

Present Time

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January 2016

In this January *Present Time*, delegates from Sustaining All Life (a project of the RC Communities) report on their successful effort in Paris during the December United Nations Climate talks, people write about recent RC workshops in a number of African countries, and there is so much more.

For the April issue, articles and poems need to reach us by Tuesday, February 16, and changes to the back-pages lists by Monday, February 22.



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Making Bigger Changes

Tim Jackins,¹ at the Southwest USA Teachers' and Leaders' Workshop, November 2015

You are the high point so far in the development of complexity in the universe. That's you. You get up and you feel horrible every morning—and you are the best there is!

Just what are you waiting for? Something better? Well, in a sense we all are waiting for something better. We got stuck in our distresses early, when

things were hard and should have been better and couldn't have been. And so we are frozen in distress, waiting for things to get better, not being able to keep a perspective that says, "You're the best. If you want it better, you're the thing that will make it better."

We have the capability of learning more and more, of being more and more aware, of cooperating more and more with other intelligences like ours. We're *it*, and yet we feel small and overpowered. We wait for someone with more clarity and initiative and power than we think we have, to make it different for us. That's a big confusion—one that almost all of us have. And it's not an accident. It's not an accident at all.

We live in a society that can perpetuate itself as long as almost everybody is badly confused. If we had any idea of how powerful we are, how well we think, and how much other people want to function with us and figure out better solutions, society wouldn't have a chance of holding on to its rigidities. But all of the distresses installed on all of us keep us separate, not able to work together, trying to do good things but feeling small and isolated.

BEING PUSHED INTO ACTION

It's interesting that at this point we are being pushed out of that position. It would be nice to say that we have recovered and those patterns don't affect us anymore, but it's not true. We are being pushed out of them by the fact that distresses, mired in our current economic system, are destroying the world. That's a fairly good motivation. We can feel small and alone and helpless and still know that we've got to do something, when things are bad enough.





The problem has always been that big changes only occur out of desperation. We don't get a revolution because people think that it's time for a change so the world can be better. We get it because people have nothing left to lose, essentially, and feel desperate about it. That motivation is playing out² now, to a certain extent, with the climate.

ILE COONEY

No big change has happened from rational guidance, from minds thinking about it clearly. There's always had to be a tight corner before something happens. That tight corner is coming now, and so change will occur, whether or not we can think about it.

A NEW FACTOR

But now is the first time, I think, that a significant number of people are dedicated to trying to think about the whole situation—about what's going on³ not just for themselves but for all of us, and increasingly for all life forms. And a significant number of those people have a tool for getting their minds to think better, anytime they choose to use it. That's the interesting thing about us—that we can get our minds back if we do a little work. We get confused about it, feel that it takes too much time, that it should go faster. Maybe we don't use the tool as effectively as we might. But we are here because we don't get confused about it for very long.

DOING MORE

We get to go out now, even though we're scared, and try to interrupt the enormous harshness, the big oppressions, the big irrationalities, that function in our systems. There is the racism, the sexism, all the confusions about sex and gender, the anti-Jewish oppression, and more. We can go out and interrupt those things, keep them from being acted out and passed on. We can be part of the beginning of the end of them.

You can do far more than you are aware of. All of us can. And we struggle to do it. One of the best things to *continued*...

² "Playing out" means being acted out.

³ "Going on" means happening.

... continued

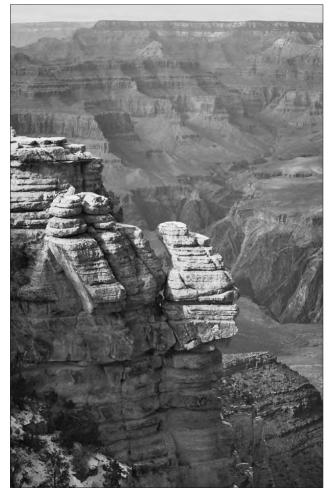
do, because of this material,⁴ is to do anything. Anything. It hardly matters what or how small it is. The fact that you move against the distresses that have held you in place is important.

It is important for your next session that you said one word out somewhere when people were loudly voicing some upset. Maybe you just said, "I don't think like that," and then walked away. That would be fine. Any little step clarifies in your mind that you know something, that you can do something. And you'll have great sessions because of it. You'll know how afraid you were to say, "I don't think so." You were waiting for someone to hit you, or blow up⁵ at you, or do whatever people did at other times in your life that left you small and quiet and waiting.

There will be ways to handle the irrationalities that have seemed so strong in the world. We have some basic understanding of them, but we don't yet know

⁴ "Material" means distress.

⁵ "Blow up" means act very angry.



THE GRAND CANYON, ARIZONA, USA • CARLY FRINTNER

fully how to handle them because we've never done it. We haven't tried.

LEARNING BY TRYING

You don't need to know the answer before you try something. You don't need to have a picture of what the product will be at the end of getting rid of all oppression, or how an economic system will function that doesn't oppress everybody, before you start. The fact is you can't know. It's too big, too complex; things change too much. But you don't need to know. A lot of us feel like we need a defense of knowing everything, of knowing how to respond to every single thing. A good response is, "I don't think so. I don't know, but I don't want it to go that way, and I will try to figure out other things that don't go in oppressive directions. I will try to figure out how we can make sure that everyone has enough to have a good life. I don't know how, but I want that, and I will work in that direction." That's enough for you to begin feeling your way around out in a bigger world.

We learn by trying things out—by seeing how they work, or don't; discharging on how restimulating it is; and then trying again and learning a little more. Each time we refine the way we understand the world and the way we interact with it. There doesn't seem to be any limit to this for any of our minds.

MAKING UP OUR MINDS

Being able to discharge on things is important, but we can make up our minds⁶ in spite of anything we haven't yet had the chance to discharge. Our minds can still make good, sharp, important decisions and hold to them.

We don't have a lot of that going on around us, and we're not encouraged to decide against the noise of society. So most of us don't get any practice in making up our minds in opposition to anything, but especially in opposition to our distresses. This is a place where we have to decide something. We have to decide not to go along with the noise of our distress. It doesn't mean we won't have the feelings—we will, until we discharge them—but we don't have to believe them. We can refuse. We can stand against the pull of distress.

People have always known how to do this. Many of the people who are remembered in our family histories are those who stood against their distresses in harsh times, who didn't give up, who didn't act on their fears. They stood there, when everyone else was running. Just

⁶ "Make up our minds" means make a decision.

their standing there, not giving in to their distresses, makes them memorable and lets people use that image. "This is the epitome of our people. This person stood up, and we are still a people because of it."

What we haven't known is that it's not just exceptional people who can do this. Everybody's mind has this capability. We haven't understood what was involved in it. I think we can figure it out.

You can stand against anything. You can make up your mind because you think something is true, even if everybody else thinks it isn't. You can do that. You have your own mind; you have your own information. You can decide independently against restimulations about needing to go along, or others being smarter than you, or everybody being upset if you don't agree. You can make up your mind, especially if you discharge discouragement about it and decide that it's your birthright because you are human—not because you are special or different, but because you are human. You were born with it. You get to claim it and fight for it. The biggest fight, of course, is against the installed distresses. You have to say no to them. "No. I refuse. No, nope, nope." In sessions you have to take that stance.

Fighting to be able to make a decision, fighting against discouragement in particular, is very useful, especially as society collapses. You may have noticed it's collapsing more quickly? It would be nice if we sped up a little, too—tried to at least keep pace, even if we can't get in front.

We need to continue figuring out ways to move more quickly through our distresses. We need to not be confined to the things we knew how to do before but challenge ourselves to take on⁷ bigger pieces. The discouragement confuses us about many things in our lives. And it is pervasive, a culturally common chronic pattern.

BIG BATTLES, BIG CHANGES

Who is going to contradict it? Everybody's got it. They go ahead with life, feeling discouraged, just as we all do. Everybody trudges forward, not remembering that we might leap forward. We might leap forward with a smile on our face into big battles. We should enjoy big battles. We're scared of them, but big battles are a time to change the world and make it different. That's what you always wanted, wasn't it? You wanted to play a role in making things better. Big battles give you that opportunity. They should be an enjoyable challenge for us—and they would be, except for the distresses. Society is getting a little shaky. It's getting shaky enough that it can't be hidden. This means that big changes are going to be made, and it would be nice if there was a lot of intelligence guiding them. You are one of the most hopeful sources of that intelligence.

We have all used counseling well, and we have better lives for it. But we have mainly reformed our lives. They've gotten better and better, less troublesome, but I don't know of many people in RC, or anywhere, who have made gigantic changes in the way they live.

It may be that bigger changes are necessary for us to have full lives as humans, particularly in this time when things are rattling toward collapse. I guess the question is, how afraid are we of making a revolutionary change in the way we think, in the way we live, as well as in society? If we can't change our lives in big ways, why do we think we can guide the change in the society? Are we still constrained by things that happened to us as children? Are we still just trying to be good kids and make it all work better instead of figuring out how we actually want things to be? These are some of the big questions we need to ask as we figure out how to use RC more intelligently and effectively.



NEW YORK, NEW YORK, USA • LYNDALL KATZ

⁷ "Take on" means take action on.







Snapshots from Sustaining All Life in Paris











Sustaining All Life, in Paris

In late November and early December 2015, fifty Co-Counselors twenty-five delegates and twenty-five volunteers—did a Sustaining All Life¹ project in Paris, France. They shared RC tools and what we've learned in RC about the connection between oppression and the environment with activists gathering in Paris during the COP21, the United Nations Conference on Climate Change. The following are reports written by delegates at the end of each day.

Friday, November 27

On Thursday and Friday many of us participated in two pre-Climate Talks events: the Conference of Youth and an Indigenous Conference, both sponsored by UNESCO (the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization). We talked to people, handed out flyers, generated interest in our work, and attended events held by others.

At the Conference of Youth we had a workshop in the program: Young People Ending Racism in the Environmental Movement. Emily Bloch and Jean Charles² presented our understandings about the connections between racism and climate change, along with sharing the tools of RC. People did a mini-session, and four people spoke strongly about their experiences of racism as related to the environment. Sustaining All Life delegates Janet Kabue and Mari Piggott³ talked about how they've used RC in their work against racism.

The workshop broke into small groups of people of the global majority and white people to share experiences with racism and environmental degradation/climate change and racism in the environmental movement. Then people reported back to the whole group. It ended on a hopeful note, and people were enthusiastic.

On Saturday morning the Sustaining All Life delegates and volunteers will begin a weekend workshop in which we'll connect, discharge, continue our preparations, have fun together, and figure out more about how to get our word out.

Diane Shisk⁴



Sunday, November 29

Today a group of us—young people and Indigenous people—joined a sunrise event at the Eiffel Tower. It was organized by Indigenous/First Nations people. Using music, words, and drumbeats, they prayed for the people of the world and appreciated Mother Earth.

After reuniting for breakfast and a planning meeting, the Sustaining All Life group headed out for our first listening project⁵ of the week. We traveled by metro to Boulevard Voltaire, near the Place de la Republique and nearer still to Bataclan, the site of the biggest death toll from the recent attacks on Paris.

The large march planned for today had been banned and instead activists had organized a human chain along the route of the march. We decided to do our listening project with the activists along a section of this chain. Early concerns about a heavy police presence weren't realized while we were there, though we heard later that many activists had been arrested and tear-gassed at Place de la Republique. In our location there was an exciting, happy atmosphere and we found it easy to engage with many people.

Once we started, it became easier and easier to talk to more and more people about Sustaining All Life. Many seemed delighted to find us and hear about our mission. Some gave us spontaneous hugs. One person invited us to the center of activism where she works, and we plan to do listening projects there this week. We invited many people to our workshops and other events.

After a quick take-away lunch, we made our way back to our hostel, where we reported back on highlights and lessons learned. After dinner we had support groups and a final planning meeting before bed. We are now finishing our day's work by writing this report at 11:30 p.m.

> Janet Kabue, Brian Lavendel,⁶ Michael Levy,⁷ and Seán Ruth⁸

> > continued . . .

¹ Sustaining All Life is a project of the Reevaluation Counseling Communities in which groups of Co-Counselors go to non-RC events and share what we've learned in RC about helping people take action to end oppression and save the environment.

² Emily Bloch is the International Liberation Reference Person for Young Adults and lives in Brookline, Massachusetts, USA. Jean Charles is an RC leader in Milton, Massachusetts, USA.

³ Janet Kabue is the Area Reference Person for Nairobi, Kenya. Mari Piggott is the International Liberation Reference Person for Young People and lives in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada.

⁴ Diane Shisk is the Alternate International Reference Person for the RC Communities and lives in Seattle, Washington, USA. She was the leader, with Wytske Visser, of the Sustaining All Life project in Paris.

⁵ 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 the environment. They may hold signs that invite people to share their thinking about the issue.

⁶ Brian Lavendel is an RC leader in Madison, Wisconsin, USA.

⁷ Michael Levy is the Area Reference Person for Santa Cruz, California, USA.

⁸ Seán Ruth is the International Liberation Reference Person for Middle-Class People and lives in Stillorgan, County Dublin, Ireland.

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Monday, November 30

It has been a day of scouting for us.

This morning we all went to the COP21 site by train, bus, car—and bicycle! We couldn't get into the non-governmental organization (NGO) area, as it doesn't open to the public until tomorrow morning, but it was good to see the venue and how it is arranged. Although the security was extremely tight, there were a lot of friendly guards.

Today was a stellar example of how we're always trying to figure out what to do as we go. Diane has been organizing us at every step. As we are walking on the sidewalk, riding on the train, or waiting for a bus, she is directing us and presenting our next steps.

We walked from the COP21 site to the Lycée Rabelais, where our workshops and other events will be held. A small group of us entered to view the site, while the rest of us had minisessions outside.

Then we went by bus and train to Gare du Nord (a large railway station). Many activist hostels are located nearby, and we thought we might do listening projects in the area or even find a place to do small workshops. We took turns getting lunch, while those not eating scouted for places to post flyers and posters. Others did listening projects outside the station. Some highlights:

• Michael Levy spoke with a couple of people who didn't know about the climate conference, and he invited them to one of our events on Saturday. He also spoke to a USer who is here for Al Gore's Climate Reality Project and who was interested in what we are doing. We are going to get him in touch with Co-Counselors in his RC Region.

• As we left this morning for the COP21 grounds, Glen Hauer9 met a man staying here at our hostel who did not speak English or French. Glen asked Juan Manuel Feito Guerrero¹⁰ to speak with him, and Juanma rode with him all the way to COP21. He learned that the man had come to the Paris climate talks as a representative of many communities in the Amazon River region and that he had traveled six days to get here, four of them through the jungle. The man was grateful to meet us, as he speaks "only" his native language and Spanish and is not familiar with the ways of white people. Juanma will ensure that he has lots of support while we are here.

• On Sunday evening, Canadians Mari Piggott, Beth Cruise, and

¹⁰ Juan Manuel Feito Guerrero (Juanma) is an RC leader in Bilbao, Bizkaia, Euskal Herria (Basque Country).



SUSTAINING ALL LIFE IN PARIS, FRANCE

Bo-Young Lim¹¹ went to a "Meet and Greet" sponsored by the Canadian Minister of the Environment and Climate Change. They didn't know if they would get in, or what they would say, but they knew they should be there. They greeted the minister and met other delegates to COP21. Imagine their surprise when they saw the minister again today, waiting in the security line to enter the COP21 grounds. They took advantage of the opportunity to speak to her one-on-one about Sustaining All Life, and she was interested in what she heard.

We returned to the hostel to do our work, meet in constituency groups, and have dinner and an organizational meeting. We should get to bed soon, as some of us are going to the COP21 grounds before breakfast, to get ahead of the crowds and post flyers and meet people.

Janet, Brian, Michael, and Seán



Tuesday, December 1

Today was the first day we were allowed into the Climate Generations area—the "civil society area" of COP21 where many organizations have stands, exhibits, films, and lectures.

Diane found a vacant space and a large empty table, which she occupied with our literature. It did not attract as much attention as we wanted, so later we moved the table closer to a walkway. Immediately many more people stopped to read and talk to us. We also found two other spots to set up literature in other parts of the huge conference halls. All this proved valuable for meeting people. (Because we are not registered with

⁹ Glen Hauer is an RC leader in Berkeley California, USA.

¹¹ Beth Cruise is an RC leader in Victoria, British Columbia, Canada, and is the editor of the RC journal *Sustaining All Life*. Bo-Young Lim is an RC leader in Brampton, Ontario, Canada.

the United Nations as a non-governmental organization, we have no official space on the COP21 grounds.)

In the afternoon we did two workshops. The first was Young People at the Forefront of the Climate Movement, led by Emily. It attracted a small but enthusiastic group, some of whom expressed great interest in learning more about RC. The second was Sustaining Indigenous Life Worldwide, led by Marcie Rendon.¹² It also attracted a small, enthusiastic group. One woman attended both workshops and decided that she would come back tomorrow to take our RC fundamentals class.

In addition to our tables and workshops, groups of us conducted listening projects throughout the day in various places in the building. Most of the people we listened to did not have high hopes for the governmental part of COP21, but some were hopeful about what grassroots groups could do. Almost all were happy to have run into¹³ people who listened to them thoughtfully.

This evening we gathered and shared lots of hopeful stories about people we'd met during the day, including from Senegal, Bangladesh, Hawaii, Scotland, Suriname, India, Mexico, Ecuador, Haiti, Mali, and the Philippines, as well as from North America and Europe.

One of us had met the director of an African federation for environmental organizations and had listened to him and told him about our work. He'd said that racism and colonization are the "big elephant in the room" (a major issue not being discussed) and that we are the only organization to have brought them up.¹⁴ This evening Diane pointed out that our delegation is being led by two working-class white women and had us pair up by gender and discharge about sexism.

We delegates and volunteers have a wide variety of skills and varying amounts of attention for the tasks we are undertaking. For example, some of us find it difficult to reach out to new people all day long, while for others it is fairly easy. Together we have been able to support each other well and accomplish a lot.

Janet, Brian, Michael, and Seán



Wednesday, December 2

Today was the day we became an established presence at COP21. In addition to the large table we were using yesterday, Diane helped us acquire an official space in the Climate Generations area. We now share a booth with an African NGO.

At our various spaces, we did listening projects and had countless conversations in which we continued to build relationships and invite people to our events.

Mari led a young people's caucus (a support group) in a public open space in the center of the venue. It grew to twenty-five participants, as young people passing by joined. The group played a game and did a goaround on what was hard and what was good about being a young person at COP21. Rob Venderbos¹⁵ said, "People who came were relieved to be among young people. You could see them relax, and they all left feeling better. I think they'll feel more connected to all the young people at COP21."

Another winner today was a decision to hold our planned forum in a large unused open space on the grounds of COP21. The forum was led by Teresa Enrico,16 Mari, and Seán. Volunteers walked around with signs and invited activists to share three- to five-minute stories of hope and courage. Once it started, those walking by were attracted by the energy in the space. The forum stood out among the events at the COP21 as one of the only places where people could hear about each other's activism and cheer each other on. Among the stories were those of a woman doctor from Afghanistan who'd decided she could save more lives by climate activism than by being a physician, and a man from Guinea who'd exposed the parties responsible for deforestation and been subjected to harassment and threats as a result. The group broke into spontaneous applause during the presentations. We had time for twelve activists to share their stories. We also did minisessions. Several folks asked when it would happen again!

Jenny Sazama and Alima Adams¹⁷ offered a fundamentals class that included two young adults, one from Taiwan and another from the United States, and a man from Italy who is making a documentary about humans and climate change.

Wytske Visser¹⁸ led a workshop for climate activists. There were nine

¹² Marcie Rendon is the International Liberation Reference Person for Native Americans and lives in Minneapolis, Minnesota, USA.

¹³ "Run into" means met, encountered.

 $^{^{\}rm 14}\,$ "Brought them up" means talked about them.

 $^{^{\}scriptscriptstyle 15}\,$ Rob Venderbos is an RC leader in Wergea, the Netherlands.

continued . . .

¹⁶ Teresa Enrico is the International Liberation Reference Person for Pacific Islander and Pilipino/a-Heritage People and lives in Seattle, Washington, USA.

¹⁷ Jenny Sazama is the International Liberation Reference Person for Allies to Young People and lives in Jamaica Plain, Massachusetts, USA. Alima Adams is an RC leader in Cambridge, Cambridgeshire, England.

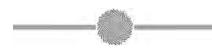
¹⁸ Wytske Visser is the International Commonality Reference Person for the Care of the Environment and was the leader, with Diane Shisk, of the Sustaining All Life project in Paris. Wytske lives in Ljouwert, Fryslân, the Netherlands.

... continued

participants, six of whom stayed for a support group afterward.

All along the way we are pushing ourselves and each other to share more and more fully what we know about humans.

Janet, Brian, Michael, and Seán



Thursday, December 3

Today we led ten—yes, ten—events in Paris! *Très bien*!¹⁹

The morning started with Emily leading a workshop for a group of young people who are staying here in our hostel who've come from around the world for a YMCA climate camp. Youth from Myanmar, Réunion, and Switzerland attended the workshop. Said Emily, "They were all excited about Co-Counseling and continuing our relationships and were grateful for the chance to show their feelings." Janet will offer them a workshop on racism tomorrow morning.

Those of us who weren't part of the workshop had a (much needed!) session.

Then it was off to²⁰ COP21! Several of us did a listening project by walking down a long lunch line with a sign saying, "How do you think oppression affects the climate movement? We'd like to listen." It was successful, because people had nothing to distract them from engaging with us.

At our midday fundamentals class, led by Jenny, three young adults got excited about human connection and discharge being the answer to climate change. One young adult man from Scotland said he had been about to quit²¹ his activism but had changed his mind after his turn in front of the group!

We staffed our tables and booth as usual and continued to have many interesting conversations with people from around the world.

Hemaima Wiremu²² led a well-attended (ninety participants!) forum on how people's communities have been affected by climate change. A woman from Peru spoke with passion and blunt truth. She said that women are the leaders in her community in spite of the violence they face every day, not only in the community but also in their own homes, and that they'd decided they would not tolerate the violence anymore. Also powerful were two young Indigenous men, from Alaska and Hawaii. A Brazilian woman living in Rome who shared her story in front of the group commented as she left that "this was the true 'people's space' at COP21."

²² Hemaima Wiremu is an RC leader in Otaki, Kapiti Coast District, New Zealand.



