

Present Time No. 174 (Vol. 46, No. 1) January 2014



We are free, each moment, to begin a completely new future, untrammelled and uninfluenced by any of the distresses of the past.

Harvey Jackins

Welcome to the January 2014 *Present Time*. Thank you to all the contributors—of articles, poetry, photos, and drawings. We'd like to hear from others of you, too! For the April issue, please send us your articles and poems by Tuesday, February 18, and any changes to the back-pages lists by Monday, February 24.

Lisa Kauffman, editor

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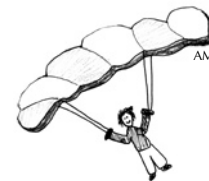
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You Might Have to Be Happy

From a talk by Tim Jackins¹ at the Southern USA Teachers' and Leaders' Workshop in Atlanta, Georgia, USA, November 2013

You have to decide that you are worth fighting for. You have to decide that you are worth facing anything for, and that you belong here with us—not because of what you did or what you will do, or any relationship, but simply because you are one of us, because you are human.

Every human being is worth every fight. If you see a little toddler running toward you, you know that you would do anything to preserve that life and those opportunities. Why do you think you are any different than that little toddler? Why do you think you are worth any less? You can't be.

There is no way to draw lines between us that makes any sense at all. We are all one in this existence. We are all human. There is no usefulness in drawing distinctions, trying to separate us. That's what oppression does, and it has to be thrown out and not accepted. You are worth fighting for. You are worth facing anything for. You are. I don't know of anyone who was told that, or who had that anywhere in her or his mind. In an oppressive society, the messages are all the other way—that you are a small bit of nothingness, and hopefully you can be useful. That's it.

What's wonderful about your being human is your mind and what it can do all by itself, whether it's connected with others or not—just the miracle of the mind that you have. You are worth every single struggle. You have to decide this. You have to make up your mind about it. I'm sure that you can say the words, or maybe you can, but actually looking at their meaning leads you into conflict with a lot of distresses that were put on you. It's a good set of battles. But you need to make up your mind that you are worth fighting for—otherwise, heading into those battles is going to be really hard.

A CHALLENGE: TO BE HAPPY

Many of us haven't stopped trying, even though we have no hope. My

version of it is that I have no hope of success and I don't care. I'm simply going to. That's it. I've decided. You have probably done something similar, set your mind rigidly in some way. Now we get to go back and challenge that. And the challenge to the bitterly-taking-life-forward is that you might have to be happy. It might be required of you—not as a self-indulgence but because that's what human beings look like without the distress. If you are trying to be human, you don't just get to struggle to be human. You actually have to try to be human.

You have to be pleased with the challenges we face. We have a lot of them; a lot of things are destructive and oppressive and have to be changed. But we are in better shape,² and in a better position, to change them than humans have ever been before.

We don't have to wait until every single battle is over to be pleased or to understand that we are going to win. We have a lot of work to do, and it should be interesting and pleasing to do that work together. There is a challenge here: you might have to be happy. It's going to take some discharge; I can see that from your faces. We'd better have

a mini-session—three minutes each way. The phrase you get to use is, "I might have to be happy."

Well, that sounded good. Apparently you had something to say. How soon will you forget? This is chronic material.³ Your mind is saturated with it all the time. We wake up in this material, and it usually goes on and on, with few interruptions. Every so often something happens that snaps us out of it, and it's a good day. "Hey look, sun!"

This is something we shouldn't do alone, because we won't remember. We won't even remember to bring it up in the next session. We will go back and work on the usual things. They

continued . . .



KOLKATA, INDIA • MAURA FALLON

¹Tim Jackins is the International Reference Person for the Re-evaluation Counseling Communities.

²"In better shape" means in a better condition.

³"Material" means distress.

COUNSELING PRACTICE

... continued

do need work; a lot of things need work. But a chronic unawareness of this material leaves it unworked on, and plaguing us and holding us back.

This is not a criticism of the way you have had to develop your life. Some people feel criticized when they're challenged to change old rigidities. This is not a criticism. You have done amazingly well with the distress in place. The question is, what would you be like without it? If you didn't just settle for "better than I have ever seen" or "better than my folks had" but tried to see what you—you, this perfect example of a human being—could be like if you got more slack?

LOOKING FOR ANOTHER MIND

I think human beings start out happy to exist and come out looking for someone else like them, who is happy with their arrival but also pleased that they themselves exist. However, they come out to us. Sometimes we can be excited for short periods, especially at the arrival of a new human. Sometimes we can show little snatches of being happy, but in general we can't. We often hope that young people will pull us out of our material. We do this rather than trying to meet them halfway, trying to be as pleased to exist as they are.

You see young ones try and try, and look and look for some other aware look coming back at them. And when they find it, they hold on to it for a long time. Children keep trying for a long time. One of the sad parts of watching children grow up is that at some point they stop looking to see if anybody else is out there. Actually, it isn't that they give up entirely; their looking just gets hidden under the distress.

You still look, but not when anybody knows you are looking. You've been pushed to where it has to be secret. You probably don't even think about what you are looking for, but you watch faces. I suspect you still hope for a face out there that will show what your own mind was like when you got here and were hunting for contact, looking out and trying to catch someone's eyes. If somebody could have just looked back and simply nodded, you would be using that memory, that contradiction,⁴ in every session now. But it wasn't possible for that to happen. Society had been too hard on people for too long. Nobody had the slack to be there in that way for the arrival of a young one.

⁴ Contradiction to distress

PLEASED TO EXIST, NO MATTER WHAT

One way of looking at this is that we're trying to get back what was taken from us in those early years, deciding to not accept the limitations that the accumulation of distress in society and our families put on us, deciding that we won't accept that as permanent. It's not permanent.

You are one of the best things that has ever happened in the universe. You are one of the most complex, interesting, interactive—whatever word you want to use. You are it. And, as I have said, you are a perfect example of us. It doesn't get better than you. It simply doesn't. You should be really pleased to exist, and most of us aren't. We can fight to exist, we can fight against injustice and take things on,⁵ but to be simply pleased that we exist doesn't cross our minds.

You could be happy to exist no matter how much work we have to do. No matter what the harshness is, the fact that you exist is such a wonderful thing. That something like us exists anywhere is just lovely. This is why we can watch little babies lie there and do nothing for hours and be thoroughly enthralled. Look, they are breathing. Oh, did you hear that sigh? The little curl of the lip—that's what I look at on babies. The shape of the mouth before distress gets there, the curve that is without tension. It reminds me of what I must have been like. It is entirely interesting and fascinating, and it should be. It's one of the best things in the universe.

So the challenge is to be pleased that you exist, no matter what. It doesn't depend on circumstances. It doesn't depend on anything else. It is your existence. Lots of other things follow from it, but the simple fact that you exist is so wonderful.

You can see in some children that they are just happy that they exist. They don't worry about it. They don't think about it. They don't have long-range plans or obligations. They are just happy when they open their eyes.

I don't know why it should be any different, ever, for us. We have lots of interesting and hard things to do, and lots of old hardships to discharge on. But that doesn't change the fact that we are us; we are that way still.

So another quick mini-session on the possibility of being pleased to be alive.

⁵ "Take things on" means face things and do something about them.

What Will We Be Like?

From “Open Question Evening in Copenhagen,” on pages 46 to 49 of *Start Over Every Morning*

Question: What will we be like when we have re-emerged from distress?

*Harvey Jackins**: I’m glad you asked that. I can give you a general picture, I think, because this is the direction people move in as they discharge.

You will wake up in the mornings like you did when you were a child on the first day of summer. “Hah! The world is out there, waiting for me! I can’t wait to get the grass between my bare toes.” You will have lots of things waiting for you to do, that you want to do. And it will be fun to decide which you’re going to do first. Because you’ll know you have all the time in the world, there’ll be no feeling of being rushed or hurried. You will look forward to

being with people you love and who you know love you.

You will enjoy finishing some work that is in progress or taking a further step with it. And you will be continually learning something new. If you already play the piano well, you’ll start the zither. You’ll go to the library every once in a while and look for all the books that you never thought of reading and start something completely new.

You will not only be thinking of how to keep your dishes washed and your lawn mowed just right, but, without fear or worry, you’ll be planning how to eliminate all nuclear arms from the world. You’ll plan how to organize support groups and classes and various other structures around you, so that you can lead other people in the same

direction. You will plan on what kind of a letter of introduction to write to the prime minister before you go talk to him personally. You’ll be figuring out how to get all the political parties to agree on one thing, which is no more armaments. You will walk down the street with an expression on your face such that everybody who passes wishes they knew you.

We won’t be able to be intimidated. Nothing will intimidate us. We’ll know that we have complete power. We’ll never forget that we have complete freedom of decision. We’ll never blame ourselves or anyone else. We’ll see the worst situation as simply a situation in which something needs to be fixed, not as something we have to get upset about. Does that make sense?

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

The Promise

High, high above,
Snowflakes falling,
falling, falling,
Silhouetted against
the sunless sky,
In the crook of the
old elm’s highest branch,
Robin’s barren nest.
Her return promises
bleak winter’s demise.
Her fledglings chirping,
the promise of
spring’s sunrise.

Sojourner Truth
Seattle, Washington, USA



NIKHIL TRIVEDI

“RC Morning First Aid”

At the recent Southern U.S. Teachers’ and Leaders’ Workshop, Tim¹ spoke of how nearly universal it is that we feel that we are not worthy and like we are truly alone. It goes back to the original hurt many of us experienced when we were not fully met with delight when we were tiny. We laughed when he described and illustrated with body language the “determined but unhappy” stance we take against the discouragement, persisting in moving ahead as best we can in almost everything *in spite of* our distress.

He reminded us that since this distress is nearly universal, it’s clearly not our fault. But the question is, what could we each be like without it?

The first contradiction² is to not hold on to any limitation to or condition for our goodness. Instead just be pleased to exist, no matter what. No worry, no thinking about it, no long-range plans, no performance required. What if each of us woke up that way every morning, remembering to use our mind to simply delight in our existence?

¹ Tim Jackins

² Contradiction to the distress

The second contradiction is to help each other, to cultivate a network of good, delighted minds and ongoing human contact. We can be creative with simple strategies, make excuses for contact, keep our Communities alive and broad so that none of us needs to pin all our needs for help on just a few relationships.

My inspiration on return from the workshop was to set up a regular mini-session every morning, in support of remembering how delightful it is simply to be my alive self and discharging whatever might be in the way that particular morning. I’m calling it “RC Morning First Aid,” and setting it up with seven Co-Counselors—some from my local Community and some who are geographically distant with whom I want to stay connected.

It seems like a simple framework to repeatedly decide to be as pleased and delighted to exist as young ones are, and to have two good minds working together to remember and discharge. I am excited to see what comes out of this over time.

Carol Wilburn
Chapel Hill, North Carolina,
and Sandpoint, Idaho, USA

Men Discharging on Pornography

At the World Conference there was much discussion about adding something about pornography addiction to our requirements for RC teachers. It was another sign that our Community is, more and more fearlessly and deliberately, challenging the patterns installed on us by an oppressive society. Each of these patterns freezes some part of our intelligence into immobility and limits what we can do collectively to handle the challenges we face.

A concern I have is that men, in particular, might be asked directly whether or not they use pornography. Are we (the Community) ready to ask that question? Are we ready to give honest answers? Are we ready to handle our responses to the answers in a human way?

As RCers we understand that no human is free of the patterns installed by racism, class oppression, sexism, anti-Jewish oppression, the oppression of young people, and so on. We acknowledge the goodness of humans while we assist them to discharge the patterns. We remember that people are



ARIZONA, USA • LISA VOSS

not “evil” for having patterns, including addictions, and that they resisted their imposition as best they could, given the entire situation at the time.

It seems to me that we are less able to hold these perspectives with addiction to pornography. It is generally seen as more personal and morally reprehensible than other patterns. So we have been much more silent about it.

As a Community, we have found many effective ways to work on sexual distresses, and many of us have dramatically improved the quality of our relationships as a result. However, we have only been able to go so far,¹ because of how deeply we have all been hurt in the area of sex.

¹ “So far” means a limited distance.

We need to build more safety. We need to find ways to work on the distresses that will not risk the good relationships we have with each other. Heterosexual men, in particular, are concerned that they might lose the good relationships they have with women if the women know everything that is in their minds.

HELPING MEN DISCHARGE

Here's what I have done in men's support groups and classes since the World Conference:

I have said that the work done so far on male domination and sexism has brought us to the point where we are ready to take on² some of the institutions of male domination and sexism and capitalism—a major one being the pornography industry. And I've said that I think this work should be done in the spirit of the Men's Commitment, which states in part, "I will permit no slandering or disrespect or blaming of any man for the hurts which have been placed upon him, and I will seek to restore safety to all men to discharge these cruel hurts."

As men, we tend to be secretive about our distresses, or, in desperation to escape our isolation, we vomit up all of our feelings without regard to the listeners' attention. After doing the latter, we look around and see horrified people who have completely lost their attention for us—and we find ourselves alone again, at the end of a very long limb.³ This is humiliating and has happened to most of us. I wanted to create the safety for men to be able to effectively discharge their sexual distresses. My judgment was that, at present, this would happen best if they did not say too much.

The goal, of course, is for men to be able to be open about everything.

² "Take on" means undertake.

³ "At the end of a very long limb" refers to the limb of a tree and means in a very difficult, vulnerable position without enough support.

But I'm not sure we are capable yet of hearing all of what goes on⁴ in men's minds and still feeling caring for them. So in these groups I did not want to hear any "confessions." I suggested that if the men were going to say anything, it should be something like, "Pornography has colonized my brain."

I think that is true, whether men have deliberately used pornography or not. Pornography, at least in capitalist countries, is on TV, in advertising, in movies—is everywhere.

Some RC women have told me that their minds have been "colonized" as well. This "colonization" seems to be achieving its purpose of reinforcing sexism and male domination and damaging the relationships between the world's two largest groups of humans.

⁴ "Goes on" means occurs.



So far the men's sessions have gone well. Being able to reveal any struggle at all in this area has been a huge relief, though very scary. And the men have found a way to discharge without too heavy a load of feeling bad, which would shut them down. I should add that they know that I love them. I have backed⁵ these men in difficult areas before.

I think we are ready to do this work—and that it will move both men and women forward. To challenge these distresses, even in the slightest, will be liberating to everyone and lift a great weight off the world. Just to know it is being done, and to see people survive the experience, will be a huge relief.

Dan Nickerson
Freeport, Maine, USA
Reprinted from the RC e-mail discussion list for leaders of men

⁵ "Backed" means supported.

Men Going Slowly as Clients

Last week I had my men's support group work on the issue of pornography. It went great. I shared Dan's posting¹ on the subject. Then I held tenaciously to his suggestion of going slowly. I also asked the men not to share details unless they were well connected to each other and to their own goodness.

No one shared details, and everyone discharged quite well. We were all inclined to jump over our feelings and our awareness of connection, and it turned out to be² a giant relief to go slowly.

Michael Saxe-Taller
Berkeley, California, USA
Reprinted from the RC e-mail discussion list for leaders of men

¹ See previous article.

² "It turned out to be" means it resulted in being.

We Can Regain Our Full Humanness

I am a white heterosexual U.S. male in my fifties. Early isolation and disconnection, combined with easy access to pornography, caused me to become addicted to pornography and masturbation—in the false hope of feeling connected and not alone.

When I was six years old, I was watching television with a glass of milk and cookies and was touching my penis and feeling some positive sensations. My father yelled, "Stop it!" and I did. This is my earliest memory of masturbation.

My father subscribed to *Playboy*.¹ He would leave it on his bedside table. I remember looking forward to being alone in the house so that I could sneak looks at my father's *Playboy* magazines and masturbate. I was left alone a lot and, in retrospect, felt very alone.

Soon looking at pornography and masturbating became associated such that I would not do one without the other. I did them when I was feeling isolated, alone, and bored. They produced some positive physical sensations, and there was a thrill in doing something I was not supposed to do and getting away with it.²

I have counseled a lot on my addiction to masturbation and pornography, though I still have more to do. I have also led numerous groups on the topic. Here are some of my thoughts:

MALE HURTS AND SOCIALIZATION

As boys we are left alone early on, both physically and emotionally. We are not expected to need closeness, reassurance, or attention. This early abandonment leaves a huge void. We feel desperate to get physical and emotional closeness in our lives.

We are also socialized to control ourselves, to not express our feelings openly. We become afraid to be vulnerable, and therefore we fear intimacy (which includes being vulnerable and sharing feelings). Numbing out seems to make it easier to control our feelings, so we become susceptible to addictions.

We feel desperate for closeness, and society focuses our attention on sex as the only avenue for attaining it. Our desperation for closeness, with sex as the narrow means to achieve it, combined with our fears about intimacy and vulnerability, leads us to seek "pseudo-solutions," such as anonymous sex, one-night stands, paid-for sex, masturbation, and pornography. These are pseudo-solutions because

they do not offer real closeness. They are generally devoid of real intimacy with another person. Sexual fantasizing is systematically encouraged and keeps us disconnected from other people and distracted from awareness about men's oppression. All of this leads to huge profits for the pornography and other sex industries.

Another reason we are pulled to pseudo-solutions is that we have all experienced early hurts related to sex and our bodies. Because we are naturally eager to discharge these hurts, we tend to seek out situations that appear to contradict them but that often simply restimulate them. This explains the wide variety of pornographic images and sexual situations that different men are drawn to.

SOCIETAL MYTHS AND CONFUSIONS

We are given the following misinformation:

- "Masturbation is based on biological necessity; if we don't do it, we will have 'wet dreams.'" Reality: It is *not* biologically necessary.

- "Men must have sex, and it's better for them to use pornography and masturbate than to force sex on another person." Reality: Men do not need to have sex.

- "Pornography should be more widely distributed, as it is an outlet for men's sexual energy and thereby leads to a decrease in sex crimes." Reality: Men simply need to discharge on how they have been hurt. Pornography reinforces sexism, male domination, racism, ageism, and violence—all of which can lead to sex crimes.

- "Masturbation and pornography do not hurt anyone." Reality: We hurt ourselves when we act out an addiction. Also, images showing sexism, male domination, racism, and ageism hurt and confuse us and distort our human interactions. For example, men are led to believe that real-life sexual contact should resemble pornographic images. In addition, pornography is created, at least in part, via sex trafficking and forcing people to have sex under the threat and reality of violence.

- "Pornography is just fantasy and fun." Reality: It reinforces male domination and sexism and hurts the people who are used to create it.

COUNSELING ON MASTURBATION AND PORNOGRAPHY

Here are some counseling tips for eliminating addictions to masturbation and pornography:

- Remember that we men are completely good, completely good, completely good. And that we have been hurt.

¹ *Playboy* is a magazine depicting nude and scantily dressed women as sex objects.

² "Getting away with it" means not suffering any consequences.

- Tell your masturbation and pornography life story. How did pornography get introduced to you? What was going on³ in your life at the time?

- Talk about how masturbation and pornography have seemed to be useful and then say good-bye to them. Direction: "I have masturbated/used pornography for the last time, and this means . . ." Discharge on what you would have to face, feel, and discharge if you lived your life without masturbation and pornography.

- Decide, as often as necessary, to stop masturbating and using pornography. Meanwhile, don't let engaging in them be an excuse for feeling bad about or blaming yourself. You are not bad in any way. You have been hurt and can discharge your hurts.

- Discharge on your earliest memories connected in any way at all with sex.

- Scorn the shame, embarrassment, secrecy, and humiliation associated with masturbation and pornography. For example, say, "I have used pornography, haven't you?" in a light tone.

- Use "blanks" to tell stories associated with masturbation and pornography. I've led a variety of groups for "People Who Are, or Do, *Blank*." The participants never talk directly about the content of what they are discharging on. This keeps them from rehearsing the distress and restimulating the people who are listening.

- Listen to women as they talk and discharge about sexism, male domination, and pornography. Hearing about these things from the women we know and care about makes real their devastating impact on women's lives.

- Organize and lead efforts to eliminate the pornography industry and people's addictions to masturbation and pornography.

- Stop doing things that lead you to act out the addiction. For example, block "adult" material on your computer, stop subscribing to cable-television movie channels.

- *Do not* bring pornographic material to Co-Counseling sessions or describe in detail what you have been most "interested" in. We need to discharge the hurts that underlie the addiction, not rehearse them.

POINTS TO REMEMBER

Here are some points to remember when counseling on masturbation and pornography:

- These are addictions. Counseling on them is basically the same as counseling on any other addiction or chronic pattern. The key is to decide to stop acting out the behavior. This will bring up the feelings we need to discharge.

- Heavy-handed, oppressive, abusive interventions early in our lives left many of us understandably suspicious of any "authority" telling us to stop masturbating or using pornography. We can discharge on the early incidents, stand up for ourselves "back there," and then choose rational instead of reactive behavior in the present.

- A support group can greatly facilitate work on these addictions. Discharging any chronic pattern requires repeatedly and in an ongoing way contradicting the underlying distresses (in my case, isolation, boredom, and disconnection). This includes setting up our lives to contradict them (in my case, by finding real closeness and intimacy, pursuing interesting activities, and taking every opportunity to notice my connection with others and our mutual caring).

- Our counselors also need to be discharging their distresses related to pornography and masturbation, in order to have the attention to be effective counselors for us.

- We can remember that distresses from our identities and oppressions—for example, Catholic shame and secrecy, Jewish terror, GLBTQ⁴ defensiveness—tie into our addictions.

- When counseling on an addiction, as the underlying distresses are brought to the surface we may temporarily feel an increased pull to act out the addiction. This is the pattern battling for survival. One solution is to counsel on the addiction regularly and repeatedly, rather than intermittently.

- Once again, we men are completely good. The confusions, hurts, and addictions were installed on us when we could not resist them. We do not deserve blame or reproach for having them. We want to, and can, discharge and regain our full humanness.

Anonymous
USA

⁴ Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer



LAUREN ACZON

³ "Going on" means happening.



LYNDALL KATZ

Attention Away from Distress

A transcript of a demonstration, at the 1986 Peace and Disarmament Activists' Workshop, in which Harvey Jackins helps someone discharge with attention away from distress

Harvey: Do you want to try attention away from distress?

N—: Sure.

Harvey: Okay. What kind of universe do you live in? Is it big enough?

N—: Yes. (*laughs*)

Harvey: Would you say, "I live in a big enough universe."

N—: I live in a big enough universe.

Harvey: "With a nice dependable sun that gives off energy at the same level for billions of years."

N—: (*repeats*)

Harvey: "Consistently, day after day."

N—: (*repeats*)

Harvey: So nice! (*N— laughs*) Big enough universe, pretty galaxy, dependable sun. Ahhh. And you are located on earth. Is that the planet?

N—: That's the planet.

Harvey: Yes, that's the planet. Of the nine planets, I understand only one of them has water and air on it. Do you happen to be on that one?

N—: Yeah . . . (*laughs*)

Harvey: Gee.¹ Summarize your luck to them out there.

N—: The universe is big enough. (*laughs*) We go around the sun, and it shines every day for billions of years. (*laughter*) And I got to live on the planet with water and trees.

Harvey: Did you get to be alive, or did you turn out to be² a rock?

N—: Most definitely alive. (*laughter*)

Harvey: Kind of nice, isn't it? There are a lot more rocks than there are live things. You get to be alive?

N—: Definitely.

Harvey: When you think about it, it's quite a break.³

(*Several repetitions, with laughter*)

Harvey: Most life functions on a complex but fairly low level. You didn't happen to get to be one of the intelligent life forms, did you?

N—: Yeah, I got that, too.

Harvey: (*whistles*) In a big enough universe, a beautiful galaxy; a dependable sun, water, and air planet; got to be alive. Did you get to be intelligent and sometimes aware?

N—: Yeah.

(*Some repetitions, with laughter*)

Harvey: Oh boy!⁴ (*whistles*) You're in a great situation, man. (*laughter from N—*) How does it feel to win nine sweepstakes like that, one after the other?

N—: It's great. (*laughter*)

Harvey: Would you tell them that your situation is great?

² "Turn out to be" means end up being.

³ "Break" means lucky happening.

⁴ "Oh boy" is an exclamation.

¹ "Gee" is an exclamation of surprise or enthusiasm.

N—: My situation is really great. (laughter)

Harvey: Say it in a positive tone of voice.

N—: My situation is absolutely great! (laughter, shaking)

Harvey: I understand that most of the intelligent beings on this planet of yours spent their lives not knowing their real nature because their lives were disturbed by distress. You didn't happen to live at a time when humankind was beginning to discover its real nature, did you?

N—: Yes, I did. (laughter, shaking)

(Several repetitions, working with tone of voice)

Harvey: I understand that only a handful, relatively, of the world's people are actually in contact with this discovery. You didn't happen to . . .

N—: You guessed it. Yeah. (general laughter)

Harvey: You're participating in its rediscovery?

N—: Yeah. (laughs)

Harvey: Behold! A fortunate man! (lots of laughter from N—) How could any little difficulties ever attract your attention when

you've got a situation going like that? (laughter and shaking from N—) Lucky! Oh my God!

N—: Lucky, I'm really lucky. (gales of laughter; shaking)

Harvey: I think I'll just stand here and admire you. (N— shaking)

(Repetition of N—'s good luck)

Harvey: This really happened to you? All these dreams come true? You got to exist in a really big universe, a lovely galaxy, adjacent to a dependable sun, on a lovely air-and-water planet? Got a chance to be alive instead of just a rock? Got that very unusual chance to be intelligent and sometimes aware? And live at a time when everything is finally coming out in the open and the sun is coming up over the horizon? Oh God. (N— shaking) I sure admire you. What a break. What a fortunate person. (more shaking) What a fortunate person. Can we put a check on this part of it?

N—: Yes.

Harvey. (to the group) Would you be happy if your client discharged like that in a session? (general laughter) And did either one of us, that you could tell,⁵ pay any attention to distress? (general laughter again)

⁵ "Tell" means notice.

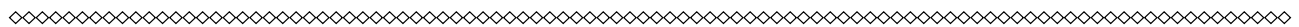


KENYA • TIM JACKINS



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Mistakes

Tim Jackins, at the Southern USA Teachers' and Leaders' Workshop, November 2013

I wish to apologize for a phrase I used today. It was a mistake. It was my mistake, and I apologize for it.

That's what has to happen when we make mistakes. We have to face them and apologize for them. We don't have to rationalize them in order to justify them. We don't even have to feel bad about them—but we probably will.

We do need to face the fact that we make mistakes. You make mistakes. I make mistakes. It's all right. It's part of our going forward. We have to look at them, see what they are, get them in our mind, discharge on whatever is connected to them so that we are less likely to make them again, and then go forward. If we don't do this, if we are not able to recognize and apologize for a mistake, no one can be clear about how well we actually think and what we can do.

It's important to remember that we are going to make mistakes no matter what we try to do, but especially if we try to go against oppression in any way at all. We can't think well consistently enough not to make some mistakes, and we have to go forward and not wait to be perfect. We all need to work on this and on all the feelings that come up around it.

If we make a mistake, most of us abandon the field, go off to the side, feel bad, and don't do anything. That's useless. We can start by working on what happened to us when we made mistakes as children. Most of us were belittled, humiliated, punished. There was no understanding. Our mistakes restimulated the people around us who had been treated even worse when they made one.

We need to figure out how to work on this material.* We need to be able

* "Material" means distress.

to look at what we do and understand that it's not going to be perfect, ever. It isn't supposed to be, and it doesn't need to be for us to make progress.

We make efforts going forward, and when we stumble, we get to look at it, say it out loud, counsel on it, and go on from there. It is the unacknowledged mistakes that confuse us, and it's the distresses from how we were treated when we made mistakes that make it so hard for us to face the fact that we do. So I apologize.

(A mini-session on "the mistake we hope we never make because we couldn't possibly apologize for it—or anything in that area")

Let's go out there and make mistakes. It's part of being alive. We need to be out where we make mistakes, or we are not close enough to the challenges we need to be facing.



To be fully alive, fully human, and completely awake is to be continually thrown out of the nest. To live fully is to be always in no-man's-land,* to experience each moment as completely new and fresh.

Pema Chödrön

* No-man's-land means an ambiguous or indefinite place.

Please take a look at the lists in the back of this *Present Time* and let us know if you find any inaccuracies. You can send corrections to <publications@rc.org> or to Rational Island Publishers, 719 2nd Avenue North, Seattle, Washington 98109, USA.

Thanks very much!
Rational Island Publishers

Priorities for Parents

Last month I led a day-long parents' liberation workshop for twenty-two parents in the southern California (USA) Regions.¹ The following seemed to resonate strongly with them, so I'm sharing it here.

When you boil it down, there are basically three things we parents do to support our young people's re-emergence. I think of them as three parts of a pyramid:

1. At the base of the pyramid is having sessions ourselves, getting ongoing support in the face of parents' oppression, and cleaning up the early distresses that complicate our parenting, our relationships with our children, and our intentions to provide solid support to young people. This is where we should put the majority of our effort.

2. In the middle of the pyramid are things like "special time,"² play listening, and RC family classes, playdays, and

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

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

workshops—all the things we do to build trust and closeness with our young people and help them feel more confident.

3. At the top of the pyramid is thinking about and paying attention to young people as they struggle and have hard times—encouraging discharge, setting limits and staying close in the aftermath, providing contradiction³ and perspective, and so on.

Too often the pyramid gets inverted—at least in our minds. We put the bulk of our attention and spend most of our energy on "giving children sessions" and thinking about their struggles and how to lend a hand. We put less time into things like "special time" and play, and even less into our own re-emergence—having Co-Counseling sessions, being part of an RC class, attending RC workshops.

I encouraged us as parents to *not* invert the pyramid and to keep aiming at putting significant time into and attention on ourselves—for our own sake as well as for the sake of our young people.

Randi Wolfe

Pasadena, California, USA

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

³ Contradiction to distress

A Session Every Time I'm Restimulated

At a recent "mental health" Liberation workshop, Janet Foner¹ counseled me on my leadership. As a leader, I know I am scared, but sometimes I can't feel my fear or remember to work on it.

When I was thirteen, my parents divorced and my mother (whom I was living with) got so restimulated that she thought people were trying to kill us. I lived with both real and imagined dangers, and there was no room for being scared. I wasn't supposed to have feelings. Nothing was supposed to upset me, and I was supposed to take care of my mother now that my father had left. I made a decision to be

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



FROM THE 2013 WORLD CONFERENCE OF THE RE-EVALUATION COUNSELING COMMUNITIES • EMILY BLOCH

"tough." Knowing I was not going to get help with the feelings, I decided to just go on. I survived by not noticing my feelings and putting one foot in front of the other, regardless of what was going on.² It worked well enough for surviving my childhood, but it doesn't work so

² "Going on" means happening.

well for leading in RC, or for living a life without migraine headaches!

Janet counseled me on noticing I was scared and on getting all the sessions I needed on how scared I was. She proposed that I call for a Co-Counseling session every time I get restimulated.

continued . . .

COUNSELING PRACTICE

... continued

I already had at least two scheduled in-person sessions and six phone mini-sessions a week, and often called for additional mini-sessions, and already felt embarrassed and guilty about needing and getting so much help.

With distresses involving sex, it was often hard to call. The material³ made me feel bad about myself, and bad about telling someone about it. I felt like a child who had been told not to tell anyone about sexual abuse, and I didn't always feel hopeful that RCers would be able to counsel me on that.

Janet believed that the oppression I'd experienced—as an ex-psychiatric inmate, as the son of an ex-inmate, as a Gay man—combined with the leadership I'd taken, inside and outside of RC—meant that I needed much more discharge than I was getting. She also believed that I could actually get through the backlog of restimulation and live my life much more in present time.

She had offered me this challenge (of calling for sessions every time I got restimulated) before, but I hadn't been ready to take it on⁴ or even take it seriously. I had felt that if I was restimulated, I should decide to get my attention out and exhort myself to do something productive. However, I hadn't been particularly good at making that decision, and getting unstuck, without being counseled by someone and discharging.

For the past several weeks I have been making *lots* of calls for sessions. Many times I have discharged well and then been able to do something more interesting than stay stuck in my distress. After discharging I have often found myself returning phone calls and staying on top of housework.⁵ (Letting myself get restimulated, without cleaning up

the restimulation, had led to messes accumulating in my house and my relationships.) I have reconnected with lots of people—especially people in other time zones and countries, as I am often restimulated late at night or early in the morning. This has been a wonderful reminder of the global nature of our RC Communities and a great contradiction to my isolation as a USer. It has had a positive effect on other people as well. People have enjoyed hearing from me. Some people have gotten sessions they would not otherwise have had. Some are even thinking of joining me in this radical experiment.

Sometimes I call and call, and all I get are answering machines. This is still a better use of my time than what I would have done otherwise. I probably would have frittered away time on *Facebook*,⁶ or restimulated myself even more by looking at pornography.

