.



EMMA PARKER

... continued



ELLIE HIDALGO

Clear-Cut Lines of Responsibility

I certainly understand your desire to have two Alternate Area Reference Persons. I like to hoard things because of my insecurities as well. I even have fourteen pairs of socks, most of them wearable.

It's necessary, however, that there be one Alternate who is designated as *the* Alternate, or First Alternate, or something like that, so there is no ambiguity as to who takes the responsibility if you falter or get caught in another country in the outbreak of war, or something like that.

Just get them to agree on who becomes Alternate Reference Person first, and let that one carry the title. Otherwise we violate the principle of clear-cut lines of responsibility. The back-up person is fine.

Harvey Jackins

From a letter written in 1980

Be Thoughtful of Japanese People

I led a workshop, and RCers who were in Japan when the earthquake hit* were among the participants. I asked the Western-world Co-Counselors not to client with the Japanese people about their own fears of earthquakes, tsunamis, and nuclear power. The events in Japan are restimulating the fears of people everywhere, and people are using this heartbreaking natural disaster to client about their own fears rather than remaining good counselors for the very people who have endured it. The Japanese people who survived are heartbroken about the deaths of their people and the destruction of their beautiful land, and they continue to fear for the lives of their loved ones and other people in Japan.

It also appears to the RCers from Japan that rather than facing the destruction and death in Japan, people of the Western world have focused instead on the "order and calm" of the Japanese people.

Marcie Rendon

Minneapolis, Minnesota, USA

Reprinted from the RC e-mail discussion list for leaders in the care of the environment

* In this context, hit means happened.

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LK

Reaching
Reaching
Reaching
Reaching

Yesterday I woke up broken
And I called a friend and cried
I was sure that I had failed
Even though I really tried

And my friend was very gracious
With the tears I understood
When it looks like no one's out there
You're still inside the sisterhood

Now it's many hours later
And I wish that I could weep
Being bottled up with anger
Makes it very hard to sleep

But I think I do remember
Feeling it was all my fault
I was three years old and lonely
When I climbed into my vault

I stayed locked inside that chamber
Waiting for my life to start
My father, who'd been gone for ages
Left a gash inside my heart

When you're touching a burn victim
You have to look before you touch
My vault is now inside a fortress
But I still want you very much

One more instance of rejection
And I'm sure I'll fall apart
I thanked my friend and those who've reached
The broken pieces of my heart

Ela Thier

New York, New York, USA



OS



JAPAN • YUKO HIBINO

Hearing Assistive Devices

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 us at 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



DIANE SHISK

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JO PERRY

GO NOW

to the lists in the back of this *Present Time*.

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MUCH APPRECIATION!

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DIANE SHISK

Nigerian Teachers Share Experiences and Goals

The third of May, 2011, saw classroom teachers sharing experiences of the Easter holidays, under the umbrella of RC, in Abagana, Nigeria.

We tidied the school compound, set normal work in motion, and then took turns saying what was new and good about the day and what we liked about ourselves.

After a brief explanation of RC, we sat in threes and took three minutes each on how we spent the holidays, whether we had set a goal, and whether we accomplished it. Then we gave three people the opportunity to tell the whole group how they spent the Easter holidays. We ended the workshop with appreciations of each other.

Some of people's highlights are listed below.

Princess Chinwe Agwuna
Abagana, Nigeria

- As a newcomer to RC, I am delighted that I can now discuss freely with my fellow teachers the burning* issues in my life.

- I loved sharing ideas and "rubbing minds" with my colleagues.

- It was my first experience of RC and an eye-opener in terms of setting goals and accomplishing them.

- I was able to communicate to my colleagues about tending the poultry in my compound—work I had not been able to do before the Easter break.

- I learnt about other people's problems and how they were solved using RC; I learnt that I'm not the only one who has problems.

* Burning means extremely important.

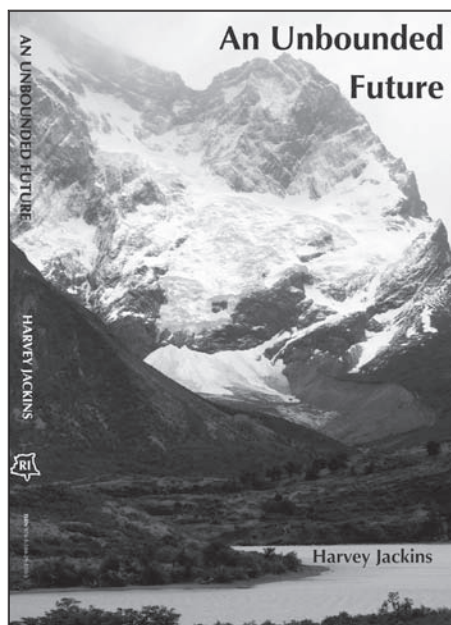
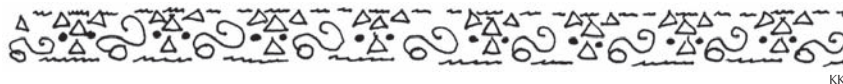
- I have been longing to have another RC class, and today it happened.

- I learnt that one should not allow oneself to be cursed.

- Many people appreciated me in today's meeting. I liked interacting with my group and learning from others.

- RC refreshed me again. I discussed with my colleagues their set and achieved goals. I experienced their feelings. We even shared a watermelon brought by one of my wives from Abuja, as she was coming back from the holidays.

- There are things within me that I think are hopeless, but my Co-Counselor made me realise that there is lots of hope for me.



\$13 (U.S.)

See page 109 for ordering information.

An Unbounded Future

*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,"
on page 15 of *An Unbounded Future*

A Men's Workshop in Matasia, Kenya

On April 30, 2011, men from different areas of Nairobi, Kenya, gathered at Upper Matasia, a serene setting near Ngong Hills, for a workshop led by Daniel Wainaina and Samuel Kiriro.¹ The main aim of the workshop was to empower ourselves and address society's expectations of men.

We explored the challenges we men face in today's society. These include police brutality and discrimination, easy exposure to drugs as an escape from distresses, lack of societal role models, neglect (as society focuses on the girl-child campaign), sexual harassment, and unequal employment opportunities. Men are generally viewed as a threat and treated with suspicion. There is discrimination in family wealth distribution (the woman inherits from both sides of the community). University admission requirements are higher for men. Men are not expected to show emotions—in other words, “Be a man.”