SUSTAINING ALL LIFE IN PARIS, FRANCE

We offered three caucuses today for youth, for women, and for activists.

Barbara Love²³ led an ending-racism workshop attended by thirtyone people. Liam Geary-Baulch²⁴ brought to it a group of students and faculty who were from a network of "historically Black colleges and universities" in the United States. They loved the workshop. One said simply, "This is a breath of fresh air."

During the day, a film crew asked Seán, "How do you feel about everything that is going on²⁵ here?" Seán said he was hopeful about the people but not about the governments, because they were too influenced by corporations and the wealthy. Afterward he asked the crew whom they were filming for, and they replied, "The French Ministry of Foreign Affairs"!

The evening finished with a reception packed with all of us and a large number of invitees, many of whom we got to talk to over the course of the evening. The event reflected the personal contact and relationship building we've been emphasizing all week. It was catered by students attending the hotel school we've been using for our workshops, and they carried plates of elegant hors d'oeuvres around the room. There was a French flag on the door with a black ribbon, and we learned that seven students from the school had been killed in the recent Paris attacks.

Another powerful day for all of us, and many others.

Janet, Brian, Michael, and Seán

²⁵ "Going on" means happening.

¹⁹ *Très bien* means "very good" in French.

²⁰ "Then it was off to" means then we embarked for.

²¹ "About to quit" means on the verge of quitting.

²³ Barbara Love is the International Liberation Reference Person for African-Heritage People and lives in Amherst, Massachusetts, USA.

²⁴ Liam Geary-Baulch is an RC leader in London, England.

Saturday, December 5

I am writing this report from 34,000 feet.

To say this has been an intense week would be putting it mildly. I think many of us surprised ourselves by the limits beyond which we were able to push. Friday was so filled that we didn't have time to write a report.

Also, many members of our team left on Friday. In our group farewells, we appreciated the leaders, the organizing team, the French RC Community, the translators, and the young people and noticed what each person and group had brought to the team. It was moving. Many of us had a mini-session on not wanting to leave.

Speaking for myself, I have to say that everyone was amazing! We pulled off²⁶ a logistically challenging, deeply human project. What an honor it was to be a part of the team.

This report is not going to have as much scope and detail as previous ones, because our reporting team has gone its separate ways, but here are some bits:

At noon on Friday we held a forum, with only ninety minutes to get it organized. To invite people, we carried signs, seen by hundreds, that said, "How has climate change affected Indigenous people? We want to listen to you!" The response was enthusiastic. We heard from a First Nations elder and leader from Canada who said he was growing impatient with the governmental climate negotiations. He reminded all of us that everything, everything, everything comes from Mother Earth and that all humans need to reclaim their connection to the Earth.

²⁶ "Pulled off" means accomplished.

Later Wytske led a workshop on classism. It was small, but people commented that "the whole world needs to know about this work you are doing."

We also held another youth caucus in the middle of the Climate Generations area. Several clusters of young people and young adults each cluster being led by one of our delegation—were sitting on the floor, deeply engaged with each other.

Even though many of us have left Paris, the work goes on. This weekend is the People's Climate Summit and Global Villages Alternative in Montreuil, a suburb of Paris, and our team is offering three programs there—two workshops on racism and a forum on the early impacts of climate change.

This morning Niti Dandekar²⁷ led the forum The Impact of Climate Change on Developing Nations and Oppressed Communities. She had a full room—about twenty-five people—and speakers from Gambia, Indonesia, Senegal, Nigeria, and Zimbabwe. At the end people were eager to stay and talk.

Ellie Putnam²⁸ reports that at Barbara and Wytske's workshop, Eliminating the Effects of Racism in the Environmental Movement, people kept coming in and were totally receptive to everything Barbara and Wytske said and did. There was also great support from the organizing team.

Yay for us!

Tomorrow our young people and young adult team will offer the workshop Young People Eliminating the Effects of Racism in the Environmental Movement.

Today Diane led a workshop for the French RC Community. They did mini-sessions in public in front of Bataclan, where many were killed in the recent Paris attacks. Frédérique Braguier²⁹ reports that "people around us were intrigued."

Brian

²⁹ Frédérique Braguier is an RC leader in Pau, France.



THE SUSTAINING ALL LIFE PAMPHLET TRANSLATED INTO VARIOUS LANGUAGES

 $^{^{\}rm 27}\,$ Niti Dandekar is the Regional Reference Person for India and lives in Pune, India.

²⁸ Ellie Putnam is an RC leader in Seattle, Washington, USA.

One of the handouts from the Sustaining All Life project in Paris

Tools for Ending Racism in the Environmental Movement

Racism* damages and divides everyone. It shapes and perpetuates the inequities of our societies and has become a part of our societal institutions. It limits the access of the majority of the world's population to the resources of society. Racism is maintained by violence, threats of violence, misinformation, lies, isolation, and greed. In the form of slavery, apartheid, and racial discrimination of many kinds, it has damaged or destroyed the lives of hundreds of millions of people.

Because of European-centric racism, humancaused climate change and environmental destruction disproportionately impact Africans or African descendants, Indigenous people, Asians or Asian descendants, Pacific Islanders, Latinos/Latinas, Chicanos/Chicanas, Mestizos/Mestizas, Arabs or Arab descendants—people of color. Also because of racism, the mainstream environmental movement in the globally dominant nations has been slow to redress this destruction and has marginalized or excluded the perspectives of people in these groups. This unaware and unchallenged racism has made the movement unwelcoming to these populations.

Although racism is aimed at particular sections of the population, it corrodes and corrupts the entire society—severely limiting the society's progress, and the progress of every individual within the society toward a full and meaningful life. Racism also limits the effectiveness of the environmental movement, by keeping it from being strong, diverse, and united.

To end racism, policies must change, racist behaviour must stop, the injustices from racism must be redressed, and all people must recover from the damage done to them by racism. Healing the damage done to individuals by racism is not the same as ending racist policies, but only by healing this damage can we be confident that racist behaviors will not continue and that racist policies will not reappear in other guises.

* We define racism as the one-way, systematic, institutionalized oppression of people on the basis of skin color or the presumption of membership in particular racialized groups. To fully eliminate racism, we must heal three forms of damage:

- The corruption of the minds and spirits of those who have been conditioned by society to be the agents of racism
- 2. The damage done to everyone in the groups of people who have been targeted by racism
- 3. The damage to the oppressed groups' attitude toward themselves, causing them to believe racist misinformation about themselves and other members of their group

All three forms of damage can be healed if people can be listened to well and supported to release their accumulated distress. Doing this healing work frees people's minds from the damage of racism and allows people to feel good about and value themselves. It can help people think about how racism is acted out in the environmental movement and the broader society, and how that can be addressed. It can help them cooperate across lines of oppression and take action to set things right.

We all need to heal from the effects of racism to be able to create a united movement to end environmental degradation and restore the environment. This is not quick or easy work. Many of us resist it. We may feel that we have been able to succeed in life only by not showing anyone how much we've been hurt. We may feel ashamed of or embarrassed by our feelings. We may feel it would be unbearable to look at and to feel them again. Perhaps this is because we have had no opportunity to tell our stories or have not been treated well when we have tried to tell them.

We may have survived by numbing ourselves to the damage we carry and by assuming we will never be free of it. In Sustaining All Life we have learned that it is possible to heal the emotional damage from racism and internalized racism, and we offer the tools to do this. Healing from the effects of racism is not a substitute for taking action to end institutional racism, but it is a vital part of the work to end racism. And it is vital to becoming widely effective in the work to end the destruction of the environment.

Connecting Racism and Care of the Environment

For years it was very difficult for me to see how care of the environment was my issue. In the United States, white people are usually shown as the key leaders of environmental work, so it felt like a "white people's issue." So many other issues are affecting black people and other people of color in my country issues like racism, poverty, gun violence, and mass incarceration—that I could not see how to make care of the environment a priority for me.

This changed after I attended the Environment and Racism Workshop led by Barbara Love (the International Liberation Reference Person for African-Heritage People) and Diane Shisk (the Alternate International Reference Person).

Barbara helped me see that what is happening with the planet is just an extension of the racism, colonialism, classism, and other forms of oppression that have been used to exploit our people for centuries. Our own homelands have been forced to build economies based on one "cash crop"

or industry—often to the detriment of the very environment we rely on (for example, Angola's complete dependence on oil to fund all of its governmental operations).

It is interesting for all of us, but particularly those of us who are people of the global majority, to discharge about the idea of "home" and "land" in exploring our connection to the planet, to the environment. Indigenous peoples had their lands stolen from them. Most of us people of the global majority in the United States were either forced to leave our homelands or fled under extremely oppressive conditions. Many of us experienced brutal wars carried out or supported by the U.S. military. Many of us still live in segregated areas with few resources areas that were forced on us when our families arrived here. (Some of my family members fear spending time outside in the summer, because of the number of shootings in their neighborhoods.)

As USers we also have other work to do. The United States carried out the genocide of Native peoples to become a nation. As capitalism advanced, the country began acting to keep oppression in place throughout the world. Currently our country exploits vast amounts of the world's resources and labor, often by means of our ongoing support of and involvement in conflicts and wars throughout the world. Thus any of us who live here, regardless of our individual class status, have lots of work to do on the role our country plays in relation to the rest of the world.

At the workshop, Rudy Nickens (the Regional Reference Person for Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, and Nebraska, USA) led a powerful group on the events in Ferguson, Missouri, resulting from the police killing of the unarmed African American teenager Michael Brown. He explained why it is important to get involved in the Black Lives Matter movement. He said it was important that those of us with more "comfortable" jobs or lives become visible supporters of this movement and show that we stand with other Black people (often young people) who are expressing their outrage at the exploitation and violence.

Rudy, Barbara, and Diane all encouraged white people to experiment with challenging racism among other white people. One white woman shared her experiences in going door-to-door in white neighborhoods asking people to put Black Lives Matter signs in their yards. It was a way to interrupt racism—and show white people their goodness

and caring—right then, right there.

Finally, I could begin to see how care of the environment is related to my life and the things I care about. There are many roads into this issue.

I also got to discharge about feeling like "I can't look at one more thing" and the early hurts that left me with that recording. Barbara encouraged us to discharge any feelings that "we don't want to clean up a mess that white people made." We must do this. This is our planet.

continued . . .



MAURA FALLON

$\ldots continued$

Barbara, Rudy, and Diane all helped me understand that anything we can do to stand against capitalism and the exploitation of humans is a step toward fighting for our entire planet. It is a good time for all of us to try things, in and out of RC, and be visible in standing against all forms of oppression.

I am now thinking about ways I can help my friends and colleagues think about the interconnections between the brutality of our criminal justice system and the exploitation of our planet. I am thinking about conversations I can start with people doing environmental work on how to make sure they are including Black people in those efforts. I am encouraging leaders in my RC Community to try going to more rallies, demon-

strations, and other events, particularly ones where Black people will be present.

I also want to work more on the idea of "comfort" as a Black U.S. middle-class person, in the context of the environment. I think we have been taught that we can "succeed" our way out of racism and that the goal is to become upwardly mobile-that this is the way to show we are not limited by racism anymore. I think it's important for us to discharge on the lies we are made to believe about what a "good life" actually means. We need to be able to think for ourselves about how we want to use our minds and our attention-not just build our lives around the constant messages that tell us to make more money and buy more things.

I think we need to be careful as RCers about telling people that there are certain ways they should live their lives, or certain things they should do, in order to claim the care-of-theenvironment issue as their own. We can stretch our minds to think about the many ways this issue intersects with those that are central to other groups. We can listen to people in other groups and ask them what they think, and we can try many different things as we work on this. I am excited about the possibilities.

I would love to hear about how other global majority people are working on this issue.

Alysia Tate Chicago, Illinois, USA Reprinted from the RC e-mail discussion lists for RC Community members and for leaders of wide world change



HAWAII, USA • DIANE SHISK

Goals Goals

One needs goals for oneself. One needs goals for one's family, for one's groups, for the community in which one lives. One needs goals for humankind as a whole, for our entire species. One needs goals for the entire world of living things. Finally, one needs goals for the universe.

Harvey Jackins* From "The Necessity of Long Range Goals," in The Human Situation

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

Following the Lead of Indigenous People

I have been thinking about *This Changes Everything*.¹ In the book, Naomi Klein says that "Indigenous land and treaty rights have proved a major barrier for the extractive industries in many of the key Blockadia² struggles." And that "even more critically, many non-Natives are also beginning to see that the ways of life that Indigenous groups are protecting have a great deal to teach about how to relate to the land in ways that are not purely extractive." In the movie, she postulates that everyone (and this includes the folks in RC whom we call people of the global majority) needs to seriously consider following the lead of Indigenous people worldwide when taking on³ environmental activism.

Chicago (Illinois, USA) has one of the largest Native American communities in the country, because it was one of the main cities in the U.S. government's Relocation Program for Native Americans in the 1950s and '60s—a program to move Native people off the reservations (another assimilation program) and into the city to be trained for industrial jobs in the workforce. Chicago is home to the ironworkers' union, which many Native men belong to and get trained in. Chicago is also home to one, if not the first, of the Native American Indian Centers in the United States.

There are also large numbers of Native people in New York City. (That Indigenous people are leading the environmental movement was evident at the September 2014 New York City People's Climate March.) Boston (Massachusetts, USA) also has a large Native American population and an Indian Center, as do the U.S. cities of Oakland and Los Angeles (California), Seattle (Washington), and Portland (Oregon). Milwaukee (Wisconsin) is another large U.S. city with a large Native American population.

None of these cities have large, if any, Native American constituencies in their large RC Communities. It is hard to follow the lead of a people if you do not know who they are or what they think, if you ignore their existence or cannot see the importance their knowledge might have for your continued existence. For example, two Native American tribes near Seattle are purchasing land on higher ground to move their people to because they "know" that the land they currently live on is going under water. (Google Hoh Tribe land purchase.)

When we talk about climate change and care of the environment, we are past the point of being "fair" in a politically correct way. I spoke at a gather-in in Seattle (Washington, USA) to raise money for the RC Sustaining All Life project that was going to Paris for the December 2015 United Nations climate talks. I said that we (the world in general) are way past the point of being "fair," that folks of various oppressed groups are going to have to discharge on the fact that they are not going to get "their fair share." We, the human race, are at a point in our history when we need to discharge on the fact that we don't have the time or the resource to "get our fair share." That "fairness" would require the continued degradation of the available resource. No one gets their promised land, no one gets reparations, no one gets to have their version of "the American dream" and preserve the environment so that it continues to be habitable for humans. I referenced how in RC family work, parents are told to not give their children the "wanted" cookie but rather have them discharge the disappointment. We are at that point in time when we all need to discharge on the fact that we are not going to get our cookie *if* we are serious about taking the necessary actions to preserve the environment for the continued existence of the human species.

Marcie Rendon

International Liberation Reference Person for Native Americans Minneapolis, Minnesota, USA Reprinted from the RC e-mail discussion list for leaders in the care of the environment





¹ A book (*This Changes Everything—Capitalism vs. the Climate*) by Naomi Klein, and a movie based on the book

² Blockadia is term for the ways in which regular people, all over the world, are engaging in direct action to stop the extraction and transport of fossil fuels.

³ "Taking on" means undertaking.

CAN INTELLIGENCE TAKE CHARGE?

Society has been something like a great unthinking creature, even though its individual members have been human beings who sometimes think.

Is it possible at the present time that human intelligence can at long last deal successfully with social irrationality? The record of the past would seem to be one thousand percent against this possibility; but there are some new factors present and growing that in my judgment indicate precisely this is now on the agenda for humankind.

One of these factors is that society has already evolved through many stages and has, stage by stage, changed to permit increasingly larger numbers of its individual members to become informed and responsible. Hardly any enslaved people had access to much knowledge, few serfs could read or write, but almost all American wage workers are literate, and modern industry pays wages to thousands of engineers and PhDs.

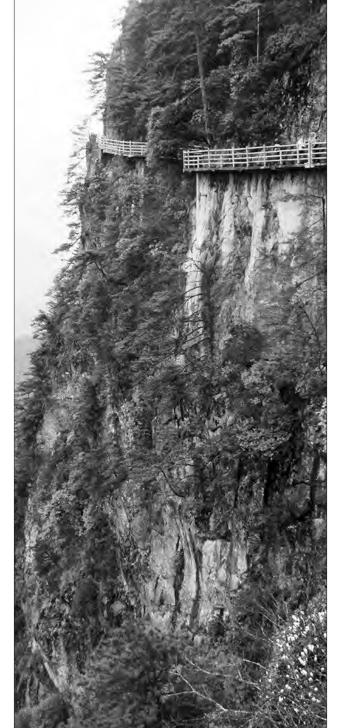
Second, the technical progress that is almost the sole positive result of any society has now brought excellent communication facilities that carry with them the possibility of communication between large numbers of the individual humans who comprise society.

Third, for the very first time the survival of society itself is threatened by irrationality rather than, as up to now, the survival of individual members only. If very many hydrogen bombs go off in the old irrational way before rational procedures supersede, then it will be not just part of the human race but most or all of it that will be destroyed, and society itself will be destroyed in the process.

Finally, a special reason. Most clearly from the viewpoint of Re-evaluation Counseling, but to a considerable degree from many other viewpoints arising today in the world, the fundamental distinction between rational and irrational individual human behavior is finally being faced and procedures are being worked out for converting one to the other.

Can flexible human intelligence attain control and ride herd on^{*} this great irrational creature called Human Society?... I have indicated that I think we *can* and, in fact, are on the historical verge of doing so.

> Harvey Jackins From "The Flexible Human in the Rigid Society," in *The Human Situation*



MOUNT MINGYUE, IN YICHUN, CHINA • CHEN PINGJUN

^{* &}quot;Ride herd on" means take charge of.

Miracles, Connection, and Leadership

From talks by Wytske Visser¹ at a Care of the Environment Workshop in the Basque Country in 2015

We humans all are a miracle, and we all have one thing in common: we have been in the womb of our mother. We all started as one egg and one seed cell. It's a miracle that in two hundred and sixty-six days we grow from a tiny little egg and seed cell into a baby. In this time, in a very complex way, our central nervous system, heart, and digestive system all work together so that we can live. That's a miracle.

The oppressive societies make us forget how special it is to be alive. The media puts out confusing messages. Most of us have the idea that we are not good enough.

CONNECTION

It is very human to care deeply about nature. Our DNA is ninety-five percent the same as a chimpanzee; seventy-five percent the same as a dog; fifty percent the same as a little fruit fly; and, amazingly, thirty-three percent the same as a daffodil. There is no doubt that we are connected with everything alive in nature.

It can seem to us that many people don't care about nature. Everybody cares deeply. If a person acts like he or she doesn't care, it is because of deep hurts from oppression. We do not have to blame anyone for being so badly hurt.

There is something about being together physically that creates safety. Small children know how to do this. They grab you. They climb on top of you. They hold on to you very tightly. They want to have human contact and be close. Then they feel safe. Therefore I like it when you are close together. I encourage you to have a lot of physical contact. We are not thinking about sex but are being like young people, who are naturally close. If we get close like this, then logically there will be more safety and we will discharge more and deeper.

We are naturally connected to each other, and to everything in the universe. The oppressive society tries everything to break that connection, which is cutting off a natural behavior of human beings.

LEADERSHIP

During World War II, on the evening before the huge bombing of Rotterdam, the minister said on the radio to the Dutch population, "You are safe and you can sleep well." The message we got was that somebody would take care of us. We get this message in our education, in our workplaces, in religion. We are told that we are not responsible. There are many people in the world saying, "I am not responsible." In Re-evaluation Counseling we think that everybody is responsible—the full one hundred percent. We also say that we have to do it together. It's like a line in a song from the musical group Pink Floyd: "Together we stand, divided we fall."

Society gives us messages that we are too small to lead. We have messages in our heads that say that we are not good enough, that we cannot play a big role, that we don't know enough, and twenty other messages of internalized oppression that make us feel small. We start believing that we are not good enough, not powerful. We are scared to show ourselves fully. Every human being is naturally powerful and can be a powerful leader. I want us to discharge on this. We need to learn to encourage each other to take bigger steps and more powerful leadership.

In RC we often lead on top of our fears. And we feel stupid for having fears and other feelings. This morning before we started, I had the feeling that I knew nothing. I felt really stupid for feeling that way. I knew it was internalized oppression, so I did a mini-session and discharged about it, and then my thinking was more available.

We often forget to discharge about our leadership in RC. Especially in environmental work, we want to move on. That is why we are here as a group. In these last months I asked people in Skype groups to discharge about leadership. I was surprised at how much everybody has to discharge on it. Every one of you has the ability to be a big, brilliant leader. Every one of you can play an important role in the area you want to lead in. It is crucial that we discharge about our leadership. It is also crucial that we become good counselors for leaders.

continued . . .

¹ Wytske Visser is the International Commonality Reference Person for the Care of the Environment.

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We need to figure out where someone needs to grow in her or his leadership. In society when people are not functioning well in their work, they are fired. We don't have a lot of examples in society of people who are not functioning well getting help to function better. There are two things we have to do: The first is to discharge and think about our own leadership. The second is to think about how to support other leaders.

Leaders wrestle with patterns. We have more to learn about how to support leaders, how to break through their patterns. It is important that we get better at supporting leaders and stopping their chronic distresses from being acted out. Sometimes we are so fed up (disgusted) with the patterns that we distance ourselves from the person. But what we need to do is come closer, so the pattern can be discharged.

We are easily discouraged. We can feel, "Okay, I give up." Because of messages planted in our heads by the oppressive society, we tend to give up easily.

I've been thinking about how I, as a working-class leader, am now an International RC leader. I had important encouragement when I came home from a workshop with Harvey Jackins. I told people what a fantastic leader he was, the best of every one I knew. People in my first fundamentals class that I was leading said, "But you have the same brilliant mind." I could not believe it. They kept saying it again and again.

Another important encouragement was when Harvey would call the working class together separately from the whole workshop. He wanted our thinking and would tell us about being working class himself.

At a time when I was going to lead a workshop in England, Harvey phoned me. He had figured that it would be difficult for me to lead a workshop in England as a Frisian. I was really scared when I phoned him back. He said, "I wanted to tell you what a brilliant mind you

ELETA WRIGHT

have, what a great leader you are," and he kept saying good things about me for ten minutes. Harvey could really think of what a person could be, so that she or he could give more powerful leadership.