I find I can move things that I didn't know I could move, but sometimes it takes half a day to get enough discharge to really move them. In the past, if I got a ten-minute mini-session I would slog along afterward in a heavy, discouraged way and be a little more productive. I would feel that if something hadn't moved with ten minutes of discharge, then it wouldn't move. In fact, some distresses require repeated whacks to get through. Yesterday I spent most of the day having mini-sessions, and then suddenly and unpredictably I started crying heavily. Then my attention was *really* out, instead of just a little better.

I've noticed that once I reach a tipping point of restimulation, it is much harder to reach out and ask for a session—even with my decision in place and after all my successes. I need to anticipate when the heavy stuff is going to come up and schedule sessions in advance.

Sometimes I can't tell⁷ if I'm restimulated or not. What does it mean to call every time I'm restimulated, when I still have chronic distresses? Doesn't having chronic distresses mean that I'm restimulated all the time? Perhaps, but there seems to be a tipping point when I start to believe the distresses, or they keep me from doing what I want to do. (Sometimes they even keep me from knowing what I want to do.)

I'm still learning when I need to call for a mini, but there are some cues I've noticed. I need to call for a mini when

I want to look at pornography
I don't know what I want to do
I can't get myself to do what I
want to do
I'm upset about something
I just got into an argument with
somebody
The world looks like a miserable,
hopeless, scary place
I am alone, and I want to eat sugar
I want to eat foods that are
bad for me
I feel alone
I can't tell if I'm restimulated
I don't "feel like" calling anyone.

It seems obvious to me now that these are good times to get a session, but in the moment it is often a struggle. To the reader: I'd be interested in *your* list. I would also be interested in counseling with you. I am probably looking for a session right now!

Thank you so much, Janet, for suggesting this project. There is something you understand about RC that we can all learn from. I am lucky to have you thinking about me.

"Henry Church"
USA

Reprinted from the RC e-mail discussion lists for RC Community members and for leaders of "mental health" liberation

³ "Material" means distress.

⁴ "Take it on" means act on it.

⁵ "Staying on top of housework" means doing housework when it needs to be done.

⁶ *Facebook* is a popular social-networking site on the Internet.

⁷ "Tell" means perceive, notice.

Becoming Freer and Freer

The decisive, breakthrough foundation of RC is simply that what the society says you must not do, which is cry, shake, “rant,” yawn, laugh, and talk and talk and talk and be listened to—this whole process that society suppresses—is exactly what people need to do! It’s hard at first to help each other because we’ve been trained not to, but if we do help each other, marvelous things happen.

Once you catch up, once you’ve discharged a lot, most things you used to need a session about don’t bother you anymore. Most things that happen to me nowadays I’m relaxed about. There are a few things I’m still working on. But there are a thousand things that bother other people terribly that don’t bother me at all. People at workshops will say, “What do you do if someone criticizes you?” And if I can get them to get up and criticize me, I can show them. I say, “Thank you. I needed that information.” And the person says, “Hunh,” and criticizes me some more. And I say, “That’s very thoughtful of you. Thank you very much.” They start to laugh.

Step by step, you become freer and freer.

Harvey Jackins
From “Open Question
Evening in Copenhagen,”
on pages 50 to 51 of
Start Over Every Morning

Protecting Children from Distressed Material on the Web

Our ten-year-old is increasingly using our computers, including sometimes going on the Web. We are aware that there is an enormous amount of distressed material on the Web and that the inadvertent viewing of it could be hurtful to a young person. We want to protect him as best we can. We are not sure that parental controls are effective or sufficient. In particular, we don’t want to impose restrictions that communicate mistrust of him and his mind. I would love to hear any thoughts, experiences, and successes you have had in this whole area.*

Michael Saxe-Taller
Berkeley, California, USA



Hi Michael,

In my household we have a system that blocks computer games and almost every site that might involve nudity, violence, or pornography.

* The “Web” is the Internet.

I think parents are well advised to put this kind of control on their computers, and to require that parents of other children, whose homes their child visits, do the same.

I don’t think it’s a matter of mistrusting your child’s thinking. It’s a matter of keeping him safe from damaging material that he encounters by accident or because of his own curiosity. It’s good housekeeping. It’s proper treatment of a toxic substance. It’s a straightforward safety measure. These sites are designed to create an addiction. They are also set up to be difficult to exit from once a child has stumbled in.

The later in life that your child is exposed to the distressed material on the Internet, the better chance he has of shaking off (literally) the damage these sites are designed to inflict.

Patty Wipfler
Former International Liberation
Reference Person for Parents
Palo Alto, California, USA
Reprinted from the RC e-mail
discussion list for leaders of parents

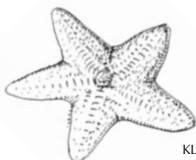


LYNDALL KATZ

Appreciating Our Fathers

In a greeting-card store, while looking for a Father's Day card, I saw a section of cards that I had never seen before. It was labeled "Father's Day—Appreciation." The cards were quite touching, and I bought one and sent it to my dad.

Later in a local men's support group I was leading, I talked about appreciating our fathers—having gratitude for what they did to care for us, teach us, provide for us, and get us here. Each of us had time as client, and I think we all struggled to fully take the direction and hold the perspective of thanks and appreciation. But I did hear stories about the men's relationships with their dads that I had never heard before and that showed more of the closeness and connection they'd had with their fathers. I think it was useful to try to move our minds toward the place of fully appreciating our dads.



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

Appreciating Men

Hi Mike,

What you wrote reminds me of a men's group I led a while ago based on the scroll by Harvey Jackins:

I am a good guy,
I am one of the good guys,
And the bad guys are good guys too.

Just about every guy had a good but hard session on the statement, particularly the last line. It seems to me that most of us have internalized the idea that men are rotten in some way or another. Fathers and other male leaders are often targeted with this feeling, since they are often the visible source of our oppression. I think it is good to take a stand, inside our sessions and outside of them, of appreciating all guys and being proud of ourselves as men. This includes, of course, our dads—each of whom did the very best that he possibly could.



Chris Austill
Somerville, Massachusetts, USA
Reprinted from the RC e-mail
discussion list for leaders of men



JIM MADDRY

I Want Us to Be Us

From a talk by Tim Jackins at the Australia and New Zealand
Pre-World Conference, April 2013

It's always possible to try a different solution, even if we don't know what one is. A number of people, in facing early places where they gave up, have said to me, "Yes, but how do you do that?" They're being asked to do something they don't know how to do. They never had the resource to develop the understanding of how to do it. It was interrupted by distress. And they couldn't discharge, so they couldn't think and figure it out. They didn't have the chance.

We forget that nothing is better at figuring out new solutions than the human mind. How to face and end our early distresses is something we have to figure out. I have figured out enough to talk some about it, and I can work with someone to show you what I know so far. But the important thing is that you have a mind that figures things out if you put it there, including things you don't know or feel hopeless about. The problem with our distresses, especially the chronic ones, is that we won't put our minds there because to do that feels like defeat again. We can't tell¹ the difference between the recording of defeat and the present difficulty.

This isn't going to be simple. It isn't going to be quick. I do think it is necessary and possible. I don't know of real problems that human minds don't solve if they keep going after² them. The key difficulty at this point is to not be run off by the recorded feeling, to remember that things are different now from when we got hurt. We went through day after day after day of hurt existence, so the feeling has that tone to it. Persistence is needed to keep our mind there—talking about it, and not hoping for a quick solution—but I have no doubt that it can move.

We also have to do things we don't feel like doing. I don't think there's a comfortable way of facing the early chronic distresses. We are going to be very uncomfortable. Part of the discomfort involves trying hard, out in the open, in spite of all the things that came at us when we tried as children—all the belittlement and the negative phrases. We now have to do something that we weren't allowed to do then.

I've decided that, for me, the result doesn't matter. What matters is what I choose to try to do. I will try to do it the best way I can. I will try to be successful, but I don't really care if I am. I care that I get a chance to find out what it might be like to be human again—like it was at the start. I've built a successful life, but on a stiff, limited version of relaxed

¹ "Tell" means perceive.

² "Going after" means pursuing.



DUCK CREEK (PAINTING) • © SAMANTHA SANDERSON

reality, on a small piece of ground. I know how to do that, but it is not all I want. It is wonderful we can do as well as we do. It is necessary, but it is "not quite us" yet.

More than anything else, along the way to ending oppression and making things as good as we can, I want us to be us—finally. I want us to see what it's like to be human without continually being misled by distresses from the past. That's the way I want my world to be. I myself am willing to take any chance on that. I made a decision to do that; some of it is a little reactive, but it's useful. We can all risk facing the discomfort of the distresses we've had to put away. We can decide that it's worth it and that we have a chance to overcome all of it.

I will come back and talk about this in different ways, because when you go away by yourself you forget it. When I go away by myself, I forget. The best chance we have is here together, recognizing that this is not simply an individual struggle. It is all of us fighting in the same direction. It is a collective struggle, even though it happens in individual minds. We need each other's minds to be able to fight this battle.

Listening is where love begins: listening to ourselves and then to our neighbors.

Fred Rogers



Being a Good Counselor

I've been teaching a class on the difference between a "dilettante" counselor and a "pro," meaning like a pro golfer, a pro at putting out oil-well fires, things like that—someone who simply sees¹ that the job gets done well. There are certain features of a pro counselor that may be worth raising, that aren't ordinarily taught, in my opinion.

One is that I don't think you can be a good counselor and think of only "giving someone a good session." By now, I think in terms of

¹ "Sees" means makes certain.

the future of this person. What can I do in this contact I have with them, this session I'm having with them, to set up continued re-emergence—to line them up and chart their path to the stars? What commitments, what directions written out so they won't forget them, can I put in their head so that they will carry them forward? What connections can I make with someone else who will hopefully take them forward beyond that?

I also need to deliberately sort out in my own mind that this person is a child of God, is extremely lovable,

even if they've just been pissing² on my shoes an hour before or something like that. I have to get away from my response to their distress or I won't do a good job. If I can't get away from it, I try to beg off³ and not go through the motions and pretend I'm being a counselor at that point.

Harvey Jackins
From the 1986 Peace and
Disarmament Activists' Workshop

² "Pissing" means urinating.

³ "Beg off" means ask to be excused (from counseling them).



MARIAN FREDAL

I Can Proceed with More Confidence

Dear Tim,¹

I've listened a couple of times to your *RC Teacher Update* CD on growth.² The part that is catching my attention this morning is near the beginning, when you mention our discipline of working early.³ Then you wonder what it would be like if we didn't have some of our early material.⁴ What would happen if we weren't so concerned about our own existence? How many people would we be able to reach for? How well could we think about our relationships with them, and keep them in close contact with RC long enough to internalize it and decide to stay? (Those were not your exact words.)

¹ Tim Jackins

² Rational Island Publishers is producing a series of CDs, called *RC Teacher Updates*, of talks given by Tim Jackins at recent RC workshops (see page 105 for a complete list). The author of this article is referring to RCTU 36, *Building RC*.

³ "Working early" means discharging on early hurts.

⁴ "Material" means distress.

I've been working on my early material for some years, following the leadership of you and others, and will continue. I'm developing a pioneer Area⁵ that is growing. I'm starting to put more stock in⁶ my vision. I have less of a wistful longing to build an Area and more of a plan in progress. But as I have successes, I sometimes still have sessions on "What if I can't do it?"

In the recent CD you reminded me to assume that I most certainly can. I can carry a glimmer of being able to function and thrive without some of that old material. I can proceed with more confidence.

SaraLynne Thoreson
Cincinnati, Ohio, USA
Reprinted from the e-mail
discussion list for RC teachers

⁵ An Area is a local RC Community.

⁶ "Put more stock in" means take more seriously.

We Can Enjoy It!

From a talk by Tim Jackins at the Family Work Leaders'
Family Workshop in Massachusetts, USA, September 2012

We have made counseling resource available for young people in ways it wasn't available for those of us who are now adults. We've done a good job. We have shifted the landscape for our young people. We also keep looking at how we do it. As we get through our confusions, the work gets to shift along with us.

Especially in this work's early years, we dutifully gave children opportunities and pushed ourselves hard. It was useful. However, the dutifulness set in a certain tone that was short of our liberation. We can try for more than that for ourselves.

It is possible to push ourselves forever to play—but we also get to enjoy it. Which distresses do we have to challenge to enjoy it? Why is it hard for us to play on our own? Why do we sit instead of playing—until we are required to play?

We do very well. We do as well as anybody else does, and in a consistent fashion. But we also need to discharge as much as we can. We can't just keep going. We need to be open about how much work that has been and how hard we have pushed ourselves. We don't take care of ourselves just by pushing. It's great we can do it, but it can leave us pushing forever instead of discharging the material¹ so that it's not a push. Pushing forward is part of enjoying life, but we also deserve to simply be alive.

How do we act toward our young ones? We do well, but we also feign happiness. We smile and push ourselves to not sound the way we usually sound and not look the way we usually look. We try to look better than that, in the direction of being human and happy. The fact that we make the effort is what the young people use. They see that we are trying in their direction. They see that we are fighting as best we know how against what happened to us in order to keep it from happening to them. But the effort shows.

We dare not consider how happy we actually are to be with them. We dare not be openly happy about it. We are reasonable about it. Some young ones can still be openly pleased to see other young ones. They light up. They're

really happy. They can still be overjoyed. They can look happy and sound happy and run uninhibited just for the joy of motion. We can sometimes do an approximation of that, but in general we can't be openly happy; we don't fully notice the joy of existence. And it shows.

The material that has left us unsure and unhappy about others can feel unbearable. We try not to look at it. We don't know how to be as happy as we could be about other people. We don't allow ourselves to be overjoyed at the chance to be with them.

This is not a personal criticism—we all have this distress. It can't be any of our faults. It has to be because of what conditions were like for us. Nobody got to stay alive in this way.

We can more fully face the harsh separation and grief we went through early in our lives, and went through alone. Nobody made much effort toward us, so we toned down our behavior and our expectations. We toned them down and toned them down and toned them down, until we were like the adults. This has always been a limitation on what young ones can see in us. They take as important reassurance the fact that we try, but that can only go so far. We need to challenge and discharge our limitations so that our children can take heart and challenge theirs.

An odd little thing has helped me keep noticing this: my family's dog, which is now two years old. It's overjoyed. It's simply overjoyed. It has been treated well and kindly. It's overjoyed! It comes in and is beside itself²! It runs up, it wags its tail. It wants to snuggle, to lick. It will do all of that and then run back to others and do it with them, then run back again, and back. It's just so happy with its existence, and having us show up³ in it.

Can we be like that? Why aren't we? What do we have to discharge? What do we have to challenge to even think of being that pleased, especially out in the open? Who stepped on you when you were that happy? Who ended that possibility for you? How do we open this path a little farther? How do we (happily!) push out in this direction?

¹ "Material" means distress.

² "Beside itself" means in a state of extreme excitement.

³ "Show up" means appear.

Important RC Resources!

Short Talks by Tim Jackins, on CD

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

For a complete list of all the CDs produced up until now, see page 105 of this *Present Time*.

Anyone can order any of the CDs for \$10 (U.S.) each, plus postage and handling.

The entire 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, and 2013 four-CD sets are also available to anyone, for \$25 per set, while supplies last.

If you are a certified RC teacher, the upcoming four CDs per year are available on a subscription basis, and mailed out quarterly, for \$25 a year. You can order up to three years at a time.

Web special: The 12-CD set for 2006, 2007, and 2008, and the 12-CD set for 2009, 2010, and 2011, are each available for \$40 per set—if you order them on the RC website <<http://www.rc.org>>.

The Liberation of the Middle Class

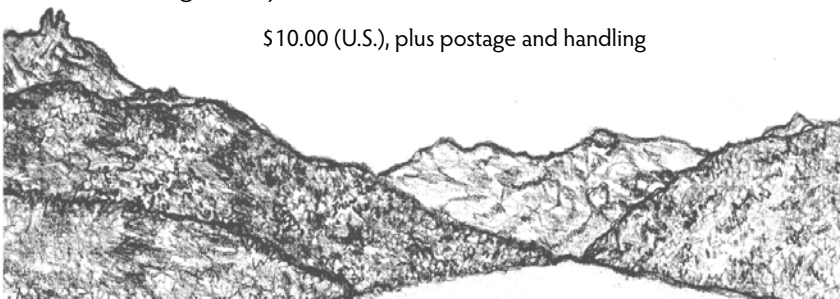
(CD #1002)

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

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

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

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



LOTAHN RAZ

New DVD: Moving Toward Liberation

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

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

Ordering information on page 110

I'm Proud of Us

I attended the recent Eliminating Racism Workshop led by Barbara Love¹ and Tim Jackins. The still undischarged effects of internalized racism cause me to struggle when I want to share my thoughts, but I've decided to stand against that and share what I can. I'm following Barbara's direction to all of us Black leaders: "No matter what you may feel, just open your mouth and let the words fall out." So here are some words falling out.

I had decided that nothing would keep me from coming to the workshop. I have no greater wish than that a public, loud, open discussion and debate about racism take place every day and in every way possible. But that didn't stop me from feeling trepidation and uncertainty about what I might have to face at the workshop. Typically people of the global majority and white people work on racism separately, but I was willing to give doing it together a try.

I have observed and been with my beloved white Co-Counselors over these last years of intense eliminating-racism work, and there's no doubt good work has been done. However, so many racist patterns are part of the "wallpaper" of white existence that they go undetected by white people. These patterns are quite visible to us people of the global majority. I'm therefore agreeing with Barbara and Tim that we have to play a part. We must strengthen our counseling muscle. Even if we can't yet be counselors

¹ Barbara Love is the International Liberation Reference Person for African Heritage People.

for white people on racism, we must at least teach and lead them on the topic.

I'm so proud of Barbara Love's beautiful strength and courage in her implacable efforts to end racism. Her intelligence shone throughout the workshop. She and Tim had made a brilliant decision to have Tim back her mind in this effort. It was a joyful experience for me to watch their two minds work together so elegantly on a topic that has stymied the world for so many hundreds of years.

Barbara started us off with an historical perspective on the creation of racism. She brought home² how racism has been used over and over to separate and weaken people so that greed patterns can win. Then, with Tim's support, intelligence, and perspective, we looked more deeply into the effects of racism on each of us, as individuals and as members of our Communities.

We had to take some deep looks at each other. Of course it wasn't always a pleasant experience—but racism isn't pleasant, so we had to expect that. I especially appreciated having the space for hard things to come up and having the leadership so that we never had to go away and give up on each other. We could stay and keep reaching for connection across race, no matter what. It touched my heart.

Every effort was made to have each topic group led by a person of the global majority and a white person. In most cases, the person of the global majority was the main leader of the group.

² "Brought home" means made very clear.

At one point we people of the global majority were asked to look around the group of two hundred and twenty-one people and choose a white person we didn't know and exchange life stories with that person for ten minutes each. That was not a simple experience for me. It immediately brought up how much I worry about hurting white people's feelings, how I often don't notice white people I don't already know, how I'm never quite sure if I trust white people I don't already know, and how I'm not sure I want to know white people I don't already know. Anyway, we all did it.

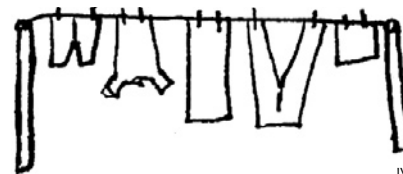
It was interesting to look at the white Co-Counselors I didn't choose and wonder what, if anything, that meant for them, and then to finally choose a person and discover her humanness and our immediate connection. I learned something important there—about trying to see a person rather than just the overarching whiteness. I've already noticed a difference in how I handle things and think about people and relationships, out in the world as well as in Co-Counseling.

I'm proud of us and our work and especially excited to be in Re-evaluation Counseling after this brilliant workshop, and at this time.

Fela Barclift

Brooklyn, New York, USA

Reprinted from the e-mail discussion list for RC Community members



JV

More than an RC Slogan

I attended the Eliminating Racism Workshop led by Barbara Love¹ and Tim Jackins. My reason for attending was my growing concern that “ending racism,” which had attracted me to RC, was becoming only a clever RC slogan.

A few days before the workshop, Barbara sent out an e-mail asking that people of the global majority counsel about their lives as a liberation story, and that they do this with both white and global-majority folks. White Co-Counselors were told to tell their life stories about racism to white people and then to people of the global majority. We were to notice what we told to whom.

Telling my life story as a liberation story was hard. The best contradiction² was to say, “I survived it all.” I counseled with several Co-Counselors, both white and Black. I noticed that I am protective of my parents when I counsel with white Co-Counselors and that it is safe to tell Black Co-Counselors how hard it was.

At the pre-workshop for people of the global majority, Barbara challenged us to “step over the line” and live as if racism had ended. She encouraged us not to believe one bit of our internalized racism. We noticed our connection to each other and our solid Co-Counseling relationships. It was clear that people of the global majority must, and are, taking the lead in ending racism.

¹ Barbara Love is the International Liberation Reference Person for African Heritage People.

² Contradiction to the distress

At registration I noticed how many white Co-Counselors were coming to the workshop. Keeping my brothers and sisters of the global majority close was the right thing to do.

Demonstrations on relationships between people of the global majority and white people included people of the two groups making commitments to each other. A panel of white people answered the question, “How has racism affected your life?” A panel of people of the global majority answered the question, “How have you experienced racism in RC?” For me, the best part was that we did this work together.

My highlight was witnessing Tim fully support Barbara’s leadership. Racism and sexism got the double whammy.³ A Black woman got to freely speak without being interrupted, apologized for, interpreted, or criticized. A white man gave his unconditional support and followed a Black woman’s lead.

Thank you, Barbara and Tim, for demonstrating for me and all who attended that “ending racism” is more than an RC slogan. My Area⁴ Reference Person and I are already talking about how we can emulate parts of the workshop.

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

³ “Got the double whammy” means got hit by the combination of two forces.

⁴ An Area is a local RC Community.

A New RC Website

The RC website has been revised, updated, and reorganized. It will be online early in 2014. Watch for an announcement on the RC e-mail lists.



COSTA RICA • THERESA D'AMATO

Gay Oppression and Racism

Two weeks ago, I attended the Eliminating Racism Workshop in Maryland, USA, led by Barbara Love¹ and Tim Jackins. Before the workshop, Barbara had asked me to lead a topic group on the intersection of Gay oppression and racism—I'm a mixed-heritage Black female who identifies as bisexual. I had agreed, though I was scared to be that visible as a Gay person at a workshop on eliminating racism. I spent most of the first twenty-four hours of the workshop discharging on and planning for this topic group.

I am pleased to say that it went very well. I led it with a team of two other LGBTQ² people of the global majority and one white Jewish woman who is in the LGBTQ constituency. The group was open to LGBTQ people and heterosexual people, both global majority and white. Approximately twenty-five people came.

I opened the group by having everyone say something they loved about LGBTQ people of the global majority. That took a long time, and I thought it was the best part of the topic group. It was clear how much everyone there loved us, and loved the LGBTQ people of the global majority in their lives. Some of the things I remember people saying were that we are brave, fun, loud, warm, full of life, very ourselves, and strong liberation fighters. It built up an incredible amount of contradiction³ to have twenty-five people say what was great about us.

¹ Barbara Love is the International Liberation Reference Person for African Heritage People.

² Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer

³ Contradiction to distress

Following that, we did a mini-session. LGBTQ people of the global majority went together, LGBTQ white people went together, heterosexual people of the global majority went together, and heterosexual white people went together.



AMANDA MARTINEZ

After the mini I talked briefly about what it means to face these two oppressions. They are two harsh oppressions. What we need from our allies is tenderness, warmth, kindness, expectation, and an invitation to be fully ourselves. One of the others on the leadership team talked about the fact that these oppressions are isolating. If you come out⁴ in your home community, you might be kicked out and sent away. When you are in the Gay community, you will likely be targeted by racism. Either place, you are left alone and feeling like you don't have a home. This is why it is a major contradiction when we can be together as people targeted by these two oppressions.

Another member of the leadership team talked directly to the allies. She told them that the more they

⁴ "Come out" means publicly acknowledge you are LGBTQ.

show, the easier it will be for her to show. We always have to hide. We need allies to ask about our lives but to talk about theirs, too. We also need them to ask what it's like in our various constituencies. It would be helpful to discharge with allies about what it is like to be LGBTQ at workshops for our global-majority constituencies—Asian, Black, and so on.

The white Jewish LGBTQ woman on the team said that she had led a topic table for white LGBTQ people earlier in the day. She reported that they had shared what they cherished about LGBTQ people of the global majority. In the context of their close relationships with them, the white Co-Counselors could see the double oppression they faced and had a good angle from which to discharge their own racism.

I also talked about how even though it's a unique position to be in—to be targeted by these two oppressions—we are also just "regular." It is an important contradiction to where we get exoticized that our allies remember that we're just regular people, too. What separates us from others is the oppression.

I did a demonstration with a Black woman who identifies as Gay. I let her know that it was for her, not for the group. I wanted her to get to show anything she wanted to show about herself and her life. She was able to notice how she had built contradiction in her life. Given the short amount of time we had both for the demonstration and for the topic group, I thought it was important to put her and our attention on the strengths we have as a group and what is going well in the face of our oppressions.

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LIBERATION

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We finished with another mini-session, again in the four groups. I loved seeing each group of us with “our people,” knowing that we all cared deeply about ending Gay oppression and racism and were excited to do that work together. The whole topic group was such a reinforcement of how we are all fighting oppression together and want to have closer relationships across our differences while we do it.

I was reminded again of how much it puts your face in⁵ an oppression to take leadership in the liberation from it. Deciding to lead this group forced me to look at where I feel terrified to be visible, and scared that I don’t have the right things to say. These feelings have everything to do with internalized Gay oppression, internalized racism, and internalized sexism, and leading the group helped me chip away at all of them.

⁵ “Puts your face in” means makes you face.

I love this piece of liberation work in Co-Counseling. It is where I can most readily see what it means to lift the weight of heavy oppression off of people—so that we can be much more fully ourselves.

“Lula Mays”
USA



A Successful Fight Against Racism and Sexism

Thank you, Diane,¹ for encouraging me to write about the Eliminating Racism Workshop led by Barbara Love² and Tim Jackins, particularly as it affected me as a female.

At her Friday-afternoon gather-in for people of the global majority, Barbara gave us a set of instructions to help us go into the workshop with a correct perspective on ourselves. They focused on remembering our significance, taking up space, and reaching for each other. These contradictions to internalized racism were important to me as a Black female going into a large workshop that was majority white.

I was oh-so-pleased to be led by Barbara, a Black woman, at a workshop that was not all Black people or people of the global majority. It also made a big difference to me to have Tim backing³ her as a Black female, so firmly and matter-of-factly.

I led a topic group on Saturday evening and had to fight hard to remember that I was smart and had useful things to say—a good and important fight for a large Black female of raised-poor and Southern⁴ heritage. I was on the team of women of the global majority who offered wrestling sessions to our sister women of the global majority—a powerful contradiction to the crushing intersection of sexism and

racism. When I had my turn as client in a wrestling session, it was clear to me that the way racism affected my Black father was deeply interwoven with how male domination played out⁵ in my family.

I took charge in my relationship with a man of the global majority I'm close to who was at the workshop. For several years I had taken the lead and the most initiative in the relationship. I decided it was time to invite him to take more initiative in a particular area of it, and I did that, as counselor, on Saturday morning. By Saturday evening he was taking that initiative in a much bigger way than before.

Taking the lead with him and inviting and expecting him to stay close and come even closer to me over time, though scary, has worked. I have fought against internalized sexism, internalized racism, and other oppressions to keep thinking about both of us and showing myself and how much I want him close. As a result, he has fought sexism, internalized oppression, and other chronic material⁶ just as hard in order to meet me. We are winning these battles together. It's clear to me that my fight to end sexism and racism is at the core of this success.



Shani Fletcher
Boston, Massachusetts, USA
Reprinted from the RC e-mail
discussion list for leaders of women

¹ Diane Balsler, the International Liberation Reference Person for Women

² Barbara Love is the International Liberation Reference Person for African Heritage People.

³ “Backing” means supporting.

⁴ Southern refers to the states of the United States that seceded from the union in 1861, leading to the U.S. Civil War.

⁵ “Played out” means been acted out.

⁶ “Material” means distress.

A Sick, Wounded Monster

The battle of women and their allies against sexist oppression has been the most widespread and hopeful of people's struggles in the last decades. The vicious oppression of over half of the people of the world had perpetuated itself without effective challenge for thousands of years. It was called into question and much of its foundations eroded in a remarkably short period of time, speaking historically. The main structure of the oppression still stands, its cruelty and viciousness still operate, but it is a sick, wounded monster. It can never recover its domination of human populations in the ways it dominated them for so long.

Harvey Jackins

From "Open Question Evening in Copenhagen,"
on page 217 of *Start Over Every Morning*

Language Liberation at the World Conference

I had the privilege of attending the RC World Conference in August 2013. My job was to assist Xabi Odriozola Ezeiza¹ in leading the interpreting coordination. We had to make sure that the conference could be understood by everyone for whom English was not their first language.

Interpreting was done in front of the conference in at least twenty different languages, following a rota.² At the same time, whispering interpretation was done throughout the room in seven languages.

We made sure that each interpreter up front had a support person. Coordination team members led daily meal tables for interpreters and for people receiving interpreting. Some people wore green armbands to show they were available to give attention to the interpreters. Others wore yellow armbands to show they were available to people receiving interpreting.

I liked being on a team that was thinking about how to make RC inclusive for everyone. I learnt a lot about how I need to take my leadership much more seriously. I am a working-class woman. My thinking was not valued as I grew up, and it has always been difficult to believe that I can communicate my ideas or that anyone would want to hear them.

At the conference I had to step outside of my comfort zone and do things that felt unfamiliar and new. I decided to be more aware of how I communicated. I noticed how often native English speakers talked compared to non-native English speakers. I noticed that some interpreters put interpreting before doing other things. For example,

they gave up their chance to speak out in group meetings or didn't take time to eat.

The conference provided me as an English woman the opportunity to think about and contradict the messages I had received about my place in the world and what my relationships with other people should look like. I realised how much I usually keep hidden. I received the message, "It is not my business to be involved in other people's lives, and it is nobody else's business what happens in mine." Realizing this helped me to discharge on where I was unaware, making assumptions, and wanting to keep quiet. Most important, it helped me to look at where I had given up

continued . . .



CORA LAKE, ANSEL ADAMS WILDERNESS, CALIFORNIA, USA • LISA VOSS

¹ Xabi Odriozola Ezeiza is the International Commonality Reference Person for Languages and Interpreting.

² A "rota" is a fixed order of rotation.

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on the hope of close connections with all people and to discharge on early separation.

I also realised that to be the ally I want to be to non-native English speakers, and have the relationships I want, I have to question why I speak only one language—the most dominant one at that. At school, learning French was compulsory. But without any connection to people from different countries, it was hard to understand why I needed another language. I already felt very

separated from mainland Europeans. Now that I have the connections, I can see that learning to speak other languages would reduce the inequality of power between native English speakers and native speakers of other languages. Communication is a two-way thing, so if only one person is trying to do it, it is not really communication at all.

I have now decided to learn Basque, because “one language is never enough” (in Basque, “hizkuntza bat ez da nahikoa”). Having made

this good decision, I get to work on early memories, messages about communication, and where as a young person I gave up expecting to be heard or listened to.

I am changing my mind about the messages I got from the society I was born into, and working out what I think, believe, and want for me. The world feels bigger and more hopeful than ever. As Xabi said to me recently, “I think we will win.” Indeed—I decide we will.

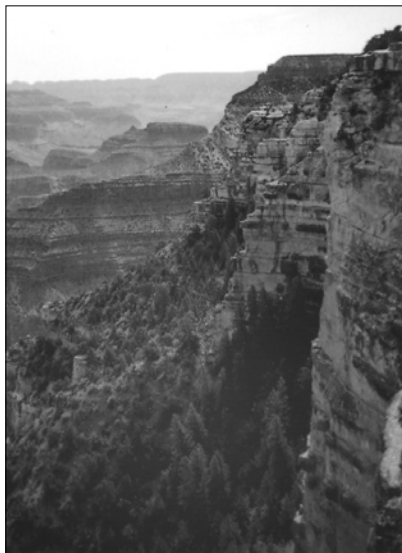
Shirley Thatcher
North Somerset, Bristol, England

Toward a Policy on Disability

WHO ARE PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES?

People with disabilities are people with apparent or non-apparent conditions that sometimes affect their ability to perform major life activities in the same way as people without disabilities. An apparent disability could be a mobility impairment, such as from a spinal-cord injury, multiple sclerosis, or cerebral palsy; or impaired vision or hearing; or a back or other body injury. A non-apparent disability could be a learning disability, an allergy, or another health-related condition.