We looked at where we do not respond well. One place is courtesy. When a man uses courtesy words, such as “sorry,” “thank you,” “please,” it is seen as a sign of weakness. We also focused on the men's rights advocacy group *Maendeleo Ya Wanaume* and why it's not effective in the country. Its aim is to be a forum in which men can report their grievances and get assistance, legal or otherwise, but it has not been effective because men are afraid to be seen as having problems, especially by other men.

We looked at society's expectations of men in the context of a global society that is competing for resources. One way to acquire the resources is to befriend a people and then colonize them. We also looked at racism and tribalism.

What is the way forward for men?

- Organize more workshops involving the larger community.
- “Change starts with me.” As we men discharge our distresses, the effects will be felt by the society.
- Talk with our families about the boy child.
- Men need to open up to their fellow men.
- Let's show up² without fear and support *Maendeleo Ya Wanaume*.

¹ Daniel Wainaina and Samuel Kiriro are RC leaders in Nairobi, Kenya.

² Show up means make an appearance.

- Avoid the comfort zones—doing things because we are used to doing them and the society expects us to.
- Don't fear criticism.
- Embrace the discharge process—crying, talking, yawning, laughing, sweating, shivering.
- Form men's support groups.

The men decided to meet every April and August.

Victor Kebane
Nairobi, Kenya



ALBANY, NEW YORK, USA • STEVE BANBURY

El artículo que sigue fue escrito por Juan (Juanma) Manuel Feito Guerrero, del país vasco y España, quién asistió una conferencia RC en febrero, 2011, para el cuidado del medio ambiente. Participaron treinta personas de varios países. Juanma coordinó las traducciones. Escribió este artículo en español; fue traducido a ingles por Brian Lavendel.



Wytske Visser
Persona de referencia internacional
para el cuidado del medio ambiente
Ljouwert, Fryslân, Holanda

Below is an article written by Juan (Juanma) Manuel Feito Guerrero, from the Basque Country and Spain, who attended an RC care of the environment conference in February 2011. Thirty people from several countries participated. Juanma was the translation coordinator. He wrote this article in Spanish; the English translation is by Brian Lavendel.



Wytske Visser
International Commonality Reference
Person for the Care of the Environment
Ljouwert, Fryslân, The Netherlands

La Diversidad de Lenguaje y el Cuidado del Medio Ambiente

Nos reunimos un grupo pequeño, y ahí estábamos reunidas, pensando en una meta enorme que es clave para la supervivencia de todo el Planeta. No sé si eso sería una de las razones, pero lo cierto es que en este grupo había una gran unión-compañerismo, un compromiso claro de “vamos a seguir juntas una vez que la conferencia acabe, y nos vamos a cuidar mutuamente”. Y algo así está ocurriendo, de hecho, una vez terminado.

Gracias a la perspectiva especial sobre el Cuidado del Medio Ambiente que cada una aportamos al grupo, y gracias en especial a las muchas demostraciones y a la teoría de Wytske, desarrollamos una conciencia de algo muy grande: que nosotras éramos el equipo encargado de cuidar el hogar de todos los seres vivos y personas y de todo el Universo. Fortalecimos la conciencia que ya traíamos de que estamos profundamente conectadas con el universo hasta el punto de que cada una somos el centro de

éste y una de sus creaciones más complejas y poderosas.

Wytske habló con palabras simples, habló de ideas sencillas, habló de sus vivencias y se mostró ella misma, en un ambiente de gran confianza, como si estuviera en casa con su familia. Casi con cada una de nosotras tenía algún tipo de conexión anterior, con algunas mucha y lo mostró delante de todo el grupo.

Después de participar en muchos talleres internacionales este ha sido el primero al que yo asisto en el que las clases en el grupo grande se transmiten en un idioma distinto al



SØREN HOLM

inglés. Wytske habló una gran parte en su lengua materna, el frisón, un idioma casi invisible en Europa debido a la opresión imperialista. Un idioma minoritario hablado por un grupo indígena europeo, gente que habita una región casi nada industrializada, donde la vida y economía rural pervive, y su medio natural está menos dañado y es muy bello. Esto creo que tuvo una gran influencia en toda la Conferencia. ¡Para mí, como persona no English Speaker fue algo tremendo!

Ligado a la liberación lingüística, durante la Conferencia sucedieron cosas inspiradoras: el idioma no excluyó a nadie, y las tres personas que no podían utilizar el inglés como lengua de comunicación tuvieron sesiones con cualquiera, en las cuales desahogaron profundamente; además organizamos medios para que Wytske pudiera elegir cuando era bueno para ella expresarse en su lengua y cuando en inglés; y cuando estaba ocurriendo un intercambio de información entre

nosotras, tuvimos conciencia de la importancia de incluirnos mutuamente. Así que transformamos el ritmo capitalista que busca la producción, la rentabilidad y la rapidez por otro que antepone las necesidades humanas y que es realmente adecuado a nuestro objetivo mutuo: conocernos, cuidarnos, entendernos, y construir un equipo basado en el compañerismo y el amor.

Igual que en la naturaleza hay biodiversidad (*variedad de especies), en nuestro grupo nos organizamos para permitir la diversidad de lenguas: todas escuchamos nuestra propia lengua delante de todo el grupo en algunos momentos, mientras Wytske daba la clase, y la de las demás. En este detalle fuimos también un reflejo de la riqueza, complejidad

y cooperación existente en la naturaleza. Cada lengua que el ser humano ha creado cuidadosamente tras un largo proceso (el cual está en constante evolución) describe el Universo de una manera única y completa.

Este artículo fue publicado por primera vez en la lista electrónica de discusión de RC por los líderes del cuidado del medio ambiente.

English translation of the preceding article:

Language Diversity, and Care of the Environment

We were a small group—and there we were together, thinking of an enormous goal that is key to the survival of the entire planet. I do not know if that was one of the reasons for it, but this group had a great comradeship, a clear commitment that “we will continue together after the conference ends, and we will take care of each other.” And something like that is in fact happening.

Thanks to the special perspective on care of the environment that each person brought to the group, and thanks especially to the theory and many demonstrations from Wytske, we developed an awareness of something very big: that we are the team to take care of the home of all living beings, and the entire universe. We strengthened the realization we had brought that we are deeply connected with the universe to the point that each of us is the center of it and is one of the universe’s most complex and powerful creations.

Wytske spoke in simple words, spoke of basic ideas, spoke of her experiences and showed herself, in an atmosphere of great confidence as if she were at home with her family.

This was the first International workshop I had attended in which the classes in the big group were transmitted in a language other than English. Wytske talked a great deal in her mother language, Frisian—a language almost invisible in Europe, due to imperialist oppression. It is a minority language, spoken by an indigenous European group—people who inhabit an almost non-industrialized region, where a rural life and economy persist and the environment is less damaged and very beautiful. This I believe had a great influence throughout the conference. For me, as a non-English speaker, it was tremendous.