We can all phone each other. If you know someone is going to lead, talk to her or him for a few minutes about how fantastic, brilliant, and powerful she or he is; how much you believe in her or his power and great mind. We can do that. Then ask later, "Was it helpful?" We have to learn how to encourage each other so that we are more confident and can break through the feeling that we are alone.

It is time that we take as much leadership as possible. And it's important that we don't do it alone.

The new goal for care of the environment² was adopted at the 2013 World Conference of the RC Communities. The highlight of that conference for me was Tim Jackins asking everyone, two hundred and thirty people, to think together for a long time about the goal. All these leaders were thinking together about a goal to move the work forward.

When I was reading the goal, one of the first things I thought was that Tim Jackins had gone up in a "helicopter" to look at all the problems the world is facing. The goal gives that overall viewpoint. We are most effective in our leadership when we are able to make decisions from this helicopter viewpoint, from a total overview, and ask each other questions about it.

Since the goal was adopted, many RCers worldwide have been leading on care of the environment. The work is growing much faster. With our growing awareness, we can help awareness grow everywhere.

> Wvtske Visser International Commonality Reference Person for the Care of the Environment Fryslân, the Netherlands Excerpted from an article on pages 1 to 3 of Sustaining All Life, No. 2

² That members of the RC Community work to become fully aware of the rapid and unceasing destruction of the living environment of the Earth. That we discharge on any distress that inhibits our becoming fully aware of this situation and taking all necessary actions to restore and preserve our environment.

Distresses have driven people to use oppression against each other and carry out destructive policies against all of the world. A full solution will require the ending of divisions between people and therefore the ending of all oppressions.

The restoration and preservation of the environment must take precedence over any group of humans having material advantage over others. We can and must recover from any distress that drives us to destroy the environment in our attempts to escape from never-ending feelings of needing more resource.



Working-Class Voices in the Environmental Movement

Why are there not more workingclass people at care-of-the-environment workshops? We must have the voices of working-class people in the environmental movement. How can we working-class people find our voices and make them heard?

For the first time, I led a class on care of the environment at a working-class leaders' workshop. I asked why more of us were not at a recent care-of-theenvironment workshop. I did not know the answer and confessed that I myself had not done a lot of work in RC on the topic. I said that I wanted to challenge us to be more visible and vocal.

I counseled two people of the global majority in front of the group, asking them the question, "Where does your mind go when you consider the destruction of the environment by humans?" The sessions were powerful with lots of discharge, information, and good thinking. Then we had long minisessions.

Hearing working-class thoughts on the environment seemed to help all of us be better able to think about it. We were more relaxed and felt good about ourselves in doing this work. It had a good, immediate benefit for me. Here is my success story:

I have long been part of the "birder" movement—people who love, watch, and study birds. The movement is largely dominated by First World middle- and owning-class white people. It is also somewhat dominated by competitive patterns, not unlike the patterns of colonialism and genocide that these cultures carry.

It is a strange paradox that sometimes birders' activities contribute to global warming and the destruction of the environment, and even to the



CARLA HINOJOSA

destruction of birds and their habitats. (In the beginning, birders shot birds to study them and stole the feathers or eggs of every species they could for their collections.)

Cornell University in the United States has a website that collects data from the daily bird sightings of birders all over the world. It is giving a more accurate picture of bird life than we have ever had. It uses a competitive incentive to encourage bird reports: a "Birder of the Month" is chosen at random from a list of "people who submit the most bird lists or reports" of a certain kind. You can see the white classist patterns of competition and consumption in the words of this incentive.

A long list of birds seen in your lifetime is considered a "good" list in the community. And if you see a rare bird, you are complimented for seeing a "good" bird. People travel using fossil fuels and spend a lot of money to "chase" a "good" bird.

I have long had the idea of writing an article that includes the good things about the birding community but also challenges us to look at the white patterns of competitiveness and consumption within it. I want to encourage us to make birding less an activity of consumption.

I was once very much in the middle of the U.S. environmental movement but was pushed out by the classism. At the workshop I acknowledged my responsibility for not doing the work to overcome that. I said that we cannot engage in blame, that we must acknowledge that we have not done the work to make our voices heard. And I said that I wanted us to do that work together.

I think because of the work we did at the workshop, I found my voice. I was able to think this morning while reading the bird reports online and submitted a suggestion for the Birder of the Month.

I suggested that it be drawn from the birders who submit only traveling bird lists for the month that do not involve using fossil fuels, or at least ten traveling lists that do not involve using them. I suggested the title "Green Bird Lists," because the word *green* is now popular and attractive among this group of people. (Yes, I am manipulating their wish to feel like good people.)

I have not given up on writing an article challenging birders on their patterns of competition and consumption, and the connection of those patterns to the patterns of genocide that are destroying the earth. It will upset people and they will start an intellectual "war" on the issues, because that is what this cultural group does when it does not agree. But I am well connected to and respected by top people in the birding movement. I will not lose them, and the article will get some good thinking going.

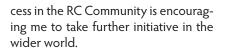
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I will be smart and not engage in the intellectual debate but rather listen and let my ideas do their work. I will not be stopped or intimidated by people's bullying or condescending patterns.

The "Initiative on Ending Classism"* that I've proposed within RC is much the same kind of strategic move. It is designed to limit intellectual debate and instead get people discharging on what seem to me to be, strategically, the key distresses that need to be eliminated. Its acceptance by and suc-

* See "A New Initiative on Ending Classism," on page 8 of the July 2014 *Present Time.*



This is what the RC class is: We put out an idea we think is a good representation of reality and then encourage people to discharge. We do not tell people what to think; we encourage them to do their own thinking. We encourage thinking and initiative rather than criticize it.

I pointed out at the workshop that the patterns of intellectual debate and attack on people's thinking are what this group of people acts out when scared, and that they probably have a great fear about the destruction of the environment. I said that our role is to help people like them discharge their fear and develop their thinking more fully.

I am excited by my first step in a long time to face, as a working-class person, the struggles I have had within a white middle- and owning-class-dominated segment of the environmental movement.

> Dan Nickerson International Liberation Reference Person for Working-Class People Freeport, Maine, USA Reprinted from the RC e-mail discussion list for leaders of wide world change



Falling

In this session, I am overwhelmed, And my life seems out of control. My counselor hones in on the feeling Until I remember a recurring dream Of falling from a great height.

In these dreams, I never make a sound. But now I let myself scream, Remembering the landscape far beneath me And my feet touching nothing but air.

At last, the words of the writer Neil Gaiman come to me. He said that when you dream of falling, Sometimes you wake up as you fall, Sometimes you wake on impact, And sometimes You discover you can fly.

> Peter Gruenbaum Seattle, Washington, USA



LYNDALL KATZ



ARIZONA, USA • LISA VOSS

Giving Myself Permission to Be Anti-environmentalist in Sessions

Dan Nickerson's¹ posting in which he asked the question, "Why are there not more working-class people in the environmental movement?" inspired me to write something about my journey toward becoming an activist on environmental issues.

I have been an activist since I was sixteen (I am fiftynine now) but have always steered clear of the environmental movement. Rightly or wrongly, I have seen it as a very middle-class movement and felt that it cared more about the environment than about the exploitation of working-class people.

In February 2015, Diane Shisk² led a gathering for RCers in London on care of the environment. In every mini-session I discharged heavily, saying furiously (with sweating, shaking, and laughing), "I am *not* an environmentalist. I'm a socialist, I'm a feminist, and I'm an anti-racist, but I am *not* an environmentalist and I *never* will be." I also worked on saying furiously, "I will end capitalism, and that will save the environment anyway, so stuff you!"³ I've no idea who I was talking to, but it made me laugh a lot and discharge lots of terror.

Shortly after that, Kathy Taylor⁴ led a few evenings in our local RC Community on care of the environment, and I carried on⁵ working in the same way. The next stage for me was having sessions on just reading the goal on care of the environment⁶ and discharging whatever came up. Kathy gave us homework—to read something about climate change—and I found some good articles that I forced myself to read. (Up till that point, I definitely wouldn't have read them.) Then I decided to read a book about it, which I'm two-thirds of the way through.

I recently had an amazing conversation with my solicitor⁷ (who was representing me in a fight with my ex-employer) about climate change, and at the end of it he said, "Well, if I become an environmental activist, it will be as a result of this conversation." And I've started asking people I know to come on the climate march here in London on 29 November.

So something has definitely shifted for me. I think the key was giving myself permission to be openly and blatantly anti-environmentalist in sessions (as opposed to being scared to show those feelings, which weren't the "right" ones to have), knowing that discharge could only lead to my becoming more rational.

> Terry Day London, England

¹ Dan Nickerson is the International Liberation Reference Person for Working-Class People.

² Diane Shisk is the Alternate International Reference Person.

³ "Stuff you" is a way of expressing anger at someone.

⁴ Kathy Taylor is an RC leader in London, England.

^{5 &}quot;Carried on" means continued.

⁶ A goal adopted by the 2013 World Conference of the Re-evaluation Counseling Communities:

That members of the RC Community work to become fully aware of the rapid and unceasing destruction of the living environment of the Earth. That we discharge on any distress that inhibits our becoming fully aware of this situation and taking all necessary actions to restore and preserve our environment.

Distresses have driven people to use oppression against each other and carry out destructive policies against all of the world. A full solution will require the ending of divisions between people and therefore the ending of all oppressions.

The restoration and preservation of the environment must take precedence over any group of humans having material advantage over others. We can and must recover from any distress that drives us to destroy the environment in our attempts to escape from never-ending feelings of needing more resource.

⁷ A solicitor is a type of lawyer.

Catholics and Care of the Environment

I recently attended the International Catholic Liberation Workshop, led by Joanne Bray* in Boston, Massachusetts, USA. I led a topic table on care of the environment. It was good to hear what other Catholic RCers are doing in their homelands.

I asked people to share what they were doing and said that it didn't matter if it was large or small, that all of it was important to share. I told them that feelings such as "I'm not doing much or enough" could be discharged after sharing.

One person shared what he had done to stop hydrofracking (deep gas drilling) in the state of New York, USA. He, along with other leaders in New York, had worked for years to ban fracking, and won.

Another person was writing a book with his colleagues about ending the fossil fuel era. Another shared that in her neighborhood and building people had started to separate the garbage for recycling, take care of the green areas, and use water in the common areas more rationally.

A nun from Chile shared that she had her own garden, did composting, had bees, and took care of animals, like chickens. She also taught students at her school how to care for the garden, the bees, and the animals-helping them to connect with the earth. She made eco-bricks from plastic and taught her students how to do this in their homes. The name of her people, Mapuche, means "people from the earth." (Mapu means "earth" and che means "people.") She lives in the city and said that having a garden and taking care of animals is her way of protesting the vast amounts of cement all over the city.

Another Co-Counselor from here in Mexico teaches people how to ride and care for bicycles. On Sundays she rides bikes with people, including families, to create a culture that uses bikes.

Someone from Detroit (Michigan, USA) works with young people in rebuilding public spaces, like parks and play areas, in low-income neighborhoods. She has the young people talk about the places that are abandoned in their neighborhoods and how they should look. After that they get together to rebuild the spaces. I shared what I do here in Mexico at the university with my students. Mostly I teach about environmental issues. I show the students how a landfill looks and operates and teach them what to consider about water for human use, what kinds of things contaminate the water, and how to measure that contamination.

> Dulce Cisneros Mexico, D.F., Mexico Reprinted from the RC e-mail discussion list for leaders of Catholics



CRATER OF TARANAKI, NEW ZEALAND • LANCE CABLK

A II 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 110).

^{*} Joanne Bray is the International Liberation Reference Person for Catholics.

Making Good Use of Pope Francis's Visit

Many U.S. Catholic churches involved in community organizing with poor and working-class people have used Pope Francis's visit as an opportunity to gather, listen to what the Pope has to say, and listen to one another.

At my immigrant Latino/a church in Los Angeles, California, our volunteer leadership council suspended the normal activities of our weekday groups so that we could meet as a parish community on Friday evenings.

For the last five Fridays we've gathered at 6:00 p.m. for a simple soup, which different groups have taken turns making. Then from 6:30 to 7:30 we've listened to a presentation on a social-justice topic that Pope Francis has written about—immigration, poverty, mass incarceration, racism, solidarity, climate change. The presentations have included testimonies of people in the community impacted by injustice: homeless men and women, undocumented mothers, a former gang member, a mother with a son serving life in prison, a woman who lost two brothers to violence.

From 7:30 to 8:30 we've broken into fifteen small groups and spent an hour taking turns listening to one another. I've taught the group facilitators basic guidelines like taking turns listening to one another, listening with respect, not giving advice, welcoming feelings, and confidentiality. They're doing a great job.

Remarkably, we've had between 100 and 120 people come each Friday. They have included Spanish speakers, English speakers, teenagers, young adults, adults, elderly people, women, men, poor people, working-class people, and middle-class folks. People are hungry for the good leadership Pope Francis has been providing, his compassionate tone, his desire to create a society that includes everyone, his willingness to look at the destruction of the environment, and his encouragement to work together to make real changes. They have loved the opportunity to be together in all our diversity. On Sunday Pope Francis visited a prison in Philadelphia (Pennsylvania, USA) to call attention to the needs of people in prison, the families they are separated from, and those impacted by crime. His continuing focus on people who often get excluded and forgotten has been inspiring. Diverse people of faith and goodwill in Los Angeles have wanted to show their support for Pope Francis, to put their faith into action, and to unite around their commitment to end injustice.

On Tuesday, Latino/a Catholics, African American Protestants, Jews, Muslims, priests and clergy, labor leaders, immigration-reform advocates, community organizers, formerly incarcerated people, and white allies will gather for a prayer vigil outside of one of the largest, most overcrowded jails in the world. This men's jail in downtown Los Angeles was built to house 7,000 men and currently houses more than 17,000 poor men of color targeted by racism, classism, and anti-immigrant hostility. We are organizing around initiatives that chip away at the way racism and classism operate in our city. The sexism within Catholic church structures slows down our ability to be as effective as we could be, so we need to take this on^{*} too.

I'm proud that Pope Francis's visit to the United States is energizing Catholics and people of diverse faiths to come together and organize around concerns that we care about deeply.

If you would like to see video recordings of Pope Francis's events in the United States and copies of his speeches, you can find them at <www.usccb.org>, under the heading "U.S. Papal Visit Highlights."

> *Ellie Hidalgo* Los Angeles, California, USA Reprinted from the RC e-mail discussion list for leaders of wide world change

* "Take this on" means do something about this.

Full Responsibility

There is no limit. We must take full responsibility, each of us, for the farthest atom of the farthest star in the farthest galaxy, because if we set any limit to our responsibility, then we have logically abandoned all responsibility.

Harvey Jackins From "Who's in Charge?" in The Human Situation

התמודדות עם האירועים האחרונים בישראל

תודה לכל מי שכתב בתגובה לאירועים האחרונים בישראל. יכולתי לשים לב לסתירה שאני מוצאת בעצם זה שאנשים מצליחים לחשוב, לא לאבד תקווה ולהשמיע קול. כל קול שפוי עוזר לי להישאר עם הראש מעל המים. זה גם מציף את הכמיהה שלי למנהיגות חכמה ונדיבה שתתווה לנו דרך ותוביל אותנו באומץ.

זה שובר את הלב לראות באיזו מהירות הפחד משתלט, ובאיזו מהירות נכנעתי לו. הפחד הזה מצמצם את גבולות חיי היום יום שלי (לו יכולתי, הייתי מטילה עוצר על הבית ולא נותנת לילדים לצאת), הוא מכרסם ביכולת שלי להחזיק בעקרונות (למשל: החלטתי לצמצם נסיעות ברכב לטובת תחבורה ציבורית - עיקרון שהושלך לפח מייד, נוכח "סכנת חיים מיידית") ולדבוק במטרות שקבעתי לעצמי (למשל: אני נמנעת מסוכר, אבל במצב הזה מרגישה שזה בלתי אפשרי!).

הכניעה לפחד מגרה מחדש הרגשות ישנות של תבוסה וחוסר תקווה - ומעצימה את חוסר התקווה בנוגע למצב הנוכחי. כל זה גורם לי כמובן "להוריד את השלטר", להעמיס על עצמי עבודה ומטלות, מה שעוזר לי לא להרגיש. הפורקן פחות זמין לי בינתיים ואני מרגישה מוצפת. בנוסף, הסשנים שכולם סביבי צריכים (ולוקחים) גם הם גוזלים כוחות.

אני מרגישה שאת הפחד שלי כיהודיה מפני האיומים שמופנים כלפי מבחוץ אני כבר מכירה. הדבר החדש שמפחיד אותי מאוד הוא לראות עד כמה החברה הישראלית הקצינה מאז האינתיפאדה האחרונה (בעשר השנים האחרונות בערך). השנאה כל כך קשה, ומוטחת כל כך בגלוי. לפעמים זה נראה כמו אבדן דרך של ממש. שנאה מוצגת כערך, כוח הזרוע מוצג כשחרור יהודים, גזענות מוצגת כציונות - הכול מעורבב. על רקע חברה מעמדית, לא שוויונית, לא מכלילה ומיליטריסטית - לא פלא שהרעיונות המבולבלים הללו מוצאים להם חסידים.

נדמה שלאף אחד אין סבלנות לרעיונות מורכבים ולפתרונות ארוכי טווח.

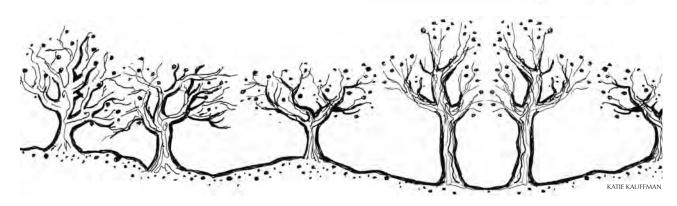
בסכסוך שלנו עם הפלסטינים - עם כל חוסר התקווה שיש לי לפעמים לגבי יישום בפועל, אני מאמינה בלב שלם שיש פתרון, ויותר מאחד. עם הגזענות המשתוללת הזו, ההסתה, השנאה - אין לי מושג איך להתמודד עם זה.

כאמור, אני שואבת תקווה מאנשים, ביעוץ ומחוץ ליעוץ, שמצליחים להשמיע את קולם בצורה ברורה ובלי פחד.

אני עובדת הרבה על שחרור מהשפעות שקשורות לשואה. לדעתי, הצעד הבא בעבודה הזו עבורנו הוא להתחיל לעבוד על חומרי מדכא. זה לא חייב להיות בקשר לפלסטינים, לכולנו יש מספר זהויות מדכא (מעמדיות, מצב גופני, מין, גיל, מגדר, הטרוסקסואליות, בריאות הנפש - ברוך השם לא חסר) וההחלטה לעבוד על מצוקות מדכא ולנקות אותן לגמרי היא סתירה אולטימטיבית לתחושות קורבנות. חלק מהפגיעה שלנו כיהודים, שקשורה לשואה, היא שקיבלנו על עצמנו את תפקיד הקורבן. אנחנו לא זקוקים לו יותר.

באהבה,

תמי שמיר, ישראל פורסם ברשימת הדיון האלקטרונית למנהיגים יהודים ביעוץ



English translation of the preceding article:

Responding to Recent Events in Israel

Thank you, all who have written on this list¹ about recent events in Israel. I can notice the contradiction² in the fact that people can think, not lose hope, and speak up. Each sane voice helps me keep my head above water.³ It also brings up my longing for smart and generous leadership that will show us the way and lead us courageously.

It is heartbreaking to notice how quickly fear took me over.⁴ This fear narrows my everyday life (I would curfew my children if I could) and eats up my ability to hold on to principles. For example, I had decided to reduce driving my car and use more public transportation—a principle that I dismissed immediately in the face of a "clear life threat." I usually avoid sugar but now feel it is impossible under the circumstances. Surrendering to the fear restimulates old feelings of defeat and

¹ The RC e-mail discussion list for leaders of Jews

² Contradiction to distress

³ "Keep my head above water" means keep from being submerged in distress.

⁴ "Took me over" means took control of me, dominated me.

discouragement and reinforces hopelessness about the situation we face. I shut down⁵ and take on⁶ a load of tasks that help me to not feel anything. Discharge is less available (for now), and I feel overwhelmed. Also, the sessions that everybody around me needs (and takes) are exhausting.

As a Jew, I am already familiar with my fear of external threats. The new thing that scares me is how extreme Israeli society has become since the last Intifada (some ten years ago). Hatred is so brutal and open. It seems that we have lost our way. Hate is presented as a value, power as Jewish liberation, racism as Zionism—everything is mixed up. In an unequal, non-inclusive, militaristic class society, it's no wonder these manipulations find many followers. It seems that nobody has patience for complex ideas and long-term solutions. I do believe there is more than one elegant solution to the conflict between us and the Palestinians. I have no idea how to handle the wild racism, incitement, and hatred within Israeli society. I draw my hope from people (in and out of RC) who can speak up clearly and fearlessly.

I do a lot of work on healing the hurts of the Holocaust. I believe the next step for us is to embrace working on oppressor distress—and not only that directed against Palestinians; we have plenty of oppressor identities (related to class, disability, sex, age, gender, heterosexuality, "mental health," and so on). Deciding to clean up any oppressor identity is a great contradiction to victim feelings. Part of our distress as Jews, which is related to the Holocaust, has been assuming the victim role. We don't need it anymore.

With love,

Tami Shamir Shefayim, Israel Translated by Tami Shamir Reprinted from the RC e-mail discussion list for leaders of Jews

Jews and Care of the Environment

⁵ "Shut down" means become numb and

disconnected from myself.

6 "Take on" means undertake.

At a recent Jewish Leaders' Conference, we signed up to be in discharge groups on areas in which we were (or wanted to be) taking leadership—for example, "mental health" liberation, young adult liberation, LGBTQ¹ liberation. We were asked to select our first-, second-, and third-choice groups.

On Saturday morning, Cherie² shared with us that not one of us hundred and forty Jewish leaders had made care of the environment our first choice. She invited us to consider that as a people who have survived genocide and have always had to be ready to leave any land we live on (at least in our distress recordings), we may not be able to work to save the land because we haven't decided that we belong there. And she gave us this direction to take to sessions: "I would make care of the environment my primary commitment, except _____."

I found it helpful to work there and be really honest about whatever came up. I'm a mixed-race Jew of the global majority, and I discharged a lot about racism. I'd love to hear how that direction has worked for others of you!