We people with disabilities are of every constituency—every ethnicity, religion, sexual identity, culture, and class background. We include educators, scientists, blue-collar workers, activists, managers, students, artists, writers, parents, partners, and lovers. Perhaps most important of all, we are problem solvers. We use all our experience, thoughtfulness, creativity, and resilience. We employ technology, equipment, and personal care assistants to help us live our lives in school, at work, in social settings, or at home. Disability oppression and advocating for our human rights unite us as a worldwide constituency. Currently about a third of people with disabilities identify as a constituency, based on being targeted by disability oppression.



STEVE BANBURY

Some of us have lifelong disabilities, starting at birth or in childhood. Some of us acquire disabilities later in life. The distresses that get laid in are different depending on the onset and nature of the condition. It is particularly difficult for those of us who are aging to suddenly discover that we have lost some of our hearing, or that our knees or hips no longer function well, or that we have developed chronic backaches or digestive problems. It's important to look at these issues and admit our disappointments, and our yearnings to return to what we had considered a “normal” life.

If we look at our disability-related challenges from outside the oppression, they simply require us to develop the tools and relationships we need to help us discharge and go ahead and live as big and wonderful a life as we can.

CAN A DISABILITY BE DISCHARGED?

We have learned in RC that with discharge the symptoms of some disabilities can decrease or even disappear. Other disabilities remain unaffected by a person's re-emergence from distress (although the effects on the person's life can certainly change). Which conditions can be discharged is speculative. We don't yet have enough information to make any assumptions or to formulate a theory.

LANGUAGE

Describing people with disabilities is charged with confusion. Some people prefer the term “disabled.” Others dislike that and may use euphemisms, such as “with special needs” or “differently abled.” A useful distinction is between *impairment*, which is the actual physical condition, and *disability*, which results from interaction with an inaccessible environment and the limitations created by society’s attitudes and structures. Like with other constituencies, the so-called inherent qualities of disabled people are the excuse, not the reason, for the oppression.

CAPITALISM AND DISABILITY

Capitalism is based on profit and the private ownership of goods and services. It requires high productivity from an underclass of workers, which also guarantees hefty profits for the owners and managers. Because an enormous number of individuals need work and thus are willing to work for low wages and few benefits, if a worker becomes disabled on the job, she or he can be easily replaced.

Capitalism defines success in financial terms. Profit is everything, and more is better. Capitalism has convinced us that independence is based on financial and material well-being. It tells us that we must rely on ourselves and that the opportunities and wealth we accumulate are ours alone to enjoy. It says that we should only be concerned that we and our own families are cared for and protected from harm. It teaches us to feel incompetent if we ask others for help. It discourages building teams of comrades or allies around ourselves. It can leave us feeling intruded upon by others “invading our space.”

As young people, we are taught to excel as best we can in order to build self-confidence and become “marketable” in a corporate world. Our lives are structured to prepare us for competition with our peers. As we grow up, “success” is determined not by our happiness but by how much money and how many material goods we acquire. People with disabilities, who may not be able to compete economically, become casualties of the economic system.

Throughout the ages, economic systems have made people with disabilities a classless and “non-productive” group. They have been seen as incapable of keeping up with the “normal” production rates of profitable goods needed to sustain a growing economy. In ancient societies, if they weren’t immediately killed, they were exploited as court jesters or wise sages, or paraded about like show animals. In no society have they been acknowledged as equal to their non-disabled peers.

DISABILITY OPPRESSION

People’s early experiences with bodies—their and other people’s physical selves and ability to communicate clearly, differences in mobility and health—set them up¹ for confusion about bodies, needs, and inherent worth.

The media and able-bodied parents, teachers, and friends encourage able-bodied children to be cautious of anyone who looks, acts, talks, walks, or thinks differently from what society has identified as normal. Some people end up thinking a disability is contagious.

We who have disabilities are taught to be embarrassed and make every effort to hide them, even though they are part of what makes us special and unique. We are rejected by a society afraid to accept the diversity of disability.

Misinformation, stereotypes, and assumptions about people with disabilities (that we are a burden, ugly, dependent, asexual, evil, saintly, inspirational, courageous, lacking in intelligence, and so on) date from ancient history and were reinforced by the eugenics movement² of the nineteenth century. Currently media-reinforced stereotypes, the youth and beauty culture, the fitness industry, and so on, convey misinformation and confusion about people with disabilities and our attractiveness and acceptability.

Some of us were denied education because no one thought we were smart enough to learn or understand anything. Sometimes we were left isolated and lonely while our peers did interesting and worldly things.

Medical practitioners, counselors, clergy, and friends convinced us that investing too much in our futures could be a waste of time. We received minimal assistance from vocational and rehabilitation agencies. Well-intentioned service providers seemed more interested in counting us as one more statistic on their monthly report than helping us reach for a more productive life. Those of us with the most significant disabilities were seldom even tested for job opportunities. Being unable to prove ourselves profitable (as defined by the dominant white, male, able-bodied society), we were often relegated to poorly run institutions and nursing homes. Although it would have cost less to care for us outside of institutions, service providers and the medical profession preferred to keep us out of sight. Those of us who could work often worked

continued . . .

¹ “Set them up” means predispose them.

² The eugenics movement sought to “improve” the human race by controlling who would reproduce. It targeted people with disabilities—along with Jews, people of color, poor people, and others—with sexual sterilization, institutionalization, and death.

LIBERATION

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in blue-collar jobs. Before they even knew who we were, service providers decided our fate, based on some report about “handicapped” people. We were rarely asked what we wanted; we were told what we would have.

Disability oppression intersects with and is reinforced by all other oppressions but primarily by “mental health” oppression (disability being defined as not normal in the way that heavy emotions, like anger or fear, are defined as irrational or dangerous), young people’s oppression (disability being synonymous with dependence and immaturity), and classism (disabled people being viewed as unworthy because they are unable to be “productive”).

Society tends to blame individuals for their failure to be “normal.” People with disabilities are now identifying disability oppression as those social attitudes and environmental barriers that demand “normalcy.”

Disability oppression includes low expectations that we people with disabilities will function competently and contribute to and participate in society. It creates self-doubt and lessens the belief we have in ourselves. The contradiction³ is to live outside the oppression by showing our intelligence, creativity, perseverance, and beauty in every possible way.

THE COMING OF OUR RIGHTS

In the past there were two main models of disability: the charity model, which views people with disabilities only as recipients of pity and donated resources, and the medical model, which sees disabled people as patients who are unable to take care of themselves, work, or contribute in any big way to the wider world. Under the influence of these models, those of us with very visible conditions were often looked at with pity or compassion. Non-disabled people would step aside when they saw us approaching, pat us on the head for any small accomplishment, or want to take care of us. They seldom asked for our input.

Change for any oppressed group occurs when the people in the group find their own voice. In the late 1950s, inspired by disabled veterans returning from World War II, and in movements for liberation in the 1960s and early 1970s, we people with disabilities—supported by feisty, self-asserting parents who bucked the system—began to demand our rights as citizens who deserved equal access. We were tired of the patronizing attitudes and the inaccessibility of education, housing, and transportation. A civil rights or consumer model was born that recognized people with disabilities as the drivers of, instead of the passengers in, their own lives.

³ Contradiction to the oppression



LAKE ONTARIO, NEW YORK, USA • BETH CRUISE

We began to live bigger lives, as we saw others like us deciding that we all had a right to a big life. Colleges, universities, training schools, and other institutions did not go out of their way to become accessible to us, but we were let in and managed to change the culture for ourselves. Faculty and fellow students became our friends and advocates. Physical access began to increase as people worked together to make campuses more welcoming to us. New legislation broke down barriers that had kept us apart from other people. More pathways to higher education and careers became physically, professionally, and socially accessible. We became teachers, lawyers, scientists, bankers, writers, and joined many other professions. We began to form a philosophy that gave us hope and reunited us with our own power. And things began to change. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities attests to the success of the worldwide movement of disabled people organizing for recognition and power.

ACCESSIBILITY IN RC

In RC, accessibility means enabling persons with disabilities to attend Co-Counseling sessions, classes, and workshops. It can include building a creative and thoughtful team around a person to ensure that she or he can fully participate.

In addition to wheelchair access, accessibility can mean having refrigeration available for people who bring their own food to a workshop. It can mean making sure people have comfortable chairs or places to lie down, or printing workshop materials—like articles, rosters, and schedules—in larger-than-usual print. Hearing Helpers, available for rent from Re-evaluation Counseling Community Resources,⁴ are useful devices for those with

⁴ Re-evaluation Counseling Community Resources is the international office for Re-evaluation Counseling, located in Seattle, Washington, USA.

even minor hearing issues. A Community might subsidize the cost of a wheelchair-accessible van or taxi to allow someone to participate in an RC event. Co-Counselors can use fragrance-free body and cleaning products to ensure a comfortable environment for those who are sensitive to the chemicals that are in many of these products.

When looking for an accessible workshop site, the workshop organizer should find out what accommodations are needed for a participant with a disability. Is wheelchair access required? Does the participant need a chemical-free environment? Can a person's voice be heard throughout the room? Community finances must be considered when choosing a site, but care should also be taken to set up the most rational situation possible for a person with a disability.

In places where wheelchair access is poor but not impossible, the person with a disability can be asked if she or he is willing to accept makeshift arrangements with lots of allies around. Can makeshift or portable ramps be used? Can a bathroom door be removed? If the dining hall is inaccessible, can meals be eaten by a team of people at a different location?

For some people, getting lots of help will be restimulating. Several big sessions on it can make clearer what the options are. Others will find it a delight to have a thoughtful team around them. A team of allies can be a lovely contradiction, because of the intense focus on inclusion as well as the increased individual attention and help.

Because each of us with a disability has distinct needs, accessibility will have many different meanings. Thus it makes sense for people with disabilities to be included in the planning and negotiation of workshop sites. We are the experts on our own individual needs. Non-disabled Co-Counselors will not be able to understand or accommodate them if we are not involved. Please don't leave us on the sidelines or make decisions for us. To take the position that we should not have to worry about accessibility, that it should be done for us, is part of the oppression. It's like saying, "It is too much trouble to have you involved—we will do it for you." A slogan of our wide-world movement is "Nothing about us without us."

In RC we want to assist each other to function in the best way we can. We are eager to appreciate and validate each other's strengths and goodness. However, sometimes validations can have patronizing overtones and overwhelm people with disabilities who are trying to carve out a niche of their own while coming to terms with their condition. Phrases like "I don't think of you as disabled,"

"You have overcome your disability so well," or "You are so inspirational" send the message that the person with a disability is not okay. They often come from non-disabled folks who don't even know the person they are addressing and just want something nice to say. Every human being deserves to be validated based on her or his own reality and accomplishments. As people with disabilities, we deserve no less.

WHAT IS AN ALLY?

In the wide world, an ally is often a person who understands disability from either a personal or a work-related experience. Offering assistance, resources, and information to a person with a disability is part of the ally's job. RC allies do some of the same things; the main difference is that discharge is a critical component. RC allies counsel and support people with disabilities to discharge whatever is in their way of being able to manage, as best they can, every aspect of their life—from health care, to choosing appropriate accommodations, to securing satisfying employment, to having a big social network, to, of course, becoming a strong and visible presence in the RC Community.

To become more flexible and open to the various needs and goals of every individual, allies must take time to discharge and reflect on their own experiences with and assumptions about disability. They must understand why one person who uses a wheelchair is not like another, or why one person may want to be challenged and another is hesitant to take any unfamiliar risks.

WE ARE OUR OWN BEST ALLIES

Those of us with similar and different types of disabilities need to spend time together. We need to be each other's friends and allies. We need to appreciate the views and wisdom that come from the complex intersection of our various constituencies based on race, geography, sex, age, gender identity, and so on. No one but us can directly understand the experience, struggles, and delights of living with a disability. We need to fight for each other in the places where insecurity and self-doubt overwhelm us and prevent us from proudly directing our lives. We need to celebrate our collective and personal victories, while remembering that some of us are heavily oppressed and in great need of each other.

We need to know each other beyond the stereotypes that keep people with different disabilities apart and that create hierarchies in which one disability is considered better than another.

continued . . .

LIBERATION

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We need to insure that every life is seen as invaluable and worthy and create a safe space for one another to discharge, re-evaluate, and fully enjoy our lives.

A LIBERATION PROGRAM FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

Here is a liberation program for people with disabilities:

- Tell the story of your disability.
- Work on internalized oppression, taking full pride in your body and speech patterns.
- Work on your need for assistance, and take pride in being exactly perfect.
- Reach for close relationships with other disabled people, across all categories.
- Train allies and hold out high expectations for them. Teach them how to counsel us.

A PROGRAM FOR ALLIES

Here is a program for allies:

- Discharge about your body and health issues.
- Work on early memories of need and help.

- Discharge on what you were told about “them” and the assumptions you may have about people with disabilities.
- Challenge your caretaking patterns and any pull to make things accessible without asking what is needed.
- Take risks and try things as you get to know and support a person with a disability.
- Do not assume that you understand the lives and needs of people with disabilities.
- See being an ally as an opportunity to be close to and support a person whose life is different from yours.

Laurie Summers
Silver Spring, Maryland, USA
Assisted by Marsha Saxton
International Liberation Reference
Person for People with Disabilities
El Cerrito, California, USA

People with comments or suggestions are welcome to e-mail me at <lsummers@aaas.org>.

Laurie



KATHY TAYLOR



Black and White in the USA



Growing up in Richmond, Virginia,¹ USA, in the 1970s and '80s, I was both fascinated and bewildered by the idea of Black and white people. As a young boy of mixed heritage, I understood black and white more literally as colors, so the idea of “Black” or “white” as a race was quite confusing to me. People across a great variation of skin tones and hair textures would all identify themselves as Black, even people whom I was sure could pass for European or “white.”

Early on, I was told by my mother that I was “of the Black race.” However, at school I was targeted by other young males of African heritage for being light-skinned. This was sometimes with the threat of violence, sometimes with actual violence. Often upon meeting me, someone might simply ask if I was mixed. There was usually a tone of resentment if it came from a male, and one of intrigue if from a female. Either way, my “Blackness” seemed so often in question. I soon learned from my mom and my uncle, who could empathize with much of my experience, that I should expect this and that I needed to be really tough if I was to prevent being bullied.

In retrospect, I realize that all of this was likely the aftermath of the historic enslavement of Africans here in the Americas. Grown-ups around me would often make references to “back in the day.” These were references to the days of slavery.

Being a person of African descent with lighter skin was generally an indication that you carried some mix

¹ Virginia is one of the Southern U.S. States—states in which the slavery of African-heritage people was legal prior to the U.S. Civil War.

of Black and white, which came with certain social implications:

- 1) You received better treatment from white people.
- 2) You were often thought to be smarter, probably because you were part white.
- 3) As a male, you were seen as more feminine by others of African heritage—until you could prove them wrong, and there was much pressure to prove them wrong.
- 4) Many thought of you as more physically attractive because, in a society driven by white supremacy, people held a European ideal in their heads.

It was much later, in my late twenties, that I actually learned of my mixed heritage: mainly African and Native American on both sides of my family. One of my grandfathers was even half European. By this time I had traveled to a few places in the world that held different perspectives about race and racism and was having the growing sense that something surrounding me was just a little suspect. There were a few pressing questions on my mind:

What did “Black” and “white” really mean?

Who decided that humans should be labeled this way in the USA, or anywhere for that matter?

Why had “Blackness” seemed to cancel out my other ethnicities and those of others who were of African and mixed heritage?

By the 1600s, after both Europeans and Africans had for some years worked as indentured servants, a group of aristocratic Europeans figured out that the social construction

of a biologically based race would better serve to hold in place a class system similar to what they were accustomed to in Europe. It would “justify” the lifelong enslavement of people of African descent, whose labor was much needed in the “New World” we now know as the Americas. This enslavement would also be more easily enforceable, since Africans looked very different from Europeans and consequently could be more easily recognized and tracked.

As generations passed, the ideology of race and racism got reinforced over and over again. As people of African descent were born into slavery, they started to internalize the false notion of their own subordination. People of European descent were born into an oppressor role that all of society would train them for and coerce them into filling. “White” was now synonymous with “supremacist” and, from the perspective of many, with “racist.” “Black” or “Negro” was synonymous with a subordinate race. This ideology served to keep slavery legal for many generations to come.

Following the ending of legalized slavery in 1863, another hundred years of laws continued to authorize the oppression and hostile treatment of now Black Americans. These laws, often called “Jim Crow” laws, mandated the segregation of Black and white people in the South.² The “one-drop rule” defined a Negro or a Black person as someone who had a Black ancestor as far back as a great grandparent. In other words, if you had Black/Negro in you, that was legally who or what you were, as if

continued . . .

² The South refers to the states, in the southeastern part of the United States, that seceded from the union in 1861, leading to the U.S. Civil War.

LIBERATION

... continued

it somehow canceled out all other parts of you—you who had been contaminated with “Blackness.” (I read an account of a Haitian woman describing Haiti as predominately white because she viewed whiteness in a way similar to how many people viewed Blackness in the USA. If you had whiteness in you, that was who you were, as if it somehow canceled out all other parts of you.)

Many Europeans who later immigrated here (Irish people, Italian people, Jews of Eastern Europe, and so on) became “white” in doing so. Many hadn’t identified themselves that way before coming here, and those who had, had understood race in a different way. Becoming a citizen of the USA often required assimilating to a white Protestant

norm of “All American,” and the racial culture that was and is the USA.

The Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s gave rise to an awareness of racism and to the liberation of those who were oppressed by it. When I remember phrases like “Black Power” and “Black Is Beautiful,” I am proudly reminded of the African heritage I have in common with other Americans with whom I stand against racism. Ultimately, the Civil Rights Movement was about the ending of all oppression. It was a milestone in U.S. history. Because of it, we now have a president of both African and European heritage.³

³ Barack Obama, the president of the United States

When I take into account the diversity of people in this increasingly global society, and my profound connection to it, I am inclined to identify myself outside of the historic racism that is Black and white in the USA. I am a User of African, Native American, and European descent!

Moving forward, both as an RCer and in the wide world as a User of African and Native American heritage, my personal liberation will require that I fully claim all that I am, especially that which was stripped away by oppression. In Co-Counseling sessions, I am finding it useful to look directly and transparently at the historic enslavement and genocide of my people, noticing how it has affected me. What have I internalized as a result of this history? What would a world without racism look like?

Greg Lipscomb
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, USA



Keeping in Contact with Young People

For several years the RC Community has been assisting young RCers to keep using RC as they move away from home—for example, to college. Jenny Sazama and Megan Lynes are the two people overseeing this project.

We collect the names of young people who would like an RC ally to be a resource for them as they head off on their own. The ally is to stay in touch with them by phone—taking all the initiative, if necessary, for several months; listening to them; Co-Counseling with them (by phone or in person); helping them figure out how to be in contact with the local RC Community (if there is one); helping them figure out which new acquaintances might make good Co-Counselors; and more. We also have a list of people who want to be allies, and we would welcome more.

Young people and allies are put in contact with each other. Sometimes they already have a relationship, and

sometimes they build one afresh. More than thirty pairs have been set up. Some pairs are quickly and wonderfully useful, and some take time—but all are useful.

I would like your help with this project. We want to continue to build both the list of young people and the list of allies, and I ask your assistance in finding people to add to both lists. How about you? Or are there others in your Community whom you could talk with so that they could consider being a part of this?

Send information to Megan Lynes, at <meganlynes@gmail.com> or 23 Caesar Jones Way, Bedford, Massachusetts 01730, USA. If you e-mail, please put “Allies to Shifting Young People” in the subject line.

Thank you,
Tim Jackins



KAS, TURKEY • LANCE CABLK

We Are the Heart of RC Women's Liberation

I am an Iranian Muslim woman. At the South, West, and Central Asian Women's Workshop, in December 2012, six Muslim women gathered at 7:00 in the morning. It was a first in RC history. Like one of the sisters said, it was the beginning of some very important and hard work in RC: we have to learn to be visible and not be ashamed as Muslim women.

The same afternoon, my Arab sister led a lunch table for Muslims and allies. Almost the whole workshop was there. It was a great contradiction¹ being with other Muslim women from south, west, and central Asia.

In the evening we gave a report to the workshop. We said that we were six Muslim women, all very different, with six different views and experiences of Islam, and all facing the oppression of Muslim women differently. One woman said, "Please do not judge Islam from what you see and hear in the media. Do not put the crimes and Islam together, like how the men in power in Iran, Pakistan, Afghanistan, and other Muslim countries use Islam as an excuse to oppress and abuse women."

Islam as you see it in the world is not the same as the Islam from the Koran. The first thing God said to Mohammed was "read" and that knowledge is obligatory for all humans. But still, a lot of Muslims don't send their daughters to school and even kill them if they try to go.

I learned that many women are told by men that the Koran is only to be read in Arabic. Women who don't know Arabic, or how to read, are told what Islam is about by the men.

I got angry remembering how many good things I forgot about Islam when I moved to Europe. During the first fifteen years I felt that I had to deny that I was a Muslim. Because I was scared of being excluded or

targeted by the growing hatred and oppression of Muslims, I felt that I should speak badly of Islam. I forgot how Mohammad had stopped the killing of baby girls and that his wife, Khadije, had asked him to marry her. She was forty-five and an independent businesswoman, and he, a twenty-five-year-old man, was working for her.

In my daily life I try to stay away from the newspapers. I'm scared of the news of drones in Pakistan and the threats of bombing Iran. I am always scared that officials are going to get me and send me to Guantanamo.² Every time I come to the United States, I feel terrified at the airport that maybe they are going to shoot me and then say, "Oh, sorry; we thought she was a terrorist."

I am looking forward to staying in touch with my Muslim sisters and to seeing the RC work on Muslim liberation grow.

What is close to my heart and mind from the workshop is to value and remember this group and stay in touch everywhere I go; to remember to always take initiative, take charge, and trust my thinking; and to remember that I matter, that everything is possible, and that sexism and racism and war *will stop!*

We are the heart of RC women's liberation.

(Great thanks to my dear sister, Anu, who encouraged me to write this, and to Google Translate.³)

In sisterhood,

Pardis Pourahmad

Copenhagen, Denmark

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

¹ Contradiction to distress

² The military prison at the U.S. naval base at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba

³ Google Translate is a free online language translation service.

Perspectives from an RC Elder

The following is a response from an RC elder to some questions posed by Pam Geyer, the International Liberation Reference Person for Elders.

What do you think and feel about the aging process? Do you regard the increase in chronological years as growth or regression? When (if ever) did you begin feeling old?

I think the aging process is probably natural. However, at least in the “developed” world, the tensions of living in an oppressive society, and the poor diet and lack of exercise, have made it occur sooner than what might be natural.

When I turned sixty I felt panicky that I was getting older, even though I was feeling great. I counseled for six months on the panic. My re-evaluation was that if I lived the way I thought made sense, based on the best values of my religious background, I needn't worry about getting old or



JOFFRE LAKES PROVINCIAL PARK, BRITISH COLUMBIA, CANADA
• SHIRA ROSEN

dying since I would be happy living a good life and taking it as far as I could.

Do you set goals, try new things, learn new things as much as you once did? Do you belong to or lead an elders' support group?

Since the re-evaluation mentioned above, I have viewed getting older as a wonderful chance to learn more, try more challenging things, and be a resource for others while taking elegant care of myself.

Ever since I read Harvey's¹ article “The Importance of Long Range Goals” in *The Human Situation*, I have taken time twice a year (usually four hours) to fill out parts of the goals chart included in that article (and in the *Fundamentals of Co-Counseling Manual*). For a long time I could not figure out what might go in the block “My goals for the universe and forever.” But one day I decided to think about it, and I ended up with several goals. Practicing “beauty and order” in an ongoing way was one of them, and it had immediate implications for my own house that week! It helped me clear out a lot of junk and have a beautiful home environment. This has served me, the people in my church, and the RC Community well.

At one point I put in the chart that I wanted to see a coalition of labor, environmental, and women's groups grow in my state over the following ten years. Just then I needed to move to a new house and had three houses I was interested in. I picked the one next door to the leading environmental lobbyist in town and over the next two years made good friends with him. Later I involved several women's groups in working with labor unions on state legislation for workplace safety and

easily engaged several environmental groups with the help of my next-door neighbor. We passed fourteen of the twenty-eight legislative proposals we backed.²

In recent years, a number of leg and foot problems have forced me to stay off my feet for months at a time. I decided I could use the time to write a book about organizing for social change. I have read at least sixty books about history, environmental issues, permaculture, organizing successes, issues facing many different constituencies, and so on, and have written fifteen chapters.

I have used my reasonably well-developed skills as a photographer to pursue pastel painting. I also keep finding new ways to be involved in activism led by people of color. I have stopped going to so many white-led meetings.

I lead an RC elders' support group in my Area.³ The second time we met I renamed it “An Elders' Liberation Leaders' Support Group.” I repeat the name at every meeting and reiterate that I expect each of us to not only be working on our individual liberation as elders but finding ways to lead other elders in our lives. A couple of people found that especially challenging at first but are now thinking of creative ways to be elders' liberation leaders. We meet only quarterly, because four of us are primary leaders in our RC Area or Region.⁴

If you have discharged on being an elder or on elders' oppression, what has worked for you?

The most difficult pattern I have is one that colludes with elders'

² “Backed” means supported.

³ An Area is a local RC Community.

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

¹ Harvey Jackins'

oppression. It has to do with⁵ settling for less and takes the form of resigning myself with the expression “Oh well, what’s the use?” when something seems especially challenging. For six months I have made the commitment in almost every session “I will never again give in to resignation!” It has helped me lose twenty-eight pounds in six months, go to meetings in which I am one of only a few European-heritage people, and keep trying to do pastel painting when what I have done so far looks terrible to me. It has helped me not give up on people who have been off base⁶ with me and instead pursue them, set things right for myself, and build a stronger relationship with them. It has kept me thinking about having a big life no matter how old I am.

Over twenty years ago I got a direction from Jo Saunders.⁷ She had me say, “My main work in life is to allow people to enjoy me.” My working-class roots and middle-class adulthood made that seem ridiculous, but it now seems like something to try. There’s no need to be the “big leader.” I can just be there and let people get to know and enjoy me. It seems to be working at church. Several people have started asking me questions about life and oppressive attitudes, for example, “I know you always address racism if you see it. Here’s a situation in which I don’t know what to do. Can you help me?” I think I am looking more approachable and relaxed.

Have you noticed others counseling effectively on being an elder and on elders’ oppression?

I have seen people counseling on physical limitations and taking better care of themselves by contradicting old patterns of ignoring their own needs. The counseling has usually

⁵ “Has to do with” means involves.

⁶ “Off base” means inappropriate.

⁷ Jo Saunders is the International Liberation Reference Person for Owning-Class People.



THE NETHERLANDS • WYTSKE VISSER

involved reclaiming love and sympathy for themselves after young lives that included very little love or sympathy.

How regularly do you encounter elders’ oppression? What have you done, or seen, that has contradicted it on the spot (immediately)?

I think I see the oppression almost every day, but I am not totally sure. In large family gatherings, the older people are left to talk to each other. In Radio Shack and other computer stores, I seldom get noticed as a customer. I was about to give a sermon on racism one Sunday, and three men asked me if I needed help, as if I had no business standing there getting my notes ready, and seemed surprised to learn that I was going to preach that day. A— tends to answer the phone as if I am likely to need something. When I recently attended an RC workshop with a broken foot, at least seventeen people asked me, with great urgency in their voices, “Are you planning to drive home by yourself?” Thank goodness⁸ several

⁸ “Thank goodness” means thankfully.

others expressed total confidence in my ability to do so. My accelerator foot was fine, and with the automatic shift I was doing great. Although well intentioned, I saw this as a form of elders’ oppression.

People generally lack high expectations for elders. However, allies have held out expectations that we live big, rich, full, meaningful lives. They have engaged with us and asked questions about our experiences. Or they have told us about new, exciting things they are doing. We want to know.

My successes include living a challenging life, trying new things, and learning constantly. Dottie⁹ taught us what to say when someone refers to a “senior moment” (a lapse in memory): “Oh no! A senior moment is when we are brilliant, exciting, interesting, and a great example to others. That’s the true meaning of a senior moment.” When someone cannot remember a word, I say, “It doesn’t matter at all. Tell us about it with the words you can recall, and just be brave and keep going.”

I had a success with someone who liked to give me advice about how to manage all sorts of things. I finally wrote her a letter. I told her how much I loved her and appreciated her caring for me. I also said that as I got older, a lot of people wanted to give me advice and it made me feel like they thought I couldn’t manage things well for myself. I said I would like her to not give me advice but to keep caring as she always had and that if I needed her help in figuring things out, I would be sure to ask. She has completely stopped giving me advice.

Anne Mackie

Cary, North Carolina, USA

Reprinted from the e-mail discussion list for RC Community members

⁹ Dottie Curry, the former International Liberation Reference Person for Elders, who died on March 10, 2012

LIBERATION

"My Class Is Middle"

My class is middle
And your class is not
You were raised without some
Of the things that I got

And I'm very sorry
When I act somewhat funny¹
Like how stiff I get
When talk turns to money

Or in group discussions
I might dominate
Or use pompous language
To make me seem great

But being together
Is so much more nice
Than being in charge
Or looking more wise

And sometimes though we
Of mid-class try our best
To do smarty things²
And ace³ all our tests

What's vital is not
Whose words are more clever
It's whether we all
Move forward TOGETHER

So I'll learn to be second⁴
And back⁵ your grand mind
Bring you in the center—
We'll all have big lives!

Yes, being together
Our classes as one
The work can be tough
But the outcome is fun

Mike Lyons
Austin, Texas, USA

¹ In this context, "funny" means strange.

² "Smarty things" means things that appear to be smart.

³ "Ace" means perform extraordinarily well on.

⁴ I am borrowing the idea of being "second" from Xabi Odriozola's article on language liberation (in the July 2013 *Present Time*) in which he encourages those of us in oppressor groups to give up our need to be first, while not being passive or quiet.

⁵ "Back" means support.

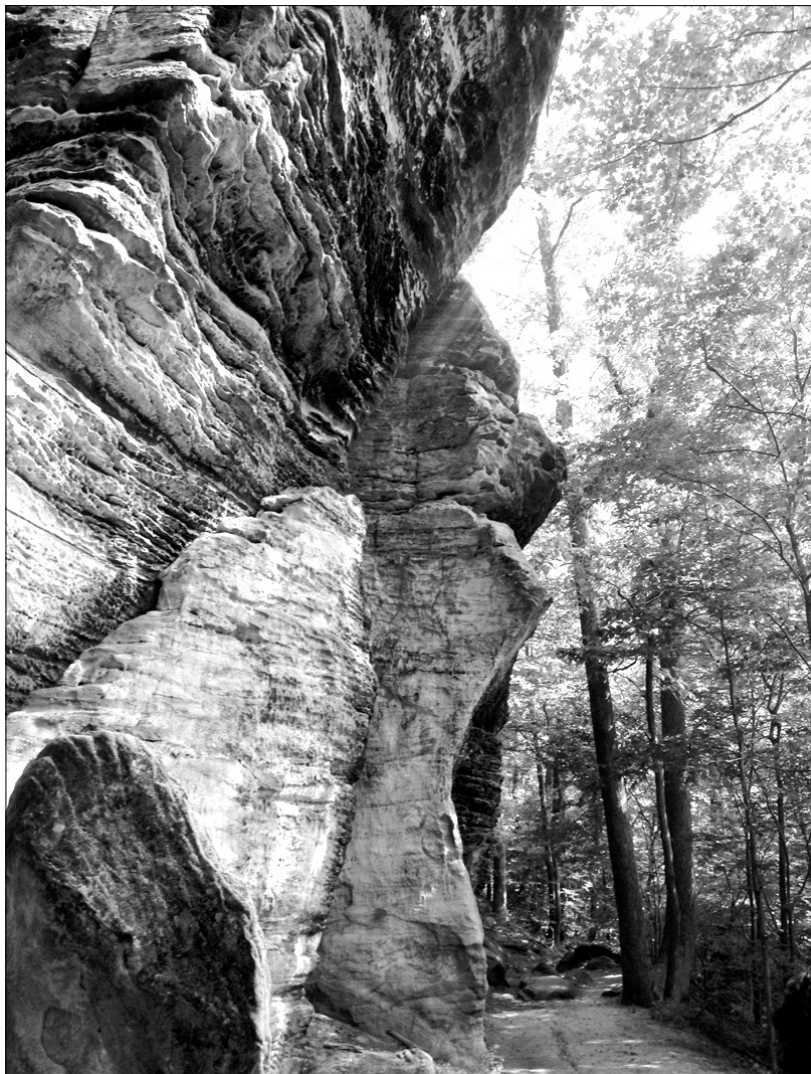
A Prototype of a Human Being

The essence of being human is the ability to be creative; to create new responses to new situations; to construct new, significant complexities where they did not exist before; to take charge of the environment and move it farther along the upward trend.