Connected to language liberation, during the conference language did not exclude anyone. The three people who could not use English as the language of communication had sessions in a language their counselors did not know, and they discharged deeply. We organized ways in which Wytske could choose when it was good to speak her language and when to speak English. When we were exchanging information between us, we were conscious of the importance of being mutually inclusive. In this way, we transformed

the rhythm of capitalism, which is based on production, profitability, and speed, into one that puts human needs first and is best suited to our mutual goal: getting to know each other, care for each other, understand each other, and build a team based on friendship and love.

Just as the natural world has biodiversity (variety of species), in our group we organized to make possible the diversity of languages. During Wytske’s classes, at times we all heard our own language in front of the group, and at other times we heard the languages of others. In this detail we were a reflection of the richness, complexity, and cooperation that exist in nature. Every language that human beings have carefully created in a long process (that is in constant evolution) describes the universe in a unique and complete way.

Reprinted from the RC e-mail discussion list for leaders in the care of the environment





GLEN HAUER

Accessing Seventeen Years of *Present Time*

I just want to say how incredible it is to be able to access a full seventeen years' worth of *Present Time* (October 1974 to October 1991) on-line. Thank you so much for this!

I will soon be teaching a class on addictions, and I wanted to review the available literature on the accumulated RC knowledge about addictions, and counseling on addictions.

Putting "addictions" into the subject field of "Index of articles," on the RC web site <www.rc.org>, led me to a large number of articles on addictions. I then realized that it's now possible to access many of these online by opening up the PDF file of the particular issue of *Present Time* they're in and just going to the article. Putting "addictions" into the PDF search window of that issue faithfully took me to each place the word appeared.

I now have a whole library of some of the world's most valuable information at my fingertips. I hope others are aware of this tremendous resource.

Ted Mayer
Hua Hin, Thailand

Allies to Indigenous People in Australia

Here in Adelaide (South Australia, Australia) we've done a lot of work in our ongoing RC class on being allies to Indigenous people.

In almost every class we start with a recognition that we're on the land of the Kurna, the Aboriginal people who lived here on the Adelaide plains for forty thousand years before the coming of Europeans.

After attending the topic group Marcie Rendon* led at the Australian Pre-World Conference in 2009, we've used the following to guide our work:

- Being pleased with ourselves—in general and also as white people.
- Asking ourselves, "How does it feel to be on the land of the Kurna people?" and "How have I benefited from the attempted genocide of the Kurna and the other Indigenous traditional owners of this continent?"
- Discharging on early memories of being mean to another person (or animal).

We've come to recognise our role in the dispossession of the Indigenous peoples, and our assumption of exclusive "ownership" of the land. We habitually "forget" that we don't "own" the land.

We've come to better understand that the genocide patterns got passed on over centuries and that we still carry them, that our ancestor oppressors were good people but that we still have their patterns of greed—of hanging on to comparative wealth while Indigenous peoples have much less.

Working on early memories of being mean to others has moved us to where

we can now get right in there with each other at that point where we temporarily lost connection with our essential human selves. For any human being to lash out and hurt others, she or he has to have lost connection with herself or himself. The point where people "had no feelings" is exactly where we need to go with them. That is the point of terror where they temporarily lost their humanness and flipped into the more comfortable end of the pattern. As counsellor I can clearly spot the point where my clients "go away." They get a blank look in their eyes. They were clearly lost when they hurt that other person.

For most of us women, the oppressor role is mixed in with being the passive witness of violence, of not standing up to stop it. We have discharged on being the witness.

Some people may start out with denial: "I've never hurt anyone in my life," or, "No, I haven't benefited from the genocide." This can quickly yield as they come to see that their counsellor will not desert them, will indeed continue to love and think well of them, as they work on their oppressor material.

Although we have not yet brought any new Indigenous people into our Community, we have much better relationships, in our workplaces and social lives, with Indigenous people and other people targeted by racism. We also have a better understanding of the challenges Indigenous people face in a predominantly white RC Community. Facing terror about genocide as white people in a predominantly white RC Community is much easier than facing that terror in the same Community as a person whose people have been targeted by genocide.

Cathy Picone
Adelaide, South Australia, Australia

* Marcie Rendon is the International Liberation Reference Person for Native Americans.

Thinking About the Job You Want

I would suggest that in thinking about the job you want, you first ask yourself these questions:

- 1) Which job will bring me the biggest income?
- 2) Which will I enjoy the most, have the most fun doing?
- 3) Which will be the biggest challenge to me, get me away from types of relationships that I am used to, and give me the chance to climb out of ruts?
- 4) Which will put me in touch with the most powerful people (potentially, that is), such as workers in the basic industries?
- 5) Which will I be delighted to master completely, including receiving plaudits from the family and surrounding community?

Harvey Jackins
From a letter written in 1980



SUSAN HUTCHISON

“ Even the smallest victory is never to be taken for granted. Each victory must be applauded. ”
Audre Lorde



PAT GREGORY

Thank You for the On-Line Literature

I just want to thank whomever is responsible for putting PDF copies of *Present Time* on the RC web site.* I hadn't noticed them there before (but that doesn't mean that they haven't been there for ages).

The literature on the web site is building into a wonderful resource. If I am doing a class on a particular topic, I can search the on-line index and then look the content up on-line (or in my own library, if that fails).

I realise and appreciate the hard, repetitive work that goes into putting this literature on the web site, and I hope that more and more material is going to be added.

Andy Stokes
Buckfastleigh, Devon, England

* Go to the RC web site at <www.rc.org>. Then go to Publications, then "Present Time."

Appreciating PRESENT TIME

I am glad to have PRESENT TIME. I was going through a situation in which I was unable to figure out how to go ahead with discharge. This issue of PRESENT TIME gave me many ideas about what topics I can work on. It helped me understand the way I need to focus. Lots of thanks and appreciation to PRESENT TIME.

I am
worth it!
SH

S.J. Shashikala
Ramanchandrapuram, Bangalore, India

I just finished reading the e-mails reprinted in the April 2011 PRESENT TIME from the RC e-mail discussion list for leaders of women, about how racism has affected women targeted by racism. I am so grateful to be able to hear these stories. Thanks to the women who shared their experiences and perspectives!



Brian Lavendel
Madison, Wisconsin, USA

Thank you for the April issue of PRESENT TIME. I can see that so much love and work has gone into it. It's beautiful! I appreciate the space given to support the Japanese RC Community. This means a lot to me, and I've discharged reading it.