J. G. Los Angeles, California, USA Reprinted from the RC e-mail discussion list for leaders of Jews

¹ Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer

² Cherie Brown, the International Liberation Reference Person for Jews, and the leader of the workshop



CAROLITC

Change Is Possible

Change is possible. All the objective conditions for the rapid transformation to a rational society are present.

Harvey Jackins From page 13 of Logical Thinking about a Future Society

The Collapsing Society and Higher Education

In the United States (and I think England) there's been a trend for universities to mimic corporations. As a result, more people who work in universities are exploited. In U.S. universities, only twenty-five percent of the professors work full-time. Of that group, seventy-five percent are white and male. Three-quarters of the contingent teaching staff work for poverty wages. They do not know if they will receive work each semester and are often forced to teach up to five classes per semester at more than one school. This is the situation I find myself in.

In the interest of "making America great" in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM), universities are cutting entire divisions, namely the ones that teach literature, languages, and history—the courses that contextualize oppression.

Corporations dictate what kinds of research projects government money funds. (For example, Congress may not allocate money for researching gun violence!) They also pay scholars to conduct research with the hope that their findings will support the corporations' financial objectives.

As societies collapse, the system destroys knowledge that does not serve its interests. This helps keep people hopeless about working in rational ways to move all of us forward. The less context we receive about oppression, the less able we are to evaluate what is coming our way and build communities that can turn the tide of oppression.

Our country is currently preparing for another presidential election. Candidates with university degrees tell us that scientists are wrong about human-created climate change, that women cannot be raped, and that racism does not play a role in why police officers kill unarmed Black men. They are able to blatantly deny the ways that oppressions and climate change impact our society. It becomes difficult to keep track of reality with the relentless drumbeat of misinformation.

Universities and those who teach in them can play a large role in turning the tide of misinformation. However, with most of those who teach working part-time and long hours just to make ends meet,* they have been less able to do this.

We RCers who teach in the university system cannot afford to be complacent. People are being moved out of teaching and research positions *because of what they publish*. We have to share what we know in our respective disciplines and what we know about generating information that is based not on feelings but on the reality of human intelligence and connection. We can also discharge on what it was like to learn and who's been allowed to learn and why.

Working on how capitalism targets the production of knowledge will have a big impact not only on learning but also on climate change, racism, and a host of other oppressions.

> Michelle Thompson New York, New York, USA

^{* &}quot;To make ends meet" means to survive.

Raising Funds for BLCD

Last year two of us, a white Jewish woman and a white Gentile woman, each organized an event to raise funds for the 2014 RC Black Liberation and Community Development Workshop (BLCD) in England. It was an opportunity to show to our friends and families our confidence in RC and our passion for ending racism. Discharging and thinking together as we organized kept us focused on our goals.

LEAH THORN, Folkestone, Kent, England:

I live in a small seaside town on the South coast of England—a few miles from Dover, the key entry port for refugees. Far-right groups have taken advantage of locals' feelings of "injustice," racism, and being overwhelmed. Many of my friends are enraged by the daily display of xenophobia and racism. I knew I would have a receptive group to call together.

The first thing I did was approach a Black friend and ask if he'd like to join me in introducing RC theory and practice on ending racism to our friends. He suggested I do something as a white person without reference to him. That interaction highlighted for me my dependence on him and our relationship. It was also an opportunity to face feelings about fundraising, charity, patronage, and reparation.

I decided the fundraiser would be for white people only. I also realised that it had to have creativity at the centre, to demonstrate the power of artists to effect social change.

I decided to make the documentary film *Strange Fruit*, along with RC theory, the centrepiece of the event. The film intertwines biography, performance footage, and the history of lynching as well as documenting a strong Black Gentile/white Jewish alliance. The thirty white people I invited got to hear about RC and BLCD—whether or not they came to the evening. Some sent money even if they couldn't come. Black friends were also interested to learn about the fundraiser and later borrowed the film.

The white friends who came mostly knew each other and were used to mixing socially, but never as "white people." In the opening circle, I invited them to tell one thing about their heritage that had a bearing on ending racism, and the stories lasted for over an hour. We talked about our relationship to racism as white people who are Irish, Roma Traveller, Northern, working-class, and Jewish. We were well connected by the time we watched the film. Afterward we had a mini-session followed by a discussion of the current-day equivalent of lynching in the United Kingdom.

As important as the money raised, I learned how to create a wide-world space for white people to address ending racism. I managed to encapsulate the ways racism operates at an individual and a structural level. As a white Jew, I had to face feelings about asking Gentiles for money. Lastly, I learnt it is possible as a white person to be passionate and hopeful about ending racism and not be dismissed as politically naïve. And it was fun.



STEHEKIN, WASHINGTON, USA • ELLIE PUTNAM

CHRISTINE SHEPPARD, Leighton Buzzard, Bedfordshire, England:

I held a fundraiser tea party for BLCD. My goals were as follows:

• To bring together my friends to celebrate my seventieth birthday

• To use this opportunity to raise funds for BLCD

• To "go public" with my friends about BLCD and RC, and their importance to me in the context of ending racism

I checked out the fundraiser tea party idea with a Black friend (who had done a fundamentals class with me in the past). She enthusiastically endorsed it and said she would come. I then sent the e-mail invite below to twenty-five people:

Dear Friends,

This is an invitation to come to our house for afternoon tea and cakes to celebrate my seventieth birthday—but with a difference!

This will be a fundraiser. My "birthday present" will be your (anonymous) donation to a project that is part of a movement I am involved in and passionate about. I can't think of a better way to celebrate being seventy years of age.

What is the project? Black Liberation and Community Development (BLCD) is a project that is part of Re-evaluation Counselling (RC), or "Co-Counselling" as it is often called. Many of you know that I have been teaching the listening tool of RC for many years. In RC people of all ages and backgrounds can learn how to exchange effective help with each other

continued . . .

. . . continued

in order to free themselves from the effects of past hurtful experiences. The BLCD project involves an international network of African-heritage people who use this listening tool to free themselves from the effects of racism and other oppressions.

Why fundraising? This year's BLCD Europe workshop will be longer than usual, with correspondingly higher costs. Fundraising is being undertaken to lower the costs for participants and thus support people to attend this important workshop.

I will explain a little more on the day. You do not have to donate to the project to come to the tea party! Would you please hit the reply button to RSVP whether you can come?

I included my bank details so people could donate online if they preferred.

The group that attended was a mix of twenty-one white, Black, and Asian men and women of all class backgrounds. I thanked them for coming to celebrate with me my seventieth year. I said that Re-evaluation Counselling is the most interesting and challenging activity in my life and an effective tool for moving us toward a world without racism and other oppressions. I told them I could not think of a better way to celebrate with them all than by getting together whilst raising funds for the BLCD workshop.

I had left out on a table the United to End Racism sheets "The Basic Theory of Re-evaluation Counselling" and "How to Begin United to End Racism (UER) Counselling Sessions." I had stuck on the side of the fridge* a large brown envelope labeled "Donations here please!" in which people put cards and cash. The total amount of money raised online and at the event far exceeded my expectations.

^{*} "Fridge" means refrigerator.

I enjoyed myself! The event was fun and purposeful and had meaning for me. It was not an introduction to RC, but I showed my confidence in RC and its effectiveness by "going public" at a social event with people I had known for a long time or made friends with more recently.

The following day a Black friend unexpectedly cried while remembering the fundamentals class she had done with me fifteen years earlier and the difference it had made in her life, although she had not continued with RC. Another friend attended the BLCD workshop. A Black friend who attended the tea party interviewed me for a film he is making about how we can end racism.



ICELAND • ALAN EPSTEIN

The Owning Class—a Pamphlet

We must end class oppression if we are to achieve a rational society and a livable planet. Jo Saunders, the International Liberation Reference Person for Owning-Class People, expands our perspective in her new pamphlet, *The Owning Class*.

She describes the damage inflicted by the owning class, how owning-class people are hurt into playing a destructive role, and how they can recover their full humanness using Re-evaluation Counseling.

"All humans without the accrued effects of past unhealed distresses have a strong desire to set things right. The owning class is no exception."

As for the future, "It will be the working class, reclaiming its power, that will bring about real change. The role of the owning class needs to be divestiture, reparation, and restitution. These two forces will spell the end of capitalism."

\$3.00, plus postage and handling

A Fundraising Birthday Dinner for Sustaining All Life

Last August I received the invitation for each of us in the RC Communities to do fundraising for Sustaining All Life,¹ but I decided I was too busy with the harvest on our farm to take on² another project.

When I received a second letter in September, I got the idea of using my mid-October birthday as a focus of a fundraising dinner. I love to use my birthday as a time to share with friends and family more about who I am and what I care about. This was perfect!

I began to draft an invitation letter and came up with³ this first paragraph:

"Crisp leaves underfoot, the cold air of the first frost, the flavor of the last tomatoes, all remind me that my birthday is coming soon. To celebrate I'd like you to join me for a fundraising dinner. The meal will be a simple affair featuring foods grown and cooked at Singing River Farm. However, good food is only a small part of the evening. I plan to include singing, a silent auction (sale of farm produce, jams, pickles, crafts that I've made), and fun activities, as well as sharing about our love and concern for our beautiful planet. Sliding scale is \$10 to \$200."

I went on to briefly explain why I want to support the Sustaining All Life delegation to attend the climate

² "Take on" means undertake.

³ "Came up with" means thought of.

The Functioning of the Future

When housework and gardening become *social* activities; when the end of littering and pollution are triumphant campaigns in which the whole population participates; when the planning and construction of a park become a people's project; then we will be close to the functioning of the future. We will be approaching the style of life where each of us enriches and beautifies our surroundings in everything we do.

Harvey Jackins From "The Uses of Beauty and Order," in *The Human Situation*

conference in Paris, my goal of raising \$500, and the details of the event.

As soon as I e-mailed the letter to about a hundred friends, I started receiving replies saying either, "Yes, we can come," or "No, we cannot come but we'll send along a check to support the fundraising effort." This was going to be fun!

Fifteen people joined my partner and me at the dinner. I led activities to help us get to know each other, we did a mini-session, and I talked about Re-evaluation Counseling in general and the Sustaining All Life project specifically. Each person was offered a copy of the *Sustaining All Life* pamphlet.

The best part of the evening for many folks was a Human Treasure Hunt. Each person got a small sheet of paper with instructions on it to find someone in the room who... uses a bike for transportation (one example of the climate-friendly actions listed). Then we sat in a circle and shared what we'd learned or what had surprised us, which led to an interesting discussion.

By the end of the evening I had reached my goal of connecting with friends and family about our caring for the environment and had doubled the financial goal I'd set. In addition, some of the people who attended are interested in learning RC. What a success!

> Laurel Green Chester, Vermont, USA Reprinted from the RC e-mail discussion list for leaders in the care of the environment



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¹ Sustaining All Life is a project of the RC Communities. From November 30 to December 8, 2015, a Sustaining All Life delegation was in Paris, France, bringing RC ideas to the activists gathering there during the United Nations Conference on Climate Change.

Hope!

So lately I've been thinking a lot about hope. What it feels like to be hopeful. What the world will look like when everyone is full of hope. Hope is something I've been chasing for a while—most of my life, I suspect.

Two and a half years ago, I decided to stop work and take a bunch of time off to figure out "what I wanted to do next." I was thirty-five and had spent all of my young adult and adult life working with and for Aboriginal people. I was tired and felt defeated. Things in this part of the world weren't looking so hopeful for many of the Aboriginal people I knew.

I had to have lots of Co-Counselling sessions on white privilege and having the freedom to just decide to "up and go" for a while, catch my breath, figure out if I could keep facing the effects of genocide in such a big way every day of my life. It was hard to not feel like I was "jumping ship," abandoning people I cared about. But eventually I packed up my life and went to look for maybe another place to live, or another way to live. I think I was really just looking for my friend hope.



BURMA • MAURA FALLON

The time off was much harder than I had anticipated. Everything about the entire world restimulated me: how much people own, how much we take for granted, how little it looks like people care, lack of generosity, how profit and money seem more important than equality and community, how much we waste, how little we notice. All I could see and feel were defeat and hopelessness disguised as apathy. I spent a lot of time on the phone with Co-Counsellors, steadily trying to find my way out of despair.

At the end of eighteen months I was ready to stop moving and "do something in the world." I wasn't sure if the home I'd left was still "home" but was willing to give it a go.¹ I decided not to rush into anything for the sake of crowding out the panic about having no money left, being back in town without a job and therefore with too much time to notice the place and its people, or wanting to "do" something useful. I was noticing the genocide and crying a lot. I was also noticing the strong community in which I had set up my life. And something new was happening. In every moment I was seeing opportunity, a possibility. In every defeat I was seeing an upside. In the big, sad things that happen, I was seeing another way of being with people.

Then two big decisions changed everything forever. Firstly, I decided to put myself on a "blackout" from mainstream media, so I could get out from under the bombardment of stories of murder, rape, bad political decisions, crisis crisis crisis, blah blah blah. I chose what news I listened to or read. I looked for stories of hope amongst the rubble while at the same time not turning away from the important, difficult things happening in the world. There's a *huge* world of hopeful grassroots organising going on² that *rarely* gets reported on. It made me so excited!

The second big decision was trusting one of my Co-Counsellors with my entire life, including all the bits I *never* show anyone—the jealousy, the terror, the deep heartache, and the endless expectation that she would leave because it was all too horrible. It was a decision to commit wholeheartedly to another human being, forever.

A few weeks ago, Seán Ruth (the International Liberation Reference Person for Middle-Class People) led a Middle-Class Liberation Workshop. It was so good for me. I found hope and suddenly discovered I could trust my mind. My dear friend hope, and my very own mind!

A lot of resource has gone into shaping us middle-class people in a way that doesn't leave much room for questioning

¹ "Give it a go" means try it.

² "Going on" means happening.

why the world is how it is. I have fought my entire life to understand and talk about the disparities and irrationality created in the world by capitalism. I have tried to fight against them by choosing to never work for the government when it's been at its most oppressive, by figuring out how to squeeze people through loopholes that bureaucrats haven't yet noticed, by ranting and raving at injustice and undermining the system in every way I could figure out without creating too much fuss or drawing too much attention. I have been teased by my friends and called a "hippy," a "radical," a "greenie," and so on, but have never felt like I've done any of those labels proud.³ I've just felt quiet and separate on the inside and looked really chirpy and chipper on the outside.

Before the workshop I'd led a gather-in for people under the age of forty to, amongst other things, help us notice our connection as peers and show ourselves as the "younger generation" in RC. I walked into the workshop with a crew of people at my side, and it made for a world of possibility. Things fell into place in my mind: The whole time I've been fighting against the oppressive society, whilst maintaining a "successful" job (whatever that is), a "respectable" lifestyle, and lots of good friendships, I've been completely furious. *Furious!* For the first time I was able to show how angry I really was and how massively defeated I felt. And under it all, you guessed it—hope!

Since Seán's workshop, my world is different. It looks, smells, sounds, tastes, and feels like hope. Everything feels possible. Everything is possible. I used to "dabble" as an

 $^{\scriptscriptstyle 3}$ "Done any of those labels proud" means been a good example of any of those labels.

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activist. Now I do a lot of environmental and climate-justice organising in the fullest, most human way I can. It's easy! Really, I can't explain it. It's like all this time I've been hurting myself by quietly sitting back and trying to do a little here or there behind the scenes.

Now I've figured out that it's time. Time to get up, trust my mind, and figure out how to be with people, to bring them together, and to hold out a big picture of everything coming with an opportunity and being full of possibility. The climate crisis is an opportunity to unite people, listen, learn from those who don't usually get consulted, and walk side by side into the unknown—knowing that what we have to gain is *so* much bigger than what we stand to lose. We get to lose the capitalist society that is set up to divide us, and instead we get to all build a brave new world together. In the words of Naomi Klein, *"To change everything, we need everyone."*⁴

Now I walk around this town I live in and see people everywhere. I see the effects of genocide every day. But I'm hopeful that my fellow human beings will stop turning their backs on things that are hard to face, and therefore easy to ignore, and instead take hold of another human being's heart and gently carry it along on the journey up and out. Together!

> Barb Molanus Alice Springs, Northern Territory, Australia

⁴ From the book by Naomi Klein *This Changes Everything—Capitalism vs.* the Climate



YUKO HIBINO

Facing Hard Feelings to Write for Liberation

Last month we found out that my brother is terminally ill and, according to Western medicine, has less than

a year to live. At some point I'll write about what I've figured out in terms of discharging and deciding to lead my family through this difficult time. Suffice it to say it's been extremely challenging and I've had to face lots of hard feelings. Azi Khalili (the International Liberation Reference Person for South, Central, and West Asian-Heritage People) told me I had to get a session every day in order to take this on,¹ and

I've managed to do so. I lost my job last month, which is another story and also very restimulating, but it's allowed me the time and space to do this work fully and to continue to think in the face of tough circumstances.

As a side job, I write media criticism, mostly about the representation of Arabs and Muslims in U.S. pop² culture. Last week an editor e-mailed me asking me to pitch a story³ about a new TV show. Initially I felt flattered but that I didn't have the attention for it. That night, even though I was exhausted, I reconsidered. I thought it would be good for me to use my mind and to put attention on something I love writing media criticism and speaking up for our people. I pitched a story and she said, "Let's go for it!"⁴ Great news, except that it meant that I had to write it and face the feelings about writing it!

⁴ "Let's go for it" means let's do it.

I hadn't written in over a month, but all of the same feelings of discouragement, hopelessness, and despair



thing that is extremely difficult for this middle-class Catholic Arab woman to do! I sent it to my editor, and she

> wrote back thrilled. It's the feature article on their website this weekend.

While I was in the midst of it, I thought I had taken on⁷ too much, as I do have overwork and overachievement patterns. Once the article was published, however, I got to feel the satisfaction of getting on the other side of the hard feelings, seeing my work in the world and being part of a societal dialogue, and having

BASQUE COUNTRY • DAPHNE DERTIEN

were right there waiting for me once I got started. Feeling them on top of the other slew⁵ of emotions about my brother (grief, worry, heartache) seemed unbearable. I found myself repeating certain statements in sessions (always a red flag to me that I'm working on something early)—statements like "I can't do this," "It's too much," "I won't survive this." Yes. Plenty of dire early feelings were up.

Thankfully, I could hear Azi's voice in my head and I had smart Co-Counselors giving me doses of reality: "Nothing bad is happening. This is not too much. It was too much back there. We get to tell that little one that she'll grow up and think and lead in all sorts of creative and bold ways. You have a good mind, and it's good for you to use it."

I managed to write the article, but after a friend edited my draft, I felt like the changes I had to make would take forever and I'd never finish. (Again, old feelings of despair.) I decided to go for⁶ mediocre, not perfect—somefought for my liberation, even while others were literally dying around me.

I realized that the feelings were just feelings. Facing them with Co-Counselors and not allowing them to stop me was a true victory. My friend told me that I make writing look so easy, which made me laugh out loud. If only she knew how many hours of discharge I put in! Still, using RC tools and relationships to challenge myself and share our ideas in the wide world never gets old.

In the article I talk openly about how Orientalism clumps all of our countries together and how the show *Quantico* has put a "sexy" twist on an old formula of painting South and West Asians as terrorists. I even manage to call out⁸ U.S. imperialism!

> Stephanie Abraham Los Angeles, California, USA Reprinted from the RC e-mail discussion lists for leaders of South, Central, and West Asian-Heritage People and for leaders of wide world change

 $^{^{\}scriptscriptstyle 1}$ "Take this on" means take charge of this situation.

² Popular

³ "Pitch a story" means suggest a story I could write.

⁵ "Slew" means large number.

⁶ "Go for" means try for.

[&]quot;Taken on" means undertaken.

⁸ "Call out" means challenge.

The Fundamentals of Co-Counseling

From a report by Harvey Jackins to the 1979 World Conference of the Re-evaluation Counseling Communities

For whatever reasons, the recovery process, the discharge and re-evaluation process, operates spontaneously whenever one person tries to think about her or his distress in the presence of another person who is willing to think about the first person's distress also. In one sense, the essence of the Co-Counseling relationship is two people thinking about one person's distress. It will sometimes appear to take other forms. It will sometimes appear as if two people are thinking about the positive aspects of the universe while one of them is discharging, but this simply means that both of them are thinking in an effective way about the one person's distress, which is to pull attention away from it enough to achieve a balance of attention. Such an appearance does not contradict the definition I just offered.

This thinking about one person by two people (or by more than two people) is divided conveniently into the roles of the client—the person whose distress is being tackled in whatever way—and the person or people whom we call the counselor or the counselors. In its optimum functioning, two or more people are together thinking about one of those people in terms of releasing him or her from his or her distress, and all the other people's distress is out of sight, is not allowed to intrude. This is the optimum situation for the recovery process.

As we all know, no two Co-Counselors have ever begun with an optimum condition. A great deal of the counseling that has taken place has included the counselor's distress being a factor in the situation in some way or other. The great genius and motivation of the client and sometimes the earnest determination of the counselor have, however, often sufficed to overwhelm that hindering factor and the Co-Counseling has worked anyway.

THINKING AND LOVING

"The counselor thinking about the client" has very much the same meaning, we have learned, as "the counselor loving the client." We have come to realize that a rational meaning of "loving another person" is very close to the meaning of "thinking about another person," that you cannot have either one of them without the other in a rational sense. We can certainly see that if one would really love another person rationally (we're not talking about "patterned" sentiment), it would include thinking about that person. If one were aware that this person has distresses that she or he is struggling to be free from, loving the person would certainly include thinking about those distresses in a way to help the person become free of them. Certainly all of us here at this conference who have ever had one good session as counselor know that if you really think about another person, you cannot help but love that person. Certainly if you're thinking about the person while the person is discharging, the discharging reveals the real person in the midst of the discharge and you fall deeply in love with her or him forever. If there is anyone here who has not had that experience yet, you will.

So, thinking and caring, thinking and loving, seem clearly to be two aspects of the same process, and both must be present in the counselor's attitude toward the client.

A distortion of our understanding of the client's role has become widespread. This is the notion that the counselor thinks about the client but the client just discharges. This has slowed down the effectiveness of our counseling.

It is possible to have counseling succeed to some degree when the client is helped to think about or against the distress enough to get discharge started and then allowed to stop thinking as he or she discharges. But it is clear that the client should be helped to keep thinking all the time, including while he or she is discharging. Really effective counseling means the client thinking all the time and the counselor thinking all the time. When we attain this, we have rapid recovery, rapid re-emergence, from the distress.