It is true that spontaneous processes within the universe also move in this direction, but the human artist, being possessed of human intelligence, is able to move more directly and more rapidly. The artist can greatly enhance the already inherent tendency within the universe toward meaning, toward complexity, toward independence, toward freedom. The artist is, in this sense, a prototype of a human being.

Harvey Jackins

From "Draft Policy for Artists' Liberation,"
on page 221 of *Start Over Every Morning*



CUYAHOGA VALLEY NATIONAL PARK, OHIO, USA • NIKHIL TREVEDI

The following eight articles are from a discussion on the RC e-mail discussion list for leaders of Jews.

Living a Life of Integrity

Given that capitalism and imperialism are still operating, how do we, as Jews, live a principled life, a life of integrity, outside of upward mobility, assimilation, and racism? How do we live a life that doesn't just cave¹ in response to discouragement about the yet-to-be-won battles? How do we do this both personally and as a people?

I recently asked Lotahn Raz² in Israel to send me some articles on the social-justice protest movements there. Several of the authors questioned the movement leaders' avoidance of "politics," of anything about the Occupation or Palestinians, and how they were focusing only on "social" issues. Another questioned how people were focusing on the racism targeting Ethiopian Israelis while ignoring the racism aimed at Palestinians. Is it principled to raise one issue without the other?

Reading these articles got me thinking about what it means in the current period to live a life of integrity, not just within the protest movements but in all aspects of our lives.

Over the past year I have led workshops on racism for several U.S. Jewish social-justice organizations. Many of the young adults participating were raised in upper-middle-class families. They have struggled with how to think about themselves as Jews and what it means for

them to live a principled life. Many have adopted policies (on GLBT³ issues, on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict) that seem to me incorrect. Perhaps they are responding to growing up privileged and are desperately yearning to find some way to be principled about *something*. We Jewish RCers need to discharge and think clearly about what living a principled life means in the present, so that we can offer leadership on this.

As I am aging I am bombarded by fear-mongering about retiring. Aging is made out to be⁴ so individualistic and lonely. How much money do I actually need to take care of myself as an elder? I've been trying not to collude with all the fear messages, which match the fears I was raised with as a Jewish girl, about saving as security for "old age." What do I actually need for real security?

What have you been thinking about and discharging on in terms of living a principled life, particularly as a Jew? Where do you struggle in your personal life and in your leadership? What's one thing you are doing to live in a principled way? What's one thing our people can do to be principled in the present?



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

¹ "Cave" means collapse.

² Lotahn Raz is an RC leader in Haifa, Israel.

³ Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender

⁴ "Made out to be" means presented as.

Integrity Includes Organizing for Change

As I understand it, living with integrity means living according to what I believe is right—but not only as an individual, because I don't think that will change society.

Were I to drop out,* move to the country, live on a small farm, and grow my own food, I might be living my personal life with integrity, but that would not contribute much to changing

society. Alongside the way I live my individual personal life, I must engage in organizing with others to make change on a societal level—to end capitalism, racism, imperialism, the destruction of the environment.

The oppressive society has set things up such that by participating in the society, in whatever role, we are complicit with it. For example, I eat only organic food, compost organic wastes, recycle just about everything

one can recycle here, and do my utmost to save water—reusing rinse water to flush the toilet and collecting the cold water from the shower until it heats up. But then I drive my car to work, because it is faster than public transportation. My salary is deposited directly into a large bank (Israel has no local credit unions). By law, my employer pays my taxes directly to the government. Even if I wanted to refuse to pay

continued . . .

* "Drop out" means stop participating in mainstream society.

LIBERATION

... continued

taxes that support the military and the Occupation, there is no legal (or even illegal) way to do it, as far as I know.

On the other hand, I have decided to teach RC as widely as I can and to use discharge and re-evaluation as best I can to reclaim my real self. I have been teaching fundamentals classes almost every year, for seventeen years. I work with Jewish early childhood educators and teach them about discharge and the importance of listening to and playing with children.

The greatest challenge is the Occupation. Ever since I have been in Israel (forty-one years), I have demonstrated against it. I vote for a joint Arab-Jewish party, the only party that consistently speaks against it. However, it is easy to forget that the Occupation exists at all. Life goes on, distant from it, unless one travels to the West Bank, knows people there, or is active in organizations opposing the Occupation. Israelis don't know much about what is happening in the West Bank, and the media makes sure

that is so. Just recently I learned that people's health is terribly compromised there (and in Gaza it's much worse). I discovered this only by reading a little-known book about the political economy of the Occupation.

So how do I do something to stop the Occupation, or at the very least not be complicit with what is beginning to look like a long, drawn-out destruction of the Palestinian people?

Naomi Raz
Jerusalem, Israel

Putting Relationships First

We young adults are forced to make many decisions, often without much support—decisions like where to live, how to make enough money, what to do for a living, who to be friends with, how to make those friends, and how to do revolutionary work. There is pressure to be getting a “good” job, living with a partner, getting ready to support a family, and even saving for retirement.

We seem to make most of these decisions based on what is available to us rather than on discharge and principle. Capitalism tries to push us into a box and distract us from really thinking about how we want to live our lives.

The main decision I have made is to continue to put my relationships first—to love family and old friends, and continue to work on these relationships as well as build new ones, specifically with working-class people of color. I hope that as I get closer to people and continue to discharge on my relationships, some of the other decisions will become clearer.

I am Indian-heritage, adopted by white parents and raised in a rural area. I come from a complicated class background. Both of my parents chose working-class jobs and a middle-class lifestyle. My mother is Protestant and was raised poor with some owning-class heritage. My father was raised upper-middle-class Jewish. I always thought that we were working class and didn't have much money. At the same time, I thought that a middle-class life (owning a house, having middle-class friends, going to college) was the only option for me.

I now live in one of the poorest cities in the country. As I build closer relationships with working-class and raised-poor people of color, I see where I need to be honest about my class background and discharge all my confusion. Working on class confusion and oppression is important. As long as we stay confused about money and class, we will have a hard time living a principled life.

As others have said, in order to really take this on* we will have to face the places that feel like death. We will have to decide to end all the ways that distress affects our and others' thinking, and resist any pull to go the easy route. We will have to keep our own re-emergence central and work on where we don't trust others to be with us in the fight.

Anonymous
USA

* “Take this on” means undertake this.

Integrity and Young Adult Jews

The issue of integrity is a difficult one for young adults, especially these days. My group of younger users is more targeted with addictions—to alcohol, sex, *Facebook*,¹ porn,² non-prescription drugs, medications, and so on—than ever before. We live in a world of seemingly infinite choice, even in the smallest decisions. This breeds opportunism, especially among those of us in the middle class. We conform, go after³ what “looks good,” and assimilate. I assume that for me this is a reaction to being targeted for destruction, both as a Jew and later as a Queer person. I struggle with it in almost every area of my life.

Like many left-wing⁴ young adult Jews (especially Queer ones), I chose a job right out of college that was considered downwardly mobile. I was raised middle class; my job was a working-class food-service job. In part I was attempting to alleviate my guilt about classism. I also wanted to retain some humanness at work—to be physically active, interact with people all day, and be in a pleasant space with lots of windows.

Two years later I took a part-time job in an office, while still working at the coffee shop. The new job did not seem attractive to me, but I took it because it would provide a good opportunity to discharge and because it paid better. I have feelings (and so do the middle-class folks in my life) that the office job is “better,” “the kind of thing I should be doing.” However, I don’t like it all that much.⁵ I’m also still wading through feelings that working at the coffee shop somehow makes me better than my peers, because I’m not living off of my privilege. (This, in itself, is a perverse kind of classism.) Meanwhile, I still get financial assistance from my parents!

Another massive issue of integrity facing young-adult Jews is that of Israel and Palestine. Many young Queer Jews get stuck in feeling like they can’t visibly support Israel in any way because of how bad they feel about racism. I feel terrified whenever I consider pointing out that supporting Israel is not the same as defending Israeli policies. In many Queer radical circles—especially among white folks who are trying to be allies in ending racism—I’ve found a vicious “Are

you with us or against us?” mentality. The people are well intentioned, but without discharge they are easily distracted and derailed by unchallenged anti-Jewish oppression.

A further complication is that many discussions among younger people now take place on *Facebook*. Someone posts an inflammatory news article, and the comments in response can get quite nasty. I don’t want to engage at all, because I doubt that I can get my point across (*and* counsel everyone) in a hundred and fifty characters or less!

“Zoe”
USA



OVERLAND TRACK, TASMANIA, AUSTRALIA • LYNDALL KATZ

¹ *Facebook* is a popular, free social-networking website on the Internet.

² Pornography

³ “Go after” means pursue.

⁴ “Left-wing” means politically progressive.

⁵ “All that much” means very much.

Sharing RC, and More of My Thinking

I carry a deep sense of hopelessness about ever living a principled life as a white middle-class U.S. person. I can do good things; I can bring my humanity and intelligence to every situation. However, on some basic level I've decided that a truly principled life of integrity is out of my reach. That's sad and incorrect.

If I were to decide that a principled life was within my reach, what would that look like? I think I would have to face and challenge where I feel unable and unwilling to give up¹ the privileges that go along with being a white middle-class U.S. person.

The privilege I feel most desperate not to give up is the access I have to RC resource, especially as a parent. Unlike the majority of U.S. parents (not to

mention parents outside of the United States), I have many hours of paid childcare each week. What I do with this time is mostly RC-related: Co-Counseling sessions, projects in my Region,² preparing to lead a workshop. I can't imagine doing these things without the free time and disposable income that I have access to.

At the same time, I feel that I have done a poor job of sharing the resource of RC (the most precious resource on the planet). I have let fear, humiliation, and disappointment get in the way of bringing it to the many people I know. Leading a principled life will mean more than sharing widely the tools of RC, but doing that seems like a good next step. I could spend less of my childcare time on

my own sessions and RC projects and more of it on reaching new people—especially raised-poor and working-class people and people of the global majority.

I care deeply about ending racism, classism, and imperialism. I can start by sharing more of my thinking. My goal is to play a significant role in the complete transformation of society, but most of my contacts don't know this. I was asked to be a speaker on a panel entitled "Challenges Facing American Jews in the 21st Century." I refused a number of times—I couldn't bear to face the feelings of fear and humiliation. But it's a good thing that I accepted in the end, because it now looks like a great opportunity to stretch myself toward a more principled life.

Julie Fox-Rubin
Basalt, Colorado, USA

¹ "Give up" means relinquish.

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

I Can Continue to Do the Right Thing

I did not grow up with people I felt proud of. My mother taught me how to shoplift, and my father made my siblings and me feel profoundly stupid.

My parents were Holocaust survivors. They met in the Lodz ghetto.¹ My mother and her sisters were sent to Auschwitz² from there. Then my mother and her only surviving sister were sent to a work camp where they stayed until the end of the war. My father and his whole family survived in the ghetto until the end of the war by collaborating with the Germans.

The idea of living a principled life is one that I would have only heard of in RC. I cry as I share this with you. I have figured out a lot on my own, including what living a principled life means for me. Mostly I have accomplished

this through doing good work in the world. I have organized vigils against anti-Jewish oppression; done hundreds of anti-oppression workshops; and counselled, supported, and taught hundreds of college students. I have stood up against racism in ways that were unpopular. Through all of this I have fought survivor and collaborator patterns that have told me to never trust anyone, to think of myself first, to support those in power, and that I am completely alone in the world and that no one will fight for or think about me.

When I read Cherie's question,³ my first thought was that I am not principled enough to respond, that I am too concerned about my own security. However, feeling bad about myself is not useful to me or to anyone else. With much discharge, I can tell⁴ that there is no present threat

¹ The Lodz Ghetto was a ghetto for Jews, created by the Nazis in Poland during World War II.

² Auschwitz was a network of concentration and extermination camps in Poland, built and operated by the Nazis during World War II.

³ See article on page 37.

⁴ "Tell" means perceive.

to me. This opens up a vast array of ways that I can be principled—not just respond to the pull to be useful to others to secure my survival. I can continue to do the right thing, every day, as opportunities are constantly offered to me both in my work and as I walk around in the world.

I can make sure that the decisions I make take into account the greater good and what is good for others around me. I can ensure that all my students have equal opportunities, especially those of the global majority and those who are working class or poor. I can ensure that our faculty represents our students in race, class, and gender

and that our non-unionized staff are treated fairly and with dignity.

It is particularly important that I never benefit at someone else's expense. There is more than enough of everything! I take this into sessions regularly.

Thanks for giving me the opportunity to think about this.

Felice Markowicz
Toronto, Ontario, Canada

Contradicting the Oppressor Role

This year, for the first time in my adult life, my husband, Gary, and I are earning a more than adequate living working as music teachers in New Zealand. I am also in a situation in which I am considered an expert in my field. I feel tempted to want to be paid more money, not because we need it but because it makes me feel more important. I am contradicting this by sticking to the hourly rate that our music trust pays all our tutors and by doing some volunteer work.

Gary and I recently went to Samoa to teach ukulele and guitar to young people there. We paid our own airfares and didn't charge anything for our services. I've also been teaching one day a week in a local school in the poorest area of our city where the students are mostly people of colour. This school has been badly affected by the earthquakes that have hit our city over the last two years. I've had to resist the idea that if I don't charge a lot for what I'm doing, I don't look important enough.

The current situation pushes me to be fearful about the future. It isn't certain that there will be enough food and water to go around. Many people are starving in the present and don't have access to water and shelter. I feel like I have to save enough money to carry my husband and me through if the work dries up or we're unable to work. The reality is that we will probably never retire from teaching music and I will probably always be able to find a way to be paid for my many skills.

Spending time in communities where people sleep on bare floors and only have enough to sustain them day by day is a good start for discharging about the waste, greed, and fear that keep us in the oppressor role.

Nikki Berry
Christchurch, Aotearoa/New Zealand



JUAN MANUEL FEITO GUERRERO

We Must Be a Force for Change

On page 289 of *The Rest of Our Lives*, Harvey Jackins talks about the “qualities of a good leader.” The first qualities he mentions are *integrity and honesty*. He goes on to talk about *caring*. The next quality is that leaders *be able to want everything to be right, even at the cost of their own comfort*.

When speaking of RC leadership, Harvey would over and over again stress courage, integrity, and doing the right thing. He would ask, “Where do you lie?” “Where do you lack courage?” Those were hard questions. Sessions on those questions felt intolerable to me. Now, many years later, after working on early material,¹ having more than twenty Intensives,² and leading more honestly and boldly, I might be able to client with him as he asks those questions.

Harvey put a lot of counseling resource into me and other Jewish women leaders. He did this because of his personal caring for us, because of our love for him, because of our leadership and liberation referencing, *and* because we were Jewish women. He thought the world³ of Jewish women. He would say, “The world is not right if a Jewish woman does not feel loved.” He had the highest expectations of us. He saw us as a group that would set things right in the world (based in part on the Jewish women he had known during his political-activist days).

He would often challenge my opportunistic patterns, or patterns of deception, hiding, or lack of honesty. I will always remember those sessions (not with great comfort). In my last session

with him before he died, he gave me the direction *to tell the truth about all things that matter*. I still discharge on and struggle with that. I think about it almost every day. When and where and how do I take the stands I need to take?

I fight actively in my mind against what the oppressive society has done to the Jewish people—and to me, personally. There were several reasons for the Holocaust. What stands out to me is that it was a systematic attempt to destroy a people whose culture, and experience of oppression, had led them to fight for intelligence and revolutionary change. Harvey saw that in me. He saw me as a potential revolutionary female. That is what we agreed I would aspire to. I cry now as I write this, trying to fight feelings of disappointment in myself. I understand that they need to be fought.

I was born during World War II and was fortunate to have connections with working-class and religious Jews with integrity. It was also a time in which my relatives were being killed. My family felt fortunate to be alive. The clear “deal” made with the Jewish people was that those of us who lived could stay alive if we accommodated to the needs of an oppressive society. Those who did not accommodate would face attacks, isolation, and perhaps death.



TIM JACKINS

I have worked on my fears of being killed and my patterns of hiding myself. I’ve uncovered my strengths as a Jewish woman and my deepest struggles. I try to look at where I am principled and where I still compromise in women’s liberation. I try to be honest about my struggles and where it is hard to tell the truth. I have tried to decide, on a daily basis, not to hide myself in any way, especially around people of the global majority (even if I show racism, which I then need to take responsibility for). I have tried to find ways to speak in my synagogue about Palestinians—to not shy away from the subject and to really listen to people I disagree with and be generous with my counseling resource. I discharge feelings of annihilation when I move toward closeness and connection with people instead of “escaping.” I can feel the minute-by-minute pull to escape. My counselors need to hold me so I will stay and shake. In my Co-Counseling leadership, I try to give an honest picture of myself—where I have been hurt as a woman, where I have been a victim of sexism, where I compete, where I want to be the most beautiful girl on the planet, and so on.

The challenge to live with integrity cuts through pseudoreality in a fundamental way. It counters how the oppressive society and its distresses have tried to prevent us from leading meaningful lives, from teaching and spreading RC in its fullness, from facing the hardest things we have to face.

We need to make sure that individually, and as a people, we intend to be a force for change.

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

¹ “Material” means distress.

² An Intensive is twenty hours of one-way Re-evaluation Counseling, for a fee, at Re-evaluation Counseling Community Resources, in Seattle, Washington, USA.

³ “Thought the world” means thought very highly.

Single Working Moms

Three of us who are single working moms met recently and shared experiences. Here is what we said we liked about being single working moms:

- We get to try an unlimited number of things.
- We get to make many decisions and learn from them.
- We are fully in charge of our relationships with our children and are the undisputed leader of our family.
- We have close and respectful relationships with our children.
- We get to think freshly.
- We understand capitalism—it's much harder to have illusions.
- We get to be a team with our children in figuring out our lives together.
- We get to openly care in every way—practically, unequivocally, and on a day-to-day basis.
- We learn to prioritize, be efficient, and do lots of things at once.
- We have to be physically fit.
- We don't depend on anyone to take care of us.
- We get to trust ourselves and take risks.



Being single working moms is also difficult. Below are some of the things we said were hard:

- The amount of work is overwhelming—no one else ever buys a container of milk; the dishes are still in the sink when we get home.
- We have to spend a lot of time away from our children.
- Nobody understands our life and how complicated and challenging it is—the thousands of details we handle—except other single parents.
- We try to make ourselves available to our children whenever they need us; we are always ready to put aside other priorities for that.
- We're exhausted.
- We don't have time to reflect on our accomplishments.
- We sometimes miss having someone with whom to think about decisions.
- There is no one to tag-team* with.
- Isolation, a reality for all parents, is especially heavy for us.
- We often have less money and fewer resources than parents who are not single.



*Randy Karr
 Jacqueline Barton
 Sharon Peters*
 Brooklyn, New York, USA

* "Tag-team" means take turns doing the work.

The Differences Are Tiny

The differences between any two people in the entire world are at most two hundredths of one percent. The commonality between Barbara Love¹ and me is 99.98 percent. She's a Black woman college professor, and I'm a white working-class hick² with a farm background. (Well, she has a farm background, too.) But we've been paying attention to these two hundredths differences because of oppression, and this is correct. These differences have been used—the oppression has been nailed onto them. But the basic reality is that any one of you, and I, are almost completely alike. The differences are very, very tiny. So anything that goes on making a big thing of those differences, for any purpose other than to contradict the oppression and distress that keeps us apart, is pure garbage.

Harvey Jackins

From the 1986 Peace and
Disarmament Activists' Workshop

¹ Barbara Love is the International Liberation Reference Person for African Heritage People.

² "Hick" means unsophisticated person.

Sports, and Men's Emotions

Non-sports-watchers often wonder why so many men watch sports with such regularity. There are a myriad of reasons. Many men feel that their lives have become predictable, boring, and taken over by male oppression. Sports offer action, live theater, and the excitement of not knowing what will happen. Viewers say that they "get to be distracted from life," they get to take a break, and that it is the only space for them. In watching their hometown team play, men feel pride, and old and current feelings of connection.

One aspect that gets overlooked is the emotion displayed. There are few spaces in our culture where it's acceptable for men to show emotion. Sports are the only one I can think of. Male viewers get to see the physical affection between teammates and from coaches to players. To watch other men cry and hug in despair, heartbreak, disappointment, or disbelief is relieving to them. It gives them the space to feel those emotions, too, even if not outwardly. They also get to see men be happy and openly celebrate together. Have you ever been at a supermarket or a party and

seen men linked arm-in-arm like the players on the bench during a tight basketball game? Where else besides sports do you regularly see men jump for joy into one another's arms?

A friend of mine said that the only time he ever saw his father cry was when his father's favorite team narrowly lost a championship series. Being that close to victory after years of not winning pushed him to release years of disappointments and sadness—which of course were about more than his



BEAVERTAIL STATE PARK, RHODE ISLAND, USA • MARJORIE SMITH

favorite team losing. It was a powerful, memorable, and touching moment for my friend. He felt closer to his dad than before. It made his dad seem more human and accessible to him.

Many men have dozens of fond memories of closeness around sports. Sports can remind men of past connections and allow them to easily connect with people in the present. Many times after a big game, I have been on the train or walking in town and some unknown man has said to me, "Hey, did 'we' win?" This often leads to immediate connection and bonding.

I am middle class, and I often watch games with two older working-class male friends. We use that excuse to spend time together, check in about our lives, and support one another. They have become central in my life. I am close to both of them, and we openly care about each other. Without sports, this important connection would not have been made so easily, if at all.

It may seem a shame that men choose sports or only have sports for this, but at least they have them. Sadly, for many men sports are the one place that they

feel is their own. Men will create a room in their house, sometimes called a “man cave,” that the rest of the family understands is their special place to watch sporting events.

Baby boys are held less than girls. Seconds after they get hurt, boys are told that it’s “okay” and that they should tough it out and be a “little man.” We men are trained to win, be tough, be better than others, and believe that it’s okay to sacrifice ourselves for some larger “good.” Certainly sports are a big part of our male training and oppression. It’s notable that in this most “manly” arena—the world of sports—men are given the most space to show emotion.

Many of us are trying to make sports be about play, fun, and connection. We want to take the emphasis off of winning but keep sports as a place where men can link arms, jump for joy, and cry together. We can get there. Until we do, realize that the next time a male partner, friend, or child wants to watch a game, it is not all negative. There are many great reasons for him to want to do so. It may be the only place he will see a boy or man cry.

There have recently been conversations in the U.S. media about the severe, long-term emotional and physical effects of the violence of U.S.

football. This is long overdue and a great relief to me. Any sport in which the intent is to physically hurt an opponent is not okay. As more and more men talk of their hurts and pain, U.S. football will have to change, or it could end one day. There have also been some conversations in the media about men’s oppression. We can all Co-Counsel, connect with our friends, and add to these conversations. It is a great opportunity to raise awareness of men’s oppression and work toward a society that will one day be free of it.

Ken Szama
Boston, Massachusetts, USA

An Introduction to Disability Liberation

I recently led an Introduction to Disability Liberation. Seven people attended. I myself have a disability—environmental illness—and one of the participants has muscular dystrophy.

I defined disability as a physical, mental, or emotional condition that significantly limits one’s activities of daily living and/or ability to work. We discussed some categories of disability (see below). I talked about RC work on disability. I mentioned our International Liberation Reference Person for Disabled People and *Complete Elegance*, the RC journal on disability liberation. We reviewed some contradictions to stereotypes of disabled people (see below). I offered a set of questions to help allies discharge on disability liberation (see the awesome list below!).

We discussed how disability oppression affects everyone. Able-bodied people are made afraid of becoming disabled (being disabled is not an advantageous position in society). They are also separated from disabled people. They miss out on contact with and information about disabled people.

We had a panel in which the two of us who are disabled answered the question “What’s good about having a disability, and what’s hard?” We said that the separation of able-bodied and disabled people is, of course, hard on people with disabilities. We pointed out that “access”—to people, places, activities, and employment—is a key feature of able-bodied people’s

“privilege.” We speculated about how life would be different for people with disabilities if everyone lived in tribes. People would have much more secure lives if societies were structured around small communities of people of diverse strengths who were close and committed to each other. Instead, our societies stratify and separate people in order to prioritize the smooth functioning of an exploitative economic system.

Finally, we split into small groups to discharge. The allies met together in one room and the two of us with disabilities went to another, so we could all voice our distresses without being overheard.

Here are some questions to help allies discharge on disability liberation:

- When you were growing up, when did you feel different because of your body or your abilities? How did people respond when you were sick?
- How do you feel emotionally when you are sick?
- When has something not “worked right” on your body, and what feelings have you had about that?
- When did you or someone else in your family need extra attention or special treatment? How did people respond? How did you feel about the situation?

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- What feelings have you had about people in your life who were sick or disabled?
- When have you been inconvenienced by someone needing extra help or not carrying his or her own weight*?
- What messages did you hear when you were growing up about people with disabilities?
- What feelings do you have about people receiving government benefits (financial assistance) for being disabled?
- How do you tend to feel when you are around someone with a disability?
- What fears do you have about becoming sick or disabled?
- When have you felt frustrated about your abilities?
- What stands in your way of being completely delighted with the prospect of being disabled?
- When was a time you thought well about a person with a disability?

Here are a couple of understatements to use for discharging: "It sometimes happens that a disabled person has a great life." "Occasionally a disabled person has a bit of fun."

The following are some categories of disability:

- Disabled Since Birth — Acquired Disability
- Mobile—Need Assistance with Mobility

* "Not carrying his or her own weight" means not doing his or her share of the work.



- Senses Function Well—One or More Senses Impaired
- Can Communicate—Have Communication Challenges
- Can Access Most Environments—Have Challenges Accessing Some Environments
- Good Overall Health—Struggling Health
- Mostly Pain-Free—Have Chronic Pain
- Stable Condition—Unstable or Degenerative Condition
- Short-term Disability—Long-term Disability
- Visible Disability—Invisible Disability
- Have Physical Issues—Have Emotional Issues—Have Intellectual Issues
- Disabled and Working—Disabled and Not Working
- Disabled and Poor—Disabled and Needs Met
- Disabled and Isolated—Disabled and Connected
- Disabled and Have a Guardian—Disabled and Do Not Need or Have a Guardian
- Disabled and a Child—Disabled and an Adult—Disabled and an Elder

Here are some useful contradictions to stereotypes of disabled people, taken from the cover of *Complete Elegance* No. 8. (at the time it was published, "physically different" was the term in RC for disabled):

- Physically different people are nice to touch.
- Physically different people are experts.
- Physically different people are hard workers.
- Physically different people have a lot to say.
- Physically different people are strong allies.
- Physically different people lead rich lives.
- Physically different people are fun.

Amy Anderson
Madison, Wisconsin, USA
Reprinted from the e-mail discussion
list for RC Community members

Eliminating White Racism, in Melbourne, Australia

The following are excerpts from some reports on an eliminating-white-racism workshop led by Anne Barton, in Melbourne, Victoria, Australia.

This year's White Privilege Conference in the United States helped me to understand that my worldview comes from how Western societies have been shaped by Christianity. I got to see how the structures and concepts we in the West take for granted have been the foundations of Christian societies for 1,700 years. They are also used to support the ideas and institutions that dominate our present societies—such as war and militarism, individualism, humans' dominion over the environment, the "invisible hand" at work in free markets, dualism (good/evil, and so on), hierarchies (god/human, man/woman), there being only one truth, and time being linear.

The "white" identity we were coerced into adopting as little ones embodies these ideas. Support groups based on religious heritage can give us a clearer picture of how confusing and terrifying this was. They can help us see how hurtful it is to take on¹ a "white" identity and how separate it is from our humanity.

Recently I have been discharging on the idea that Australian heritage could include the heritages and identities of all the people on the continent. To think about this glorious cultural inheritance that is waiting for me to respectfully and humbly acknowledge it has brought deep discharge.

In 1901 Australia was founded as an explicitly white nation. This national identity swept away the interconnectedness, complexity, and relationships of our rich history. It was like a "whitewash" over these legacies. Our many different stories and our understanding of ourselves as a collection of peoples became "white." We deported people, who had been here

¹ "Take on" means assume, adopt.



KATIE KAUFFMAN

for generations, because they were not "white." Until the 1960s we called Britain "home." All of this was a devastating loss for us. I suspect it's behind how we white people are silenced and silent about much of our history and how we struggle to back² each other and show how deeply we care.

The theme of the Saturday evening class was "Hello, let's eliminate white racism!" At previous workshops we discharged on making eliminating racism central to our lives. In this class I wanted to see if I could get around the "white" business of taking this on³ as a big, hard job. That insidious attitude permeates wide-world anti-racism work. To keep our heads out of it takes discharging on the reality of what we are doing here: building relationships. How fun and easy! It's what we know how to do. We know about discharging our restimulations about people. We know about deciding, acting, and discharging. I used Tim's article on relationships in the July *Present Time*⁴ to talk about how our internalised oppression can play out⁵ between us when in reality we are the treasured partners of our eliminating-white-racism dreams.

One of the great things about the White Privilege Conferences is the number of resources that are brought together in one place. I always bring back books that help me discharge and

² "Back" means support.

³ In this context, "taking this on" means undertaking this.

⁴ "Relationships," by Tim Jackins, on pages 3 to 5 of the July 2013 *Present Time*

⁵ "Play out" means be acted out.

think about eliminating white racism. One of them described white privilege as constant affirmative action⁶ for white people. If we white people think we have gotten to where we are by hard work, intelligence, persistence, and merit, we will struggle with the relationships we need to end white racism. It will also be hard for us to see how we have been tricked into believing that Aboriginal people are broken, that the land is past saving, and that the situation here is hopeless. The real situation is that some damage has been done but Aboriginal Australia is so huge, profound, complex, and resilient, it is unstoppable.

In the last class I revisited concepts from Christianity to talk about the economic system and its relationship to care of the environment. In classical economic theory, the environment is viewed as an "externality" (thus environmental degradation is not seen as a cost when calculating value). This stems from Christian ideas of humans' dominion over the earth and links with the concept of the "invisible hand" of the free market. Within this theory, degradation of the environment is acceptable. It is also shored up by our sense of entitlement as white people and the myth that white Australians struggle to survive in a harsh, empty, inhospitable land.

There is so much—particularly the world-changing, revolutionary resource of RC—to make us hopeful and ever more determined to end white racism. I get glimpses of another world, past the white patterns, where we are a joyous humanity at one with our little planet.

Anne Barton
Melbourne, Victoria, Australia

continued . . .

⁶ Affirmative action is an active effort to improve the employment and educational opportunities for members of oppressed groups, such as people of color and women.

LIBERATION

... continued

Anne insisted that I work on being a hundred percent Australian, which means that I have a sixty-thousand-year-old history. This allowed me to connect with a sense of belonging to the universe, being a pulsing part of it.

Roslyn Cassidy
London, England

Eliminating white racism is easy! You just have to break it down into chunky bite-size pieces in order to discharge it effectively. Also, breaking down racist patterns into a series of historical events makes it much easier to fully claim the position of being the agent of oppression.

Bruce Clezy
Northcote, Victoria, Australia

I liked hearing that ending white racism is about relationships. Suddenly it seems like something I get to do with other people, for me.

Kelsey
Melbourne, Victoria, Australia

I used to think that Australia was a country established for and populated by white people. I was surprised to learn that this was not an accurate picture. In fact, many different people from many different lands—for example, Chinese and South Sea Islander peoples—settled in Australia. We not only killed the Indigenous people (genocide), we deported people of ethnicities that did not conform to the white stereotype.

It was good to be reminded that white people are a relatively small part of the overall population of the world. I appreciated the new term for people of color: people of the global majority.

Bartley McGowan
Port Melbourne, Victoria, Australia



YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK, CALIFORNIA, USA • MAARIT NIEMI

Australia has always been a diverse, multicultural place. Indigenous people from many different language groups, nations, and clans were joined by refugees from England, Scotland, Wales, and Ireland. Some people were captives; others were captors. Most were workers and/or poor. Later, economic refugees from all over the world arrived to hunt for gold and land.

When Australia became a nation, many of us white people were completely unaware of the rich and complex social, philosophical, and political systems of the Indigenous people. Or perhaps in the absence of sufficient discharge, it looked like our need for land was in conflict with their deep and powerful relationship with this country.

White racism rejects relationship. Eliminating it requires deep relationships among white people. It requires us to regain our ability to listen effectively to each other and to get and stay so close, and be so good to each other, that we never feel like victims or act out our oppressor patterns again. This can allow our relationships with people of the global majority to flourish.