Cynthia Johnston
Melbourne, Victoria, Australia

I'm a huge PRESENT TIME fan!



Emily Cunningham
Seattle, Washington, USA

The articles, drawings, poems, musings, and letters in PRESENT TIME are not only a contradiction* but an incredible growing resource for making a difference in life and the world, through connection, discharge, and listening. I was enchanted by the report from Africa on the brilliance of people working on inclusion—an effort dear to my heart.



Lynne J. Steinberg
St. Louis Park, Minnesota, USA

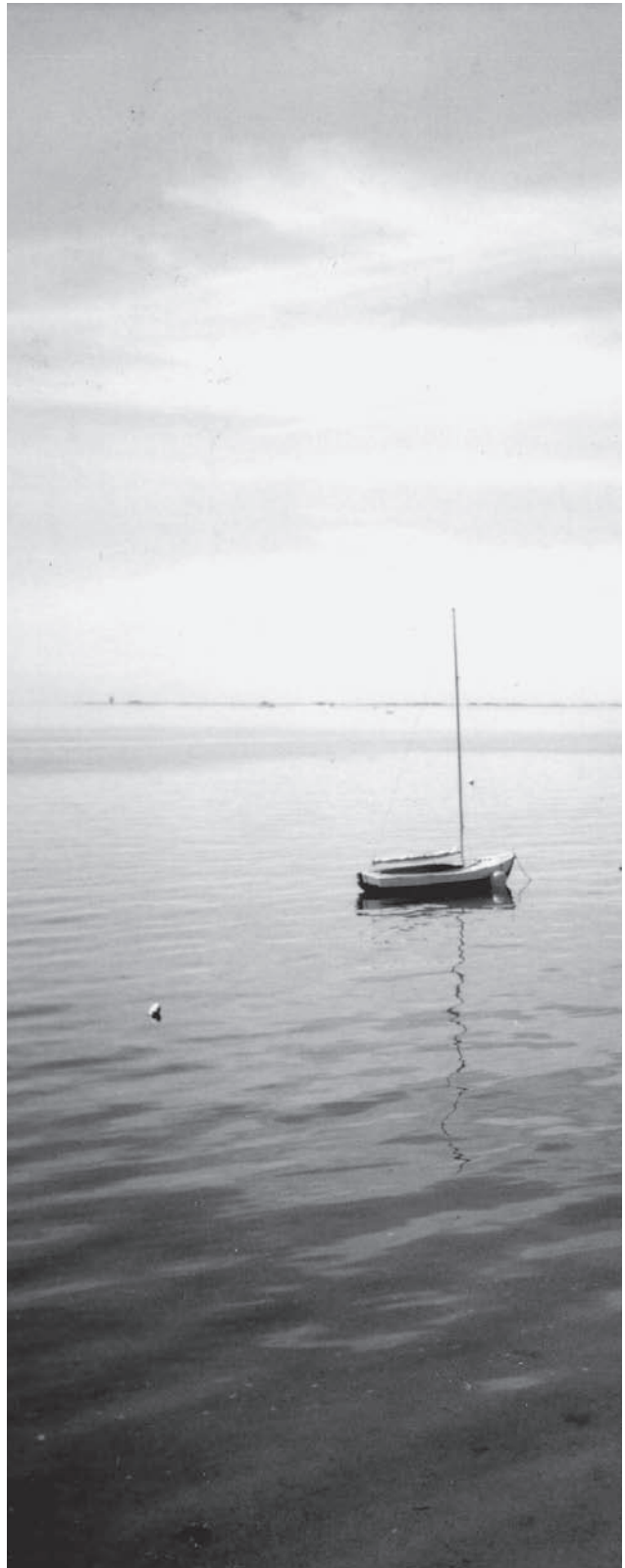
* Contradiction to distress

Katie,* I wanted to tell you that I love your drawings that appear in PRESENT TIME. Aside from your skill, I like what you draw, and they make me smile when I come across them.



Jo Perry
Ballina, New South Wales, Australia

* Katie Kauffman



JO PERRY

Confronting My Own Classism

Reading the postings about the protests in Wisconsin (USA), and the importance of building relationships with allies, has inspired me to write something I've been meaning to write about some unexpected experiences I've had making friends and allies.

Most of my husband's best friends have political and social views that differ significantly from mine, and from his. They make jokes I'm uncomfortable with, they vote for candidates I can't imagine myself supporting, they are scornful of many political ideas I support, and most of them think labor unions are bad and feel free to say so (I work for a union). Alcohol is a routine part of socializing for them, which I find challenging (I do not drink alcohol).

But these people love my husband, and he loves them. The house we live in was built in a weekend by about a hundred of them, after the house my husband had been living in burned down. I have since seen them pull together similarly for another friend when his family's house burned. They are generous with their time and resources, and as I've gotten to know them, I've learned of heroic things they have done in their relationships and in their communities. These are good people.

I think it is significant that they are all solidly rural working-class—"raised that way, still that way." They were born and raised in our rural part of Maine (USA), while I come from a city in another state. Although my husband comes from the same kind of background as I do, he does not carry patterns that keep him from being close with people from different backgrounds and with different views of the world. If he has anything at all in common with someone, he can relate to him or her, starting with that. This has been inspiring to me over the twelve years that we have been together.

Many aspects of our lives are somewhat "counter-culture" and quite different from the lives of these mainstream rural Maine people. I had numerous Co-Counseling sessions on trying to figure out how to interact with this group of friends. Typically, when I was with them, I could think of nothing to say, so I had sessions on my frustrations about that. And I had sessions on things they said that bothered me, my discouragement about the alcohol, my struggles with the food they preferred, and so on.

It helped that they made it clear to me that they wanted me. Once it

was clear to them that I was with Paul to stay, and that I was good to him, I was "in." Paul's best friend would complain to me if I missed too many parties. He also complained that I usually didn't come over when Paul did. So I worked hard to build relationships with these people that were real. It took a lot of discharging, and it took that because of my patterns, not because of theirs.

After one particularly challenging social gathering, I left early, thinking I was tired and wanted to go to bed. But when I got home and turned off the car, I just leaned back in the seat and cried hard for a long time. And I realized that I wasn't tired as much as I was just not feeling any connection with these people, and part of me knew that I really didn't want it that way. I wanted real connections, not just to figure out how to interact, and the lack of those connections was heartbreaking and exhausting. So I took that thought to sessions over the next couple of weeks, although I wasn't able to discharge nearly as hard as I did alone in the car.