For counseling to be effective, the client must be thinking before discharging, while discharging, and after discharging. The client's mind, as well as the counselor's, needs to be fully engaged.

THE COUNSELOR'S COMMITMENT

The counselor's attention needs to be fully for the client. We are now engaged in the beginnings of a grand campaign to eliminate carelessly allowing the counselor's distress to become a factor in the counseling

continued . . .

... continued

situation. We want to be very clear that the counseling session must be completely devoted to the most rapid, profound re-emergence of the client, even if the counselor "dies in the process." Now we say "dies" because, of course, it's safe to say it. No counselor has ever yet died from a client's material.¹ But at some point in the process, counselors' old fears of death are quite likely to deceive them. Therefore we make no compromises here. In many counseling situations, counselors will feel that they will die if they persist in pushing through for the client. Since it's going to feel like that, and at that point, restimulated, they will be unable to tell² the difference, we ask that counselors make a commitment to "be there" for the client even if they die doing it. That will get them through the pseudo-crisis of their fears of death, which they will have to surmount. Afterward, of course, they will realize that they were not in any danger of dying, but by then the job will be done.

CLIENT ALWAYS READY

Another commonly circulated notion, which is completely false from the counselor's point of view (and in a sense from any point of view), is that the client is at fault for not having a good session, that it is the client's responsibility if the session does not go well. Often I overhear such phrases as "She didn't want to try, so there was no use working with her," "She wasn't ready to be counseled," "Everybody has given up on him; we should never have taken him into the Community," and so on.

The plain truth of the matter is that all of us, viewed from the counselor's point of view (and in a sense from any point of view), are perfect clients. Every one of us is a perfect client. Every human being is ready at this moment to completely re-emerge from his or her deepest distresses, if given the opportunity by the external factors, the most important of which is the counselor. Every one of us, as client, is shaking the bars of the prison cell of our distress, is biting at the steel with our teeth, is kicking it and cursing it and doing everything else we can think of to somehow emerge from this confining distress. Every human being is at all times a perfect client.

It is not ever a question of whether the client is ready to tackle something, whether the client is ready to re-emerge. The plain fact of the matter is that every one of us, and every other human being, is at every moment ready to re-emerge completely and almost instantaneously if given the intelligent, caring support and fearless counseling from outside that is necessary.

I would like for all of us to engage in a campaign to lay to rest this nonsense that "clients are not ready" and put the responsibility (not the blame, because all of us as counselors have done the best we could up till now, but the responsibility) exactly where it belongs, on all of us as counselors.

As counselors, we have the freedom to improve. As we get ready to counsel, we may feel terribly inhibited. We may have awakened this morning with an itchy nose and a post-nasal drip and a big toe that doesn't feel good, but if we see the reality of our client's position, we will see there a magnificent, gallant hero or heroine who is tied down with barbed wire cutting into her or his flesh, whose arms and legs are twisted into unnatural positions, whose air supply is almost cut off by occluding debris, but who is struggling gallantly to emerge nevertheless. In reference to that situation, we, the counselors, in spite of our aching big toe and post-nasal drips, have enormous freedom, flexibility, strength, power, and resources. We have the freedom to think flexibly about the client's distresses to a vastly greater degree than the client has, and so the responsibility of solving this situation, of putting resources to work correctly, lies overwhelmingly and primarily with us.

CLIENT'S VIEWPOINT DIFFERENT

A small footnote: As a client in a counseling situation, we must not use what I've just said to allow some of our powerless patterns to obscure our own strength. As clients, we need to hold to the attitude that even if we never found a counselor at all, if we were stranded on a desert island with nothing but a palm tree and a fiddler crab, we have enough theory that we could determine to completely re-emerge and succeed in doing it. We have enough theory already in our possession that all we would have to do is look at our distresses as they show up in our feelings, calculate the exact opposite and do the exact opposite, and when we need companionship tell the palm tree or the fiddler crab about it, and we could discharge. We could re-emerge. As clients we must assume this to keep from falling into the grip of our powerlessness. But that is a small footnote. Overwhelmingly, the job will be done by us as counselors, not as clients, because as clients we're perfect. All of us are ready to do anything to re-emerge, and the counselor's pattern that says, "You're not trying (*jeering*)," is completely

¹ "Material" means distress.

² "Tell" means perceive.

We will pay better attention the more mastery we have of the theory.

unaware of the fact that we have just tried so hard that the barbed wire has cut an inch deeper into our flesh. This is an accurate description, I think, of where the responsibility falls.

PAYING ATTENTION

How do we, as counselors, communicate this thinking, this caring, to the client? Well, we say we "pay attention to him or her," and we "sort of" know what we mean. What is attention? It's very hard to define. Perhaps we cannot define it well. Nevertheless it has meaning. It might be what a mathematician or a logician would call a necessary undefined term. At least all of us know very well the difference between somebody really paying attention to us and someone not really paying attention to us. Right? You are familiar with the phenomenon. So we can use the phrase for communication.

We say that the counselor "pays attention to the client." Can we describe it? How do we communicate this attention, this caring, this thinking about her or him? Certainly we do it in part by our regard, our visual regard. There's a bit of nonsense that's been circulated widely among the Communities that it is up to the client³ to keep her or his eyes on the counselor at all times. Isn't that ridiculous? If any of you have mastered crying with your eyes open, please tell me how. But it is true that clients have the right to expect the visual regard of the counselor. When they look up, they should be reassured by the direction of your gaze that you are "with them." You indicate your caring by the availability of your visual regard.

You indicate your caring by the expression on your face. You all know the difference between the expression that is interested and cares (*demonstrates*) and the all-too-familiar chronic-pattern expression (*demonstrates*).

You indicate this caring, this aware attention, this paying attention, by the posture of your body. Your posture can say, "I am relaxedly focused upon you," or, all too often, "I'm not really here." You communicate this caring, this thoughtfulness, by the remark or the gesture that indicates you are following their thinking.

You cannot communicate this by any patterned or mechanical attitude. If there's one thing that stops me from discharging at all, it's the counselor who fixes me with an anxious stare, or the interjected "uh huh, uh huh, uh huh" after everything I say. I can't think about myself at all under those conditions and feel a pull to turn the person into a client at that point (which may be the necessary thing to do sometimes).

We can communicate by our regard, by our facial expression, by our body's posture, by our general attitude, by the short, encouraging word occasionally. "Go ahead, let the tears come" is an encouraging word if it works. If you say it and the person stops crying, then you don't persist in saying it. You conclude that it isn't right for that client. There is a big range between "Let it come, it's all right," said in a gentle voice and someone shouting "Cry! Cry! Cry! It's good for you! Cry!" which I once heard someone do.

We fundamentally communicate this caring, this thinking about the client, by paying attention, and our ability to pay attention is a function of a number of factors.

It is a function of how well we ourselves have discharged, how well we have cleaned up the baggage of nonsense, the conglomeration of patterns, that follows us around and appears to speak for us. To the extent we have cleaned that up through our own discharge, it is unlikely to intrude into the client's session. So, our ability to pay attention is in great part a function of our own progress as clients. Discharge in our sessions as client turns us into a better counselor.

How well we are able to pay attention is a function of how well we have understood RC theory, assimilated the accumulated knowledge from successful counseling practice. We can pay much better attention if we understand the process in all its simplicity and in all its complexity. We will pay better attention the more mastery we have of the theory. Such mastery of theory means assimilating it to where it is really ours because we have thought it through, not simply repeating phrases out of a publication.

continued . . .

³ "Up to the client" means the client's job.

COUNSELING PRACTICE

... continued

DECISION NECESSARY

However, even if we have discharged on and on, and read every bit of literature five times over and memorized it so we can repeat it by heart,⁴ and have even thought it through, there is still a third factor that is necessary for us to be effective counselors, for us to pay effective attention to the client. This is the factor of decision.

I don't think this factor has yet received enough attention. We have understandably encouraged several generations of new counselors to believe that if they kept discharging enough they would eventually be very good counselors. This has certainly moved them in that direction. But I think we can say now that not only our own discharge and re-emergence, and not only our understanding of theory, but also making up our minds to do a good job, to be there for our client, is crucial.

We do not have to wait until all of our distress is gone before we can decide to act as if all our distress were gone. We do not have to wait until we are "comfortable" before we act as if the client were the only person in the Co-Counseling situation that mattered. It does make a difference to make up our minds. "To the devil with my feelings.⁵ This client is going to reemerge!" Do I make sense here? (*Group responds with* "Yes!")

There is a factor of decision. The decision is easier to make and clearer when we have discharged more, it can be carried out with more consistency when we have mastered theory, but the idea of decision, I think, has to be there from the very beginning.

These three factors largely determine our effectiveness as counselors. Our ability to pay attention is a function of all three: how much we have freed ourselves from distress, how much of the theory we have come to understand, and how much of a decision and a commitment we have made. In the Co-Counseling relationship, the counselor's proper regard is for the client and the client's re-emergence only, not at all for the counselor's comfort or the counselor's fears.

If we can pay good enough aware attention, then, for most counseling situations, we need to do little else. The client is everywhere and at all times so eager that in most situations this is all we need do. When we come to more demanding situations, in which additional techniques are needed, we find that these advanced techniques only operate on a foundation of paying aware, thoughtful, caring attention. Counselors who try to use these advanced techniques without such a foundation do not do good counseling. They wind up⁶ trying to manipulate the client and frustrating both the client and the counselor. The fundamental foundation of counseling is paying aware, clear attention. This is so effective, this meets the needs of the client so well, that most people will respond as perfect clients, even if they have never heard any theory at all.

SIMPLE ASSISTANCE

There are simple additions to paying attention that will be helpful. Sometimes the client has embarrassments, speech inhibitions, various patterns that inhibit the beginning of the discharge process. There are simple things we can do in addition to paying attention that will allow the profound strength of the client to begin to operate-such things as asking, "What are you thinking?" and then listening. Often one question is enough for a long, long session. "Where were you born? What happened after that?" and the story of the person's life unrolls with less and less inhibition. If the client stops and says, "I don't know why I am telling you all this. This is ridiculous," and you look interested and ask, "What did happen after that?" (group laughter), he or she will continue. Ask, "What do you feel are your strong points?" which for many people is easier to respond to than "What do you like about yourself?" Any simple framework question, such as, "What are your big interests in life?" will work. Anything that allows the person to start talking is likely to release this profound response to simply being paid attention to.

When I am asked to handle clients that everyone has difficulty with, I almost universally find that what solves the problem is to look at them with approving regard, be really interested in them, ask them to talk about themselves, perhaps indicate an interest in their work. If you indicate you find your clients interesting and take an interest in their jobs, and so on, and simply listen, even the "impossible" clients are almost universally into heavy discharge in about ten or fifteen minutes. Based on some deep computation, their intelligence decides it is safe as long as the counselor is there acting human instead of trying to manipulate them.

The fundamental relationship of Co-Counseling is simple. It is not necessarily easy, because it does

⁴ "By heart" means from memory.

 $^{^{\}rm 5}$ "To the devil with my feelings" means my feelings are of no significance.

⁶ "Wind up" means end up.

require a decision on the part of the counselor—a decision that "my feelings don't matter, you matter. For the duration of this relationship, this session, you matter. I will think about you, I will care about you, I will love you, I will support you, I will be there for you no matter what rocks of restimulation you drag

me over in the process." If we can express this, this is profound, this is powerful, this is almost everything we need. Every human being in the world is waiting for someone to present this opportunity to become the perfect client.

Excerpted from pages 65 to 75 of The Benign Reality



DIANE SHISK

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

An Accidental Rediscovery

What came to be known as Re-evaluation Counseling was the accidental rediscovery of a crucial part of actual reality. A man in deep trouble, abandoned by all the "mental health" specialists, was taken home and kept out of sight to keep the police from arresting him and putting him in mental hospitals for the rest of his life.

He insisted on crying no matter what anybody did to try to stop him. When he had cried and shaken and laughed for two weeks, he emerged into elegant functioning. This was such a bizarre happening that it was impossible not to notice that something unusual was going on.

From that beginning, explorations have led to recovery of accurate information, in many areas, about what reality is really like. That recovery process is still going on, more and more widely, more and more rapidly.



Harvey Jackins From A Better World, pages 10 to 11

when shadows are cast by my stone, let me hold it in your light to see it clear to weigh its pull and hear its plight I make pain into tears I make laughter from fears such a human delight as the stone disappears and my own light shines bright

> *Gudrun Onkels* Seattle, Washington, USA

RANDY SMITH

Applying RC in South Sudan

It was a privilege to meet Victor Sillas from South Sudan at a workshop in Northern Uganda last month. He shared this story with me, and gave me permission to share it with others in the RC Community.

> Pamela Haines Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, USA

I started RC in Yei in South Sudan in 2006, after an introduction by Wanjiku Kironyo.¹ I lived a life for more than twenty years without both parents; only my granddad and grandma. Growing up, I experienced hatred watched beatings, looting of properties, raping, and killing. It was a turning point in my life when I learned RC, when I was introduced by Wanjiku to the theory that there is nothing wrong with any human being except the result of mistreatment and oppression.

I have been using RC since then. It has changed my life tremendously in the sense that I have been able to identify my own problems and get a way of coming out of them. That has helped my family, too. I was able to unite my mother and father after twenty-three years of separation.

My dad was in Khartoum (Sudan) during the war. He came back to Juba (South Sudan). I was working for an NGO (non-governmental organization). When he came, some of my relatives asked me to go see him. I felt so angry, and I said I didn't want to. But then I picked up the book on basic RC theory and was reading about how humans were created perfectly without any problems. I quickly reflected that it wasn't his fault that he left me. I went back and told him that I was a different person.

I wanted him to meet my grandparents, but they were very angry and didn't want to see him. I sat down with them and tried to explain to them how we were created, and the social issues that came and interrupted our lives and made us vulnerable in our thinking and made us not see others as human. That made my grandmother calm down, and she said he could come over. And he came here.

My mom was in a refugee camp in Uganda. I sent word to her and she came. When she came, I brought the relatives. That's when I said that her husband was coming and that she still had a chance to build a family together. It took me three months mediating between them. Finally they got together and are staying together in Juba.

When my granddad was passing away, he said, "You are in charge of my family. Take care of everybody and the house. I trust you and know you can manage it." It was RC that helped me in dealing with the different issues. At least once a month at home now we have family sessions, with about fifteen people, and I share insights I have from RC.

My second success was in using the same thing in prisons. In the Central Equatoria State (South Sudan), there are five prisons. I was visiting those prisons, listening about people's lives-about the different problems, frustrations, and mistreatments-trying to help them not be more stressed. It took a lot of time. Now I have a program to share recorded messages electronically to support the prisoners. I am also helping in a diversion program in the community, helping people understand that the prisoners are not criminals, that their situation is not their fault, that they need to be accepted back in the community.



I do programs at an international school, and we go and talk to Senior 4 students, prepping² them for what's next. Most are dropping out because of various problems and poverty. We say, "What do you want to become? How do you want to see yourself? You need to have a hope." We travel to students every semester before the schools close. Re-evaluation Counseling is so good in that you feel people are getting out of their issues. Some of their problems are a pretext—not the real issue. They say, "We didn't know!" I visit; we talk about drug abuse, sex, love, how their choices affect their minds and their future.

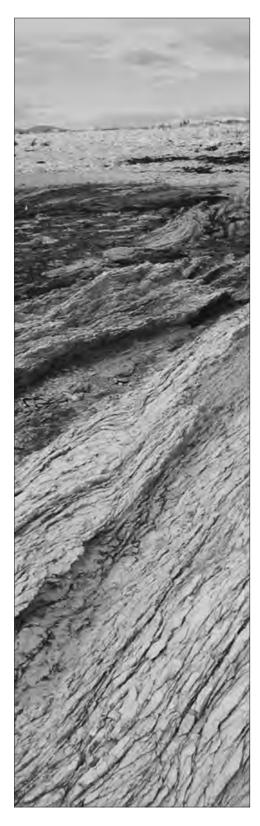
Co-Counseling sessions are strengthening me. I feel so revived when I have a session. I feel new, and challenged, and with more ways of figuring out how to deal with my own problems. It gives me insight into how to deal with others. I don't have a group yet. I really need a group.

Victor Batali Sillas Juba, Central Equatoria State, South Sudan

Reprinted from the e-mail discussion lists for RC Community members and for RC teachers

¹ Wanjiku Kironyo is the Regional Reference Person for Northern Africa.

² "Prepping" means preparing.



Knowing Each Other More Fully

From the 2014 Australian Leadership Workshop

Workshop participant: It looks like you've made a conscious decision to have your workshops less "packed." There's time for things to start whenever they start and relaxed time for chatting or playing or whatever. It's not like other workshops I've been to. So I want to know, is this a conscious thing?

Tim Jackins: Yes, it's conscious, and it depends on the group, and what needs to happen for that group at a particular time.

A lot of experienced RCers use only Co-Counseling to build their relationships. Their knowledge of each other is based only on their sessions. There's no additional information and no need to face most of their difficulties with relationships. So I try to provide the time and the context for people to face them. A fair number of people hate my workshops. "This is an absolute waste of time." But I don't think so. I'm trying to set up conditions so that people can't hide behind counseling, so they can't avoid committing themselves more broadly to a person than just having sessions. I'm trying to set up the time and opportunity for people to challenge the material¹ that keeps them staying separate from each other. I'd like us to build deeper, broader relationships, rather than staying to close to the strict little model we have to start out with in order to interrupt a lot of distresses.

A Co-Counseling relationship can be as full and meaningful as any other relationship we ever have. However, we don't know how to get close. We need to figure out ways to jiggle the material that keeps us standing stiff and separate. If we can hang out² around each other, look at and learn from each other, and enjoy each other's presence sing songs, play, and other things—then sessions go better. There is a sense of really knowing the person we are counseling with and not having to build that in each session. We actually come to know each other.

We have been somewhat slow to figure out that each person's struggle is really everyone's struggle, that nobody gets through her or his material alone. There is some idea of moving forward as a people that we don't have, because the oppression we've grown up under has separated us so completely. I think we have to begin figuring out how to rebuild that idea.

At some workshop sites, people sleep or eat far away from the meeting room, so I want people in the meeting room at a certain time so they will be there together. Not that I'll start the meeting, but so

¹ "Material" means distress.

² "Hang out" means spend relaxed, unstructured time.

COUNSELING PRACTICE

they can be there together and begin the battle of actually getting to know and rely on each other more fully.

Workshop participant: I assume this is for experienced groups of RCers. You wouldn't do this with a fundamentals group.

Tim: I wouldn't do it with a fundamentals group, because they're not ready to face all of these things. We're not that ready either! (*laughter*) We walk into a room full of people and feel awkward and separate and alone, and don't know who to go stand next to or what to say. Some of that material is still there, and we don't easily remember to create opportunities to challenge it. We don't do that in our lives. Every day we are around a thousand people we don't know, people we would like to get to know, and we don't do a thing about it. We don't stop and say, "Hi, you look interesting. Can we talk for a minute?" Not to try to build a relationship out of it or make it something significant, just to have contact with someone we like the look of. So I try to start some of that here.

Another participant: I think it's easier for me to make contact with people I don't know. It's harder once I know people, because then, you know, the small talk . . .

Tim: . . . runs out?

Participant: Yes, it runs out.

Tim: Well, it depends on our material. A number of us can't go up to new people. We just won't do that. We have no idea that it's safe, that they would want us to have contact with them. I also think there's someplace it gets uncomfortable for just about all of us even with people we've already had some contact with. We can't really open up and be enthusiastically with each other. We guardedly share small bits of data and try to make it socially acceptable, instead of trying to share more fully.

So it depends on where the material sits on us. Maybe you're good at the initial opening, but many of us aren't. And I don't know anybody who is good at the whole thing.

Every person here knows thousands of things the rest of us don't know and will never know if we don't hear it from her or him. That's just how varied our lives are. It's a tremendous opportunity. Every person has a different perspective from ours on every issue, and we need to hear it. We need to understand and have a picture of the great variety out there. But we haven't known how to get that out of each other. It's all about our struggle with relationships. We never got to practice as we grew up. But here we are, and we have to do something.



AUSTRALIA • DIANE SHISK



LISA VOSS

Fighting for My Teenage Son

This is the story of what happened in my family as my son became a teenager. From the moment he went to high school at age eleven, he went from being a bright, curious, funny, intelligent, sensitive boy to being bad-tempered, disaffected, disinterested, angry, agitated, and unhappy.

The right-wing government in England has made some major cuts to the funding of education. This has led to my son's publicly funded school being completely overcrowded, with thirty-plus students in a class. The teaching standards have dropped, and the teachers are completely overstretched. More significantly, there has been a shocking lack of care for the well-being of my son and the other students.

My son is good at thinking for himself. He has a great sense of humour and likes to do things his own way. The teachers always liked him, and he was interested in what he was learning. He had good relationships with his teachers and was popular with his own age group. As soon as he began high school, I could tell¹ things were wrong. He would come home looking disconnected and angry and go straight to the computer to play violent video games. Then he would shout and scream when I insisted he come off them. He started eating sweets in a manic obsessive manner, and I would find sweets wrappers hidden all over his room. He also began demanding that I buy expensive and unnecessary things for him.

Normal teenage behaviour? I understand that teenagers have a natural need to be independent and separate from their parents, but this was more than just the separation process. His body was tense; he was irrational and compulsive. I could tell he was really unhappy. He was not engaging with the education he was getting. He said he was learning nothing, that he could not see the reason for what he was doing, and that he could learn more from a few hours on the Internet.

After a year and three months at the school, he banged his head badly while in the school building. He told no one at school until he began to feel unwell the next day. Then he became extremely ill with problems associated with the injury. Sickness and headaches from the injury are still ongoing, nearly two years later.

Despite repeated attempts at communication, the school hardly responded. A pupil in their care had suffered a head injury, but they did nothing to help him get back to school. There was no extra support, care, or resource—just business as usual. His dad and I were so shocked, upset, and stressed about our son that we were struggling to manage what was going on.² No one called us.

For the last three years I have found it difficult to focus on my own life, as I have been so busy with my son. I have decided to make it my job to be someone whom my son can take his difficult feelings to. He has used me well! In order to have the attention and time to be with him and listen to him, I have tried to stay as rational and healthy as possible. This has been a very big job.

² "Going on" means happening.

¹ "Tell" means see.