For me this means continuing to teach Co-Counselling to raised-working-class people and people of the global majority. "The future is in our

hands"⁷ means that we raised-working-class people get to use what we know about the world and the goodness of all humans to create a world where white racism becomes a distant, esoteric historical study.

Stephen Costello
Thornbury, Victoria, Australia

It was important to me that we started the workshop with a sense of who we were before a wallpaper of messages taught us how to be "white."

Discharging a profound lack of physical closeness from very early on seems key for many of us white folk.

The class on "whiteness" and all the things that construct us as "white" was helpful. For me, one part of being white is being mean and cruel to others if they break my rules.

I think we made some headway on being less mean to each other.

Sometimes someone says something to us and we take offence and are ready to defend. Deciding to give the person some room will immediately give us more room, too.

Lisa Rasmussen
Northcote, Victoria, Australia

I moved strongly in the direction of acting self-loving and powerful and away from comfort seeking, and what came up immediately was anger. I didn't let myself dramatize it. I just stuck with the direction and was able to discharge with small noises and movements and hot sweat.

I decided to stop acting on feelings of embarrassment and discomfort in choosing which relationships to pursue,

⁷ From the RC commitment for working-class people

in and out of RC. I also decided to stop acting on the belief that if I feel uncomfortable, have upset feelings, or need to think about how to relate to someone from a different background, there is a problem. There is no problem. I'm in a position of privilege and entitlement if I don't do things because I feel embarrassed, scared, or like I don't know what to do or how to do it.

By acting powerful in a session and using my full mind (not just being a "good girl" and taking a direction), I was able to actually discharge anger rather than simply feel angry, powerless, and victimized. Throughout the workshop I found myself singing and skipping spontaneously.

Karen Rosauer
St Kilda East, Victoria, Australia

Anne reminded us that our relationships in RC will trigger old restimulations. I need to discharge these restimulations, knowing that I am now safe and loved. In fact I was always loved, and there were times when I was safe.

Anne encouraged us to use our RC relationships to practice principled behaviour. She gave an example of a behaviour that lacked integrity—not telling a workshop transport person important information in a timely manner—and encouraged us to "clean this up." It was lovely and hopeful to see people following her direction.

Relationships are how we'll eliminate white racism.

Anne reminded me of the importance of not leaving a client without a contradiction,⁸ even if that means feeling like I might make a mistake. As Harvey⁹ put it, "Welcome upheaval!"

Yehudit Koadlow
North Caulfield, Victoria, Australia

⁸ Contradiction to the client's distress

⁹ Harvey Jackins

Deserving is another concept embedded in the oppressive Christian/capitalist construct. It has nothing to do with why things happen and who has what. I can see how it's used in the media to sell everything and link that to "goodness" and God.

I had many sessions this weekend on what feels like utter and irrevocable isolation. "I don't have people" sounded in my mind. In the past when I have felt this, in desperation I have often wanted to blame the counselor and lash out with my tongue. Over the weekend I was supported to repeatedly put my mind on discharging the feelings. By the end of the weekend I could tell¹⁰ that I have people who want to hang¹¹ with me through the tough stuff. Deciding that I am loved, that I won't give any credit to my recording,¹² and that I won't blame anyone for my difficult feelings is indeed a great step forward in eliminating white racism.

Rachel Steinmann
Brunswick East, Victoria, Australia

Unbeknown to me, I have been living inside a "white mystique." This invisible-to-me problem has had a big influence on me and those around me. It has had a crippling effect on my ability to function as a cooperative, reasonable, fair-minded person.

It has taken much conscious effort and leadership to bring me to this awareness. It has taken a whole gang of us all willing to do this together. It has required a light, positive tone; an uncompromising direction against comfort-seeking and victimhood; good information about history; and plenty of hard-won free attention.

¹⁰ "Tell" means notice, perceive.

¹¹ "Hang" means stick, stay.

¹² Distress recording

I thank my white leaders, and the RCers of the global majority who continue to be our allies in this vital project.

Rowan White
Fitzroy North, Victoria, Australia

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



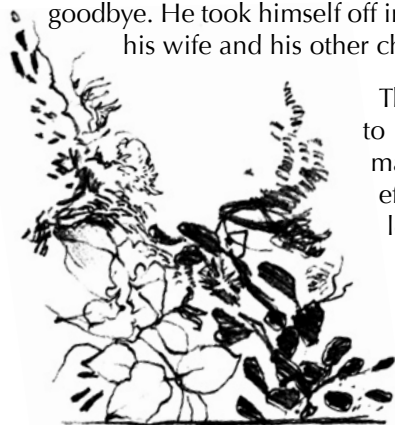
ROB VENDERBOS

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Hurts from Irish Emigration

I recently read a detailed account of an Irish family's emigration story. It told of an "American wake"—a farewell, with music, song, and dance, to an Irish person who was emigrating—and the final farewell the morning after. The father could not deal with the heartbreak of his daughter leaving, effectively forever, and was not able to say goodbye. He took himself off in the morning. It was his final gift to his daughter. He wanted to save her, and his wife and his other children, the devastation (he believed) of seeing him showing his pain.



ANNE BARTON

The story gave me an insight into my own approach to discharging. I hold back to save others an imagined worse pain. I wondered if other Irish people, and maybe Irish men in particular, have noticed anything similar. Is this one of the effects of intergenerational hurts? Has so much historical heartbreak as a people left us with a collective grief that's both hard to bear and hard to share?

Pascal McCulla

Belfast, Northern Ireland

Reprinted from the RC e-mail discussion list for leaders of Irish-heritage people

Celebrating Jewish Women on Shabbat

I was on a team that put together a celebration of Jewish women's culture on Shabbat.¹

Planning a Shabbat celebration focused on women sounded pretty² straightforward. However, we soon realized how much male domination and patriarchy have seeped into every crack of Judaism and Jewish cultures: We found a Yiddish song about unity of all people, including women, but it was called "Every Brother"; we wanted to include a song that is sung each Friday night in congregations around the world celebrating the feminine Spirit of Life, but the metaphor is of a groom greeting his bride; we wanted to recite traditional Sabbath evening blessings, but Hebrew is a gendered language and all of the words used to describe the Divine are in the male form.

So how do you put together a cultural celebration when the culture is so riddled with oppression? We discussed, we discharged, we edited, we rewrote, we created, we searched for new prayers, and we concluded that we have to face and challenge any

sentimental feelings or numbness we have attached to our Jewish identity. As Jewish women, we sell ourselves short³ if we settle for sexism in exchange for a frozen hope for security. Our integrity is compromised as allies to the liberation struggles of other women if we don't find the courage to fight our own battles.

The celebration of Jewish women during Shabbat was spectacular. With help from our allies, we presented some of the breadth of Jewish women's experience through song and poem and prayer and storytelling. Everything about our loud, bold, powerful presentation was a victory. I think we were able to show love for and pride in our heritage while also taking an uncompromising stand for the liberation of women.

Jevera Temsky

Washington, D.C., USA

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

¹ Shabbat is the Jewish Sabbath.

² In this context, "pretty" means quite.

³ "Sell ourselves short" means deny ourselves what we deserve.

White U.S. Southerners, and Racism

Racism profoundly interferes with our ability to love and feel connected. I don't think we humans can "decide" or "agree" to quit caring about just one group of people. We would have to give up on feeling fully connected in general. We can't turn off part of our caring, like turning off the lights in one room of a house.

As young people, we can tell¹ that racism is stupid, arbitrary, and unthinking. It gets "justified" by those around us, but we know that it doesn't make sense. We face a (false) choice: to be either the targets or the agents of the oppression. "Agreeing" to take on² the oppressor role is essentially agreeing to huge heartbreak and disconnection. When I tackle this piece of my distress, I often feel that I am alone in a desert, or in a building so big that I can't see the ceiling or any of the walls, and no one else is there. I'm completely by myself.

Our damaged connection affects our relationships with both the targets and the agents of the oppression. Even as a white U.S. Southerner,³ I carry distress that tells me there are "worse" white people—white folks who are more racist, less discharged, less enlightened—than I am. It tells me that I don't get to have these "worse" white people and that I shouldn't even want them. Allowing it to remain unchallenged is the same as deciding to keep some of my racism undischarged. As long as I set myself above and separate from other agents of racism, I don't have to fully clean up my own oppressor patterns.

In order to clean up these patterns, I have to claim all white people (even those "more racist" ones) and face that racism has ruined all of our minds and sense of connection. I have to be clear that the racism they carry is no worse

than the racism that got smeared on me. They may just be showing it more.

This relates to how important it is that U.S. RCers work on the U.S. Civil War and the oppression of U.S. Southerners. We white U.S. Southerners are held up as the worst U.S. white people. Because the portion of our history that involved racism and enslavement is widely known, USers outside the South often believe that racism is not as bad where they live and that they are not as racist as U.S. Southerners.

THE SOUTH AS A COLONY OF THE NORTH

In the past, a mill would buy up lots of land and build a town around it, including small houses and company stores. It would rent the houses to its employees and let them buy merchandise at the company stores on credit. Often the merchandise would be expensive and leave the employees with little money to spend on things not owned by the company.

This is similar to how the United States and other powerful nations have treated their colonies. They have claimed a country because they wanted its resources and then have organized that country's economy to funnel more and more resources to their own country. They have put a few colonized people in positions of power (police, overseers,

owners) and allowed them to function as that country's elite. This colonized "elite" has often been hated—by both the local people and the people in the colonizing country—thus deflecting blame for the injustice away from the colonizing country.

The South functioned as a "colony" of the North. Its economy was set up so that the industrial North could most efficiently extract from it as many resources as possible, and so it would be unworkable without huge amounts of unpaid labor.

We USers need to fully face this history and the distresses it has left on all of us. Patterns of superiority in USers outside of the South and internalized oppression in U.S. Southerners interfere with cleaning up the racism in our minds and our communities.

As a member of the group designated as the worst racists in the world, I have to battle messages that say I have no right to think about or speak up about this. I have to remind myself, over and over, that we U.S. Southerners can move on this and be instrumental in ending racism.

Leslie Kausch

Greensboro, North Carolina, USA
Reprinted from the e-mail discussion
list for RC Community members

The Most Important Job

The most important job in the whole society is producing new humans. The most important, most demanding, most exhausting job is decreed to be absolutely unpaid. Parents are supposed to work eighteen hours for the glory of it. If you complain as a parent, you're told that you are privileged to be with your young people. Well, it is a rare privilege, but that doesn't lessen the oppression at all. Parents are overworked so desperately, are so tired, that it's a wonder they do as well as they do.



¹ "Tell" means perceive.

² "Take on" means assume, adopt.

³ A U.S. Southerner is someone from one of the states of the United States in which slavery was legal prior to the U.S. Civil War.

Harvey Jackins
From "Open Question Evening
in Copenhagen," on page 44
of *Start Over Every Morning*

Insights into Jewish Liberation

Cherie Brown¹ came to our Region² in New York City (USA) to lead a Jewish liberation workshop. She described it as three workshops: (1) a Jewish liberation workshop for Jews, (2) an allies-to-Jews workshop, led by Fela Barclift,³ and (3) a Jewish liberation workshop for everyone (we had two classes in which we all met together).

Here are some of my insights from the workshop:

♦ **Taking on⁴ Jewish practice:** Cherie said that when she first became International Liberation Reference Person for Jews, she thought that re-emerging from the Jewish identity was like re-emerging from any other identity: “claim it, clean it up, and discard it.” However, she noticed over time that RC Jews who embraced Jewish practice seemed to be re-emerging faster than Jews who did not. Anti-Jewish oppression makes us think that we are safer if we

assimilate. Adding Jewish content to our lives contradicts that part of the oppression and can be important to our re-emergence. She said, “Imagine that you live a fully Jewish life. What would you do?”

♦ **Assimilation:** We get targeted as Jews whether we assimilate or not. If we assimilate and don’t pass on Jewish traditions, then only the distresses get passed on to the next generations. It’s crucially important to discharge our hurts from anti-Jewish oppression. However, if that’s all we do when we take on⁵ Jewish liberation, something fundamental will be missing.

♦ **Jews of the global majority:** Three Jews of the global majority spoke in a panel. As a Mizrahi Jew,⁶ I was one of them. The Ashkenazi Jews⁷ were surprised to hear that Mizrahi Jews have practices, melodies, and so on, that differ from those of Ashkenazi Jews and that Jews of the global majority are the majority of Jews in the world. In the United States, Ashkenazi Jewish culture dominates;

other Jewish cultures are not known as well or celebrated as often.

♦ **Having myself, as a Mizrahi Jewish woman:** Following the October 2011 Jewish Liberation Conference in London (England), the global-majority Jews who attended had conference calls every few months with Cherie. It wasn’t until those calls that I realized how hungry I was for contact with other Jews targeted by racism—how I wanted to hear their stories, hear about their families and what their lives were like. I realized how hard it was to grow up in the United States, where white Ashkenazi culture is assumed to represent all Jewish culture. I now understand why I had so many feelings about Yiddish⁸: my culture and my people had been hidden, squashed, and forgotten. The conference calls and the panel at the workshop helped me to have myself as a Mizrahi Jewish woman, as well as appreciate and love Ashkenazi Jewish culture much more than before.

Sharon Wolf

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

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

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

³ Fela Barclift is the Area Reference Person for the Brooklyn Bedford-Stuyvesant Area in New York City, New York, USA.

⁴ In this context, “taking on” means adopting.

⁵ In this context, “take on” means undertake.

⁶ Mizrahi Jews are descendants of Jews from the Middle East, North Africa, Central Asia, and the Caucasus. They often identify as people targeted by racism.

⁷ Ashkenazi Jews are Jews of European decent, who generally identify as white.

⁸ Yiddish is a High German language, written in Hebrew characters, that is spoken by Jews of Central and Eastern European descent.



MAURA FALLON

I do not want my house to be walled in on all sides and my windows to be stuffed. I want the cultures of all the lands to be blown about my house as freely as possible. But I refuse to be blown off my feet by any.

Mahatma Gandhi

The World Conference Year

Tim Jackins, at the Southern USA Teachers' and Leaders' Workshop, November 2013

This year is a significant one in our four-year cycle. We have had all ten of the Pre-World Conferences as well as the World Conference. These conferences are where I get the best sense of who we are, all around the world, and how we are doing.

For the first time we have a (minimum) count of active RCers. Diane Shisk¹ asked all the Area² Reference Persons to tell us how many classes happened in their Area in 2012, and how many students were in each class. This was just classes in organized Areas

(about a third of RC teachers are outside of organized Areas), but there were fifty thousand people actively Co-Counseling! We have never before had enough information to even guess at this.

If fifty thousand people are in classes, it means that probably five hundred thousand people have gone through classes and are circling around. An interesting thing about them is that they are almost all full of goodwill for you whom they left, and favorably inclined toward this set of ideas. (*laughter*) They really are. They think fondly of you. They don't have any argument with you. They just couldn't figure out a way to make RC work for them. Our Communities have not yet figured out how to get the exact right resource to every single person. We just don't have that much resource.

We are gaining experience. We are getting better at it. We are always trying things. Some of them we can't make work, but that's all right; it is not a mistake. It's part of how we gauge whether we are reaching far enough and not being too timid.

¹ Diane Shisk is the Alternate International Reference Person.

² An Area is a local RC Community.

There are lots of people around the world very much like you. This is what I get to see at the conferences: collections of people who understand and have chosen to use this tool for the rest of their lives. They understand how big a change it consistently



CHINA • TIM JACKINS

makes in their lives and they are not going to give it up. It's theirs. They have this in common with you, and you can count on them. There are sizeable groups of such people in many different places. They are not free of distress—they continue with their struggles,

discouragements, and feelings of unhappiness—but they are clear enough. They have done enough work. Though they may sometimes act out their distress at each other, they are not deeply confused by it. They just can't stop acting it out yet. You know how that is. (*laughter*)

IN GOOD SHAPE

The Communities are in the best shape³ I've ever seen them in. There is a clear, deep understanding of RC, and we keep figuring out more things. We continue along the same paths we started out on, and they get broader and more inclusive. We are reaching places in the work on our distresses that we haven't been able to go to consistently before.

Some people have to handle a particular question after they have been in Co-Counseling for a while. People outside RC ask them, "Well, when are you going to be done?" (*laughter*) "When are you going to be all better?" My answer is that every time I have a session my life gets better. Why would I ever stop? There may be a point when we aren't as driven toward sessions as we have sometimes been, when we can go

continued . . .

³ "Shape" means condition.

TEACHING, LEADING, COMMUNITY BUILDING

... continued

off and not have restimulation grab us as quickly. But RC stays a useful tool, and we keep understanding it better and better.

A recent example of how far we have come was a workshop on eliminating racism that Barbara Love⁴ and I led two weeks ago in Washington, D.C. (USA). There were 240 experienced Co-Counselors there who wanted to further their work on racism. The RC Community has done a lot of work on racism and has made great progress. (We also know we have more to do, and we're always hunting for ways to work together more effectively.) It was interesting what didn't happen at this workshop. People didn't get easily upset and restimulated with each other. They knew that they were allies, no matter what distresses society had laid on them. They understood that. They

⁴ Barbara Love is the International Liberation Reference Person for African Heritage People.

could listen to things they'd never been able to listen to before. They didn't have to quickly retreat into having a session. They could keep thinking about something and then, when they had the opportunity, go have sessions on it. It's clear that we are gaining mastery in places where we have been chased by our distresses. This is also happening in other areas—for example, in women's work and men's work.

You are in RC at a good time. If you are fairly new to RC, boy,⁵ are you lucky! (*laughter*) Ask an old-timer what it was like when she or he started Co-Counseling. (*laughter*) There was more confusion and restimulation. It had to be that way, but we have continued to move on. Now the process is actually accelerating. This is useful, since society seems to be collapsing faster and faster.

⁵ In this context, "boy" is an exclamation that means wow.



JIM MADDRY

We sent a list of questions to all the 219 Area¹ Reference Persons about the level of RC activity in their Areas in 2012. Almost every one of them responded. The information gathered gives us a picture of the amount of RC activity in organized Areas around the world in that year.

It does not include data from unorganized Areas—now called Developing Communities—or from activities that happened on a Regional level. (There are 1,095 certified RC teachers in organized Areas and 435 in Developing Communities.)

Here are the numbers:

- 49,262 people actively Co-Counseling (having weekly sessions and attending Area events)

¹ An Area is a local RC Community.

- 443 fundamentals class series
- 476 ongoing class series
- 200 Area leaders' class series
- 365 Area workshops
- 124 Area playdays²
- 1,038 Area support groups meeting regularly

Diane Shisk
Alternate International
Reference Person
Seattle, Washington, USA

² An playday is a several-hour RC workshop that includes time for children to do whatever safe activities they want to do, with the encouragement and appreciation of the adults present, and to discharge if they wish. It also includes discharge time for the adults.



How a Guideline Is Changed or Formed



The first *Guidelines for the Re-evaluation Counseling Communities*¹ were adopted at the first World Conference, in 1972. They have been updated at every World Conference since then, as required by the *Guidelines*. Here is the process for adding a new Guideline or changing an existing Guideline:

When an RCer gets an idea for a new Guideline or an improvement to an existing one, we ask that she or he first have sessions about the idea. Because the *Guidelines* often contradict distress, the “idea” may be based in undischarged distress. We also ask that the person discuss the idea with a local RC leader (RC teacher or Reference Person). Many of the proposed changes we receive are based on a lack of information about the *Guidelines* or a misunderstanding of a particular Guideline. Still, any RCer can put forth a proposal at any time and it will be considered. (And many changes are made to the *Guidelines* every four years.)

The proposal can be sent either to the International Reference Person (IRP) or to the appropriate Pre-World Conference.

All RCers attending the ten Pre-World Conferences meet in *Guidelines* groups in which they make proposals for new Guidelines or for changes to the existing ones. They may or may not discuss any individual proposal, but all the proposals are written up in the notes of the meetings and forwarded to the IRP and the Alternate International Reference Person (AIRP).

The AIRP organizes the proposals from all of the Pre-Worlds (by the section of the *Guidelines* they relate to). Then the IRP and the AIRP review each proposal and decide whether it should be

- recommended to the *Guidelines* Advisory Committee for consideration,
- set aside for inclusion in the *Community Builder’s Manual* (a publication in the works²), or
- rejected as redundant or inappropriate for the *Guidelines*.

All of the proposals (organized by section of the *Guidelines*) are then sent to the *Guidelines* Advisory Committee (an international and diverse group of RC leaders), along with the recommendations of the IRP and the AIRP.

The people on the *Guidelines* Advisory Committee (GAC) review and discuss the proposals over a two-month period via e-mail and three two-hour conference calls. First they make recommendations regarding each of the proposals to the IRP and the AIRP. After the IRP and AIRP review their recommendations, and perhaps add their own recommendations, the existing *Guidelines* are marked up to show how the proposed changes could be incorporated. Language to be deleted has a red line drawn through it. Language to be added is written in red and underlined. This marked-up document is sent back to the GAC, which reviews it in a second round of discussion and comment. The document is circulated like this many times and goes through many revisions during the two months.

If the GAC and the IRP agree on a proposal, it moves forward in the agreed-upon form to the World Conference. If they disagree, discussion continues until time runs out (the World Conference is usually six weeks after the last Pre-World). Every disputed *Guidelines* proposal receives at least two rounds of communication between the GAC and the IRP. A number of the proposals have a significant amount of work done on them by subcommittees of the GAC. If there is no agreement after two or more rounds of discussion, a best-possible draft of the disputed proposal moves forward to the World Conference.

continued . . .

¹ The policies for the RC Communities

² “In the works” means being created.

TEACHING, LEADING, COMMUNITY BUILDING

... continued

Our goal is to finish this process approximately two weeks before the World Conference, to allow time for translation of the proposals³ and to give RCers coming to the conference time to read and discharge about the proposals in advance.



HELEN PARKIN

Leaders coming to the World Conference are expected to read all the proposals before arriving. At the World Conference itself, they meet in two small-group (six-person) meetings in which they review the proposals and suggest new ones. Comments from these groups are collected. Then the AIRP and a sub-group of the *Guidelines* Advisory Committee work through the day and night to organize all the proposals into one document. That document is reviewed with the IRP the next morning. Then a new document of proposed changes to the *Guidelines* is drafted based on the small groups' input as reviewed by the IRP. The new document is distributed to the World Conference at noon. People are given an hour and a half to review it. Then the IRP leads the conference as a whole through a review of each proposal. The Guideline under discussion is illuminated on a large overhead screen.

For each proposed change, the IRP first asks whether it can be accepted without comment. (At this World Conference, about half the proposed changes were accepted without comment.) If anyone has a comment, that person is given a microphone and speaks to the conference as a whole. Everyone with a comment who raises her or his hand has an opportunity to speak.

During this review, many changes may be made to the proposal. The IRP asks if the Guideline can be accepted as amended. Sometimes it takes several passes, but usually the Guideline as amended is accepted. (This year we could not reach consensus on about ten of the Guidelines, because we ran out of time. Tim⁴ asked the conference if it could agree to send those Guidelines to committee for final revisions with the committee being instructed to take into consideration the concerns expressed at the conference. The conference agreed, and the process was finished a month after the World Conference ended.)

The *Guidelines* are then edited by a group of people to make them easier to read while retaining content.

The final version of this year's *Guidelines* should be available shortly, in print and on the RC website.

Diane Shisk
Alternate International Reference Person
Seattle, Washington, USA

³ The *Guidelines* proposals are translated into a number of languages for the non-English-speaking delegates to the World Conference. Guidelines completed earlier in the process are sent to the translators at that time, so the translators have about three weeks to translate the first half of the *Guidelines* proposals and then two weeks to translate the rest.

⁴ Tim Jackins

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 111).

Bâtir une Communauté de Co-écoute en Côte d'Ivoire

La Côte d'Ivoire, un charmant pays de vingt-deux millions d'habitants, a connu la guerre à la suite d'une crise post-électorale en 2011.

Je me suis retrouvé au Togo comme réfugié en avril de cette année-là. Deux semaines après, je rencontrais Missigbe¹ et la RC-Togo.

J'ai compris immédiatement que cette Communauté pourrait m'aider et aider pareillement mon pays. J'ai décidé de me joindre à la Communauté de la Co-écoute du Togo. Missigbe et les autres membres m'ont adopté. La même année, j'ai participé à un atelier animé par Marion et Ellie.² Quelle chance!

En mai 2013, j'ai eu une autre opportunité de participer à un atelier de perfectionnement avec les mêmes dirigeantes américaines. Comme nos vies sont liées!

Après deux années d'apprentissage, Missigbe, en accord avec le leadership international de la Co-écoute, m'a octroyé un certificat d'enseignant des classes de base de la Co-écoute. Quelques jours après, je suis retourné en Côte d'Ivoire. J'ai découvert un pays en pleine reconstruction, sans aucune trace de guerre, mais où beaucoup de cœurs sont meurtris. « Il faut que j'agisse au plus vite, on a besoin de moi et de la Co-écoute » me suis-je dit.

Quelques jours plus tard, j'ai animé ma première classe de base

¹ Missigbe Hokameto, un dirigeant de la Co-écoute à Lome, Togo

² Marion Ouphouet et Ellie Putnam, des dirigeantes de la Co-écoute à Seattle, Washington, USA



MATT WEATHERFORD

en compagnie d'une huitaine de personnes. Toutes sont tombées en admiration devant la théorie de la Co-écoute. Il s'en est donc suivi toute une série de classes de base. Le *Guide pour l'enseignement des classes de base* m'a servi d'outil didactique. Bien conçu, il m'a facilité la tâche.

Les membres de la classe ont commencé à apprécier les séances de décharge et un noyau passionné de Co-écoutant-e-s a commencé à naître. Ils se sont familiarisés avec le vocabulaire : automatismes de détresse, contradictions,³ etc., et ont adopté les règles de la Communauté.

Je donnais régulièrement des coups de fil et passais dès que j'avais le temps chez chacun des membres de la classe pour une séance de décharge. Un dirigeant doit être un exemple !

En octobre, c'était la rentrée des classes. Du fait que nous tenions nos classes de Co-écoute dans une école primaire, nous avons rencontré quelques soucis de local et d'horaire pour nous réunir régulièrement en grand nombre. Alors nous tenions nos réunions à deux, et parfois, je visitais chacun des membres pour des séances.

³ Contradictions à la détresse

Suite au compte rendu adressé à RCCR,⁴ Ellie a intercédé auprès de la Fondation⁵ pour que nous puissions acquérir un local meublé pour nos réunions. La foi des membres dans la Co-écoute s'est encore approfondie. Ils ne se sentent plus seuls. Ils savent désormais que la Communauté des Co-écoutant-e-s est une grande famille humaine bien soudée.

En Côte d'Ivoire, il est difficile d'être crédible si votre association ne possède pas de local. C'est pourquoi nous sommes reconnaissants pour cette intervention spontanée en notre faveur.

Nous poursuivons nos activités en révisant la théorie de base et en déchargeant beaucoup sur divers sujets. Le problème de local étant réglé, un groupe de soutien est en train de naître.

Je songe déjà à former un autre groupe dans une autre commune, et je suis en train de réunir des personnes dans ce sens. Mon engagement est d'asseoir une prestigieuse Communauté de Co-écoute.

Je remercie mes ami-e-s qui m'ont fait confiance et tous les dirigeant-e-s qui continuent de nous soutenir. Nous formons une famille humaine.

Je garde espoir.

Cyrille Zounon
Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire

⁴ Re-evaluation Counseling Community Resources, à Seattle, Washington, USA

⁵ La Fondation de la Réévaluation, qui fournit des ressources pour aider à la dissémination des idées et des pratiques de la Co-écoute, et à la formation au leadership de personnes dont les faibles revenus, la situation géographique, ou d'autres circonstances restrictives limitent l'accès à la Co-écoute

English translation of the preceding article:

Building a Co-Counseling Community in Ivory Coast

Ivory Coast, a charming country of twenty-two million people, experienced war following a post-election crisis in 2011. I came to Togo as a refugee that April. Two weeks after I arrived, I met Missigbe¹ and RC Togo.

I understood immediately that this Community could help me as well as my country. I decided to join the RC Community in Togo. Missigbe and the other members “adopted” me. During the same year, I participated in a workshop led by Marion and Ellie.² What an opportunity!

In May 2013 I had another opportunity to participate in a workshop to reinforce our skills, with the same U.S. leaders. How our lives are connected!

After two years of apprenticeship, Missigbe, in agreement with the International RC leadership, granted me a certificate to teach a fundamentals class.

A few days later I returned to Ivory Coast. I discovered a country in the process of reconstruction, without a trace of war but with much heartbreak. I told myself, “I need to act quickly; people need me and need Co-Counseling.”

Several days later I held my first fundamentals class, with eight students. Everyone was in awe of the theory of RC. Therefore, a whole series of fundamentals classes followed. The *Fundamentals Teaching Guide*, in French translation, was useful. This well-thought-out document made my task easier.

People began to appreciate the discharge sessions, and a passionate core of Co-Counselors started to emerge. They got used to the vocabulary—distress patterns, contradictions,³ and so on—and adopted the rules of the Community.

I phoned people in the class regularly and visited each one of them for a session as soon as I had time. A leader must be an example!

In October, school started up again. Because we held our RC classes in a primary school, we had a

few problems with the location and schedule for our regular large-group meetings. So we met as pairs, and sometimes I visited each member for sessions.

Following a report to RCCR,⁴ Ellie interceded with the Foundation⁵ so that we could get a furnished room for our meetings. Everyone’s faith in RC has further deepened. People no longer feel alone. They now know the Community of Co-Counseling is a large, well-connected human family.

In Ivory Coast it is hard to have credibility if your organization doesn’t have a location. That is why we are grateful for the spontaneous intervention on our behalf.

We are continuing our activities by reviewing the fundamentals theory and discharging a lot on various topics. With the problem of a location resolved, we are in the process of forming a support group.

I’m already thinking about starting another group in another town, and I’m bringing people together for that purpose. My goal is to establish a Co-Counseling Community.

I thank my friends who trusted me, and all the leaders who continue to support me. We are forming a human family.

I remain hopeful.

Cyrille Zounon
Abidjan, Ivory Coast

Translated by Ellie Putnam and Régis Courtin

¹ Missigbe Hokameto, an RC leader in Lome, Togo

² Marion Ouphouet and Ellie Putnam, RC leaders in Seattle, Washington, USA

³ Contradictions to distress

⁴ Re-evaluation Counseling Community Resources, in Seattle, Washington, USA

⁵ The Re-evaluation Foundation, which provides resources to help disseminate RC ideas, skills, and leadership training to people whose low income, geographic location, or other restrictive circumstances limit access to RC



FINLAND • KAISLI SYRJÄNEN

A Workshop in Rwanda

I led an RC workshop in Kigali, Rwanda, in August 2013. Forty-five people attended. Twelve of them had been at my previous workshop. The rest were new to RC.

I taught a class on how society targets the various groups. I described how oppression is implemented through existing structures, how it blends in so “naturally” that even the target groups embrace it and carry it further, and how capitalist society builds on it.

There was a large group of men. We had a class on men’s and women’s and young people’s oppressions. We later separated into groups to discuss these issues further. Some of the outcomes were shared in the larger group. Men could notice where they needed to support the women’s re-emergence, and vice versa. There were lots of Co-Counseling sessions and demonstrations. Many participants commented on how important the demonstrations were in driving home¹ the points.

We explored the topic of leadership—leadership within

¹ “Driving home” means helping people really understand.



AUGUST 2013 RC WORKSHOP IN KIGALI, RWANDA

ourselves, in the family, in the community, and at the government level. We evaluated good and bad leadership and the consequences. We looked at leadership on the continent, the many challenges facing it, and how RC can address those challenges. There was much discharge related to the genocide,² since many had been victims of it. We worked on where we go from here, given the distresses that have accumulated and affected so many people’s lives.

² The Rwandan genocide of 1994, in which approximately eight hundred thousand people, mostly of the minority Tutsi ethnic group, were killed by members of the Hutu ethnic group, while the powerful nations of the world stood back and did not intervene

At the end of the workshop participants made some personal commitments to move forward—for example, on forgiving perceived enemies and even having Co-Counseling sessions with them.

This was a successful workshop. I was happy with the outcome and hopeful about RC growth in Rwanda and the commitment to see that the genocide gradually becomes a thing of the past. I want to thank Tim and Diane³ for the support that made this possible.

Wanjiku Kironyo
Regional Reference Person
for Northern Africa
Nairobi, Kenya

³ Tim Jackins and Diane Shisk

Obligation versus Agreements

You don’t owe anybody anything. You will not turn out to be* a miserable monster if you don’t have obligations riding you. You have free intelligence, and you can decide moment to moment.