A turning point came after a party one night where there was a young woman I had never met before. We talked easily. I found her interesting and easy to engage with in conversation. I experienced the whole gathering that evening as enjoyable and invigorating.

But questions were gnawing at the edges of my consciousness. Why did I find her so interesting and the other people less so? Why did I feel safe to freely converse with her, in contrast to how carefully I measured my words with the others? Although many of the things she was interested in were similar to my interests, why did those things seem more interesting or more "rational" than the interests of others in the group? And why did I feel engaged instead of marginal when talking with her?

The possible answer to this question was uncomfortable.

As I thought about it, I was pretty* sure that this woman came from an upper-middle-class or owning-class background. And if this were so, then I had to face the uncomfortable realization that my struggles relating to the other people had little or nothing to do

continued . . .



KARL LAM

* Pretty means quite.

WIDE WORLD CHANGING

... continued

with subject matter or points of view and nearly everything to do with classism—mine.

This uncomfortable realization gave me powerful fuel for many sessions. I was furious that the oppression had kept me from being fully myself and engaging with and loving these wonderful friends. I was able to cry hard about that. On one occasion, when they were holding a birthday party for one of the women and I could not go because of a Co-Counseling workshop, I got to cry hard again, both about my feelings of being different, and about finally feeling like I really, really wanted to be there.

During this time I also had sessions on my feelings about connections with people in my union, the vast majority of whom grew up in working-class families and had done blue-collar work all their lives. As a person who grew up in the middle class, I have generally felt, awarably or unawarably, different from them. For the most part, they have not been the people I have chosen to socialize with—ostensibly because we have different interests and different ways of socializing. They are people I like and respect, but I have not experienced the kind of connections with them that I have with my social friends from other parts of my life.

Some of my union friends feel that other union members are like family. In sessions I imagined this, and looked for why they would feel that way and I would not. And I let myself want that connection. These sessions began to melt walls that I had not even realized were there.

Recently one of my husband's friends asked me how things were going with a struggle my union was having

with our electric company. I braced myself. In the past he had often made disparaging remarks about unions, and as a dairy farmer he had every reason to want electric rates to stay as low as possible. I told him we still didn't have a contract and that negotiations had broken down. And instead of making a negative remark, as I had been expecting, he commiserated! He had a new viewpoint, not because I had tried to give him one but because we had gotten closer and I had discharged enough to be myself around him. His response to the situation was based on his connection to and respect for me.

And more and more I notice that I feel my union friends as fully part of my life. I eagerly look forward to time with many of them, and care more deeply than I ever have about what happens to them. Last year on my birthday, I skipped the union meeting and spent time at home. This year (today, actually) I am taking a cake to the meeting!

When I think about the political and social-action work that I do, I now see more clearly than ever that to have the kind of world I want, building these kinds of relationships, and discharging on the things that keep me apart from people who are different from me, are some of the most important work I can do.



With love and solidarity,

Cynthia Phinney

Livermore Falls, Maine, USA

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



BETH CRUISE

Capitalism Can't Be "Patched Up"

Your rewritten article still carries the underlying assumption that capitalism could be patched up¹ to work if only somebody had a different attitude about it. I think the crucial thing is simply that capitalism cannot work in any way differently than it does, and that the differences between liberal and right-wing² policies are superficial. The vast increase in the public debt, and the armaments race, are essential features, as long as there is capitalism, of keeping the market going at all.

Traditional economics is based completely on fallacies. I am afraid that unless you face the reality of this viewpoint, you will remain caught in the enormous frustration of being wedded to a system that is inherently unworkable.

Harvey Jackins

From a letter written in 1980

¹ Patched up means improved with minor repairs.

² Right-wing means reactionary.

Seeing the Strengths of My Mixed-Class Background

Cynthia! What a great posting!¹ As always, you inspire me.

I have been doing some fresh thinking about myself and class. I was raised working-class and sometimes poor; my early jobs were all working-class jobs. Then I became a teacher for four years, after which I returned to working-class jobs. Then I married an upper-middle-class man and worked as a mother and homemaker and eventually as a caregiver for elders (all working-class jobs), while living in an upper-middle-class home.

Because of changes in my life and a lot of discharge, I now recognize that my current situation is thoroughly upper-middle-class. I no longer have a working-class job, nor do I experience directly the oppression of working-class people; rather, events restimulate old experiences of working-class oppression. So for now I identify as raised working-class/poor and currently upper-middle-class. That is the most useful position from which to think about my life and my relationships with people, particularly working-class people in situations in which I can play a good role as a well-informed ally.

As a child I often sought to escape my working-class conditions and be like middle-class people. I was a scared, quiet, obedient child and easily fit the expectations of teachers—the beginning of my training to join the middle class. My separation from other working-class people began in earnest in the sixth grade, when, due to overcrowding in the sergeants' children's school, a small group of "good" students was sent to the officers' children's school. My older brother and I were in that group. Sixth grade was one of the hardest years of my life. I stuck out like a sore thumb. The



WYTSKE VISSER

officers' children would have nothing to do with me. I became quieter and turned all my attention to my studies. At the officers' children's school the expectation was that all the children would attend college; as a result, unlike my younger sister and brother, I assumed that I would go to college.

By the time I graduated from college, my life was very different from my sister's and from that of the working-class people I had grown up with. I was increasingly uncomfortable with the way they led their lives—their choices, their jokes, their ways of entertaining themselves—and I felt that I was better.

For many decades I felt caught in a "no man's land"—it was clear that I was too "rough cut" to fit in with middle-class people, yet when I was home with working-class people, I was too "refined." When I learned in RC about classism, I reclaimed my working-class identity and worked for years to reconnect—particularly with my younger sister, Karen.

Karen has spent most of her adult life as a working-class woman, slipping in and out of poverty. She has lived in a world very different from mine. Most people have a hard time believing we are sisters, because our lives went in

such different directions. My friends have a hard time with her, and her friends have a hard time with me. Yet she and I are proud of each other and tell everyone that we are *so* much alike. This stops them in their tracks! It has always been useful for me to have Karen in my life, not only because she loves me so completely but also because she sees life differently than I do. She leads with her heart; I lead with my head. We are a good balance for one another. It has always been great for me to aspire to be more like her. She and I have a fantastic relationship that we have worked hard for against the effects and pulls of classism.

Being determined to have my sister has been hugely important in shaping who I am. I am sad to say that I have not been able to do as well with the people she has close to her. I try to do and say the right things, but I feel distant and must fight back feelings of disapproval. I know this is the result of the class training I received. Cynthia, your story gives me hope!