The special time³ he has chosen has all been on screens. It has included playing video games (which I hate), reading Facebook messages with him (I am not a fan of Facebook either), and watching numerous Youtube videos and vloggers (video bloggers on the Internet). He has invited me into his world, and I've realized how little I've known about the world in which teenagers now live.

I have been so restimulated by everything that has happened that I have hardly been able to have sessions about anything except my feelings and worries about my son. I have Jewish heritage, which also explains how big this has been for me. I have a session every day. I have done a huge amount of discharging. I have let my heart break a thousand times and looked again and again at what happened to me in my own teenage years. It has not been comfortable.

My son still has ongoing health issues, and he and his dad and I eventually took⁴ the decision to remove him from school. Since then he has been doing better. I can see some signs of recovery. He looks more

⁴ "Took" means made.

relaxed, his posture has changed, and he is starting to get back some of the spark he had many years ago. He has begun to spontaneously play and is engaging with some schoolwork again. He is not demanding to buy things all the time, and our home life is calmer. He is still suffering from headaches much of the time.

He says that at times he feels like a different person. There is a whole new set of problems as a result of his not going to school, but I feel that at least he is on a positive path now.

It has been hard to think clearly over the past three years. I have fought to get my son back and to some extent succeeded. It has been a huge journey for me and incredibly difficult. I am still struggling to see the gifts and positive outcomes from this struggle, though I am sure they will be revealed in time.

I have been shocked by the lack of care for the wellbeing of teenagers in school. What is happening in the lives of other teenagers? What can we do?

Let's not forget what it's like to be a teenager. Let's discharge on our teenage years and not wait until we are forced to look at them because of the difficulties facing our children and grandchildren. Things are even harder for teenagers now, with the digital world bringing more complexity and putting more pressure than ever on their lives.



We Can Live Every Moment Well

I conjecture that if you and I as leaders actually correctly determine the "key actions" or "nodal points" of our situations, and move on them, we can indeed live every moment well. We can take only actions we enjoy taking; we can avoid fatigue and burnout;* we can retain sufficient leisure for rest, recreation, and enjoyment.

> Harvey Jackins From The Longer View, page 37

³ 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.

^{* &}quot;Burnout" means becoming physically and emotionally drained from doing a difficult job for a long time.

Anesthesia, Surgeries, and Challenging Defeat

Harvey Jackins used to say that anesthesia is as close to death as a person can come without actually dying. I've had anesthesia several times.

During my birth my mom had ether anesthesia, which was usual at the time. My second anesthesia was when I had appendicitis at age thirteen. (It seemed like only an instant between when they asked me to count backward from a hundred to when I was back in the hospital room.) Anesthesia number three was for a tonsillectomy at age nineteen.

At age twenty-two I had three surgeries after a head-on car collision in which I'd been in the back seat with no seat belt. (They hadn't been invented yet.) Multiple injuries included a compression fracture in my back, a broken wrist with a severed nerve, and a broken hip. I was initially pronounced "dead on arrival" and then was unconscious for three days. During the nine weeks I was in the hospital, I refused pain pills and sleeping pills. Even before I found RC, I didn't want to get addicted to drugs.

After finding RC, I worked in many sessions on the surgeries and the anesthesia. Later my goal was to end the chronic pain in my back. Thanks to RC I've had no chronic pain for at least ten years. (I have occasional pain but can easily get out of it with exercise and discharge.)

I've only recently associated feelings of defeat with anesthesia. In a recent session I was going through (once again) the sequence of surgeries, focusing on the anesthetics, but this time I fought for myself. I knew my counselor was there, but I didn't look at her; it was too distracting. I was challenging the defeats. The incidents were piled one on top of the other.

I was a pianist in grade school and high school, and after the accident, due to the cut nerve in my left hand, I could no longer play the piano as well as I once had. I look forward to challenging that defeat.

> *Pam Geyer* Bellaire, Texas, USA



fim Jackins

Anti-discharge Patterns

Discharge is a spontaneous process. We're all set to do it—except that in the pile of distress patterns there are many, many patterns that take the form of interfering with and inhibiting this process. A large number of them are socially conditioned. They have been petrified in the culture so that the culture mistakenly equates its survival with keeping the recovery process from happening.

All of us are parasitized by a large number of anti-discharge patterns. We all have the capacity to discharge thoroughly and completely—to heal ourselves and recover all of our intelligence and zest and flexibility—but for the inhibiting patterns.

These patterns also have in them an element of unawareness. All of us operate in a great deal of unawareness of this whole set-up. We're prisoners in an invisible cell. The bars are invisible to us. And since we can't see them, we rationalize that we're not crying because we "don't feel like crying" or "not now." We're all surrounded by this tremendous amount of conditioning. If we get one thread loose and get one five-minute burst of laughter, it's such a relief, even though if we could somehow cut through the conditioning, we would laugh for days and days and days.

> *Harvey Jackins* From a talk at Buck Creek III, 1971



PEOPLE'S CLIMATE MARCH IN MELBOURNE, VICTORIA, AUSTRALIA • VICKY GROSSER

Breaking Through Isolation

Dear parents,

A little success at breaking through isolation!

It occurred to me recently that I could call my regular Co-Counselor (who does "special time"¹ with my seven-year-old daughter) during evening tooth brushing. This is often our hardest time of day—when I am tired and just want to get through it, and my daughter wants a lot of playlistening.²

Bringing another person into the room by telephone has been wonderful! We share "news and goods" and laugh and talk about various things, and the tooth brushing is completed much more easily and happily (especially for me).

I encourage us all to reach out and pull others into those hard, lonely times of parenting!

"Anne"

¹ 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.

² "Playlistening" means being paid attention to in a warm and playful way.

The List

The List is an extraordinary book of Re-evaluation Counseling theory and practice, by Harvey Jackins. He wrote it later in his life, in consultation with many people. It is a collection of all of the insights he had about RC over the decades of discovering, developing, using, and communicating the RC on which many of us base our lives.

The List has been available since 1997. It is used by a large number of us who have been in RC long enough to have known Harvey. However, it has not been publicized in recent years, and many people who have come into RC since Harvey's death have not had the chance to become familiar with it.

The book is organized in an accessible manner and is an excellent reference. I think that anyone who has gained the basics of RC theory would benefit from having it available and reading a randomly selected paragraph from it now and then. Also, there will be a downloadable index for it on the RC website, making it easier to locate particular topics.

The List is available only in hardcover (as a true reference text). To encourage wider distribution of and access to it, for 2016 we are lowering the price from \$50 to \$30 (plus postage and handling). For ordering information, see page 110. Pay Attention to the Client

Try to pay attention to the client instead of "knowing what they need." "Knowing what they need" is almost always bound to be out of the counselor's distress.

> Harvey Jackins From a talk at Buck Creek III, 1971



Tim Jackins

Highlights from the October Kenya Workshop

A teachers' and leaders' workshop took place in Nairobi, Kenya, in October 2015. It was organized by Wanjiku Kironyo¹ and her committee and led by Barbara Love,² assisted by Fela Barclift.³ The forty-seven people who attended were from Benin, Ethiopia, Ghana, Ivory Coast, Kenya, Nigeria, Rwanda, South Sudan, Tanzania, Togo, and Uganda.

Barbara assured us that we were going to have a wonderful time together, and that turned out to be true.⁴

Early on she asked us to recount past events like our first day at school, to relax the atmosphere and help us discharge—and it did just that.

There was interpreting from English to French, and vice versa, for our brothers and sisters from Francophone Africa. Interpreting was also done from and into Kiswahili.

Barbara asked how often we had Co-Counseling sessions. She reminded us that it is important to help ourselves first before seeking to help others by counseling them. She then asked us to choose one thing we were going to work on for six months. Everyone wrote something down, whereupon we had a mini-session on our individual choices. We took the same task to our support groups.

Then we were asked to pick two topics to discuss as a group. People's choices included leadership, oppression, African democracy, sexism, bullying in school, aging, youth, and care of the environment. We each chose the topic that interested us the most. Then we broke into groups and discussed it. The following are tidbits of what transpired:

• Sexism and male domination: Following a discussion on how men have generally treated women badly, Barbara had all the men stand in front of the women and apologize. The women seemed pleased.

• Colonialism and racism: The following key words were used in the interaction: primogeniture, aristocrats, Negroid, Caucasoid, Mongoloid, slavery, land, resources, Europeans, Afrikaans, Asians, greed, internalized oppression, races, God, Age of Reason, Christianity, ideology of white supremacy.

Culture night was colorful. People from all the countries shared about their food, clothes, dance—anything they wanted the others to know.

Then Barbara passed the baton to Fela to lead family work.⁵ After a brief introduction, we divided into groups and played our favorite games. We got to play games we had not played in years! At one point we broke into groups based on our countries of origin to brainstorm on how we were going to replicate the family work in our Communities back home.

When all was done, we had a circle of farewell. Barbara led us in paying a glowing tribute to Mama Africa,⁶ who is now retired. We sang for her and sent her a recording of our singing. We also wrote messages. One could tell⁷ from the emotions expressed that Mama Africa's contribution to RC in Africa will be remembered always.

Thumbs up⁸ to Wanjiku for having all of us in one place and for improving communication by means of a WhatsApp⁹ Group for Africa. Now we can a ll share with one another what is going on¹⁰ in our Communities.

> Urbain Bamana Area Reference Person for Accra, Ghana Accra, Ghana

⁵ Family work is the application of Re-evaluation Counseling to the particular situations of young people, and families with young children. It entails young people and adults (both parents and allies) interacting in ways that allow the young people to show and be themselves and not be dominated by the adults.

- ⁶ Melphy Sakupwanya, a former Regional Reference Person for Africa
- "Tell" means perceive.
- [®] "Thumbs up" means appreciation.

⁹ WhatsApp is a cell phone application that allows people to send messages for free to many different kinds of cell phones.

¹⁰ "Going on" means happening.



DIANE SHISK

¹ Wanjiku Kironyo is the Regional Reference Person for Northern Africa.

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

³ Fela Barclift is the Regional Reference Person for Brooklyn and Greater New York City, New York, USA.

⁴ "Turned out to be true" means is what actually happened.

The African Teachers' and Leaders' Workshop

I am an RCer from Nairobi, Kenya, and one year old in RC. Within this year I have been liberated in some areas of my life. Others are works in progress, as I continue to discharge past hurts.

Each of the workshops I have attended has been an opportunity full of new knowledge, and the African Teachers' and Leaders' Workshop in Karen (Nairobi, Kenya) in October 2015 was one such experience. It was full of great teachings from Barbara Love and Fela Barclift.¹

One of the topics was colonialism. For a long time I had repressed the feelings of hurt from colonialism. At this workshop it dawned on me that we had been seriously oppressed and I felt the feelings of hurt for my people who

¹ Barbara Love is the International Liberation Reference Person for People of African Heritage. Fela Barcliftis the Regional Reference Person for Brooklyn and Greater New York City, New York, USA. had directly suffered the colonialism. I was able to discharge the feelings, and I am continuing to work on them with my friends for my full re-emergence. We are also working on internalized colonialism, which we believe will have a great ripple effect.

I was restimulated by the stories shared in the sexism and male domination class. It is a continuous work in progress to sensitize the young generation, especially the girls, to discharge on sexism and male domination, and to get more and more men embracing women as equals in society.

Fela led the family work so well. I need to discharge a lot more, as my childhood did not have a lot of playtime. The majority of us were made to mature really fast. Working on this will mean better parenting skills and being better allies to parents. The concept of contradiction² was practiced greatly. As they say, practice makes perfect, and I am more-than-ever able to use contradiction effectively. The more I listened to other Co-Counselors use contradiction, the more tips I learnt on how to use it.

Re-evaluation Counseling has been of great help to me, people around me, and the surrounding community. We continue to sensitize people on the need to discharge hurts of all kinds to be free people. I want to thank the entire Re-evaluation Counseling Community for the great organization of RC in Africa, and for going a step further to fund the workshop that was a great experience for the participants. As transformed individuals, we will enhance the shining of the light of Africa.

> Rosenell Nyakinyua Nairobi, Kenya

² Contradiction to distress

Discussions of Theory

The discussions of theory that are remembered well by students are the discussions which appear in answer to questions students ask and even more particularly in response to difficulties which the students have experienced and which they bring to the teacher for help with a solution.

> Harvey Jackins From "The Teacher of Re-evaluation Counseling," in The Human Situation



BASQUE COUNTRY • TIM JACKINS

•••• A Victory Against Fear

The forty-five of us who attended the Nairobi (Kenya) Young Adults' Workshop in August 2015 considered it a victory—a victory against the fear of meeting and leading during war. There was a lot of discharge even before we gathered, and we chose the smallest room at the venue as our meeting place, so we could be physically close. One of my thoughts as we were doing introductions was, "So this is what re-emergence looks like."

It has been difficult for young adults to gather after having been targeted by terrorism this year. Many young adults have been killed. As the leader of the workshop, I had big sessions on being responsible for gathering people. I had the constant thought, "What if they come for us during the workshop?"

Iled the workshop supported by Humphrey Kasembeli, Nicholas Oiko, Jane Lucy Gachihi, and Rosenell Nyakinyua, who are RC teachers in Kenya. We started out planning for thirty-five young adults, but by the week before the workshop forty-five had confirmed that they were coming. Wanting to be together had won over the effects of war and conflict—the isolation, fear, and not having a lot of hope about life.

My highlights were as follows:

- The class on care of the environment. We committed to what we are going to do differently in our daily lives to positively impact the environment.
- The class on culture and tradition. We shared early memories of being told not to cry or show emotions. The young men talked about how people had clearly communicated to them that crying was a sign of weakness. I had them go around the class and tell fellow men how much they love them. Then they held hands and hugged a lot, which led to discharge.
- The class on the effects of war on our lives, and discharging on death. There was an empty chair at the workshop for a young adult who had died a few weeks before. He had loved music and his favorite instrument had been the drum. We brought out the drums and danced to one of his favorite songs. After that we did lots of discharging on how we felt about him not being there.

Janet Kabue Thika, Kenya The workshop was rewarding for me.

The new big group is well balanced in leadership, talent, and the understanding and use of RC—thanks to the leaders.

In the women's group, participants pledged to move on and make a difference in their lives. Congratulations to them all, and long live their re-emergence!

The whole team, especially the men, bid farewell with much discharge to their friend Maximillian, who was to be at the workshop but had died just before. They accepted that it is good for men to cry.

> Jane Lucy Wambui Gachihi Nairobi, Kenya



MATT WEATHERFORD

The serene environment at Karen in Nairobi was a great one for an RC workshop.

We were able to mourn a friend and young adult member of the group. Emotions flowed freely. Memories of loved ones whom we had not mourned fully came into reality, and I was able to discharge the feelings of hurt.

I learnt that past hurts sometimes hinder us from being the best people we can be and that it is okay to let ourselves feel and discharge the feelings instead of pushing them aside, where they can "eat" us gradually over the years. There was also a reckoning that we should appreciate everyone for what they are in our lives. We should express our love and concern, as everyone should feel loved and appreciated when they are alive.

The workshop was a great moment, with great learning moments, which created a desire to live by the theories of RC.

Rosenell Nyakinyua Nairobi, Kenya

Building Stronger Communities in Ghana

The August 2015 workshop in Ghana was led by Sharon Wolf.¹ As usual, she brought all her experience and skills as an RCer to bear.

Our goal before, during, and after the workshop was to build stronger RC Communities in Ghana. Before the workshop, we organized a series of classes for the new participants. This was to pave their way to the workshop and make things easier for Sharon.

We began the workshop with introductions: Who are you? Why are you here? Sharon stressed the need for confidentiality. She explained the roles of listener and speaker as well as the "dos and don'ts" of a session.

She spoke about humans' vast intelligence, natural zestful enjoyment of life, and natural caring relationships with other human beings. The participants were eager to know more and asked a lot of questions. She later talked about hurts, distress recordings, and the healing process (discharge). She also talked about three policies:

1) No socializing. Participants appeared to have misunderstood the policy or at least were loathe to accept it. This was not surprising to me—I was under the same misapprehension fifteen years ago when RC was introduced to me. I think aversion to the policy is primarily because of how in African communities people form friendships and partnerships at social gatherings. Such associations may even lead to intimate relationships, such as marriage. In short, the African way is communal living. However, Sharon did an excellent job of explaining the rationale behind the policy.

¹ Sharon Wolf is an RC leader in Washington, D.C. USA.

2) Avoiding mind-altering substances. We should not take mindaltering drugs before class, including caffeine or alcohol. When we ingest chemicals, our minds can't work well and it's difficult to discharge and heal fully.

3) Confidentiality. People will be secure if what is discussed in a session stays there. Here again, people asked a lot of questions.

Before the workshop, a number of the participants had called with reasons why they would have to leave in the middle of the program. It had appeared likely that just half of the participants would be staying to the end. However, almost all of them stayed to the end. They found the discussions so interesting that they called off² their other engagements.

Below are comments from two of the participants.

Urbain Bamana Accra, Ghana

After learning the guidelines for an RC session, we paired up and had five minutes each. Then we went for a tea break. Thirty minutes later we resumed, and Sharon shared information. We old members could refresh ourselves and deepen our knowledge of RC: as a result of mis-

² "Called off" means cancelled.

treatment and oppression, our natural attributes get overshadowed; to recover from the painful experiences we need to discharge.

We were reminded that a session doesn't always have to be "painful." We can also use it to express joy or happiness. We can even spend session time sleeping.

We met in support groups during which some members burst into tears.

Special thanks to Sharon Wolf, Urbain Bamana, and other supporting leaders for pulling this off.³

> *Joseph Mayouma* Ghana

I learned a lot. Now I know that I need to talk to someone about whatever is bothering me. I tried that during the sessions we had on Saturday. After sharing with a friend, I felt lighter, relieved, and free. I enjoyed it. I loved the two games we played as well. I'm not sure about crying in front of others.

I am glad I was a part of it. I think it's a great thing to help others free themselves of all the hidden pain and hurt in their minds.

> Marian Jubiril Accra, Ghana

³ "Pulling this off" means successfully accomplishing this.



THE ACCRA, GHANA, COMMUNITY BUILDING WORKSHOP • URBAIN BAMANA

A Workshop in Gulu

In the early morning of 4 September, 2015, our host collected us Kenyan delegates to start the journey to Gulu, North Uganda, for an RC workshop. We later picked up all the Ugandan team from different waiting points in the beautiful, hilly city of Kampala (Uganda), and soon we were all headed to Gulu.

The journey was long but very interesting. In different groups as we sat we listened attentively to each person. The countryside was fertile, and on the roadside we were able to buy pineapples, melons, cassava, simsim (sesame seed), cookies, and plenty of bananas.



WILDER RANCH STATE PARK, SANTA CRUZ, CALIFORNIA, USA • PAM ROBY

On arrival, Abitimo Odongkara, Pamela Haines, and Chuck Esser¹ were waiting and offered us a wonderful, filling dinner. Before long all of us were checked in and happy in Comboni Retreat Centre. Suddenly, the heavens opened and there was a heavy downpour. This helped us sleep the night away.

At the workshop we had daily classes with Chuck, Pamela, Rickie,² and Wanjiku,³ and feedback from all of us leaders on how sessions, support groups, and table topics were going. Nothing was left to chance, and we leaders felt very happy and supported.

During the oppression topic, all the men promised to change and support families. On the family day, as we listened to children, it was evident that the distresses we all face contribute significantly to how the children are raised. A young child was allowed to cry all through his distresses until he regained his composure and was very happy and able to freely interact with people. The mothers and fathers were happy to discover that Re-evaluation Counseling can enhance how they bring up their children and that it's not too late to change.

One parent decided to adopt a more loving and caring attitude toward her daughter. She realized this was possible by applying special time⁴ and committing to listening more often to her. She and I promised to remain in touch and follow up on her progress with the little girl, whom I noticed was greatly affected.

The three-way sessions each had an experienced leader, a knowledgeable support person, and someone who had not experienced much RC prior to the workshop. This worked out so well that our only challenge was that time was not allowing for many more sessions.

Special appreciation goes to all the leaders and participants for the commendable participation we all enjoyed.

continued . . .

⁴ "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.

¹ Abitimo Odongkara is the Area Reference Person for North Uganda. Pamela Haines is the Area Reference Person for the Schuylkill I Area in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, USA. Chuck Esser is the Regional Reference Person for New Jersey, USA, and the International Commonality Reference Person for Family Work.

² Rickie Kashdan, an RC leader in Long Branch, New Jersey, USA

³ Wanjiku Kironyo, the Regional Reference Person for Northern Africa

TEACHING, LEADING, COMMUNITY BUILDING

. . . continued

I made the following personal commitments:

- In all aspects of my life, I am going to make everything that I do go well.
- I will teach more RC in opportunities I get working with families and women's groups.
- I will discharge more on the "whys" of what I don't like, so that I re-emerge better!
- I will continue to read more RC literature to understand RC better.

Re-evaluation Counseling has been a beautiful gift of wholeness and healing. It has had a huge positive impact on my life and the lives of those around me. My family has greatly benefitted from my participation, and I can see that soon most of my family members will be RCers.

Jane Lucy Wambui Gachihi Nairobi, Kenya

A Counselor in Practice

The teacher of Re-evaluation Counseling teaches mostly by example. Students learn to counsel by being counseled, by seeing others being counseled. So the teacher is necessarily a counselor in practice most of the time.



FORT DE SOTO PARK, ST. PETERSBURG, FLORIDA, USA • MARTY POTTENGER

Harvey Jackins From "The Teacher of Re-evaluation Counseling," in *The Human Situation*

Many Workshops in Nigeria

From 4 to 6 September, 2015, all the RC Communities in the northern part of Nigeria held a workshop in Abuja, our Federal Capital Territory. From 11 to 13 September, over seven Communities held their workshop in Enugu (Enugu State). And from 18 to 20 September, Lagos State held its workshop, with over sixteen Communities present.

They were all worthwhile workshops. After thirteen years and eight months, we have finally come to the best way to carry the Communities along and encourage the teachers and leaders.

> Chioma Okonkwo Area Reference Person for Lagos, Lagos State, Nigeria Lagos, Lagos State, Nigeria

The Southern Nigeria Leaders' Workshop

Tam happy to write about the Southern Nigeria Leaders' Workshop, held in September 2015 in Enugu (Enugu State).

It was a great opportunity for me to learn how to teach RC by modeling rational behavior, exhibiting a good attitude, being a friend, and welcoming other people's friendship.