Now this is not the same as making agreements and not keeping them. That’s an entirely different business. Re-evaluation Counseling, as a Community, cannot function without the agreements. If we’re going to have joint efforts, we have to make and keep agreements. But that’s not the same as being obligated. You can retire from the RC Community anytime if the agreements are onerous to you, but don’t stay in and break them.

Harvey Jackins
From the July 1986 Peace and Disarmament Activists’ Workshop

* “Turn out to be” means result in being.



RC in Lira, Uganda



A few years ago I attended an RC workshop led by Pamela Haines¹ and Chuck Esser² in Gulu (Uganda). The presentation on goal setting helped me set priorities for myself and see myself as a new person. My fellow students noticed that whenever people had problems, they came to me. They also saw that I was often smiling and happy, which was not the case before. They asked me what my secret was.

Two boys from Lira, from a different tribal group than mine, were particularly interested. They were leaders in the school with me. I told them what my life was like before I became acquainted with RC, what it was like afterward, and how I handled my issues with other students. For example, a girl started hating me and was harsh and rude after I won an election. People wondered how I would handle it. I didn't return her hatred, and people were surprised.

I called my grandmother, Abitimo Odongkara,³ and asked her about starting an RC group. The two boys from Lira started meeting with me on Sundays. We also had Co-Counseling sessions with each other. Then they wanted to share RC ideas with others in their village. The group grew to about thirty. At times they would call me up, while they were all there as a group, and we would talk about RC over the phone. For example, we discussed the pamphlet *How to Begin RC*.

I got financial help for transport from my grandmother and started to go to Lira monthly. D—'s father offered his motorbike, and R—'s father refueled it. That made it easier to travel to the village. The parents didn't hesitate to provide us with whatever we needed. Maybe they saw some impact on their children's lives.

Five members of the Lira group came to the five-day fundamentals workshop we had in Gulu. After that, Chuck and I held a class for the group in Lira. They now have a deeper understanding of RC and plan to continue. A number of people set up buddies for when they leave the village and go back to school at the end of the month.

¹ Pamela Haines is the Area Reference Person for part of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, USA.

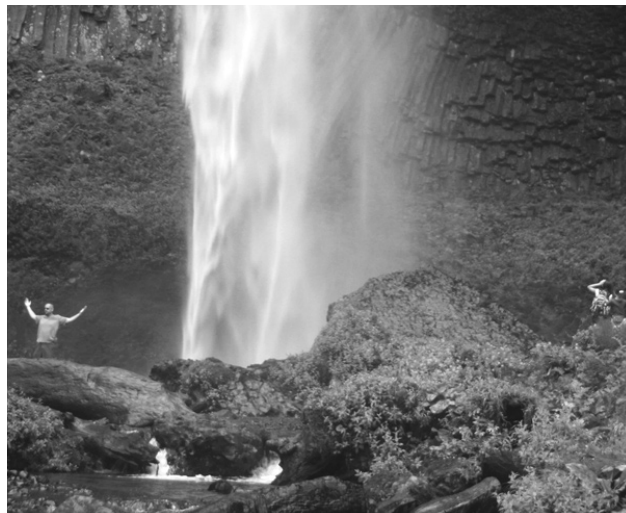
² Chuck Esser is the International Commonality Reference Person for Family Work, and the Regional Reference Person for New Jersey, USA.

³ Abitimo Odongkara is the Area Reference Person for North Uganda.

This village has been especially affected by the war. Some of the youth were not going to school and were not doing anything. The goal setting helped them. Even before the workshop in Gulu, they had found things to do and had begun some projects. Today one of the boys told me that he might be going to school next year, due to his efforts at farming to get himself money. Also, R— can now pay for school as a result of the goal-setting sessions I had with him.

I suggested that we not add more people to the group before we fully understand RC and take it into our lives. When we understand RC so well that people out there appreciate our ways, then they will come to join us. First we need to strengthen our group.

Atune Naume
Kampala, Uganda
(dictated to Chuck Esser and Pamela Haines)



COLUMBIA RIVER GORGE, OREGON, USA • LANCE CABLK

The Effective Leader

The really effective leader just walks around encouraging everybody else to do the leading. Someday I'm going to become a really effective leader.

Harvey Jackins
From *The Rest of Our Lives*, page 90

A Nigerian Leaders' Workshop

I was glad to be part of the RC Community leaders' workshop in Lagos, Nigeria, on October 19, 2013. We talked about the way forward and our plans for 2014. In doing this, we considered Community building, young adult participation, racism, the environment, and having a family workshop. After each class we had a session. We all noticed how RC is positively affecting our daily lives.

Sean Presto
(aka Iloakasia Leonard)
Lagos, Nigeria



SEATTLE, WASHINGTON, USA • TRAVIS QUEZON

Moving Forward in Nigeria

The recent workshops in Unizik, Abagana, and Awka (Nigeria) were the outcome of many years' work—work that was begun by Melphy Sakupwanya¹ about eight years ago.

Until recently I was fighting lots of distresses—busyness, discouragement, hopelessness, and having unattainable expectations—that affected the development and sustainability of these RC Communities. After many Co-Counseling sessions and lots of discharge, I made up my mind² to jump in and run ahead.

A highlight at the Unizik workshop was seeing Chioma³ radiating as she led. She flowed from one topic to the other with ease. When she called for a session, everyone was in a hurry to discharge on early childhood distresses. It was easy for me to appreciate Melphy once again, and I was not the only person who saw a

big piece of Mama⁴ in Chioma. The crowning highlight of the workshop was formally organizing the Nnamdi Azikiwe University RC Community and choosing Rev. Prof. Anayo Nkamnebe as the Area Reference Person and Chineze Obi-Okoye as the Alternate. I am persuaded that before long the great capacity within the university community will be realized.

The Abagana workshop was emotion-filled for me because of my attachment to the development of RC in that Community. During the introductions and “good news,” I suddenly remembered that the Community had been up and running for five years. My eyes and mouth were wide open at people's appreciation and understanding of basic RC theory. I was elated at their level of commitment. Chioma and the support team were also impressed. It was interesting to watch the support team handle the various topics assigned to them by Chioma and to see them lead. The entertainment

and refreshments stood out.⁵ (We had a purely traditional *paino*⁶ meal, and I loved it!)

Re-evaluation Counseling at Abagana Girls' Secondary School has come a long way in improving the relations between teachers and students and among the teachers. Princess Chinwe Agwuna⁷ has, over time, offered them a great resource. No wonder they have all accepted her continued leading of that community.

Sadly, I could not attend the Awka workshop.

Finally, let me use this opportunity to remind the new leadership to have sessions and discharge on a regular basis. That will make leading in RC a lot easier. Welcome to the new experience!

Kingsley Chimedu Ibekwe
Enugu, Nigeria

¹ Melphy Sakupwanya is the former Regional Reference Person for Sub-Saharan Africa.

² “Made up my mind” means decided.

³ Chioma Okonkwo, the Area Reference Person for Lagos, Nigeria

⁴ “Mama” is Melphy Sakupwanya.

⁵ “Stood out” means were particularly good.

⁶ *Paino* means soup and fufu (a starchy food made by boiling a vegetable, like cassava, yams, or plantain, and pounding it into a dough-like consistency).

⁷ Princess Chinwe Agwuna is an RC leader in Enugu-Ukwu, Anambra State, Nigeria.

Dear Tim,¹

I recently ordered all the *RCTU CDs*² that I've never listened to, and I've been working through them while running, working out, or driving. Nice to get to hear lots of your thoughts over the years!

Nat Lippert
Portland, Maine, USA

¹ Tim Jackins

² *RC Teacher Update CDs*—a quarterly series of CDs produced by Rational Island Publishers of talks given by Tim Jackins at recent RC workshops. They are intended primarily for RC teachers but are available to everyone. For a list of all the *RCTU CDs* to date, see page 105 of this *Present Time*.



BALTIMORE, MARYLAND, USA • AMANDA MARTINEZ

2013 Guidelines Available Soon

The new 2013 *Guidelines for the Re-evaluation Counseling Communities* will be available in early February—both in print (from Rational Island Publishers) and on the RC website, where they will be easily searchable.

Sliding Scales and Integrity

Does being too detailed with sliding scales discourage people from having sessions about money and using their integrity? How do we encourage integrity in our use of money for RC?

It is difficult to think about differences in wealth and income and about the economic inequality of our world. I will speak from my experience only.

In my First World¹ country of the United States, when organizers use a specific sliding scale tied to income (and I don't think it would be different if wealth were included), it looks to me like people view their application as they do their tax form. In my country, people almost uniformly try to pay as little tax as possible and use anything, legal or illegal, to reduce their payments. This happens despite a strong pretense of patriotism. I hear almost no one except myself say, "I am proud to pay my taxes."

An organizer of one of my workshops—a working-class person—had many people calling her up because of a detailed sliding scale. They were having long discussions with her about why they thought they should pay less and giving many detailed reasons. This put her in the role of a "tax advisor." I don't think that is how to encourage integrity or is fair to the organizer. It did not seem good to her or to me that people were treating the collection of fees for the workshop like an impersonal arm of an oppressive institution.

In my Region² the latest brilliant and effective idea is from an RC teacher who teaches a class on money and charges from one dollar to a hundred dollars for each class meeting. (In the case of a workshop, she does mention the estimated "break even" fee necessary to pay all the bills.)

In our Region I would say that even the poorest person wastes a dollar a week on addictions or some other attempt at finding comfort. So it does not seem unreasonable to charge that. I can go out on the roads around my house and in an hour find enough discarded returnable bottles to pay for this class.

In our Region it would take a factory worker two days to earn a hundred dollars, and that does not include the cost of his or her transportation to work. On the other hand, there are people who might spend a hundred dollars in that same two days on things that are not necessities, but they would find it a challenge to give up those comforts to pay for an RC class. The scale challenges them to choose the class over comforts.

¹ First World means industrialized, materially wealthy.

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

With this kind of very open scale, people in our Region have ended up using their integrity as a guide. I think this is because of two things:

1) There is no specific answer to how much people should pay—they have to decide for themselves.

2) We have done a lot of work, directly or indirectly, on class and the genocide of Indigenous people. Also, our highest level of leadership consists of working-class or raised-poor people. We have a long-standing Native community. We have more diversity in terms of income and wealth than many RC Communities. And people of low income and little wealth are prominent in our Community and greatly respected.

I think this scale encourages integrity, but I don't think it is just the scale that has made a difference. It is also the work we have done to build an economically diverse Community and to make having such a Community a goal that everyone is proud of.

What motivates us to do that work? I think it is the close relationships we've figured out how to make between people of significantly different incomes. We care enough about each other that people who have the means to pay think beyond what is good for themselves to what will support the whole. There are not many places in their lives where they can spend their money and get such a significant return in supporting the end of oppression. Numbers of them write generous checks to pay for a workshop. Sometimes if a workshop is in danger of not paying all the bills, a person

who has already paid will come forward and give another few hundred dollars. And we all feel good about that.

Is everyone able to use his or her integrity? No, some people who have the means are trying to pay the least they can, because that is what society encourages them to do. But I do not feel bad about that—it is simply the condition of the oppressive society.

I think the real question is, how do we encourage integrity in paying for classes and workshops in RC? I think this method has worked for our Community. Your Community may be different and require a different "solution."

I will add that because ours is a First World Community, even a person who is struggling financially is living a lifestyle that is wealthy by world standards. There are International workshops at which the participants vary more greatly in terms of their wealth and income, and the wealthier people of the world lack simple information and awareness about that. I think more specific sliding scales can be offered in those situations—scales that educate people about the extremes of inequality and help them understand in a concrete way what it would mean, specifically, in those situations to use one's integrity.



Dan Nickerson
International Liberation Reference
Person for Working-Class People
Freeport, Maine, USA
Reprinted from the e-mail discussion
list for RC Community members

What Does an RC Class Consist Of?

What does an RC class consist of? The communication of useful information that people otherwise would not get. That's the content of it. How do you communicate it? One way is by handing out literature and asking people to read and report. Great classes occur in which people are asked to read one article from *Sisters** and report on it. They reluctantly take it home and look at it. Then they notice another article and read the whole damn issue—and they come back with their eyes in flames. "Ah ha!"

Wherever you do it, the communication of useful information is a class. You'll be having a class in the elevator that will last a minute and a half. Everyone wants to know something useful that they didn't know before. The farmers I grew up among would come back from town and say, "Well, I learned something new today." That was a high point: "I learned something new." Sometimes it was just nonsense they heard, but at least it was new. It wasn't the same damn Russian thistle that had been in front of their door for three years.

Harvey Jackins
From the July 1986 Peace and Disarmament Activists' Workshop

* *Sisters* is the RC journal about women's liberation.

Subscriptions Oriented Toward RC Teachers

Over the past year we've encountered some misunderstanding about the RC literature subscriptions that are specifically oriented toward RC teachers. *Two very different kinds of subscriptions are available to RC teachers.* Here is a brief explanation of the two and the differences between them:

- *RC Teacher Packets* are packets of newly published RC literature—mostly printed literature, such as books and journals, but also sometimes digital media (DVDs). Most RC teachers who speak English well are expected to subscribe to the Teacher Packets (this is clearly stated on the Request for Certification as an RC Teacher form). But you do not need to be an RC teacher in order to subscribe. *Teacher Packets are typically distributed every twelve to eighteen months, vary in content each time depending upon what has been recently released, and are invoiced at the time of shipment.* Your Teacher Packet subscription will remain in effect until you cancel it, even if you stop being an RC teacher.

- *RC Teacher Update (RCTU) CD* subscriptions are completely optional and consist of quarterly CDs of recent workshop talks by Tim Jackins. *The subscriptions are available only to certified RC Teachers; must be prepaid; are not automatically renewed; and are for a fixed term of one, two, or three calendar years (for example, for 2014, 2015, and 2016), at \$25 (U.S.) per year.* If you have a current *RCTU CD* subscription, you will be notified when your subscription expires.

HOW TO SUBSCRIBE

To subscribe to *RC Teacher Packets*, please e-mail your request and current mailing address to <litsales@rc.org>. You will receive your first Teacher Packet when it becomes available. Depending on timing, this could be as much as a year after you first subscribe. (Meanwhile, of course, you are welcome to order any RC literature you want.)

If you are an RC teacher and want to subscribe to the *RC Teacher Update (RCTU) CDs*, subscriptions cost \$25

per year (\$27.50 for residents of Washington State, USA) and are available for up to three years. To order a subscription by credit card on the Rational Island website <www.rationalisland.com>, search on the title "RC Teacher Update subscription" and select the option you prefer. Or you may place your credit card order by calling the office in Seattle (9:00 AM to 5:30 PM Pacific Time, at +1-206-284-0311). If you prefer to pay by check, please e-mail <litsales@rc.org> to request an order form you can send with your payment.

If you are not an RC teacher and would like to purchase the *RC Teacher Update CDs*, you may purchase them individually for \$10 each (U.S.), plus shipping and handling. Past years' sets (four CDs per set) may be purchased for \$25 per set, plus shipping and handling, depending on availability. For more information, see pages 105 and 106 of this *Present Time*.



LK

“Make Your Reports Like That”

We're going to report on what we've been doing in the wide world, five minutes per person. Let's keep our motivation for seeing that everything goes right—rather than impressing people, or apologizing for our difficulties, or doing any of the other things that waste our time when we try to communicate. Please, in your report, assume that you are a marvelous, powerful person, who has done a brilliant job, and that part of what you've done is crucial for other people to hear about and understand. Make your reports like that, will you?

Harvey Jackins
From the July 1986 Peace and Disarmament Activists' Workshop

People Leaving RC

Tim Jackins, at one of the Pre-World Conferences, 2013

Question: How do we handle it when someone leaves the RC Community? How do we handle the other Community members' distresses about it? What do we do?

Tim: People leave the RC Community for several different reasons. Some people should leave. Some people shouldn't have come in to begin with, and we don't want to spend a lot of resource encouraging them to stay.

We want to be thoughtful about who comes into the Community. The Community can't handle everyone's distresses, even though we want to. Sometimes, in wanting to, we use bad judgment. We invite in, and make hopeful, people we don't have the resource to help.

Sometimes it's a friend of ours, and we can't see their struggles clearly. Or we see the distresses clearly and we want someone else to help us, so we drop the person on the Community. Sometimes we can't tell¹ that there's heavy distress waiting behind a smiling face.

Sometimes people don't stay because of the *Guidelines*,² especially the no-socializing policy.³ I wouldn't work too hard on those people either. There's a way that their distresses can have them committed to causing trouble.

Most people leave because their discouragement overcomes them. They are working on things and it gets harder for them to get their attention out of the distress. Often their Co-Counseling relationships aren't good enough yet, so no one notices or no one moves to help them. If we are the teacher of the person's class, then hopefully we get some indication. We can have a session with them, or do a three-way session and include their usual Co-Counselor, to help things go better. The amount of resource we put into this effort is up to our judgment.

People often leave after their first class. How much this happens depends on how strong the



STAN EICHNER

local Community is. The bigger and stronger the Community, the more it is a contradiction to people's material.

Almost everybody feels discouraged in RC at one point or another. It's useful to work on those distresses before they grab us. For example, we can have people work on them in an ongoing class. We can ask the question, "What would get so hard on you that you couldn't keep having sessions?" We can help people recognize that there is nothing wrong when those feelings come up, but that they don't have to believe them.

It's far easier to get people to understand this before it happens. If it happens first, I think we want to offer people resource, but we want to do it in such a way that we are not taking care of them. We want to know enough about their distresses that we can contradict them. We also have to remind people that it's just distress, that there's nothing wrong now, and get them working on earlier times when they left other situations in discouragement. Many people have never been able to stay anywhere.

A way to help the RCers who watch these others leave is to get them working on the same material.

We have all lost people and relationships we have cared about, so we can have lots of restimulations and not much thinking in this area.

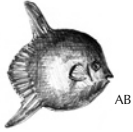
¹ "Tell" means perceive.

² The *Guidelines for the Re-evaluation Counseling Communities*—the policies for the RC Communities

³ The no-socializing policy of the RC Communities states that Co-Counselors should not set up any relationships, other than Co-Counseling, with other Co-Counselors or with people whom they first meet in a Co-Counseling context.

Appreciating *Present Time*

Thank you for sending to me PRESENT TIME October 2013. I got it today, and I am so thrilled reading every page. I appreciate all the love and care that this involves. *Muchas gracias* (many thanks).



María Lorena Cuéllar Barandiarán
San Salvador, El Salvador

My lifelong Co-Counselor and I have appreciated and enjoyed the October 2013 PRESENT TIME as an illuminating and educational resource. Thank you all!

Sojourner Truth
Seattle, Washington, USA

Thanks for making PRESENT TIME very easy to read and also inviting to read and look through.

Jan Venderbos
Wegea, Fryslân, The Netherlands

As a middle-class person, I thoroughly appreciate PRESENT TIME for how much information it provides. I sense that my class upbringing has involved distresses that keep me from learning about (the sometimes harsh) reality. I am now learning about hopeful things that are happening in places where I thought there was no hope. I am also learning details about the history of the Jews that are not so pleasant but nonetheless a part of reality and that I want to learn about.

Thanks to PRESENT TIME and all its contributors. I think that means you!

Benjamin Altman
Brooklyn, New York, USA



BILL LIPPETT

Racism, and Care of the Environment

One day when I was very, very young, I sat on the curb in our yard. I was so small that it felt like a comfortable chair. The length of my legs exactly matched the height of the curb. I remember clearly the details of that moment—the roughness of the concrete, how it felt under my hands and on my legs, the cracks in the street, the gravel and soil that had collected in the gutter. I don't remember being aware that I was a little black girl. I don't remember being aware of being poor. My clearest memory of that moment is about the earth. I was thinking about the grass and the dirt and that they belonged to me. I was aware of each blade of grass and thinking, "This is my grass, it belongs to me. This is my ground." I knew that I could act in this world in any way I chose. It belonged to me, and I belonged to it.

My awareness of racism is not as clear a memory. It came on gradually, I think, but the content was clear. Over time little messages I received—from my family, from our neighbors, from the white insurance collectors who came to our house once a week, from the white men who drove the bus past our house every day, from the white family who owned the grocery store on the corner, and from the radio—jelled into a clear statement about who I was and my relationship to that grass and that dirt.

The message was that the world was not mine. It did not belong to me. Once that message was clear to me, I was aware that I was a little black girl and that we were poor. I came to believe that the world belonged to white people and not to black people, not to Indians, not to Mexicans. I did not yet know that there were other people of color in the world.

As I think about it now, I realize that volumes of misinformation had taken shape in my mind and misled me about



TRAVIS QUEZON

my place in the world. What I came to believe at that point was that Mexicans were physically beautiful people who were ornamental. Their place in the world was decorative. Native peoples were a bit less beautiful, but stoic and strong, and were enemies of the white people and thoughtlessly mean to them. Good ones could be the white man's sidekick.¹ We black people were not at all beautiful and had no power or value in the world. We were allowed to be in the world if we were quiet, respectful of white people, and stayed very small.

I saw my parents and other relatives become humble when white people were present and angry when they were not. I learned to behave that way, too. The adults in my family were servants—doing domestic work, mowing lawns, carrying luggage, carrying groceries. But they had learned to disconnect from the people they served and from the world they lived in. I learned it from them.

We did not totally disconnect from the earth, but like sharecroppers we accepted that only a small piece of it could be cared for by us. My family raised a garden and from time to time raised rabbits and chickens. I saw that my people had some happiness around digging in the dirt and growing food and caring for animals. And I also saw some sadness in it, connected to being locked out of the big picture of things.

¹ "Sidekick" means subordinate partner.

Racism caused us to become politically humble as well. The position was that it wasn't our world and it wasn't our country. Our people were brought here against their will, and we felt no responsibility for or connection to the country. I can remember as a child hearing the news reports on the radio and thinking they were about the big wide world out there, which was just intimidating to me. It had nothing to do with me and my family. When we heard that a family in our neighborhood had gotten on welfare, we rejoiced for them. It was our way of getting something back for the sacrifices our ancestors had made.

When Barack Obama became President,² I was finally able to claim this country as my own.

That was a step for me in reclaiming my connection to the planet. I am not yet able to fully embrace the attitude of the little girl who knew the world belonged to her, but I can now see the possibility of reclaiming it. The RC Community accepting the new goal on care of the environment at the recent World Conference was another big step in that direction for me. I am seeing many things in a new light now, and I can see myself moving closer to the earth. The shift has a lot to do with moving from using the earth for my benefit (having a garden and a nice lawn) to caring well for the soil and remembering that all living creatures love their life. I am carrying bugs outside now, rather than smashing them (not all of them, but I am getting there). My commitment to recycling has a deeper focus now. I will continue to discharge on this goal and enjoy seeing where it will take me.

Dorothy Marcy
Fayetteville, Arkansas, USA

² Barack Obama, an African American man, became president of the United States in January 2009.

Ending Unsustainable Lifestyles

I led a table at the World Conference for “people living an environmentally unsustainable lifestyle.” Ten people showed up.* We went around with three questions:

1. *Have you determined your degree of consumption and if it is sustainable?* Three people had used some method to decide if their lifestyles were sustainable and had determined they were not. One person had calculated that if all the people of the world lived at that person’s level of consumption, it would take four planets the size of earth to sustain our population. The others assumed or suspected that they were not living at a sustainable level of consumption but had not used any particular formula to determine that.

“I suggested we might make sustainability partnerships with Co-Counselors. We could help each other set goals, make plans, and discharge.”

2. *What step have you taken to reduce your consumption of the earth’s resources?* Everyone had done something. People’s actions were quite varied. Most had required a significant change from a former lifestyle, and all were successful in reaching a short-term goal.

3. *What addiction or circumstance leads you to the overconsumption that you fight to overcome? What distress do you need to work on to move against this addiction or circumstance and toward a sustainable lifestyle?* All but one person easily identified some piece of irrationality that they could attack systematically in Co-Counseling sessions.

* “Showed up” means came.



LINCOLN PARK, CHICAGO, ILLINOIS, USA • NIKHIL TREVEDI

I shared my thought (based on my experience) that this is probably similar to our struggle to achieve a healthy diet and enough exercise—that is, it is hard to do alone. I suggested we might make sustainability partnerships with Co-Counselors. We could help each other set goals, make plans, and discharge. Perhaps ten minutes of a weekly session could be used for this.

For some of us this is not just about our own patterns of consumption but also about those of the people in our household. We could move on this, too, with the help of these partnerships.

I can think of some exciting implications. How much has our wide-world-change work been contaminated by our lack of personal integrity in this area? Might our movement against our own overconsumption lead to a renewed integrity that would be sensed by the people around us? Might it inspire other people to actions—personal, political, and economic—that would be significant in preventing and reversing damages inflicted on the earth by human activity?

If this inspires you to experiment with these partnerships, please let me know of your results.

Dan Nickerson
Freeport, Maine, USA
Reprinted from the e-mail discussion
list for RC Community members

Counterrevolution Due to Persistence of Patterns

Harvey Jackins, at the July 1986 Peace and Disarmament Activists' Workshop

Question: I'd like your thoughts on one of the great questions. We had Russia and China moving toward a genuinely new society, and they've fallen back to state capitalism. How did that happen without a major violent revolution? It seemed relatively smooth. Was it just a matter of old patterns, or were there mistakes in terms of structure that made it possible?

Harvey: I think it's the persistence of patterns of oppression in the heads of the leaders of the revolution and in the subculture. There's always an allure. For example, you notice it when you get elected to be business agent for the union. You've been used to being laid off, and here you've got a steady job with a wage comparable to the lowest pay of a journeyman, something like that. All of a sudden you've got security. Your family thinks, "Maybe we can have a little decent furniture." All the pressures of upward climb come in on you real heavy. The boss starts talking to you nice. Union members come around and say, "Fat cat,¹ loan us some money; if you don't, you're a (derogatory word)."

The pressure of the patterns is there. And it certainly is on the people who take leadership in a revolutionary movement. They haven't thought about patterns. They don't know about patterns. The only models they have for somebody operating in a leading position are the old oppressive models. I think this is the principal thing.

Also, the counterrevolutions didn't occur without violence. A lot of people died in Russia, and there was a lot of violence in China. Large numbers of people died in the regression to capitalism after Mao's² death.

¹ A "fat cat" is a wealthy and privileged person.

² Mao Tse-tung, the leader of the People's Republic of China from 1949 to 1976

What Are the Needs of Leaders?

What are the needs of leaders? Do they need to get together and all agree upon a program that they will all carry out¹ together, and have the organizational secretaries check up on them to see that they carry it out? We've always assumed so, but it turns out to be² complete nonsense. All this enormous effort that organizations have made to work that way turns out to be complete nonsense, worse than unnecessary.

What do leaders working in the same field need? They need to release their individual initiative. When they get together, they need four things:

1. They need a chance to report on what they've been doing, with the

attention of their interested peers. That's point one on the Wygelian agenda.³

2. Next they need a chance to share information, tell what they know, in the field that they share a common interest in. "What seems to be the situation facing Asian Pacific people at the present time—in the

³ The "Wygelian" agenda is what is followed in a Wygelian leaders' group. A Wygelian leaders' group is a group of leaders and potential leaders of a particular constituency in which each person takes a turn doing the following: (1) reporting on what he or she has been doing in the last period with regard to the constituency, (2) saying what he or she thinks is the current situation facing the constituency, from his or her viewpoint, (3) sharing what he or she proposes to do as a leader in the next period, and (4) discharging on what is getting in the way of his or her leadership. The group does not make any group plans but rather serves to encourage individual initiative. It meets only when the members feel a need for meeting.

world, in the country, in Los Angeles County, in Topanga Canyon? What facts do you know, what opinions do you have? Distinguish between facts and opinions if you can, but what do you know?" The Wygelian groups in Seattle (Washington, USA) within a period of a few meetings

continued . . .



NIKHIL TRIVEDI

¹ "Carry out" means make happen.

² "It turns out to be" means in practice it is revealed to be.

WIDE WORLD CHANGING

... continued

became enormously well informed. They all knew what everybody else knew; they shared back and forth. They'd find a good book and buy a few extra copies and bring them in case somebody wanted to buy them. They'd copy magazine articles, recommend magazines, and so on like that. Sharing information—a basic need among leaders who are working together. Point two of the Wygelian leaders' agenda.

3. They need to set goals in the hearing of people who share their motivations, their interests—who are their peers. Boy,⁴ do you think a lot better when you know that people who know the score⁵ are listening to what you're going to do. Each person

⁴ "Boy" is an exclamation.

⁵ "Know the score" means know what's happening, are informed about the situation, have experience related to the topic.

is free to set their own goals. Those are the ones they'll have a chance of carrying out. So point three of the Wygelian leaders' agenda is a simple question: "What do you propose to do in the area of Asian Pacific leadership in the next period?" "Well, I thought I'd bake cookies with the right slogans on them and take them to schools." *That's fine.* If that's what the person says they'll do, they'll do it. They don't have to be pinned down⁶ and make commitments that somebody will check up on. Also, they frequently get inspired by other people's goals.

4. They need assistance in crawling out of the distress that gets in the way of their leadership—the fourth point on the Wygelian leaders' agenda. The last thing is a session. "Where are you hung up? What's getting in the way

⁶ "Pinned down" means made to be explicit.

⁷ "Hung up" means stuck, unable to move forward.

of your leadership?" Boy, are people ready to tell you! They may not say, "Well, I have this difficulty that I would appreciate some help with." They may say, "This is all tomfoolery."⁸ You're just wasting our time. I want to get back to . . ." But they've handed you their difficulty. They've handed it to you in the best way they can, and if you're any kind of a counselor, you'll find a way to get discharge going on it.

And you don't meet regularly. You only meet when there is something to meet about. Wonderful idea! Wonderful! No regular meetings! And you don't meet very often.

Harvey Jackins

From the July 1986 Peace and Disarmament Activists' Workshop

⁸ "Tomfoolery" is foolishness.

Connecting with the Environment—A First Step

I had a lovely experience at a recent workshop. There were two presentations on care of the environment. In the first one, two people brought up a bag full of medicinal and edible plants that they had gathered from the workshop site (Marin Headlands, California, USA). One of them spoke about how a first step in caring for the environment is to appreciate and connect to it. She passed around the different plants they had gathered and shared what was special about them. The plant that struck me¹ most was fennel. The smell of its pollen was amazing, and I couldn't help grinning at the idea that this expensive "gourmet" herb was growing wild and was freely available. The second presentation was about how awesome mushrooms are. The speaker shared how a company was using mushroom-farm byproducts as a replacement for styrofoam.

For most of my life I didn't have attention for nature. This was because I'd been so beaten down by messages of hopelessness about the environment. I had also received a lot of fear-based messages. I'm the child of two physicians who worried about things like infectious disease and skin cancer.

I used to think that hikes and nature walks were unbearably boring. I almost never noticed the natural environment, other than the temperature and the rain, snow, or sun. I didn't see the difference between walking around a city block and walking in the woods, other than that it was more convenient to walk on a sidewalk.

¹ "Struck me" means got my attention.



JERUSALEM, ISRAEL • JEVERA TEMSKY

Then a year and a half ago, I worked in a public elementary school that focused on the environment. I co-taught with a teacher who would bring in leaves of different plants and ask the sixth-grade students to sit quietly with them for ten minutes—not writing, drawing, or talking; just being with the plants and connecting with their essence. Many of the young people were interested in the tiny differences among the leaves of the various chaparral plants. We would go on hikes in the Santa Monica mountains, and my co-teacher would declare a few minutes of silent time every now and again for all of us to notice what we saw, smelled, felt, and heard. It was wonderful to connect with the earth and each other, and I loved learning from the young people. (“Hey, teacher! This is a lemonade berry! You can eat it!”)

After getting lots of Co-Counseling sessions on how much I didn't know (especially as I was their science teacher!), I started to have more attention for nature. I would pause in the middle of the street and say to my partner, “Whoa!² Look at that plant. It's so interesting. It looks like it's crawling across the ground.” I think things shifted because of the wonderful contradiction³ of being around people who were so connected to and interested in the natural environment. The environment was no longer something just to fear or worry about. It became something to enjoy.

Being connected with the environment is a great first step for me, because it gives me a reason to take action for the environment, rather than doing it just because it's the “right” thing to do—or ignoring environmental degradation because it's too overwhelming and hopeless, or dismissing it because it's not as urgent as “real” oppressions, such as racism and classism.

At the Young Adult Leaders' Workshop in the Marin Headlands a few months ago, I noticed that we rarely needed anything to get our attention out besides looking outside and noticing what was out there and how beautiful it was. It made me wonder if life would be different, if we'd be less caught up in our distresses, if we had a chance to live where we could experience the natural world more abundantly. In addition to discharging on the scary messages I've received, I think it would be good for me to spend time in sessions just appreciating and connecting to the natural environment.