Being a working-class woman in a middle-class family and community has been extremely challenging, and I have had to work hard to keep my head above water. Identifying strongly as working-class and raised-sometimes-poor has given me a place to stand, a place to feel good about myself, a place to think, and a place to act from. I am so thankful for the work we have all done, with thanks especially to Beth Edmonds and Dan Nickerson² for standing by me, for championing me, for many hours of sessions, for having faith in me, and for loving me *so* sweetly—kindnesses beyond what I ever imagined I would experience.

continued . . .

¹ See article on page 77.

² Beth Edmonds is the Regional Reference Person for Maine, USA. Dan Nickerson, her husband, is the International Liberation Reference Person for Working-Class People.

WIDE WORLD CHANGING

... continued

Over the last year I have moved through a huge piece of distress and now find myself feeling as though my future is a wide-open highway that I am eagerly traveling down, excited about making choices about where I go and what I do. I am finding myself much more interested in, rather than defending against, all the working-class people in my life. I have seen significant and rapid improvement in my relationships with all of them and am eager for the future of those relationships. I am eager to continue to work on the internalized oppression that has separated me from them and has diminished the depth of my joy in our connection.

I organize and attend the Maine (USA) Raised Working-Class/Poor Support Group that Dan leads. I am excited and pleased that it has become a

safe place for people who are currently living working-class lives in extremely challenging economic times. And it has become clear to me that I have all the protections and advantages of the middle class. I no longer do working-class work. I have enormous economic security, at least for the time being. This gives me a space to think and move freely, to decide what I want to do and how I want to do it. There is no economic hammer hanging over my head.

Recognizing my current situation and all of its opportunities is extremely useful. I have done a large amount of work on classism; I understand a great deal; and I am less vulnerable to the confusions of the middle class, or of the working class, for that matter, having lived in and discharged hard about both. I don't know everything about what I

want to do with this new freedom in my brain, but I am discharging on trusting myself—a brilliant, fun woman with tremendous integrity, who was raised in the working class, is now thoroughly middle-class in lifestyle and privilege, has the strengths that come from both, and is not limited by the confusions and patterns of either. From this spot I am eager to continue to clean up the effects of classism on my life and on the lives of all the people I love—which, by the way, means everyone in this world, starting with the people closest to me.

The future looks bright and exciting and full of possibilities that I cannot even begin to imagine yet—not bad for an almost sixty-two-year-old woman!

Jerry Ann Yoder

Yarmouth, Maine, USA

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



MELBOURNE, VICTORIA, AUSTRALIA • WYTSKE VISSER

Short Talks by Tim Jackins, on CD

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

For a complete list of all the CDs produced up until now, see page 105 of this *Present Time*.

Anyone can order any of the CDs for \$10 (U.S.) each, plus shipping and handling.

The entire 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, and 2010 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.*

We Need to Do More Work on Classism

Dear Cynthia, Jerry, and everyone,¹

I was so pleased to read this thinking.

I was raised working-class in England, where we had an exam called 11+. Everyone took it at the age of eleven, and if you passed you went to a different kind of school (Grammar) than if you failed (Secondary Modern). The 11+ was a kind of “intelligence test,” and those who passed it were destined to a different life from those who failed, because, it was supposed, they were simply more intelligent. I passed, and my sister failed. Despite being disabled, passing this exam opened up a world of learning to me and resulted, by the time I was twenty, in my thinking that everything my family did, ate, wore, watched, read, or talked about was “stupid,” inferior, and boring. They meanwhile thought that I had “ideas above my station,” because I read too much. (They probably also thought I was an arrogant little prick,² but they were too nice to tell me that.) This is a common story. Families, communities, and the world have been divided into two types of people—those who work with their minds and those who work with their hands.

The people who still fail at school and are therefore thought to be less intelligent are angry about the way they are treated, but they do not have a clear analysis that gives them something to blame it on, in

the way that black people now have the concept of racism to be angry about, or women have the idea of sexism to fight against. Classism is still a taboo subject (one we are not allowed to talk about or think about). In this vacuum, many working-class people turn on³ people even more vulnerable than themselves, especially immigrants and asylum seekers, and blame them instead. And this is exactly what so many of us “superior,” upwardly mobile, Grammar school- and university-educated types don’t like being around—their jokes, their right-wing⁴ politics, their racism. It has even made it hard for me to be with my own family for more than a few hours. It is what makes it hard to think of introducing them, and the many like them, to RC. Their “views” would meet with such disapproval from the RC members that they would run a mile. At the same time, I know that it is the seeing of the “real person” that happens in RC classes and sessions that is the guaranteed path out of these false divisions. I am still working on regaining my family, and trying to think what the solution is to this problem. I think we need to do much more work on classism, including the internalised sort. It is good to know I am not alone.



Love to you all,

Micheline Mason
London, England

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

¹ See previous two articles.

² Prick means highly unpleasant, irritating person.

³ Turn on means direct mistreatment at.

⁴ Right-wing means politically reactionary.

Israel and Unity

There is no question that the feelings of antagonism and the barriers to acting human are there, and no question that there is a long history back of it—that the violence has gone both ways, and who has oppressed whom has changed a number of times. But I, of course, cannot agree with you that we should give up our policy of unity—because Israel will not survive without that.

Harvey Jackins
From a letter written in 1980



SIERRA NATIONAL FOREST, CALIFORNIA, USA • LISA VOSS

Introducing RC to a Non-RC Organization

A few weeks ago I introduced RC to a non-RC organization of ninety social change leaders. Eighty of them came to the meeting.

I began with a three-minute introduction to RC. I talked about RC as the missing link in societal change, and about listening and discharge. Three other people each also talked for three minutes about their social change projects. Then participants went to a twenty-minute meeting, choosing one of the four of us to meet with.

Twenty people came to my group, including three RCers. People did mini-sessions after I gave them a few ideas for using the time. Afterward we had a closing circle—and shared what was good about listening, and exchanging listening time. People didn't want to leave the group. Many signed up for an introductory lecture in the RC Community, including

people who heard my three-minute introduction but went to another group.

I had to work hard to do the evening—including two weeks of daily Co-Counseling sessions on “coming out of the closet”¹ about RC.

I've made my RC leaders' class half Mizrachi² and mixed-heritage, and I do two monthly sessions with the Mizrachis and mixed-heritage people. That, and the introduction for the wide-world group, are good stepping stones for broadening success. I think we can have similar success with Palestinian RC and Arab-Jewish unity.

Lisa Blum
Tel Aviv, Israel

¹ “Coming out of the closet” means being open with people.