I discharged lots of distresses that I have had for quite some time as a result of oppressions in my environment. And I was reminded of the one-point program of RC: "to use RC to seek recovery of one's occluded intelligence and innate humanness, and to assist others to do the same."

Sincerely the environment of the workshop, the recreation, and the Co-Counseling sessions were powerful instruments for discharging.

Ezinwanyi Ugoala Umuahia, Abia State, Nigeria

A statement by Dottie Curry (a former International Liberation Reference Person for Elders), who led my first RC teachers' training workshop, has stayed in my heart and mind in my everyday desire to keep learning and leading in RC. She said that it is important for a counselor to remain aware and alert, and understand RC theory and practice, and also not be impatient or judgmental. Chioma Okonkwo (the Area Reference Person for Lagos, Nigeria), who led the Southern Nigeria Leaders' Workshop, exhibited all these positive attributes.

Kingsley Ibekwe Enugu, Enugu State, Nigeria



I have been in RC in Tehran, Iran, for more than eleven years and was recently certified to teach RC. In October, another Co-Counselor from Iran and I went to Mumbai, India, for a three-day teachers' and leaders' workshop led by Niti Dandekar, the Regional Reference Person for India.

We worked on many topics, like how our discharge was stopped after our birth, how leading can feel lonely, and all of the obstacles that prevent us from fully fighting for ourselves. Many good directions helped me discharge on deciding to be a leader, which is good for my Community. We also worked on the *Guidelines*^{*} and shared our difficulties with using rules.

All the classes were translated into the languages represented at the workshop, and each language was made central by being up in front for twenty minutes. This worked against English-language domination and was good for all of us.

The last day started with discharging anger. At first I was afraid to try it. People were screaming so loudly! I

was scared to take a turn, because I had never had permission to show my anger like that. But after trying it, I could feel how much of a difference it made and how it would change my life if I could keep having those kinds of sessions.

When we shared our highlights of the workshop, mine were the hope and love from each face. Saying goodbye was difficult for me, because it felt like saying goodbye to people who had become like my dear family.

Before we returned to Iran, we had the chance to attend an RC class in Mumbai. People came from many places across the city to share their hope and love for us in Iran. I think the Indian and Iranian RC groups can help each other even more now that we have built our relationships more deeply.

We returned to Iran full of hope and energy for progress in RC. My goal for RC in Iran is to teach RC to many people to help them change their lives.

Each workshop I attend is like a sunrise for me.

N— Tehran, Tehran Province, Iran

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



The 2016-2017 Pre-World and World Conferences

AFRICA-November 18-21, 2016

Lagos, Lagos State, Nigeria Organizer: Chioma Okonkwo +234-8023-108-536, chioks4@yahoo.com

SOUTH ASIA-November 24-27, 2016

Pune, Maharashtra, India Organizer: Niti Dandekar +91-20-24352771, dandekarniti@gmail.com

WEST COAST NORTH AMERICA January 13-16, 2017

San Francisco Bay area, California, USA Organizer: Mary Ruth Gross +1-510-243-5934, maryruthgross@gmail.com

AUSTRALIA/NEW ZEALAND-February 17-20, 2017

Sydney, New South Wales, Australia Organizer: Lyndall Katz +61-4-1053-1243, lyndallk@gmail.com

EAST ASIA-February 23-26, 2017

Beijing, China Organizer: Ma Lihong +86-13552670282, rcmalihong@163.com

LATIN AMERICA-March 23-26, 2017

Location to be determined Organizer: Carmen Rodriguez Sanchez +56-2-2232964, carmenrodriguezsanchez@gmail.com

CENTRAL/SOUTHERN NORTH AMERICA

<u>April 27-30, 2017</u> Near St. Louis, Missouri, USA Organizer: Alysia Tate +1-773-680-9767, alytate@gmail.com

EASTERN EUROPE AND ISRAEL-May 19-22, 2017

Warsaw, Poland Organizer to be determined

WESTERN EUROPE-May 25-28, 2017

Near Malmö, Sweden Organizer: Fredrik Eklof +46-70-885-9171, parsamtal@fredrikeklof.se

EAST COAST NORTH AMERICA-June 22-25, 2017

Near Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania, USA Organizer: Kathy Miller +1-215-247-8105, workshopsbykathy@gmail.com

WORLD CONFERENCE-August 8-13, 2017

Storrs, Connecticut, USA Organizer: Stacey Leeds +1-860-974-1043, leedspechie@charter.net



יהודים יקרים

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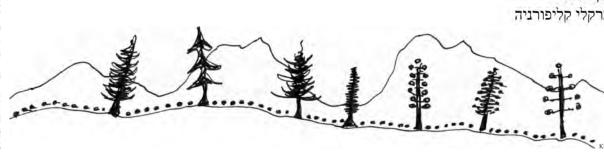
НJ

לאחרונה נפגשה קבוצת המנהיגים היהודיים של המחוז שלי. הקדשנו זמן לפרוק על התפרצות האלימות החדשה בירושלים וסביבותיה. כשייעצתי לחמשת המשתתפים בקבוצה התבהר משהו כללי. כל אחד מאיתנו עשה מאמצים משמעותיים להביא לשינוי הקשיים הללו. דרך בניית קשרים אישיים. פעילות פוליטית. הנהגה בקהילה היהודית וכו׳ אך אף אחד מאיתנו לא היה יכול לשים לב למצב מבלי להאשים את עצמו. לא יכולנו שלא לחשוב על מה לא עשינו. לא יכולנו לא לבטל את ערך המאמצים שלנו. נראה כי החוויה של להיות עדים מרחוק ומחוץ לישראל. לפגיעה המתמשכת של הקונפליקט גורמת לנו לשנוא את עצמנו על כך שלא הצלחנו לעצור את הארועים.

היה לי ברור לגבי כל נועצת שהיא היתה חייבת לשים לב לכך שהמאמצים שלה הם אמיתיים ומשמעותיים ודורשים הערכה זה עזר לבקש מהנועצת לנקוט עמדה נגד שנאה עצמית או האשמה עצמית כדי שיוכלו להכיר במציאות של המאבקים וכדי לא לשגת מתוך נואשות -או להתמיד מתוך נואשות כשהגיע תורי וכשעלו אותם החומרים עבורי, היה ברור כבר איך לעבוד עליהם.

היה טוב לעזור אחד לשני להסתכל ישירות על המציאות באופן הזה.

באהבה דן אלטר ברקלי קליפורניה



English version of the above:

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Counseling U.S. Jews on Events in Israel and Palestine

Recently my Regional Jewish leaders' group spent some time discharging on the recent outbreak of violence in Jerusalem (Israel) and surrounds. As I counseled the five of us, a general issue became clear. Each one of us had made real efforts to work for a solution to the struggles, through building personal connections, activism, Jewish community leadership, and so on. But not one of us could put our attention on the situation without blaming ourselves in some way, thinking of what we hadn't done, dismissing our own efforts. It seems like the experience of witnessing the ongoing hurt of the conflict from the outside makes us hate ourselves for where we haven't been able to stop it. It was obvious to me that each person had to notice that his or her efforts were real, made a difference, and needed to be appreciated. It helped to ask them all to take a stand against hating or blaming themselves, so that they could face the reality of the struggles and not turn away in discouragement (or grimly persist). By the time we got to my turn, when the same material came up for me, it was clear how to work on it.

It was good to help each other face reality in this way.

Dan Alter Berkeley, California, USA Translated from English into Hebrew (see above) by Dan Alter Reprinted from the RC e-mail discussion list for leaders of Jews

The Ending War Workshops

I have been attending the Ending War Workshops since 2010. They are interesting to me for many reasons. The first is that I get accurate information about what happens to people, to their family, to their friends, to their nation, and to the whole world when war breaks out. Then I meet people every year from all over the world with whom I develop a comradeship and who have the same vision as I do of ending war and its destructiveness. Then I hear people's stories about what happens to their countries when war starts and see that their stories are identical to mine in my country: death; poverty; destruction everywhere; and lots of pain, mental and physical, inflicted on people.

I also see the link between capitalism and war. In the last workshop Julian Weissglass (the International Commonality Reference Person for Wide World Change and the leader of the workshop) was very communicative about the destruction of the environment and war.

These workshops get better and better. The last one was the best for me, and I think I know why. Julian has developed over the years very close relationships with people who help to make the workshops as easy and friendly and understood as possible.

Another reason this workshop was the best was that Julian approached us more personally and became more vulnerable. He was ready to admit if he made a mistake. People at the workshop seemed to feel closer. As Julian said, to end war we need to have close relationships between us.

> Theodoros Kakoulidis Monemvasia, Peloponnese, Greece Reprinted from the RC e-mail discussion list for leaders of wide world change



RIVER CLEDDAU, WEST WALES, WALES • ELENA MOSES

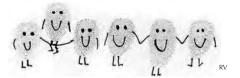
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My Experience in RC

Anjiku Kironyo, the Regional Reference Person for Northern Africa, shared her experience in RC in an interview with me at a recent workshop in Northern Uganda. I'm delighted to give more people a chance to get to know her, her thinking, and her work.

Twas the first person in Ke-Inya—actually in the whole of Africa-to get RC. During the United Nations World Conference on Women in Nairobi in 1985, Diane Balser (the International Liberation Reference Person for Women) and Barbara Love (the International Liberation Reference Person for African-Heritage People) introduced RC at a workshop. Initially I wasn't sure what this was all about—people laughing, smiling, wanting to get closer. I was a bit uncomfortable. But the more I learned about the theory and practice of RC, the more I was impressed. I understood it to be a tool that was more and more useful in my personal growth and liberation and with my immediate family, the community around me, and my work. I became a good listener and was able to give people space. And I realized that the more people acquired the tool, the more empowered they became.

Initially I had thought that once I acquired all the tools I would be okay, I wouldn't have to go on like when you get a degree. But as time went on I realized that RC was a lifetime tool that became useful in every situation I confronted and that therefore, as long as I was not dead, I would always need it. And it has not only liberated me but also, as the work has taken off, the men, the youth, the women, and the elderly people.

As one of the Regional Reference Persons, my goal has been to spread RC to as many countries as possible. But whenever I have been in a country in Africa to lead a workshop, after the workshop we've tended to become disconnected, to lose track. Therefore I established a communication strategy-an electronic forum for instant communication. Anyone can share a brief message with everybody, as short as "Good morning, Africa," so long as it is within the bounds of RC. So we can know what is happening and write to us all. We can share half a page about a workshop and the impact it had on us. We can send a picture, or even a small clip of video. Whenever I don't hear from someone, I can easily ask how that person is. And I send something like a picture or a quote once a week to everybody.

I keep working on encouraging and empowering the leaders. Because RC recognizes that leadership is in every one of us, I encourage everybody to lead. We don't need to think there is somebody else to wait for. I say, "You are the one we have been waiting for."



Pamela Haines Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, USA

I share the scenario of tending the African beehive: you have to anchor yourself well, so you don't worry about yourself. When you are in an airplane, they say to put on your own oxygen mask and life jacket before helping children with theirs. The concept I use is "I come first." People say, "No, no, no, that's selfish." But I have to be well anchored to reach out to other people.

The recent family workshop was the second one I've attended, and I've been impressed by the skills that are taught. I've seen the instant impact on the people here. I wish I'd known about family work when my children were growing up. Then I just asked them questions like "Did you do your homework?" I never listened to them. But RC has helped me realize that there's always a new beginning. You can hop in when it stops at your station, and not worry about what happened before.

I have a keen interest in seeing family work grow. A big challenge in Africa is the damage that has been done by colonialism and the frequent internal conflict and wars that have followed. The core values of the family have been challenged a lot. As people attempt to reconstruct those values, through all the economic and social hardship, and mistrust and suspicion, family work is a central tool.

> Wanjiku Kironyo Nairobi, Kenya

Thinking About Young People at Community Workshops

One of our goals as a Community is to make RC accessible to young people. One of the ways to do this is to make sure that there is space for young people at Community workshops that are not specifically set up for young people.

I have found that until a Community has consistently had significant numbers of young people at its workshops, the workshops can feel hard for the young people, and other Community members can find it hard to have the young people there.

When I talk to allies about having young people at workshops, I often talk about what I call the "Donut Rule": having a ring of allies who hang out* with and Co-Counsel with the young people at the workshop. While often at workshops certain people are specifically assigned the job of "allies to young people," being part of the "donut" is not an official job. It means getting in contact with the young people at the workshop, sitting with them during classes, having mini-sessions and sessions with them, and hanging out with them during breaks and mealtimes and in the evenings.

Feelings we adults had when we were young that we were uncool or unliked can come up when we spend time with young people. Spending time with young people at a workshop is a great way to work on these feelings (with other allies at the workshop).

I have found that as more young people come to Community workshops consistently, the "donut" of allies around them grows to the point where it becomes unnecessary, because many Community members have attention for and relationships with the young people.

I encourage all allies at a workshop with young people to work on whatever they need to work on to be part of the "donut" and making the workshop go well for the young people there.

Emily Bloch International Liberation Reference Person for Young Adults Brookline, Massachusetts, USA

* "Hang out" means spend relaxed, unstructured time.

Communication of important new ideas can be received only by a person who likes or loves the communicator.

Harvey Jackins



MONUMENT VALLEY, UTAH, USA • ANNE MACKIE

Applying RC in My Life

Jane Lucy Wambui Gachihi, from Nairobi, Kenya, shared this story with me at a workshop in Northern Uganda and gave me permission to share it in Present Time and on the RC e-mail discussion lists. I'm delighted to give more people an opportunity to meet her!

> Pamela Haines Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, USA

I love RC very much. Maybe because of that, in everything that I do I bring the tool of RC.

I have put a lot of time into dealing with a case at home. After separating from my husband, in spite of the love we had for each other, I discovered that he was totally unwell due to depression. I kept visiting him where he was staying with his family and could notice very easily, from my experience with sessions, what he was feeling. He would yawn a lot, and sometimes I could read the anger in him.

I became for quite some time the counselor, and he the client, though he didn't know that. His brothers and sisters asked, "What is this that you do?" They said I seemed to be the only medicine for him and begged me to do anything I could.

I engaged in lots and lots of sessions and adopted this project as a leader. I even read about the use of RC with regard to full recovery. Truly this helped us completely. Our two grown daughters were very encouraged. There was lots of hope that my husband could become fully well.

Over the years he became well. He was able to resume part-time work and come back home without any problems. He and I decided that every Sunday after church we would have sessions. Now I had introduced RC completely, to where we could talk two-way. Today my husband is an RCer, and he's always excited about anything regarding my RC work.

My daughters have expressed interest in becoming RCers and using RC in their organizations, and we are making that official. And my husband and I, as Grandfather and Grandmother, have been instrumental in "play listening" with our grandchildren. They love that they can sit in the middle of the room while we are listening and share "news and goods" and disappointments. I delight in seeing them so well able to express themselves. They have a lot of love for Grandma and Grandpa and look forward to coming to visit us. I believe that now we are all fully RCers. I'm able to run the house without feeling the gap. It was broken, but now it's back and okay.

Throughout the time I have been in RC, since 2004, I have also been involved with women's groups. My husband is supportive when I do groups with the church, travel to meetings, facilitate at workshops, and so forth. After recently moving from an up-country home to Nairobi again, I got elected in the women's group in the church, even though I was new to it, and I believe it's because of who I am as an RCer.

In South Sudan I worked with the Christian Women's Empowerment Program and offered, with Wanjiku Kironyo (the Regional Reference Person for Northern Africa), an introduction to RC. The women were able to strongly embrace the tool of RC in addressing the oppressions they'd been going through. With the war of over twenty years, and the lack of support because their men had been completely taken over by drunkenness, they were not able to figure out what to do. Using RC they were able to think it through. Many of them started small businesses.

I also worked in Juba (South Sudan), where we introduced RC in a similar way. Since I returned to Kenya, I have introduced it in the Catholic Christian community in Machakos and now Nairobi.

I have kept in touch with my groups—through the media it's easy—and I occasionally make the trip to Machakos and the Sudan. They've been waiting for peace to come back. Discharge has helped them so much. They're good!

My passion really is family and women's groups. Because of the work I've done in my own family, people see me as a resource. Recently I assisted in a workshop for youth in Nairobi. When the young ladies talked about the oppression of women, they were able to express themselves so well. After listening to the steps I'd gone through, and how I'd never given up on my husband, they promised to take leadership in their families as well. It gave them the morale to think, "Yes, we can do it!"

> Jane Lucy Wambui Gachihi Nairobi, Kenya Reprinted from the RC e-mail discussion lists for leaders of women and for RC Community members



Sexism Affects All Our Relationships

This past year I was the organizer for a men's leaders' workshop. Out of this effort I gained a new and unexpected understanding of how sexism limits our lives as men.

During the first half of the workshop, all my Co-Counseling sessions were spent on things associated with the work of organizing—in particular, feelings about workshop jobs that people had failed to follow through on or do as thoughtfully as I would have liked. This is a challenge for many workshop organizers, but there was a particular flavor to it during this workshop.

As organizer, I was approached over and over again for information that was readily available by looking where it was posted. I was routinely asked what time a meal was, where a group was meeting, or if I had seen something someone had misplaced. Men sometimes interrupted my mini-sessions or conversations to ask me these questions. I began to think of them as the "Do you know where my socks are?" questions.

One evening I walked through our meeting room to find it a mess—used tissue everywhere, chairs and mats disorganized, the snack table a wreck. While I picked up and straightened, several men worked on their computers in the back of the room (it was the only room with wi-fi), occasionally looking up to watch but making no effort to help.

The next day all my sessions were spent on this experience. I felt it was stupid to be using my session time for it and thought that my expectations might be unreasonable. But I couldn't free my attention from the upset, so I assumed that it was something worth discharging on and kept at it, hoping I could eventually go on to "more important things."

After much discharge, I had a new thought: that what was being aimed at me was sexism that of course sexism, being a chronic distress, isn't only active in the presence of women, it's active all the time! In the absence of women, it seeks out the person or persons playing the closest thing to the "female role"—in my case, the role of workshop organizer.

It was my job as organizer to think about the room, the food, where we would be sleeping, how things looked, people's physical needs, the schedule, where groups would meet, and a million other things critical to the well-being of the group and the functioning of the work-shop—things traditionally thought of as "women's work." This meant that I was now being targeted in one of the ways that sexism has us targeting women—with unaware expectations of caretaking.

I began to view my job as organizer differently. I started to ask men more directly to take responsibility for the jobs they'd been assigned. At the end of each class I began requesting that all the men, before leaving their seats, look around and pick up any loose tissue or trash and straighten the chairs and mats in their immediate vicinity. This had the room organized in a few minutes. It also functioned to return people's attention to the responsibility we all carry to look after ourselves and the environment we occupy.

It's gotten me thinking about how sexism affects all our relationships, not solely our relationships with women. Thinking of it as a distress activated by the presence of women limits our understanding of what it is and how it affects us. Women are the "target group" of the distress, but clearly it has a negative effect on our thinking about everything—our connections, our environment, our responsibility for each other, what we can dedicate our minds to, and our relationships to each other as men.

> Steve Thompson Seattle, Washington, USA Reprinted from the RC e-mail discussion list for leaders of men

A Man Takes Leadership on Women's Liberation

I was one of the male delegates participating in the No Limits for Women project in New York (New York, USA) last March.¹ It was great to be there as a male ally and to work with a group of our strong RC women leaders. At the end of the project, Diane Balser² encouraged each of us to report back to our local RC Communities, so in May I led a one-day workshop on the project for the Netherlands and Fryslan.

Two of my close female Co-Counselors and I figured out how to organise the report-back workshop and what to do there. Twenty-three people—eighteen women and five men—came. (There had been a waiting list, much to my surprise.) I started by sharing some thoughts on ending sexism and male domination, based on what I had learned during the No Limits project, as a men's leader, and at the 2013 RC Contemporary Women's Issues Workshop in England. They included how women's oppression is being acted out all the time, 24/7,³ but that it is especially hard to see for the oppressor—in my case, as a white owning-class heterosexual man.

- ² Diane Balser is the International Liberation Reference Person for Women and was the leader of the No Limits delegation.
- ³ 24/7 means twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week.



RIDGE LAKE, LASSEN VOLCANIC NATIONAL PARK, CALIFORNIA, USA • LISA VOSS

It was a big contradiction⁴ for me to talk about ending sexism and male domination to a group of mostly women. I was able to show my fear and embarrassment and was greatly supported by my two female Co-Counselors. I did demonstrations with two young adult women on how sexism and male domination had affected their lives.

After lunch we watched some of the video of the No Limits workshop "Ending Sexual Violence Against Women with Men as Allies." Everyone also got a copy of the transcript of the video, prepared especially for our workshop. It helped all of us for whom English is not our first language to better understand what was said.

Next we split into separate groups of women and men for sessions. When we came back together, I talked about how we did the No Limits project. Sharing this wideworld project with the workshop inspired us all to think about how we can work on ending sexism and male domination in our daily lives.

I showed the materials the No Limits delegates had handed out and gave a PowerPoint presentation I'd made with photos of the project, Twitter messages sent by the delegates, the No Limits name tag and business card, and the conference programme. Everyone bought a reprint of *No Limits: The Liberation of Women*, the pamphlet that the No Limits delegation had handed out at the conference.

Before closing we took turns thinking about what we as RCers, individually and as a group, can do to help end sexism and male domination.

At the workshop I learned again that it is possible to talk in public as a man about ending sexism and male domination. As a panel member at the No Limits workshop "Men Ending Sexism and Male Domination," I had already practiced speaking in public about how sexism and male domination have affected my life. This topic is hard for men to be frank and honest about. Talking publicly about something so embarrassing was one of my most important learning points.

We, women and men, can work together to end sexism and male domination. For me this has become a realistic perspective. I've also learned that "what is good for women is also good for men."

Goof Buijs Broek in Waterland, the Netherlands

¹ In March 2015, No Limits for Women (a project of the Re-evaluation Counseling Communities) sent a delegation of Co-Counselors to the nongovernmental-organization Women's Forum held in conjunction with the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women Beijing+20, in New York, New York, USA.

⁴ Contradiction to distress

Using Sustaining All Life to Build Our Local RC Community

I am one of the volunteers with the Sustaining All Life delegation to Paris.¹ I live in Michigan, in the Midwestern part of the United States, and am part of an RC Region with no organized Areas (local RC Communities). When I decided to volunteer with the Sustaining All Life delegation, I also decided I would use it as a chance to be visible with my work in RC, to help our local Communities grow, and to get closer to my Co-Counselors.