I'm curious to hear what others of you think. Have any of you worked in sessions on appreciating the environment? I'd love to hear anything you've learned or how it's gone for you. Where have you lived (urban areas, suburban areas, rural areas), and how has that affected your relationship to the natural environment, if at all? How do you counsel on this?

J. G.

Los Angeles, California, USA
Reprinted from the RC e-mail
discussion list for leaders of young adults

² “Whoa” is an exclamation.

³ Contradiction to distress



OLNEY POND, LINCOLN WOODS STATE PARK, LINCOLN, RHODE ISLAND, USA • MARJORIE SMITH

Accurately Perceiving Reality

The steps of liberation are

1. accurately perceiving reality,
2. setting a full range of goals (if you don't have immediate ones, you don't get off your dime¹; if you don't have long-range ones, you fuddle around²),
3. drafting and agreeing on policy,
4. communicating policy widely (organizing leaders, organizing groups, organizing allies).

We continuously think and act, and then discharge on the revealed blocks in our thinking (which are revealed by our acting and the difficulties we run into when we act). Then we think some more, act, and discharge.

Accurately perceiving reality is a crucial first step. We are not in a liberal world, an intellectual world, a middle-class world of illusion, where our good intentions will somehow inspire God to intervene and clean up the situation. That's not reality. If God is there, she's an aloof God who says, "I gave it to you; handle it, for God's sake," or something like that.

We are in a very real world in which, understandably, in the grip of patterns, we sold ourselves into oppressive class

societies. Class societies act like pre-human life; they are about as intelligent as a sand urchin. They evolve in a crude caricature of Darwinian evolution until they collapse and a new society emerges from the ruins, with a lot of dead people left behind.

We are in a very positive world that is in danger of being ruined by the senseless operation of the latest, and I'm quite sure the last, oppressive society—the owning-class, working-class society—in which one motive transcends all other motives, as far as the society's concerned, and that's profit. Profit supersedes all intelligent considerations. This society is in the last stages of collapse, and in its collapse it is resorting to war, as all societies have done.

We're properly concerned with this universal thrust toward war and with the extreme danger of a collapse that is armed with nuclear weapons. We're not ninnies³ in feeling that this is about the most important issue. But we can't solve it if we see it as separate from the total situation. It cannot be solved without handling the necessary transition to a non-oppressive society. The threat of nuclear arms, the threat of war, are not isolated phenomena. They're simply an expression of the whole picture, of the reality that surrounds us.

Harvey Jackins

From a talk at the Peace and Disarmament Activists' Workshop, July 1986

¹ "Get off your dime" means start moving.

² "Fuddle around" means think or act in a confused, aimless way.

³ "Ninnies" are fools, simpletons.



SUE EDWARDS

FIVE-YEAR SUBSCRIPTION TO *PRESENT TIME*

Rational Island Publishers is offering a five-year subscription to *Present Time*, at the request of many people who would like to not have to re-subscribe every one or two years. The cost is \$84 in the United States, outside of Washington State; \$92 in Washington State; and \$124 (U.S.) outside the United States. (A couple of dollars have been added to partially cover the anticipated increase in costs over the next five years.) To order a *Present Time* subscription, see page 111 of this issue.



ELLIE PUTNAM

On the following nine pages are thoughts from several International Liberation and Commonality Reference Persons about their constituencies and care of the environment.

Parents, and Care of the Environment

We parents have a close and intimate connection to the future generations of humans and to all generations throughout time. Watching our children grow from babies into adults helps us understand the continuum of life.

Harvey¹ said that we as human beings should take responsibility for the entire universe, including the farthest star. He understood that there were limits to our resources and that to begin with we might only be able to be aware of the farthest star. He also said that taking charge of everything would require cooperation among many generations over time. I envision us parents and the generations that follow us partnering to transform our society, including caring for the environment.

As Tim² has pointed out, sustaining all life and changing the direction of our society and its relationship to the environment will mean changing the way people relate to each other. We can raise the next generation in a way that will change everything about how people treat each other and other living things. And building communities around our families can change human cultures in a way that will help sustain the environment.

¹ Harvey Jackins

² Tim Jackins

We want our children to have good and hopeful lives and futures. We want them, and their children, and their children's children to have a sustainable environment to live in. Our love for our children and grandchildren makes it hard for us to numb out about the environment. This can be a lever

We can raise the next generation in a way that will change everything about how people treat each other and other living things.

for discharging on the goal of caring for the environment. It can help us decide to take it on³ in whatever way makes sense for us.

There is a continuum of leadership we can take depending on the priorities of our families at any given point. We can think about what is re-emergent for ourselves and our families. Leading on care of the environment will look different for each parent.

It's easy to be overwhelmed with all the work of being a parent. We do not have to put care of the

³ "Take it on" means adopt it.



WARM SPRINGS RESERVATION, OREGON, USA • LANCE CABLK

environment in a box of shoulds. We can discharge on how much we love our children and want them to have a big future. We can discharge our discouragement, helplessness, and worry, so that we can think about the environment and not pass our related hurts on to the next generation.

We can support our children to think about the environment as they show an interest. We can listen to them about it. We should not communicate to them society's fears about it. We get to give them attention, respect their thinking, and follow their lead.

Marya Axner
International Liberation
Reference Person for Parents
 Somerville, Massachusetts, USA
 Reprinted from the
 RC e-mail discussion list
 for International Liberation and
 Commonality Reference Persons

Unions, and Care of the Environment

A major part of what we unionized workers expect from our unions is better wages and job protection. This often sets us up against environmental initiatives in industries such as manufacturing, hotels, defense, coal, oil, and steel in which job security is tied to production that may not be sustainable for our planet.

Under capitalism, employers make a profit from production. Thus they generally do not accept initiatives that interfere with production. Such initiatives can be successful only through major campaigns carried out by organizations like unions, especially unions working together with environmental organizations.

In the United States, many unions have joined together to form the Blue Green Alliance, in which workers can share information, plan strategies, and be a political force for legislation for environmental justice.

As union activists, putting our attention on care of the environment has meant fighting through hopelessness and feeling overwhelmed by the way capitalism prioritizes greed over the environment. We need to keep discharging on where we have won against corporate greed and what it means to keep thinking about more solutions that work both for workers and for the environment.

Many of us workers sacrifice our bodies for our jobs. We need to look at how we are also sacrificing the environment for our jobs, and discharge on that in Co-Counseling sessions, so we can organize others to think about how to change it.



MATT WEATHERFORD

Taking on¹ this work means taking ourselves seriously, which is a contradiction to internalized working-class oppression. It has been helpful to hear about unions that have succeeded in taking initiatives to care for the environment. We want to keep getting more information about that, particularly from outside the United States.

Here are some thoughts from other RC union activists about the relationship between unions and care of the environment:

- We workers need to notice that we have the power to change working conditions to protect our environment. And we need to get information about where that is not happening, and what we can do to change that.

- “Green Choice,” which allows hotel customers to choose not to have their linens changed daily, is good for the environment. However, employers have used it to cut housekeepers. We need to come up with² solutions that work for both workers and the environment.

- We had a big win when we got Right to Know legislation,³ but we need to update it with more protections and for new jobs.

- In the United States, unions have fought hard to get rid of manufacturing jobs that are harmful, but then those jobs often go to developing countries.

- We need to take responsibility for how toxic waste, old computers, and so on, are being dumped in the Global South.

- Green production can help build the economy, if workers are in charge of making energy policy. Oil and coal unions are pushing to be a part of workable solutions.

I look forward to collecting more thinking from RC union activists who are discharging and thinking about how we can work for policies and workplace practices for care of the environment.

Joanie Parker
International Liberation Reference
Person for Trade Unionists
Jamaica Plain, Massachusetts, USA
Reprinted from the e-mail discussion list for International
Liberation and Commonality Reference Persons

¹ “Taking on” means undertaking.

² “Come up with” means think of.

³ Right to Know legislation has given workers the right to know what chemicals they are working with on the job.



Jews, and Care of the Environment

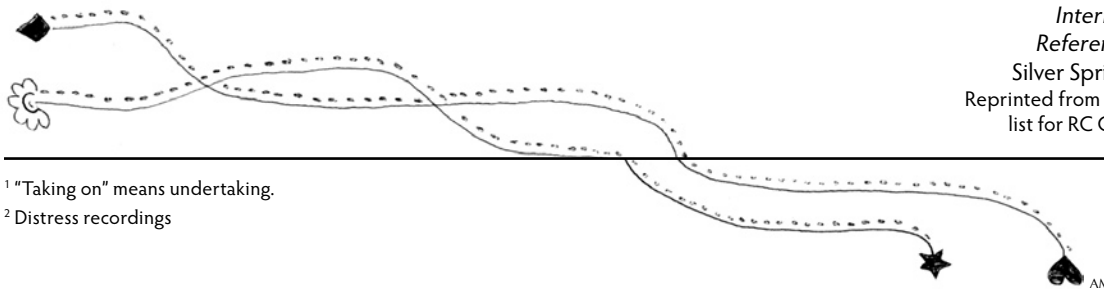


For the past year I have been on the board of a U.S. national Jewish organization that has made work on the environment, with Jews, its key issue. I am beginning to take what I am learning from my colleagues there into my work with Jewish RCers.

Here is some of what I am finding as I begin to discharge, and counsel other Jews, on taking on¹ environmental work:

- As a result of our history of being expelled from country after country, and with installed recordings² of always needing to be ready to pack a bag and go, many of us have trouble feeling like we belong to the land. We don't always know that we belong on the earth or that we have a right to a deep connection to it.
- Because we have experienced attempted genocide and internalized that, we have a hard time not feeling terrified in the face of information about possible environmental destruction. Some Jews respond to the fear by engaging in urgent fear-fueled activity. Others try to escape feeling overwhelmed by avoiding, denying, or ignoring the information. Still others feel like environmental destruction, like the Holocaust, is too horrific to contemplate. Their fears of annihilation leave them feeling too powerless to act.
- When Jews have an opportunity to discharge on their feelings of not belonging on the earth and their fears of annihilation, and on the overwhelming nature of environmental issues, they are some of the fiercest and most passionate activists and organizers for care of the environment.

Cherie Brown
International Liberation
 Reference Person for Jews
 Silver Spring, Maryland, USA
 Reprinted from the e-mail discussion
 list for RC Community members



¹ "Taking on" means undertaking.

² Distress recordings



Catholics, and Care of the Environment



Here are some things I've done with RC Catholics on care of the environment, and some of my thoughts:

I've listened to global-majority people about their daily lives. I've learned how their oppression shows itself in concrete ways and tried to understand its impact on their health and their staying alive on a day-to-day basis. I've backed¹ them to first fight for themselves and stuck with them, understanding that the battles are long-term and require committed relationships.

Global-majority people should get to work—in Co-Counseling sessions, panels, and workshops—on all contradictions to genocide and racism. European-heritage people need to trace back and discharge on their people's histories of violence, destruction, "ethnic cleansing," and genocide. They need to work against the denial of their oppressor role and toward the reality of how precious life is.

At workshops I've had people share stories about the place in which we are meeting, contradicting the pull to make genocide go "invisible" or not exist. What is the story of the

land? What is the story of the people who lived here? (Thanks to Marcie Rendon² and other Native people for leading the way on this.) We've heard beautiful and inspiring stories about the land and Indigenous peoples.

I have had everyone at a workshop simply notice, discharge about, and appreciate being alive, encouraging every imaginable version of "I am alive," such as, "I love being alive," and "Why I am happy to be alive." This challenges Catholic internalized oppression.

continued . . .

¹ "Backed" means supported.

² Marcie Rendon is the International Liberation Reference Person for Native Americans.

WIDE WORLD CHANGING

... continued

I've counseled Catholic activists on specific battles they are taking leadership on outside of RC, and those listening have been inspired to see where fellow Catholics are on the front lines. Activists—especially when they are on the front lines—need to challenge their fear and isolation. These Catholic activists have been grateful to have a home base of Catholics whom they know care about and are connected to them.

I've helped Catholics notice that our caring about and connection to care-of-the-environment work comes from our culture and people and is not in conflict with our heritage. Pride in our leaders!

I've provided Catholics with resources (DVDs, lists of Catholic environmental organizations and leaders), to back up sessions with broad information and inspirational

leaders. I try to make sure to start with international leaders, global-majority leaders, women leaders.

I keep remembering that this work is *enjoyable!* We are enjoying and loving each other, loving life, laughing a lot together.

Joanne Bray
International Liberation
Reference Person for Catholics
Greenwich, Connecticut, USA
Reprinted from the e-mail discussion
list for RC Community members



Elders, and Care of the Environment



Dear elders,

I invite you to have Co-Counseling sessions and start a discussion about how care of the environment intersects with elders' lives.

Here are a couple of questions to think about:

- What care-of-the-environment issues are related to the oppression of elders?
- What changes have you made to help heal the environment?

Here are some of my thoughts:

All people in every group are either affected by elders' oppression or will be, if they live long enough. Elders can be poor, part of the global majority, working class, middle class, and so on.

In cities where smog is heavy, more people develop asthma and other chronic ailments. Depletion of the ozone layer makes it difficult for many people to be outside.

If people eat meat, antibiotics given to animals can end up in their bodies, increasing their chances of being resistant to antibiotics.

Elders are often prescribed numerous medications. The by-products of those medications in urine, or outdated medications disposed of in the toilet, can end up in the water supply.



NIKHIL TRIVEDI

Most of what I've done so far for the environment has been on a personal and local level, like being an avid recycler, working on consuming less, and attending city council meetings when issues of the environment are on the agenda.

Being raised poor, I've found it comforting to find good prices on things. Lately I've been able to look at what I actually *need*, not what I want or think I need.

I look forward to hearing from you!

Pam Geyer
International Liberation
Reference Person for Elders
Bellaire, Texas, USA
Reprinted from the RC e-mail
discussion list for leaders of elders

Raised-Poor People, and Care of the Environment

Re-evaluation Counseling was started by Harvey Jackins, a raised-poor man, who from the beginning emphasized beauty and order, seeing that everything we are in contact with goes well, and thinking fully about one another and all the species on our magnificent planet. Along with the theory he wrote and taught that is related to our current environmental goal, he lived simply, saved things, and recycled all he could. He helped us be better stewards of our planet by holding out hope, raising our consciousness about the dangers of capitalism, giving us a tool that could help us think about all things, and encouraging us to give up thinking small. He asked us to discharge everything in the way of knowing that we could be “the one” who would lead the charge that made *the* difference for us all. With that beginning, and many years of work by all of us, we individually and as an organization are thinking about the environment in an even bigger way.

One of the strengths of raised-poor people is that we always try to make full use of anything we have or can find. We survive by using our good minds and natural creativity to recycle everything. For the most part¹ we are generous and share what we have with one another. When we make soup, we try to make enough to give some to another family. We hand down our clothes for generations. We knock on our neighbor’s door to borrow the only ladder in the neighborhood. When we have a big job to do, we work together rather than hire someone from the outside. When we have money

in our pocket, we share a bigger percentage of it with others than do people from other income groups. All this is good—not only for our own survival but for our relationships with one another and for the environment.



HELSINKI, FINLAND • KAISLI SYRJÄNEN

Historically, our people have stayed connected to the earth and other species and have been thoughtful in taking care of them. Native Americans, for instance, have always considered the earth their “mother,” to be treasured and cared for. They have valued the lives of animals and not taken them for anything short of survival purposes. They have long understood the interconnectedness of life. They have been and should continue to be leaders in the care of the environment.

Many of us raised-poor people have been able to hold on to our thinking about environmental issues. However, class oppression and the need to survive have limited our choices, damaged our bodies, created distress recordings, and interfered with our ability to think well about the larger picture. Large numbers of us, particularly those of the global

majority, have been the targets of the most dangerous environmental practices. All over the world, factories and dumps of all sorts, including those that produce toxic gases, liquids, and other materials, are put in our neighborhoods, not in wealthy neighborhoods. Our children die at much higher rates because of this. Large numbers of low-income workers die early because of the dangerous working conditions and toxic chemicals they have to tolerate to make a living. The lands of poor people are stripped and left ruined, as a routine practice all over the world.

Prisons, “mental health” facilities, and other institutions that house “unwanted” and possibly “dangerous” people (in other words, people who have been heavily oppressed and then blamed for their patterns) are often placed near our homes, not in wealthy neighborhoods. Wealthy people, who hold the power, do not want “danger,” unsightliness, and reminders of human suffering anywhere near their children, beautiful homes, and beautiful neighborhoods. When people have access to lots of money, it is easy for them to maintain pristine beauty and order—by paying others, particularly poor people, to clean and garden and organize and care for their things. Poor people do not have that luxury. They need to use their time, energy, and money for survival. They cannot devote big blocks of time to their own environment or to larger environmental causes they care about. In our raised-poor workshops we have always worked on these injustices. We have done

continued . . .

¹ “For the most part” means in general.

WIDE WORLD CHANGING

... continued

so with increasing frequency since the RC Community made care of the environment one of its four main goals.

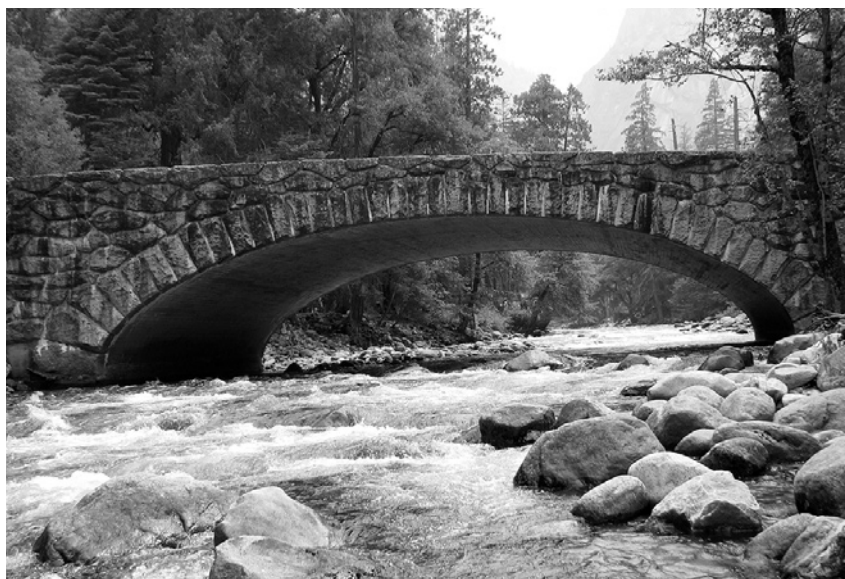
When people are heavily discouraged by poverty, even if they have time, they may not be able to think well about their neighborhoods or the larger world. People who are starving or just getting by² may be pulled to solve their difficulties in the only ways they have available. All too often this means resorting to environmentally damaging practices that threaten species and our planet as a whole. We raised-poor people who are discharging on these things know that for the environment to be right for us all, poverty must be eliminated. We see environmental degradation and human degradation as class issues, and in our new Raised-Poor Draft Policy Statement we say:

- **Today the “profit motive,” as the key determinant of decision making, threatens our world.** Today global capitalism, in its search for ever-cheaper labor and its reliance on the profit motive as the key determinant of decision making, is the economic system that dominates our planet. While capitalism has had advantages over systems that dominated before it, it has become unworkable and increasingly oppressive to people throughout the world. Not only has it left most of the world’s people in poverty today, it threatens humanity as a whole—and thousands of other species, our air, and our water. Rampant poverty and worldwide economic struggles and insecurities make our efforts to create change for our planet, and humanity, ever more difficult. The mounting disadvantages of capitalism for everyone are becoming clear to more and more people.

- **We want change.** In RC we are opposed to human beings hurting other human beings. Within that broad category of agreement, we are opposed to oppression and to any disrespectful and hurtful practices that have become institutionalized. We are opposed to anything that gets in the way of people being able to make a living wage, safely, and children having their emotional, physical, educational, and material needs met. We are opposed to dividing people and telling some groups that they are better than others. We are opposed to profits for a few prevailing over greater human dignity and life for all. We are opposed to relying on prisons and “mental health” facilities to house and treat those who have been mistreated, rather than getting it right for children from birth onward. We are opposed to anything that confuses people about reality and threatens the environment that humans and other species need to flourish. To the extent that global capitalism, or any economic system, promotes these things that we oppose, we want change.

- **We raised-poor people have never been confused about the fact that change is needed in our world.** Many of the key leaders in RC were raised poor or raised by parents who were raised poor. They, as well as many other raised-poor Co-Counselors, have dedicated their lives to moving us all toward eliminating the class patterns that have kept us from being able to think about unity and caring for all people and living things. With the care-of-the-environment goal, we have been able to discharge on these issues in new ways and have taken ever-bigger steps toward leadership and effective action. The interrelatedness of everything has become more apparent. Most of all, we have seen clearly that to save our planet, and all the species on it, people of all class backgrounds need to discharge their class-based distress, move toward unity, and make eliminating poverty one of their key goals.

Gwen Brown
International Liberation Reference
Person for Raised-Poor People
Wilmington, Delaware, USA
Reprinted from the RC e-mail
discussion list for leaders in
the care of the environment



YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK, CALIFORNIA, USA • MAARIT NIEMI

² “Getting by” means surviving.

Young People, and Care of the Environment

Young people are usually very connected to the environment. They are curious about the world around them, particularly the natural world because it is so complex and interesting. Their lives are not separated from nature. Most of them would play outside all day if given the opportunity. They are also not as confused as older people about isolation in relation to the environment. They would prefer that everyone be together in nature rather than people spending time in nature as a solitary activity, as many do.

YOUNG PEOPLE'S OPPRESSION

Young people's oppression is a tool of capitalism. It installs powerlessness and discouragement on us young people. It disconnects us from other people and the world around us. It keeps us obedient and prevents us from acting in the rational way that young people know how to act.

Most schools separate us from nature. More and more, young people around the world are being put in classrooms and made to learn inside. Schools also interfere with our curiosity. This, too, damages our relationship to the environment.

Schools have been a major tool of colonization. Around the world they are increasingly based on a white Westernized model, which is disconnected from the environment. Were it not for Westernized schools, many young people would be learning in traditional ways that are more connected to the environment.

NATURAL LEADERS

We young people have had less time than older people to accumulate hurts about connection, curiosity, and playfulness and to pile up discouragement. This means that we have a better understanding of what's really important and are thus natural leaders and models—generally, and in care of the environment. There are many examples of young people taking action to protect species that are important to them. Many environmental movements and organizations have been started and led by young people and young adults.

CHALLENGING DISCOURAGEMENT

Discouragement makes adults feel hopeless. Because we young people don't have as much accumulated discouragement, adults often pin their longings to feel hopeful on us. They may give up on making changes themselves and communicate that it's up to us¹ to solve



EVERGLADES, FLORIDA, USA • MARTIN URBEL

the mess that's been created, and to be hopeful for them. Along with figuring out how to support young people's leadership in care of the environment, adults need to challenge their own discouragement and push themselves to lead and take stands. People of all ages can challenge early discouragement and take powerful stands to change the world.

YOUNG PEOPLE'S WORKSHOPS

In my time as International Liberation Reference Person for Young People, I have not done much formal work on care of the environment. However, young people's workshops are filled with things that are crucial to care of the environment, such as work on connection, racism, classism, and leadership. At young people's workshops, young people are able to play hard (often outside) and hang out² and connect in ways that people struggle to do at most adult workshops. There is a hopefulness about young people's liberation, our connections, and how we can change the world that is unique and powerful.

Young people's workshops generally include a small number of experienced adult allies who have usually discharged enough to not pin their hopes on us (or at least not act on those feelings). This makes it possible for us to be hopeful just for ourselves and each other, not for the adults, and is a big contradiction to young people's oppression—in particular, to the way that it intersects with care of the environment.

Mari Piggott
International Liberation Reference
Person for Young People
Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada
Reprinted from the RC e-mail discussion
list for International Liberation and
Commonality Reference Persons

¹ "Up to us" means our job.

² "Hang out" means spend relaxed, unstructured time.

Young Adults, and Care of the Environment

Dear young adults,

I have been thinking about the relationship between young adults and care of the environment. Here are some of my initial thoughts:

Many of us young adults heard about global warming and climate change as young people. Discouragement, urgency, fear, and confusion about the environment, and disconnection from it, were part of the fabric of the distresses we grew up with. We heard the debates about whether or not climate change was real, and listened to adults be hopeless and discouraged about how far it had already progressed.

As young adults we are faced with young adult oppression. We are told that we have to compete with each other for limited resources—for example, a small number of spots in university programs and a limited number of jobs, good houses, and partners. We are in the last phase of the training to be “productive” members of a capitalist society. Young adult oppression tells us that we should choose material security for ourselves, no matter the cost, and leave people behind and step on top of whoever or whatever might get in our way. This is related to the distresses that have allowed humans to get disconnected from the environment.

Another part of young adult oppression is being pulled to take on¹ “adult” jobs and hobbies in order to make our lives look more “grown-up.” This often means moving away from a connection to the environment. We (especially middle- and owning-class young adults) face a lot of pressure to settle down and have an office job. Young people and young adults



VICTORIA, BRITISH COLUMBIA, CANADA • BETH CRUISE

who want to do non-traditional environmental work are put down² for having “silly, trivial, stupid” dreams and ambitions. Part of standing up against young adult oppression is staying connected to the environment and holding on to our dreams.

Many of us are fighting hard against young adult oppression, to build big lives based on human connections and not on the capitalist notion of “getting ahead.” We are figuring out how to make a difference in the world, have deep relationships with people, and not give up on ourselves. This is related to care of the environment. The problems facing humans and the environment are big problems, and we need people who are going to push themselves to think in big ways about how to solve them.

Many young adults are care-of-the-environment activists. Young people and young adults have led and continue to lead many major social movements. This is partly because they have not had as many years to accumulate chronic patterns of discouragement and thus are able to make a decision to fight for the world they want. Everyone can make this same decision. Young people and

young adults have simply had more space to do it. They get to lead older adults to not give up on having big lives and to fight for the environment they want.

As younger people we will likely see the effects of climate change over a longer period of time. It is unclear what kind of shape³ the environment of the future will be in. For some of us, this plays a role in the decisions we make about how to set up our lives—what kind of work to do, where to live, whether or not to have children.

To change how humans interact with the environment, we will have to change how we think about the world. We will have to shift from capitalism to prioritizing what will work for all humans, not just a small group of people. Young adults have an important role to play in this shift.

I would love to hear what you think about young adults and care of the environment. Feel free to answer any or all of these questions:

- What is the relationship between young adult liberation and care of the environment?
- What would you like the RC Community to know about young adults and care of the environment?
- What has been useful to you in working on care of the environment in Co-Counseling sessions?
- What steps have you taken to care for the environment?

Emily Bloch
International Liberation Reference
Person for Young Adults
Brookline, Massachusetts,
and Seattle, Washington, USA
Reprinted from the RC e-mail discussion
list for leaders of young adults

¹ “Take on” means engage in.

² “Put down” means criticized, belittled.

³ “Shape” means condition.



The Environment, and Allies to Young People



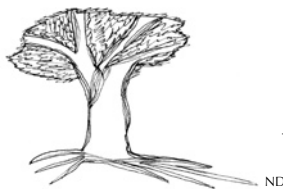
As always, I think our biggest job as adults is to follow young people. They have not lost where they care about all living things. They care about animals and flowers and trees. And they care about people—all people, no matter what they look like and whether or not they come from a background similar to theirs. The environment would be in a very different condition if we just followed young people around and tried to match their open caring.

Another part of our job is to help young people think about what is possible. We can listen to their dreams and the way that they think, like about putting flyers up around the neighborhood or talking to their friends about things that are important to them; we can stop at the animal hospital when we are in a rush. If we follow them and help them make their ideas a reality, they will be left knowing their power and knowing that we will follow them in their idea that it's possible to change things.

If we listen, we'll find that young people have tons of great ideas. My son and his friends raised over a thousand dollars for endangered animals at our local zoo by selling hot chocolate outside our house during the winter. They talked to everybody about global warming. They made a two-page flyer and handed it out with each cup. It included lots of things people could do in their house and neighborhood to help the environment, like dry clothes on the clothesline, and phone numbers, like where to call to plant a tree. A story about it got in the local newspaper and was picked up by one of the two biggest newspapers in Boston (Massachusetts, USA) and

then by the biggest news station. It caught everyone's attention so quickly—a young person doing something as simple as selling hot chocolate. He showed that he cared. The word spread all over Boston. People are dying for¹ somebody to stand up and openly say he or she cares. They are waiting for someone to be powerful, for some solutions, for hope. They are ready for this, and backing² young people to take the lead is just the way to go. If we can help the next generation follow their dreams and their power, it will make a big difference.

Another part of our job is to talk to young people openly and thoughtfully and give them a clear picture that is not filled with our discouragement. They need to understand the capitalist system, how it promotes greed, and how greed turns people against each other. We need to talk with them openly about racism and how it is part of the way greed is perpetuated. They need to understand that people are good and that no one intends to be greedy or treat other people badly, that the mistreatment is part of what we need to work against, and that they are in a perfect position to do this.



Jenny Sazama
International Liberation Reference
Person for Allies to Young People
 Jamaica Plain, Massachusetts, USA
 Reprinted from the e-mail discussion
 list for RC Community members

¹ "Dying for" means desperately longing for.

² "Backing" means supporting.



NEW YORK CITY, NEW YORK, USA • AMANDA MARTINEZ

I learned . . . that if one advances confidently in the direction of his dreams, and endeavors to live the life which he has imagined, he will meet with a success unexpected in common hours.

Henry David Thoreau

Putting an End to War

On the first of October, I returned—excited and inspired—from my second Healing from World War II Workshop. Julian Weissglass¹ has been leading these workshops for years now. I know many people who go year after year, and now I understand why. This is not a one-time workshop; it is a worldwide project to put an end to war. I found it enormously empowering to be part of a group of like-minded people battling together against everything that divides us.

Julian says that we can put an end to war and has set a goal of doing it in fifty years (starting from three years ago). War is not in our genes—we need to be carefully trained in order to go out and kill other people. Just as it once began, war can be ended. Many things will be involved in this, including discharging all the hurts and patterns, individual and societal, that have been caused or exacerbated by war and passed on from generation to generation: fear, distrust, nationalism, patriotism; divisions, hatred, and hostility among people from nations that have been enemies; most oppressions; and more.

Tremendous profits are made from war. As Julian spoke, I thought, “What if all the weapons-manufacturing plants were simultaneously destroyed all around the world? Then there would be nothing to fight with.”

¹ Julian Weissglass is the International Commonality Reference Person for Wide World Change.

We listened to each other’s stories about war. We met in support groups called Sharing our Stories, with people from very different backgrounds so that we got to hear many different experiences. I had the pleasure of leading one of these groups, and it influenced how I counsel people. I now listen more instead of looking for fancy directions.



MADISON, WISCONSIN, USA • MARIAN FREDAL

I was also in a support group for discharging about the Holocaust. We were two Israelis, two North American second-generation Holocaust survivors, and two Germans. What started out looking impossible turned out to be² empowering. Inspired by a demonstration on building alliances between two people from different countries, one of which had ruled the other, I counseled in my turn with the German woman. I imagined the two of us building an alliance and fought to see her humanity while not ignoring the history piled up between us.

I much appreciate Julian’s leadership and humility. He always

² “Turned out to be” means resulted in being.

apologizes for any mistakes he makes. He discharges on USer imperialism and explains difficult words and expressions so that everyone will understand. He is the leader, but it is a joint project. He says, “We’re all in this together.” He makes room for others and is constantly learning.

Part of Julian’s strategy for ending war involves spreading the idea that a world without war is possible. He goes around and asks people what they think about that. If people haven’t heard an idea, they will not be able to fathom it. We can plant the thought in people’s heads that a world without war is possible. The woman sitting next to me on the plane, when I asked her what she thought, said, “When people don’t want war anymore, there will be no war.”

Upon my return home, I led an evening, inspired by the workshop, for the two Areas³ in Jerusalem (Israel) and gave people a chance to tell their stories about war. We need to do *much more* of that here in Israel. My Area has also decided to do a listening project, and I’ve suggested that we use Julian’s question.

Naomi Raz
Jerusalem, Israel
Reprinted from the RC e-mail
discussion list for leaders
of wide world change

³ An Area is a local RC Community.

A Listening-Project Tool

My Community has done several listening projects.¹ We have a sign, and a table with RC literature on it. (I think the table looks like we are selling something.) Sometimes people come to our table. Sometimes we walk up to people and volunteer to listen to them.

For the most part,² this was seeming too passive to me. Shy patterns were keeping some Co-Counselors from approaching people directly. I thought, "We need to go out among the crowd and 'capture' people." I designed a "coupon" to give to people that would help us connect with them, show ourselves, and invite them to our listening table.