² Mizrachi Jews are Jews who are descended from Jews of the Middle East, North Africa, Central Asia, and the Caucasus. They often identify as people targeted by racism.

The 2013

Pre-World Conferences and World Conference

Here are the dates for the Pre-World and World Conferences, coming up in 2013:

January 18 to 21

Western North America Pre-World Conference

February 7 to 10

South Asia Pre-World Conference

February 28 to March 3

Australia/New Zealand Pre-World Conference

March 21 to 24

Latin America Pre-World Conference

April 4 to 7

Central North America Pre-World Conference

May 2 to 5

Africa Pre-World Conference

May 31 to June 3

Eastern/Southern/Central Europe and
Middle East Pre-World Conference

June 6 to 9

Western/Northern Europe Pre-World Conference

June 20 to 23

Eastern North America and Caribbean
Pre-World Conference

July 11 to 14

East Asia Pre-World Conference

August 7 to 11

World Conference



Loyalty to a petrified opinion never yet broke a chain or freed a human soul.

Mark Twain

Capitalism, and a New Economic System

Capitalism has many internal contradictions. The basic one is that the profit system does not allow enough purchasing power to come to the market to purchase the value that is brought to the market in the form of goods and services. As a result, there is a continual glut of so-called over-production. This is actually only over-production in terms of the capitalist system and market, and of course is never as much as people could use.

I don't know how much of the total corporate worth goes into profits and is not reinvested. The ideal, of course, is that it *is* reinvested, and you give it to the bank to reinvest if you can't do it yourself. However, in practice, this runs up against the basic contradiction—so the banks get stuffed fuller and fuller with money and finally only the government, by promising to pay in the future, is able to borrow and put it back into the market enough to keep the market going. When this runs out, loss of confidence in the government's ability to pay puts a stricture on the ever-increasing national debt. Then things are in bad shape* indeed.

A rational economic system would, I think, include public ownership of all the enterprises that involve more than one person, or one family working together. There would be room for artisans, artists, craftspeople, and so on, but I think that eventually even they would work in groups, simply for the greater satisfaction. Law, constitution, bureaucracy, international relations, all would have to change to be directed not toward profits but toward the welfare of everyone in the world.

* Bad shape means in a bad state.

Ingenuity would not have the limitations now placed on it by the profit system and would flourish. Medical care would greatly improve and would lose its bureaucratic character. Education would become rational. Religion would perhaps find its real role instead of being caught up in the struggle between the oppressed and the oppressors.

A rational economic system would not include wages, since by definition wages are only a portion of the value produced. People would work. Some people would earn more than others, certainly in a transition period. Eventually, and perhaps quite quickly, there would be enough for everyone to have everything they rationally wanted.

In the transition period, pay would be based on skills. After that, I think that everyone would have what they needed and would produce what they enjoyed. Certainly there would be people who did not do physical work because of handicaps; otherwise, I think everyone would work with their hands as well as with their heads.

I hope that RCers will play a good role in a transition to a workable system. Offering correct policy will be an important part of that role. Discharge will spread rapidly by example, I hope. And one doesn't have to wait until one is free from a pattern in order to act against it, or outside it.

The capitalist system is well into a state of collapse right now. It is not going to be one decisive point but a long series of things. Our job is to ameliorate and lower the level of violence and destruction as much as possible, not set ourselves the impossible task of absolutely preventing them. That is too unrealistic.

I don't know how to "re-emerge" people any faster than we are doing, and I work all the time at finding good ways to be both patient and urgent.

If we do everything right, we can accomplish everything in twenty years. We should not blame ourselves if it takes a couple of hundred.

Harvey Jackins
From a letter written in 1980



DADES GORGE, MOROCCO • MICHAEL HAND

We Need to Listen to All People

I went to an Arts Wisconsin Arts Day Conference. Arts Wisconsin is a coalition of arts and cultural organizations in Wisconsin (USA). Every year, for one day in the beginning of March, we get together to talk with each other and lobby the legislature for support of arts and creative endeavors throughout the state. It was useful to share ideas, stories, and strategies and to talk about the impact of Governor Walker's proposed budget.*

I spoke publicly, which is challenging for me. First I spoke in a workshop of about thirty people about the importance of art as a method of inquiry. I talked about

* In February of 2011 the governor of Wisconsin, USA, proposed a budget that would drastically reduce social spending and deny public workers the right to collective bargaining.



INDIA • DIANE SHISK

improving our thinking by listening to ourselves in our own creative process and by listening to each other in artistic collaborations. I said that the arts help us learn to listen to each other in creating democracy.

Then I spoke to a group of about a hundred and fifty in which people were reporting on their visits to their state government representatives. I stood up and said that I'm always scared to speak publicly but that these times require that we all learn to be brave. I talked about the importance of listening to the legislators and others whose opinions differed from ours. I said that yes, people need information, but that we also need to listen to all people, to stop demonizing people. We have to learn to ask the right questions that will help open people's hearts and minds. I said that as artists and cultural workers, we know a lot about the importance of hearing each other. We have a crucial role in helping people heal and function better.

People cheered, thanked me afterward, and offered to brainstorm with me about helpful questions. Now I'm excited to speak in public again! I want to talk more about not demonizing anyone—about the need to ask ourselves how people became so hurt that they back such damaging policies, and the need to listen to and talk with our neighbors and family members who have opposing opinions.

Beth Racette
Madison, Wisconsin, USA
Reprinted from the e-mail discussion
list for RC Community members

Complete Index to *Present Time* Available On-Line

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



LAWRENCE WRIGHT



HOUSE OF THE VALIXOGLU FAMILY •
KATERINA STAVROPOULOU-VLACHOU

Terrorism and Violence

I am glad that your brother could be with you, and glad that the situation in Beirut¹ is quiet.

I'm sorry about all the terrorism and violence. It is the cumulative effect of a long history of mistreatment, so that victims of violence are made to pass on the violence to other people. Similar terrible things happen in the United States all the time, though not in such a concentrated form and they are not given so much publicity. But in the places where the conflicts of interest among the great powers come to a head,² such as in Lebanon, innocent people suffer even more than they do in other places.

We will stop that one of these days, and I think you and I will have something to contribute to the solution.

Harvey Jackins
From a letter written in 1980

¹ Beirut, Lebanon

² Come to a head means come to a critical point.

It Felt Better to Act

I was leaving work today, when I noticed a small group of protesters gathering at the university where I teach. They were there to protest a campus event that was hosted by a student group that had raised scholarship money for undocumented students at the school. I walked on, feeling like I wanted to do something but not sure of what.

Then I headed back toward the group. I thought of three questions I'd ask any one of the protesters who was willing to talk to me: Can you tell me about your organization? Can you tell me what you know about funding for college students in the United States, both documented and undocumented? What do you think would need to happen so that anyone in the world who wanted to go to college could go?

I listened to one man for about ten minutes. Mostly he showed me a lot of

his anger and discouragement. I didn't talk much at all, except to ask those questions. Afterward I wished them all a good weekend and left (and got a mini-session right away).

It was a small interaction, and I don't know how effective I was in giving that guy a peek outside of his material,* but it felt better to act than to do nothing. It wasn't that scary and didn't take too much time. In another situation (with someone with better attention), a conversation like that might make a bigger difference. Another time, I'll have more experience initiating these kinds of chats.

Jennifer Ramos
Riverside, California, USA
Reprinted from the RC e-mail discussion
list for leaders of wide world change

* Material means distress.



KEITH OSAJIMA

Index to the July 2011 *Present Time*

- Africa:** workshop in Nigeria, 70; workshop in Kenya, 71
- Allies:** and the Holocaust, 26, 32; to Japanese people after the tsunami and nuclear accident, 47-66; to Indigenous people in Australia, 74
- Artists:** and being middle-class, 42-43; and world change, 84
- Australia:** allies to Indigenous people, 74
- Capitalism:** and class society, 13-16; and the middle class, 33-34; can't be patched up, 78; and a new economic system, 83
- Classism:** all about, 13-16; and the middle class, 16, 33-46, 77-81; and Tohoku, Japan, 59-65
- Closeness/contact/connection:** and being middle-class, 37-38; and overcoming fear, 58
- Community (RC):** we are doing fine, 11; in Japan, 47-50; participation in, and wide world change, 57; individual leadership in, 66
- (Co-)Counseling:** on racism, 3-4; on disasters, 5-6; no blaming, 7; and something shifting, 9; on the Holocaust, 18-31; directions for a musician, 22; avoiding button-pushing, 32; moving ahead on all fronts, 57
- Discharge/discharging:** when overwhelmed, 5; on disasters, 6; on the Holocaust, 18-31; after the tsunami and nuclear accident in Japan, 47-66
- Distresses:** from the Holocaust, 18-31; after the tsunami and nuclear accident in Japan, 47-66
- Earthquake:** and the nuclear accident in Japan, 47-66
- Emigration:** from Ireland, 17
- Environment (care of):** and language diversity, 72-73
- Genocide:** the Holocaust, 18-31
- German-heritage:** and the Holocaust, 23-24
- Holocaust:** all about recovery from, 18-31
- Indigenous people:** in Australia, 74
- Intelligence/thinking:** recovery of, as middle-class people, 34-35, 44-46; trusting one's own after the tsunami and nuclear accident in Japan, 51-53; during difficult times, 54-57
- Ireland:** colonisation and emigration, 17
- Isolation:** and fear, 58
- Israel/Israelis:** and the Holocaust, 19-20, 28-29; and unity, 81
- Jackins, Harvey:** 6, 8, 10, 22, 27, 32, 39, 50, 57, 66, 70, 75, 78, 83, 85
- Jackins, Tim:** 3-4, 13-16
- Japan/Japanese people:** the tsunami and nuclear accident, 5, 47-66; Tohoku, 59-65
- Jews:** and the Holocaust, 18-31; and middle-class liberation, 41
- Kenya:** workshop in, 71
- Language:** articles in Japanese, 47-65; diversity, at a workshop, 72-73
- Leadership:** individual, 66
- Liberation** (see Oppression/liberation)
- Literature (RC):** appreciating *Pensamientos*, 8; accessing seventeen years of *Present Time*, 74; appreciating the on-line literature, 75; appreciating *Present Time*, 76
- Men:** and the Holocaust, 25; men's workshop in Kenya, 71
- "Mental health" oppression/liberation:** and the Holocaust, 30-31
- Middle Class:** role of in society, 16; all about, 33-46; and classism, 77-80
- Musicians:** directions for, 22
- Native people:** in Australia, 74
- Nigeria:** workshop in, 70
- Nuclear power:** and the accident in Japan, 47-66
- Oppression/liberation:** racism, 3-4; classism, 13-16, 77-81; Irish, 17; and the Holocaust, 18-31; middle-class, 33-46; women's, 40-41; U.S. Southerners', 42; of Japanese people, 47-65; of people in Tohoku, Japan, 59-65; men's, in Kenya, 71; and language, 72-73; of Indigenous people in Australia, 74
- Oppressor patterns:** and racism, 3-4
- Owning class:** role of in society, 13-16
- Parents:** and the Holocaust, 26
- Play:** all the time, 12
- Poems/songs/rhymes:** 10, 25, 67
- Present Time:** accessing seventeen years of, 74; appreciation of, 76
- Racism:** ending it, 3-4; in Tohoku, Japan, 59-65
- Relationships:** cleaning up an old one, 39
- Sexism:** and middle-class women, 40-41
- Society:** and classism, 13-16, 77-81; and capitalism, 78, 83
- Southerners (U.S.):** oppression of, 42
- Spanish:** article in, 72-73
- Teaching/Communicating RC:** after the tsunami and nuclear accident in Japan, 5, 47-66; and disasters, 6; in Nigeria, 70; in Kenya, 71; and RC literature, 74; to a non-RC organization, 82
- Technology:** usefulness of, 27
- Theory (RC):** don't force crying, 6; no blaming, 7; strength pulls up fears, 8; crying a long time, 10; being encouraging, 12; playing all the time, 12; avoiding button-pushing, 32; and an old relationship, 39; fear and loneliness, 58
- War:** and the Holocaust, 18-31; terrorism and violence, 85
- Wide world changing:** classism, 13-16; and Co-Counseling, 57; can't patch up capitalism, 78; teaching RC to a non-RC organization, 82; capitalism and a new economic system, 83; speaking publicly as an artist, 84; terrorism and violence, 85; it felt better to act, 85
- Women:** middle-class, 40-41
- Work:** a job you want, 75
- Working class:** role of, 13-16; middle-class allies to, 35; and classism, 77-81;
- Workshops/gather-ins/conferences:** middle-class, 33-46; in Japan, after the tsunami and nuclear accident, 47-58; in Nigeria, 70; in Kenya, 71
- Young people/children:** talking to them about the Holocaust, 26



ELLIE PUTNAM

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/>.



Present Time
P.O. Box 2081
Main Office Station
Seattle, Washington 98111
USA



Printed on recycled paper using soy-based ink