We began approaching people and offering them the "free coupon." It looked like this:

LISTENING COUPON

**Return this coupon to
the listening table and receive
10 minutes of listening
as you answer one of
the posted questions.**

Passersby generally accepted the coupon. (Some found it hard to believe it was free!) I would smile and say, "Hello, please accept this coupon. There is a listening table over there. If you turn in³ the coupon, someone will listen to you about the three posted questions." I encouraged the RCers to converse with people while passing out the coupons and to ask for their opinions on the three questions.

It was a useful tool. Some people showed up just to see if it was real and free. My highlight was making so many connections. The Co-Counselor at the listening table got to counsel a lot more people than before. Next time I will put the questions on the coupon so that people can know them in advance.

Josephine Grimes
Albany, New York, USA

¹ In an RC listening project, several Co-Counselors go to a public place and offer to listen to passersby about some important issue, such as racism or a current war. They may hold signs that invite people to share their thinking about that issue.

² "For the most part" means mostly.

³ In this context, "turn in" means bring to the listening table.

Our Choice

The principal reason why people are not taking charge of the situation and eliminating the patterns, oppression, and danger of nuclear holocaust is the existence of large numbers of patterns on everyone. (There is also a tremendous amount of misinformation, which is perpetuated by the oppressive society, and a lack of communication between people and a lack of leadership.)

If people can just begin taking turns listening to each other, the recovery process can begin and, if persisted in, will accelerate. And all the people of the world, in all their different groups, can come to a common agreement, eliminate oppression and the danger of war, and have a world that modern technology would allow us to convert and restore very quickly to a Garden of Eden.

We have a very real choice between, on the one hand, a future Garden of Eden for our children and, on the other, the complete destruction of all complex life. Taking turns listening to each other, and the rest of what we call Re-evaluation Counseling, is the most hopeful way we've found so far for helping to make that choice in a good direction.

Harvey Jackins
From "Open Question
Evening in Copenhagen,"
on pages 54 to 55 of
Start Over Every Morning



KATIE KAUFFMAN

Racism, Genocide, Colonialism, and Care of the Environment

At the East Coast North America and Caribbean Pre-World Conference, I attended a topic group on racism, genocide, colonialism, and care of the environment. Barbara Love,¹ Azi Khalili,² Minquansis Sapiel,³ and Irene Shen⁴ led the group with power and clarity.

They exposed the lie that people of the global majority don't care about environmental issues.

They revealed how thoroughly the degradation of the environment has been intertwined with racism, genocide, and colonialism.

They modeled the critical importance of the leadership of people of the global majority—for the environment and for our RC Communities.

They clarified that we must address the environmental crisis in the context of everything we know about racism, genocide, colonialism/imperialism, sexism and male domination, classism, capitalism, and so on. Any attempt to address the environment as separate from these issues will be severely limited.

¹ Barbara Love is the International Liberation Reference Person for African Heritage People.

² Azi Khalili is the Area Reference Person for the Brooklyn Gardens RC Community, in New York City, New York, USA, and the International Liberation Reference Person for South, Central, and West Asian-Heritage People.

³ Minquansis Sapiel is a Co-Counselor in Old Town, Maine, USA.

⁴ Irene Shen is an RC teacher in Brooklyn, New York, USA.

Here are some of the points that stood out to me:

- Environmental racism includes all policies and practices that result in people of the global majority being disproportionately affected by environmental hazards. For example, every region of the United States has racial disparities in terms of where garbage dumps, polluting factories, and hazardous-waste facilities are located. A large percentage of all African Americans, Latinos/as, and Native people in the United States live near these factories and facilities and experience disproportional negative health effects.

- Colonial powers in Europe have a long history of extracting resources from Africa, North and South America, and Asia, making Europe wealthy while ruining the lands of people of the global majority. International corporations, including those in North America, continue to destroy these lands today.

- In the United States, patterns of greed, addiction, consumption, and disconnection from the peoples of other nations underlie genocide, colonization/imperialism, and environmental racism.

- We all had Indigenous ancestors at some point in our family histories. We are all deeply connected to the land.

- Capitalism continues to put profits before both people and the land, with devastating results all over the world.

- By discharging, we can reclaim our love of and connection to the environment, including all people everywhere.

Russ Vernon-Jones
Amherst, Massachusetts, USA
Reprinted from the RC e-mail discussion list for leaders in the care of the environment



SHIRA ROSEN

If you move . . .

and don't tell us in advance of your address change, it causes a surprising waste of resources. The post office does not forward bulk mail; instead it destroys the undelivered journals. Then we usually receive a notice from the post office saying that you have moved, and we are charged postage due for the notice. This need not happen if you will kindly let us know of your address change with as much advance notice as possible.

Thank you,
Rational Island Publishers

Creating the world we want is a much more subtle but more powerful mode of operation than destroying the one we don't want.

Marianne Williamson



Important RC Literature!



Part II, Fundamentals Teaching Guide—Liberation

Part I, Fundamentals Teaching Guide (published in 2007), is an outline of how a fundamentals class might be taught. It includes thoughts about organizing a class and doing an introductory talk about RC. There are also outlines for classes on twenty-seven topics (newly updated to include a class on care of the environment).

Part II, Fundamentals Teaching Guide—Liberation, consists of outlines for teaching basic liberation theory. The outlines were written by our liberation leaders and will be excellent resources for teaching liberation theory to members of both oppressed and oppressor groups. Included in the *Liberation Guide* are the following chapters:

- Liberation Overview
- African-Heritage Liberation
- Artists' Liberation
- Catholic Liberation
- Chinese-Heritage Liberation
- Chicano/a Liberation
- College and University Faculty Liberation
- Liberation of People with Disabilities
- Educational Change
- Elders' Liberation
- Care of the Environment
- Family Work
- Frisian Liberation
- Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Queer, Transgender Liberation
- Japanese-Heritage Liberation
- Jewish Liberation
- Korean Liberation
- Language Liberation
- Lawyers' Liberation
- Men's Liberation
- "Mental Health" Liberation
- "Mental Health" Workers' Liberation
- Middle-Class Liberation
- Musicians' Liberation
- National and Regional Liberation
- Native/Indigenous Liberation
- Owing-Class Liberation
- Pacific Islander and Pilipino/a-Heritage Liberation
- Parents' Liberation
- Protestant Liberation
- Puerto Rican Liberation
- Raised-Poor Liberation
- Southern U.S. Liberation
- Trade Union Activists' Liberation
- Eliminating White Racism
- Wide World Change
- Women's Liberation
- Working-Class Liberation
- Young Adult Liberation
- Allies to Young People
- Young People's Liberation

Both publications are for RC teachers, and those preparing to teach, but are available to everyone.

Part I: \$25.00 (U.S.), plus postage and handling
Part II: \$15.00 (U.S.), plus postage and handling
(no quantity discount)

A new edition of

A New Kind of Communicator

The fifth edition of *A New Kind of Communicator* (a collection of key articles on teaching, for RC teachers) was printed eighteen years ago. Since then Re-evaluation Counseling has continued to grow and develop. RC ideas have spread, and we are better at communicating them. RC Communities continue to multiply and develop worldwide.

The sixth edition of *A New Kind of Communicator* includes four of Harvey Jackins' articles from previous editions as well as fourteen new articles describing what we have learned since those earlier editions were published.

I am confident that you will find this new edition both enjoyable and helpful.

Tim Jackins

\$5.00 (U.S.), plus postage and handling

Working Together to End Racism

A pamphlet introducing RC
from the perspective
of ending racism

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

For ordering information, see page 110.

The RC Website

There is a website for Re-evaluation Counseling at <<http://www.rc.org/>>. At this site you will have easy access to a large amount of information about Re-evaluation Counseling, including:

- RC theory (basic theory, including an introduction to RC, *The Art of Listening*, and the RC postulates)
- An introductory talk (in audio) by Harvey Jackins (1986)
- RC practice (how to start RC, what to do in a session, counseling techniques, how to lead support groups)
- Policies, forms, and the *Guidelines for the Re-evaluation Counseling Communities*, 2009 edition
- Articles by RC leaders and Community members (quotes and selected articles from *Present Time* and other RC journals)
- Translations of articles into many languages
- New materials on language liberation
- Resources for workshop organizers
- Rational Island Publishers (contact information and literature ordering)
- Ordering RC publications on the web: <www.rationalisland.com>
- An on-line fundamentals of Co-Counseling class
- Outlines for teaching fundamentals classes, in English and Spanish
- An ever-growing collection of back issues of *Present Time* (currently 1974-1995)
- An index to all issues of *Present Time*
- "Today's Thought"—a short daily thought from a Re-evaluation Counseling perspective
- International Reference Person Perspectives

How to Contact Us On-Line

- The International RC Community: ircc@rc.org
- United to End Racism: uer@rc.org
- Rational Island Publishers (orders, and billing questions): litsales@rc.org (or order on our web-site at www.rationalisland.com)
- Re-evaluation Counseling Community Resources (Intensives and office matters only): rcoffice@rc.org
- Automatic response e-mail about RC: info@rc.org
- For sending photos: photos@rc.org

On-Line Fundamentals Class

An on-line fundamentals of Co-Counseling class is available for people who are interested in learning more about RC.

Active participation in the class is reserved for those who do not have fundamentals classes in their geographical region. Learning Re-evaluation Counseling via e-mail is much more difficult than learning it in a regular class and requires a higher level of commitment to the learning process and to regular Co-Counseling sessions.

If you are already participating in a regular RC class, or are an RC teacher, you may still have access to the articles used in the on-line class by enrolling in the class as an inactive member. Please note, however, that all of the materials used are already published and available in printed issues of *Present Time* and other Rational Island Publishers publications. The on-line class organizes these materials, making them more easily accessible.

Please see the RC web site at <<http://www.rc.org/class/fundamentals/>> for more information about how to sign up for either active or inactive membership in the on-line fundamentals class.

United to End Racism

United to End Racism (UER), an ongoing program of the Re-evaluation Counseling Communities, is on the web at <<http://www.rc.org/uer/>>. The e-mail address for UER is <uer@rc.org>.

United to End Racism is working with other groups involved in eliminating racism, and sharing with them the theory and practice of Re-evaluation Counseling.

Electronic Mailing Lists

The RC Community maintains a number of electronic mailing lists for particular categories of RCers. These lists are for active members of the RC Community, and most of them are for active leaders only. (If English is your first language, part of being an active member of the Community is subscribing to *Present Time*.) If you would like to subscribe to a list, first e-mail the person in charge of the list, then forward that person's approval, your request, your contact information (phone number, mailing address, city, state, postal code, country), and whether or not you have a subscription to *Present Time*, directly to the International Reference Person at <ircc@rc.org>. Read the information below for the various lists and whom you need to contact for approval to subscribe to them.

RC Community Members: <rc@mail.rc.org>.

Contact any Area, Regional, or Liberation Reference Person.

RC Community Members Involved in Eliminating

Racism: <uer@mail.rc.org>. Contact any Area, Regional, or Liberation Reference Person. (This list is for trading information on the theory and practice of using RC in the fight to eliminate racism, both inside and outside of the RC Community.)

Regional Reference Persons: <rrp@mail.rc.org>.

Contact the International Reference Person at <ircc@rc.org>.

Area Reference Persons: <arp@mail.rc.org>.

Contact the International Reference Person at <ircc@rc.org>.

International Liberation and Commonality Reference

Persons: <ilrp@mail.rc.org>. Contact the International Reference Person at <ircc@rc.org>.

RC Teachers: <teachers@mail.rc.org>. Contact the

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Editors of RC or non-RC publications:

<editors@mail.rc.org>. Contact the International Reference Person at <ircc@rc.org>.

Translators of RC Literature:

<translators@mail.rc.org>. Contact Truus Jansen, Rational Island Publishers Translation Coordinator, at <ircc@rc.org>.

Activists for the Liberation of "People Targeted for Destruction by Society Because of the Patterns Imposed Upon Them":

<access@mail.rc.org>. Contact the International Reference Person at <ircc@rc.org>.

Leaders of African-Heritage People:

<black@mail.rc.org>. Contact Barbara Love, International Liberation Reference Person for African-Heritage People, at <bjloverc@gmail.com>.

Leaders of Artists: <artists@mail.rc.org>.

Contact John Fehringer, International Liberation Reference Person for Visual Artists, at <rc@fehinger.com>.

Leaders of Asians: <asian@mail.rc.org>.

Contact Francie Chew, International Liberation Reference Person for Chinese-Heritage People, at <franciechew@gmail.com>.

Leaders in the Care of the Environment:

<environment@mail.rc.org>. Contact Wytske Visser, International Commonality Reference Person for the Care of the Environment, at <wytskevisser.coe@gmail.com>.

Leaders of Catholics: <catholic@mail.rc.org>.

Contact Joanne Bray, International Liberation Reference Person for Catholics, at <jmbray@aol.com>.

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Leaders on Disability, Chronic Illness, and Health:

<health-disability@mail.rc.org>. Contact Marsha Saxton at <marsax@wid.org>.

Leaders of Educational Change:

<education@mail.rc.org>. Contact Marilyn Robb, International Commonality Reference Person for Educational Change, at <joyfulplace@yahoo.com>.

continued . . .

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... continued

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Leaders of **Irish-Heritage People:** <irish@mail.rc.org>. Contact Sheila Fairon at <fairon@fastmail.fm>.

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Leaders of **Men:** <men@mail.rc.org>. Contact the International Reference Person at <ircc@rc.org>.

Leaders of **"Mental Health" Liberation:** <mental-health@mail.rc.org>. Contact Janet Foner, International Liberation Reference Person for "Mental Health" Liberation, at <jbfoner@verizon.net>.

Leaders of **Middle-Class People:** <middle-class@mail.rc.org>. Contact Seán Ruth, International Liberation Reference Person for Middle-Class People, at <seangruth@gmail.com>.

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Leaders of **Owning-Class People:** <owning-class@mail.rc.org>. Contact Jo Saunders, International Liberation Reference Person for Owning-Class People, at <jo.saunders@btinternet.com>.

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Leaders of **Working-Class People:** <working-class@mail.rc.org>. Contact Dan Nickerson, International Liberation Reference Person for Working-Class People, at <dnickerson122@comcast.net>.

Leaders of **Young Adults:** <young-adults@mail.rc.org>. Contact Emily Bloch, International Liberation Reference Person for Young Adults, at <bloch.emily@gmail.com>.

Leaders of **Young People:** <young@mail.rc.org>. Contact Mari Piggott, International Liberation Reference Person for Young People, at <marikathleenp@yahoo.ca>.



ISAAC EVANS-FRANZ

INFORMATION COORDINATORS

FOR RCers IN PARTICULAR TRADES OR OCCUPATIONS OR SHARING PARTICULAR INTERESTS OR BACKGROUNDS

Many large categories of RCers have an International Liberation Reference Person (ILRP) or an International Commonality Reference Person (ICRP). These ILRPs and ICRPs are listed in *Present Time*. Below is a listing of “Information Coordinators” of other particular groups of Co-Counselors. The “Information Coordinator” is an RCer who has agreed to keep an up-to-date list of RCers in her or his category, occasionally circulate an informal newsletter (compiled and distributed via e-mail—one copy to *Present Time* always, please), and help plan any special workshops, policy statements, or classes. The informal newsletter is circulated only to the people who make a written contribution to it.

If you belong in one of these categories that has an “Information Coordinator” already, please write to her or to him, giving your full name, address, e-mail address, and phone number and sharing yourself and your ideas.

If you would like to be an “Information Coordinator,” please write to me and tell me why (and include your full name, address, e-mail address, and phone number). Feel free to suggest new categories. If you have someone else to suggest, I would like to hear that also.

Tim Jackins

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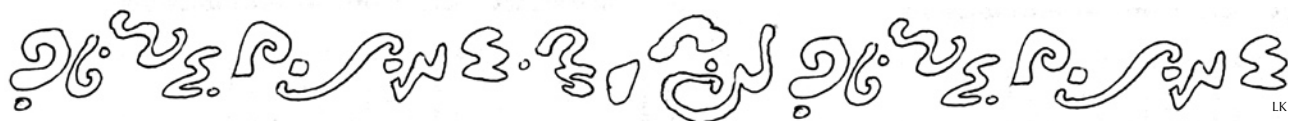
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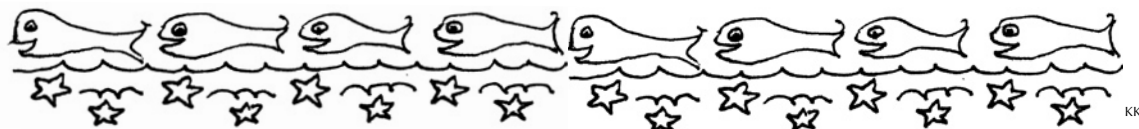
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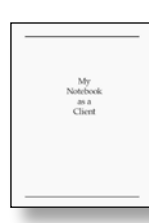
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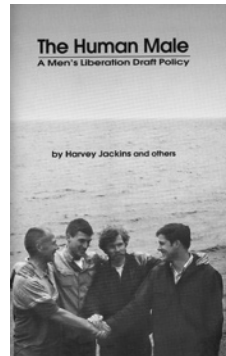
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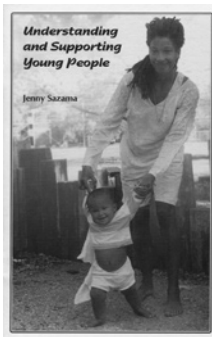
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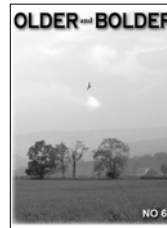
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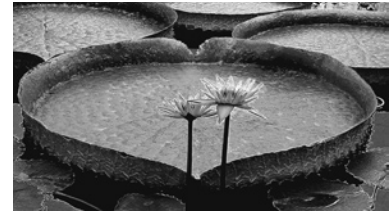
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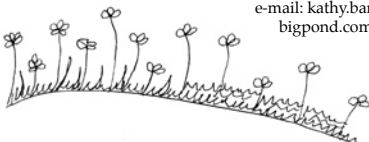
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NANCY LEMON

WORKSHOPS

- wheelchair accessible ✕ not wheelchair accessible ◇ no information supplied by organizer

This list of weekend workshops includes only some of the Regional and International RC workshops being held all over the world. We list all announcements we receive from workshop organizers, workshop leaders, and local RC newsletters, to the extent we have space and are sent sufficient information. Because we do not have enough staff to solicit this information, we ask that workshop organizers send workshop information (dates, place, accessibility, leader, organizer and how to contact organizer, title of workshop, and who the workshop is for) to Rational Island Publishers.

Attendance at any of these workshops requires the written approval of your Area or Regional Reference Person or the International Reference Person. For more information, contact the workshop organizer.

A REMINDER TO ALL WORKSHOP ORGANIZERS AND LEADERS: (1) attempt to find workshop sites that are wheelchair accessible (note: "partially accessible" means not accessible), and (2) send information about accessibility to *Present Time*, along with other workshop information.

DATE	PLACE & ACCESSIBILITY CODE	LEADER(S)	ORGANIZER	DESCRIPTION
January 15-20/14	California, USA	◇ Tim Jackins	Dvora Slavin. Tel. +1-206-399-8944, dvoraslavin@gmail.com	Reference People, for West Coast USA & Canada
January 31-February 3/14	near Boston, Massachusetts, USA	◇ Diane Balsler & Jenny Szazama	Tresa Elguera. Tel. +1-718-857-9193, Tresatres@gmail.com	Women in their 40s
February 7-9/14	Honesdale, Pennsylvania, USA	◇ Beth Edmonds	Claire Foreman. Tel. +1-570-662-3218, claireforeman@gmail.com	Early Sexual Memories, for Central/Western New York, Pennsylvania outside Philadelphia, & New Jersey, USA
February 14-16/14	Phoenix, Arizona, USA	◇ Julian Weissglass & Jim Driscoll	Catherine Land Evilsizor. Tel. +1-520-327-8990, azcland@gmail.com	Veterans & Allies, for USA
February 20-23/14	Havelte, The Netherlands	◇ Chuck Esser & Dorann van Heeswijk	Jan Venderbos. Tel. +31-58-2673543, j.venderbos7@upcmail.nl	Family Workers' Conference for Continental Europe
February 21-23/14	near London, England	◇ Marsha Saxton	David Ruebain. Tel. +44 208 340 4124, davidruebain@hotmail.com	Disability Liberation for Everyone
February 27-March 2/14	near Oxford, England	◇ Dorann van Heeswijk & Chuck Esser	Barbara Harwood. Tel. +44-7890 386854, barbaraharwood1944@googlemail.com	Family Work Leaders' Conference, for England, Scotland, Wales, Cornwall, Sweden, & Norway
February 28-March 2/14	near Baltimore, Maryland, USA	● Dvora Slavin	Randi Wolfe. Tel. +1-707-356-8010, randiwolfe@gmail.com	White Ashkenazi Jews Eliminating Racism, for North America
February 28-March 2/14	Minneapolis, Minnesota, USA	◇ Tim Jackins & Marcie Rendon	Alison Ehara Brown. Tel. +1-510-525-1635, tsitsho@gmail.com	Indigenous Leaders
February 28-March 2/14	outside Boston, Massachusetts, USA	◇ Azi Khalil	Amisha Patel. Tel. +1-773-368-5366, Madrasmoon@gmail.com	South Asian Liberation (for Indian & Pakistani heritage RCers), for North America
March 6-9/14	Newton, Massachusetts, USA (near Boston)	◇ Joanne Bray assisted by Lorenzo Garcia	Mike Reichert. Tel. +1-610-667-9503, michreich@comcast.net	Catholic Men Leaders
March 7-9/14	Northern California, USA	◇ Jo Saunders	Sharon Veach, Tel. +1-650-248-5430, srveach.rc@gmail.com	Owning Class, for West Coast Canada & West Coast USA
March 14-16/14	near Boston, Massachusetts, USA	◇ Teresa Enrico & Carolyn Kameya	Hao-Li Tai Loh. Tel. +1-610-667-4561, tai_loh@msn.com	Asian-Heritage Family Workshop, for families with an Asian-heritage parent who is leading in RC
March 21-23/14	near Minneapolis, Minnesota, USA	◇ Cherie Brown	Judy Tilsen. Tel. +1-651-776-3130, judymtilsen@gmail.com	Jewish Liberation, for Midwest USA
March 21-23/14	Wisconsin, USA	◇ Dorann van Heeswijk	Karez Bez. Tel. +1-773-680-9731, karenhbez@gmail.com	Allies to Jews, for Midwest USA
March 21-23/14	near Seattle, Washington, USA	● Jo Saunders	Diane Shisk. Tel. +1-206-276-0759, dshisk@earthlink.net	Liberation from U.S. Nationalism, for USA
March 28-30/14	Japan	◇ Mari Piggott	Lillian Ono. Tel. +81-11-615-3699, pear2apricot@gmail.com	Young People, for Japan
March 28-30/14	Prescott, Arizona, USA	◇ Pam Geyer	June Yvonne Coleridge. Tel. +1-602-861-8008, +1-602-509-4936, jvcoleridge@gmail.com	Health & Healing, for Southwest USA
April 4-6/14	Greensboro, North Carolina, USA	◇ Seán Ruth	Leslie Kausch. Tel. +1-336-509-3680, singonki@gmail.com	Middle-Class Liberation, for East Coast North America
April 10-13/14	De Schiphorst, the Netherlands	● "Jeanne D'Arc"	iktoma. Tel. +31 588446918, +31-640065487, iktoma@chello.nl	Gay Liberation, for European Mainland
April 24-27/14	near San Francisco, California, USA	◇ Fela Barclift & Lorenzo Garcia	Micaela Morse. Tel. +1-917-518-4983, micaelamorse@mindspring.com	People of Global Majority Family Work Leaders' Conference
May 2-4/14	Melbourne, Victoria, Australia	● Jo Saunders	Christine Marnane. Tel. +61139817 6158, cmarnane@netspace.net.au	Owning Class, for Australia & New Zealand
May 7-12/14	near Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, USA	◇ Janet Foner (5/7-10) & Tim Jackins (5/10-12)	Anne Piche. Tel. +1-603-209-2615, annepiche@gmail.com	International "Mental Health" Liberation Conference
May 16-18/14	Cheshunt, London, England	◇ Jenny Szazama	Billy Forsythe. Tel. +44-117-9393517, wjforsythe@hotmail.com	Allies to Young People
May 23-25/14	Newton, Massachusetts, USA (near Boston)	◇ Marsha Hunter & Diane Balsler	Sally Wolf. Tel. +1-206-579-0500, sally.wolf@comcast.net	Women Lawyers, Law Students, & Judges
May 23-26/14	Greensboro, North Carolina, USA	◇ Julian Weissglass	Rachel Winters. Tel. +1-919-960-5117, rachelwinters@mindspring.com	Healing from U.S. Wars

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WORKSHOPS

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DATE	PLACE & ACCESSIBILITY CODE	LEADER(S)	ORGANIZER	DESCRIPTION
May 30- June 1/14	Versailles, France	◇ Jo Saunders	Delphine Barberot. Tel. +33 3 84 91 77 71, +33 6 72 73 97 95/cell, delnew@gmail.com	International Owing Class
June 6-8/14	Kent, England	● Cherie Brown	Stella Mason. Tel. +44 208 392 0605, stellamason@blueyonder.co.uk	Jewish Liberation, for Wales, Cornwall, Scotland, Netherlands, Switzerland, & England (leaders meet 6/6/15)
June 6-8/14	Chevy Chase, Maryland, USA (near Washington, DC)	● Diane Balsler assisted by Dorothy Marcy & Pam Geyer	Rachel Noble. Tel. +1-503-659-3775, rocnoable@msn.com	International Older Women (leaders' gather-in on afternoon on 6th)
June 20-22/14	near Boston, Massachusetts, USA	● Barbara Love & Pam Roby	Jack Manno. Tel. +1-315-391-5959, jpmanno@esf.edu	International College & University Faculty (6/18-19 for Faculty of all nations outside USA, 6/19-20 for Faculty of the Global Majority & White Faculty Eliminating Racism)
June 27-29/14	near St. Louis, Missouri, USA	● Marilyn Robb	Russell Vanecek. Tel. +1-314-249-5089, russellvanecek@yahoo.com	Educational Change Leaders
July 18-20/14	Location to be announced	◇ Emily Bloch & Cherie Brown	Nina Eichner, nina.im.eichner@gmail.com	Young Jews
August 1-5/14	Harvard, Massachusetts, USA	● Russ Vernon-Jones	Marcy Morgan. Tel. +1-215-724-1571, marcymorgan48@gmail.com	Educational Change
August 6-10/14	Location to be announced	◇ Tim Jackins	Jan Yoshiwara. Tel. +1-360-951-5852, jyoshiwara@yahoo.com	Asian Leaders
August 15-17/14	London, England	◇ Janet Foner	Terry Simpson. Tel. +44-113-246-9798, Tezbeulah@phonecoop.coop	Ex-Psychiatric Inmate Leaders, for England
August 21-24/14	Los Angeles, California, USA	● Diane Balsler	Rachel Noble. Tel. +1-503-659-3775, rocnoable@msn.com	Contemporary Women's Issues, for Western Latin America, Western & Midwest North America, & invited male allies
September 19-21/14	Parkville, New York, USA (near New York City)	◇ Azadeh Khalili	Nazish Riaz. Tel. +1-781-888-8171, nazishr@gmail.com	Muslim Leaders, for USA
September 19-21/14	Upper Midwest USA	◇ Diane Shisk & Physical Power Team	M'Lis Bartlett. Tel. +1-734-474-2723, mlis@umich.edu	Women & Physical Power & Health, for training women leaders in this work, for Central & Southern North America
September 26-28/14	near Seattle, Washington, USA	◇ Diane Shisk & Teresa Enrico	Marion Ouphouet. Tel. +1-206-956-9327, moupouet@aol.com	Large Women & Female Allies, for West Coast North America
October 3-6/14	Ottsville, Pennsylvania, USA	◇ Fela Barclift, Teresa Enrico, & Chuck Esser	Alix Webb. alixwrc@gmail.com	People of Majority Family Workers, for East Coast North America
October 23-26/14	Chevy Chase, Maryland, USA (near Washington, DC)	● Barbara Love & Cherie Brown	Rachel Noble. Tel. +1-503-659-3775, rocnoable@msn.com, Judi Soloway, jchaznow@yahoo.com	International Black People & Jews
November 13-16/14	Alton, New Hampshire, USA	◇ Diane Shisk	Guy Wood. Tel. +1-802-387-5676, guynvt@gmail.com	Open, for Québec, Canada & Maine, New Hampshire, & Vermont, USA (11/13/14 for leaders)
November 14-16/14	Vienna, Virginia, USA	◇ Pam Geyer	Sally Oesterling. Tel. +1-301-434-3237, sallyoes@verizon.net	Elders' Liberation, for Washington, DC, Maryland, & Virginia, USA
December 5-7/14	Newton, Massachusetts, USA	◇ Jenny Sazama	Lydia Vernon-Jones. Tel. +1-413-335-2990, lvernonjones@gmail.com	Allies to Young People, for East Coast North America & the Caribbean
January 16-19/15	Location to be announced	◇ Marcie Rendon	Beth Edmonds. Tel. +2-207-865-3869, bethedmonds@gmail.com	Native Liberation, for Eastern Americas
January 30- February 1/15	East Coast USA	◇ Cherie Brown & Jo Saunders	Mike Markovits. Tel. +1-203-536-5413, mjmrkvt@aol.com	International Owing-Class Jews
February 6-8/15	Boston, Massachusetts, USA	◇ Diane Balsler	Barbara Deck. Tel. +1-617-312-6515, badeck1@gmail.com	Middle-Class Women, for North America
April 2-5/15	East Coast USA	◇ Fela Barclift & Chuck Esser	Rickie Kashdan. Tel. +1-732-222-1685, kashdan@comcast.net	Family Workers' Conference, for East Coast USA & Caribbean
April 16-19/15	Newton, Massachusetts, USA (near Boston)	◇ Joanne Bray	Rita Davern. Tel. +1-651-698-8498, ritadavern@yahoo.com	Practicing Catholics
June 4-7/15	near Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, USA	◇ Janet Foner	Terry Simpson. Tel. +44 113 246 9798, Tezbeulah@phonecoop.coop	International Ex-Psychiatric Inmate Leaders
September 25-27/15	near Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, USA	◇ Joan Karp	Glenn Johnson. Tel. +1-413-522-5409, mrglenn2u@gmail.com	Early Sexual Memories for "Mental Health" Liberation Leaders
October 7-11/15	The Netherlands	◇ Tim Jackins	Goof Bujs. Tel. +31-204033254, bunic@ziggo.nl	Men, for Europe
November 5-8/15	East Coast USA	◇ Tim Jackins	Gregg Wagner. Tel. +1718-786-8982, greggwag@earthlink.net	Men, for East Coast North America
November 13-15/15	Alton, New Hampshire, USA	◇ Janet Foner	Anne Piche. Tel. +1-603-209-2615, annepiche@gmail.com	"Mental Health" Liberation for Everyone, for Québec, Canada & Vermont, New Hampshire, Maine, & Western Massachusetts, USA
December 4-6/15	near Seattle, Washington, USA	◇ Marcie Rendon	Nola Hadley Torres. Tel. +1-510-299-5782, 511torres@sbglobal.net	Native Liberation, for Native People Raised in the Native Community, for Western Americas



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Re-evaluation Counseling

Re-evaluation Counseling is a process whereby people of all ages and of all backgrounds can learn how to exchange effective help with each other in order to free themselves from the effects of past distress experiences.

Re-evaluation Counseling theory provides a model of what a human being can be like in the area of his/her interaction with other human beings and his/her environment. The theory assumes that everyone is born with tremendous intellectual potential, natural zest, and lovingness, but that these qualities have become blocked and obscured in adults as the result of accumulated distress experiences (fear, hurt, loss, pain, anger, embarrassment, etc.) which begin early in our lives.

Any young person would recover from such distress spontaneously by use of the natural process of emotional discharge (crying, trembling, raging, laughing, etc.). However, this natural process is usually interfered with by well-meaning people ("Don't cry," "Be a big boy," etc.) who erroneously equate the emotional discharge (the healing of the hurt) with the hurt itself.

When adequate emotional discharge can take place, the person is freed from the rigid pattern of behavior and feeling left by the hurt. The basic loving, cooperative, intelligent, and zestful nature is then free to operate. Such a person will tend to be more effective in looking out for his or her own interests and the interests of others, and will be more capable of acting successfully against injustice.

In recovering and using the natural discharge process, two people take turns counseling and being counseled. The one acting as the counselor listens, draws the other out, and permits, encourages, and assists emotional discharge. The one acting as client talks and discharges and re-evaluates. With experience and increased confidence and trust in each other, the process works better and better.

For more information, you can go to the web site: <http://www.rc.org/>.



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