Some of us here have scheduled four RC introductory lectures in four cities—Detroit, Flint, and Ann Arbor (Michigan) and Toledo (Ohio)—in the month of November.

Detroit, Flint, and Toledo are called rust-belt or post-industrial cities. They have long histories tied closely to the car industry. Due to the collapse of this industry and historic (and current) racist policies, they have large populations of African Americans and are faced with significant environmental challenges. Water is undrinkable in Flint due to lead poisoning. In Detroit there are ongoing fights about water rights, and people have had their water cut off due to their inability to pay overly high water bills. Toledo has struggled with the poisoning of its water sources by agriculture and urban waste. Ann Arbor is a wealthier city, with a large university and many young adults interested in climate change.

I have relationships with environmental justice activists, environmental education teachers, and environmental scientists in all three Michigan cities. All four cities have an RC teacher in them who has relationships with people, mostly of the global majority, doing environmental work. Each introductory lecture will focus on the needs and issues of the particular community. For instance, in Detroit we will hold the introduction in an environmental justice organization that is welcoming to families. In Toledo we will hold it near a hospital in which RC leaders work and have been talking about wastereduction strategies. They have also been working with the Catholic Diocese to put solar panels on low-income homes.

Most of us (teachers of RC) have been working in these communities for years but have struggled to connect that to our Co-Counseling work. I suspect this is due to individual early discouragement as well as the effects of racism on the communities in which we work. Also, most of us are white and have the patterns often carried by white people that can keep us feeling separate and on our own.² To try to shift this, we have set up, before the introductions, weekly conference calls in which to discharge about our fears and discouragements.

We are also organizing some smaller projects and activities:

• We are doing listening projects on the university campus. We've tried one, and it was great fun. Two of us met, did a mini-session, and then listened to students for about forty-five minutes. Then we did another minisession and went back to work.

• An RC teacher will be showing *Dis*ruption³ as a part of her RC class.

• In another class, a teacher used a recent *Present Time* article on the environment for a class discussion.

• Naomi Klein will be speaking at the university about her book *This Changes Everything—Capitalism vs. The Climate*, and a Co-Counselor is organizing mini-sessions before and after her lecture.

That's what we are trying. We'll let you know how it goes!

M'Lis Bartlett Dexter, Michigan, USA Reprinted from the RC e-mail discussion list for leaders in the care of the environment

All Manner of People

All manner of people with all manner of distress pattern difficulties still impeding them, with greatly varying levels of experience and with greatly different personalities, have become teachers of Re-evaluation Counseling.

Harvey Jackins From "The Teacher of Re-evaluation Counseling," in *The Human Situation*

¹ Sustaining All Life is a project of the RC Communities. From November 30 to December 4, 2015, a group of Sustaining All Life delegates and volunteers went to Paris, France, to bring RC ideas to the activists gathering there during the United Nations Conference on Climate Change.

² "On our own" means alone.

³ Disruption is a documentary film about climate change and the organizing of the September 2014 People's Climate March in New York City, New York, USA.

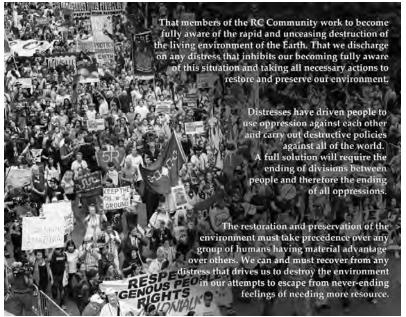
RC Environmental Goal Posters

Rational Island Publishers has produced several lovely 20-inch by 27-inch color posters. The one to the right comes in two versions: one with our RC goal on the environment* on it and the other with the goal rewritten to communicate its essence without using RC vocabulary. Both are in English.

Another poster, which you can see on the RC website at <www.rc.org/ SAL posters>, is in RC language and comes in both a Spanish and an English version.

* A goal adopted by the 2013 World Conference of the Re-evaluation Counseling Communities





A third poster, to the left, has our goal in non-RC language and is available only in English.

Having these posters in our daily lives is a way to remember our commitment to changing our economic system and our relationship to the environment.

All the posters are \$8.00 each, plus postage and handling (no quantity discounts). For ordering information, see page 110.



JOHANNESBURG • NANCY LEMON

More from Rational Island Publishers

A New United to End Racism T-Shirt!

We now have new United to End Racism t-shirts—with the same wonderful graphic as the original, created by Robert Young, but with only the simple text *United to End Racism* on them. They are lovely, artistic, and meaningful, and we will be using them for many activities for a long time to come.

If you have worn out your old one, or never had one of the originals (we created them for the United Nations World Conference Against Racism in 2001), you now have the opportunity to buy this updated version.

Wearing the t-shirts is a great way to begin conversations and take a more public and active position against racism. And now is an excellent time to be even more active than we have been before.

You can order the t-shirts from Rational Island Publishers for \$20 (no quantity discounts), plus postage and handling.



Love, Tim Jackins



1 inch by 3/4 inch

United to End Racism Pins

Another good way to initiate conversations about ending racism

\$5.00, plus postage and handling (No quantity discounts)

Working Together to End Racism

A pamphlet introducing RC from the perspective of ending racism

\$2.00, plus postage and handling



Ordering information on page 110

We Are Winners Against Racism

I attended a workshop for teenagers and allies in the Nordic countries. Ten of us—four teenagers and six adults—were people of the global majority. It was the first time there had been such a big group of us. Twenty-eight of the participants were white. I came as an ally to support the relationships between the teenagers and their parents. It felt like an honor.

I soon noticed racism playing out¹ among the teenagers. I could see it in the competition, who got to choose a room first, and people going silent. I pointed this out to another adult of the global majority. Then I talked to the leaders' team (five people, all white). One of them, from my Region, had done a great amount of work with white people on ending racism. That made it a lot easier for me to point out the racism. I felt like I didn't need to take care of the white leaders' feelings as much. But I was scared, my legs were shaking, and there were two things I didn't dare to say.

The following morning I told them I wanted to talk to them again. I addressed the two other things I had seen and shared my thinking about what could be done about them. They followed my suggestions.

¹ "Playing out" means being acted out.





Later I gave a brief talk to the women gathered for physical counseling² sessions, which was one of the things I had suggested to the leaders' team as a way for us to deepen connections and fight for ourselves. Then we split up into two groups—women of the global majority in one room and white women in another. I also talked to the allies, with a person of the global majority supporting me, about how racism was playing out and its effects on the people of the global majority—being silenced, backing away from what we wanted, and feeling discouraged.

These two things made a huge difference for the relationships between the global majority teenagers and the white teenagers and also for the adults. We all got much closer. The global majority teenagers took up more space directly after the physical counseling sessions and got to see that it's possible to fight our way through internalized racism. I am proud that I trusted my mind, shared my thinking, and didn't let the internalized racism silence me.

During the workshop I also met several times with the global majority adults, to build closer bonds. Most of us have known each other for many years, but this time I could take in that our relationships have reached the point where internalized racism won't divide us. We are invincible; we are winners against racism. We have each other.

> Sujata Maini Stockholm, Sweden Reprinted from the RC e-mail discussion list for leaders of South, Central, and West Asian-Heritage People

 $^2\,$ "Physical counseling" is counseling in which a counselor, who has been trained to do it, provides aware and thoughtful physical resistance for a client to push and fight against.

All Humanity Has the Same Goals

Any new trade union, or people's organization, or anti-nuclear organization begun in the future must, from the beginning, have a policy clearly established of international cooperation, of reaching across all national barriers, of proclaiming always and everywhere that all men are brothers, all women are sisters, and all humanity has the same goals.

Harvey Jackins From pages 151 to 152 of The Kind, Friendly Universe

Musicians' Liberation

I am a musician from Sydney, Australia. I play the drums professionally and enjoy playing guitar and piano and singing. I recently attended the International Young Adult Leaders' Conference in Massachusetts (USA), where the presence of artists and musicians was strong.

Someone led an artists' topic table on Saturday evening, and close to twenty people came! I questioned whether or not to still lead a musicians' table on Sunday and decided to go ahead. It was great. Six people came. The participants claimed it was a contradiction¹ simply that the group had been called. They were delighted to get a chance to work on this stuff. Almost everyone, including people who lived and breathed music, said they hardly ever did sessions on music and realised how important it was.

I talked a little about the oppression—how hard we are on ourselves, how we criticise and compare ourselves to one another, and how playing music is so often viewed by society as a hobby, not a profession, so we give up on pursuing it or have struggles taking it seriously.

I wanted to keep the focus of the group as positive as possible, because as musicians we tend to be down on ourselves² almost all the time. I did a round of everyone answering the question, "What instruments do you play or have you played, and what instruments would you love to play?" I then asked, "What do you love about music?" and "What gets hard?" Everyone went to the second question first. Because so often we just focus on what's hard, I made a conscious choice to redirect each person, after some discharge, to the first question and challenged them

to stay there. It was good listening to everyone talk about what they loved about music. As young adults we are a little closer to the dreams we once had and are fighting hard to hold on to them, but I find this question is great regardless of our age—as it helps us remember our dreams about music and playing a musical instrument.

Earlier this year I started an Australia-wide musicians' support group via Google Hangouts.³ Doing this work is changing my life, and what a contradiction it is to have this wonderful gang of musicians backing⁴ me. We are getting close as a group, and I am noticing that they are in my mind, which contradicts the isolation I feel as a musician.

I have been working recently on giving up comparisons and criticism—a difficult challenge in the face of the

⁴ "Backing" means supporting.

oppression! But I had a breakthrough last night. I was going to a jazz jam in New York City (USA), and I decided that I would try to enjoy everything I could about the music and remember what I loved about it. Every time I had a critical or judgmental thought, I interrupted it and went back to enjoying. I got to hear some incredible drummers and simply enjoy the sounds and be inspired. I even enjoyed what I played! It was definitely a win, and I will try to hold out this new approach from now on.

I wouldn't have started this work if it hadn't been for my developing relationship with the International Liberation Reference Person for Musicians, Heather Hay. If you are a musician out there, Heather would love to hear from you, so please write to her at hlhay3@gmail.com. Who knows? It might change your life and move musicians' liberation forward!

> Nicola Ossher Sydney, New South Wales, Australia



TURKEY • LANCE CABLK

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 (USD) 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.

¹ Contradiction to distress

² "Be down on ourselves" means feel negatively about ourselves.

 $^{^{\}scriptscriptstyle 3}\,$ Google Hangouts is a way of communicating over the Internet.

Immigrants

Immigration in the United States is strongly tied in with capitalism and the policy decisions of the U.S. government. It is also strongly linked to racism and class divisions. Immigration may look different on different people on the surface, but there are some deeper similarities.

Immigrants are often treated as invisible or as an afterthought, even though we perform important work in our new countries. Often our differences are not seen, or we are seen as so different that we are regarded as perpetual foreigners or exotic "others." People may assume that all immigrants of a particular nationality are alike and not see the diversity within our group. We are heavily pressured to assimilate and give up our cultures.

Immigrants of the global majority are also targeted for our perceived racial differences. We may notice that something is wrong, but because of how we have internalized racism we often assume that native-born white people must know better; we second-guess our thinking and can barely talk about racism. Our survival patterns and the pressures of assimilation can lead us to avoid confrontation and not make waves. Sometimes, because of the oppression, we have a hard time seeing where white people and other locals can be our allies.

We all need to prioritize discharging on the racism targeting African-heritage people, but we also need to discharge on the oppressive messages about groups from different national backgrounds.

Allies to immigrants can discharge on their internalized stereotypes of the various nationalities. They can also discharge on their own families' histories of migration and assimilation and any feelings of being superior for being from a dominant national background.

Immigrants can discharge on what we have had to give up to fit in and survive. We can discharge feelings of not knowing the rules of the game, feelings of always having to translate ourselves, feelings of always being an outsider and of isolation, loss, and nostalgia for our home countries. We can discharge



ISLE OF ELBA, ITALY • HOLLY JORGENSON

on where we have a hard time standing up, for fear of being attacked, and on messages that we better be grateful for simply having been allowed into our new countries (a way of silencing us and keeping racial divisions in place).

Immigrants have big pictures of the world—not because we are better but because we have lived in very different worlds. We can reclaim the many strengths of the cultures we have been a part of. We can also work on realizing that we are completely good, that there is nothing wrong with us, and rejoice in the unique strengths and other qualities that all humans bring to our worlds.

Below are listed some useful articles on this topic.

Bikku Kuruvila Berkeley, California, USA

"Ending Racism Toward Asians," by Cheng Imm Tan, Present Time No. 172 (July 2013), pages 58 to 60

"Immigrants," by Katy Butler, *Present Time* No. 42 (January 1981), page 65

"Immigrant and Proud," by Ellen Koch, *Present Time* No. 38 (January 1980), page 62

Note: These articles are all on the RC website <www.rc.org>, along with others on immigrants, and can be found by searching for the titles.

Ode to the ending of oppression by a white Protestant woman (a sonnet)

A girl was born, a beauty, she is mine! Into a world of wonders, hurts and all. This precious babe was held in lonely thrall While fighting to be close—her heart did pine!

So many folks she wanted something fierce Parents, sisters, fellow humans, yes—all: in her room for hours with just the walls. Disappointments—defenses built—and fears.

But now! Oh now, the tone is all ashift We have arrived, oh little one, we're here. As in close-held dreams—your broken heart, we'll lift Always closer at your pace—melting fear Together we can treat you as the gift You are—your love for others now rings clear.

> *Sarah Harre* Somerville, Massachusetts, USA





TOGO • MARION OUPHOUET

A New Day for Elders

It's a new day for elders! We can be hopeful, we can be active, we can set big goals. We have lots of experience in the world and lots of knowledge. We've also made many mistakes that have added to our learning experience. Now it's time to appreciate ourselves as elders and not give in to "feelings" of aging, which are so limiting.

There are hurdles. One of the biggest is our health. Many of us have chronic physical conditions due to the layers of physical and emotional hurts we've accumulated from lack of consistent discharge along the way.

A lot of our distresses about aging came in when we were younger, from watching older people and the way they were treated. We observed and absorbed elder oppression, but we didn't pay much attention to it until we became older. Even now, how many of us have sessions on aging, on watching elders slow down and live narrower lives? We can become fearful of aging if we don't discharge along the way. And it's never too late. There is plenty of time for us—and our allies, too—to discharge the hard stuff we typically ignore.

Many elders have good lives, but what if I told you that it is *great* to be an elder? I want us to focus on how good things actually are. If we have to step outside the distress to do so, we can. Where can you notice that life is good now? And where is it hard? Do you get discouraged?

Without discharge, distresses can make us fear aging and death. We can live good lives without these feelings!

Pam Geyer International Liberation Reference Person for Elders Bellaire, Texas, USA

STAN EICHNER

Female First

A key direction I've been giving at women's workshops is "female first." It is the latest of several such directions. An earlier one, "I am fully female in every fiber," points to the fact that female biology is fine, that it was and is a pretext for the oppression rather than the cause of it. "Female first" is an attempt to contradict the historical reality that in class societies all men's lives have superseded in importance all women's lives. Men have been the primary sex and have dominated women in almost all, if not all, oppressive societies. Females coming first challenges and serves as a basis to transform male domination and sexism.

"Female first" does not mean that sexism comes first, before other oppressions. We are also not proposing that women reverse roles with men. It means that in ending sexism and male domination, we must abolish the secondary, subordinate role of women in oppressive societies. It means that the battle against sexism should occupy a primary place in our minds. It means that sexism is a key oppression in the world and that there are times (for example, at women's workshops) when the battle against it comes first. Most important, it is a consistent contradiction to the secondary, subservient status of women.

"Female first" also contradicts the denial and general acceptance of sexism, particularly in the contemporary period. It is the best way we've found to bring to the surface and challenge in all its detail—the depth, invisibility, and lack of understanding of the oppression women face.

For a woman client to repeatedly take the direction, "Female first!" and then answer her counselor's question, "And what does that mean?" can bring up vast amounts of distress about female oppression, as well as how other oppressions intersect with it.

ENDING THE ENTIRE OPPRESSION

When we look at any oppression, we are looking at the structures, institutions, and distresses that affect an entire group (while also understanding that every person's experiences with the oppression are unique). When we look at female oppression, we are looking at a collective experience that involves the subordination of women to men.

In many non-RC women's movements, particularly in the Western world, solutions have been individual rather than directed at abolishing the entire oppression. For instance, people have focused on voting for a woman for head of state rather than on ending the whole system of sexism and male domination. While we discharge on our own unique experiences, we need to have a picture of what has happened to all of us. One woman cannot be liberated entirely without the liberation of all women.



AUSTRALIA • DIANE SHISK

"FEMALE FIRST" IN EVERY OPPRESSED GROUP

We need to make visible the sexism and male domination within every oppressed group. All systems of oppression are male dominated. If we look at racism without looking at sexism, or at anti-Jewish oppression without looking at sexism, or at ageism without looking at sexism, we leave intact the male domination in each of those oppressions.

We usually say, "Black women," "working-class women," "Chinese women," "Jewish women," "young women," "Muslim women," and so forth. To raise awareness of how deeply sexism and male domination have affected everyone, and to emphasize how being female has been subsumed by other oppressions, at women's workshops I've been asking women to say, "female and Black," "female and working class," "female and Chinese," "female and Jewish," "female and young," "female and Muslim," and so forth.

We need to apply the principle in the RC women's policy that as females we have more in common with each other than we have differences. While we must work on the differences among us in order to create a sense of unity, being female must come first. For most of us this will feel very hard.

When I look at my early distresses, the Jewish ones seem to predominate, particularly since I was born during World War II, when many of my family members were being killed in Europe. The primary battle my people faced was with anti-Jewish oppression. Putting "female first" has felt like a betrayal of Jews, of my own people. But in practice it has meant that I've been able to look hard at the sexism among Jews, at how sexism has affected my Jewishness, and at what I share in common with all

continued . . .

. . . continued

women (all of whom face at least two oppressions).

The fear is always that we are going to unite with women who oppress us in our other identities. In practice, when we remember the importance of race, class, and Lesbian oppression *and also* "female first," we can work on both the divisions and the commonality. I advise all women leaders, from all geographic areas and constituencies, to take the direction of "female first" so that they can fully integrate the battle against sexism into all of their RC and wideworld leadership.

DISCHARGING OUR DEFEATS

As women we each need to work on our own history of sexist mistreatment as well as the sexism we have witnessed. This includes feelings of discouragement from the defeats we have suffered and seen. We also carry recordings¹ from the defeats of women in earlier generations, including in the beginning of class societies. We carry discouragement from how women have been subordinated and forced to accept all aspects of sexism over all periods of time.

¹ Distress recordings

We need to face these feelings, understanding that while they seem like they're in present time, they are not. We need to go back and stand alongside the young girls we were who tried as hard as they could to fight back. Our task is not to relive the early defeats but to discharge them and move decisively against the oppression in our present lives. This is a revolutionary task.

WINNING MEN OVER AS PARTNERS IN THE ENDING OF SEXISM

One of the places we feel most discouraged and defeated is in our relationships with men. It feels like we need to accommodate to sexism, both institutionally and in our relationships, in order to have close relationships with men or, in choosing not to settle, give up on men completely.

At a recent women's workshop in a class on winning men over as allies, I did a demonstration with an Area² Reference Person who had struggled with keeping men in her Area. She worked on the pull to separate from and give up on men, on early hurts in her rela-

² An Area is a local RC Community.

tionships with men, and on feeling rejected by men for not being the "right kind of woman." The contradiction³ for her was that she is "fully female," that all women are the right kind of women, and that she should have as many men as possible close in and following her lead.

To transform our relationships with men and lead them in being partners with us in eliminating sexism, we must prioritize sexism, put ourselves first, and show them it is in their interest to challenge and eliminate sexism. We must face our hurts from sexism and where we feel defeated and powerless in interrupting it. We must fight how we ourselves have been sexually exploited and the ways that men and class societies have exploited all women economically.

We need to work much more on this at workshops. It is a joint project of all women.

> Diane Balser International Liberation Reference Person for Women Jamaica Plain, Massachusetts, USA Reprinted from the RC e-mail discussion list for leaders of women

³ Contradiction to the distress

No Unimportant Oppression

I think it is necessary for us to communicate, and reiterate over and over, that there is no unimportant oppression, that everyone needs every ally they can get, that we must be glad to throw our support behind every group, no matter how small or unpopular, if they are actually seeking liberation, and that we'll be glad to include their proposals and demands in the general program.

> Harvey Jackins From page 154 of The Kind, Friendly Universe



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Including Gay and Bisexual Men in Men's Work in RC

Gay and Bisexual men are men. We were born male, and most of us were treated as males from the time we were born (and sometimes before), even if we didn't feel fully male. When we took on¹ our version of a "Gay" identity, we were still male. We have benefited from male privilege and have acquired patterns of sexism and male dominance. As men, and as Gay and Bisexual men, we are deeply good and human, and we have distresses based on what has happened to us, some of which are specifically related to what has happened to us as men. For these reasons, we belong in men's work in RC.

For some of us, RC men's work has been a good home. We have much more in common with other men than we have differences. We have men's issues—distresses, struggles, strengths, and passions—that are common among men in many cultures. Despite how we or anyone else may feel, we belong fully in men's work in RC. Over the years, the Gay liberation leadership in RC has held out a firm policy that we in our constituency belong in, are an important part of, and need to show up² in men's liberation activities in RC.

SOME BIG DIFFERENCES

That said, there are some big differences between the ways our lives have played out³ and the ways the lives of men who did not end up taking on our identities have gone. Some of us were the bullied ones on the playground—the ones who didn't "fit in," especially not into the rigidly defined male gender-role stereotypes that have prevailed in Western-dominated cultures. Some of us liked girls "too much" at the wrong age. Some of us liked music and the arts "too much." Some of us showed our feelings "too much." Some of us liked another male and showed it "too much."

Many of us were targeted by other males for how we didn't "fit in." This, in the form of bullying, teasing, ostracizing, and other negative behaviors toward us, is what Gay oppression looks like in the early years of men's lives. Emotional and physical bullying; sexual abuse, including rape and gang rape; repeated public humiliation and exclusion have happened to a substantial number of us at the hands of other males.

Many of us also carry deep longings for other men. These have been set up by a combination of things. Some of us have an empty place inside from the absence, emotional or physical, of our fathers. For some of us it was a man who played the key role, who kept us alive or gave us hope, at a certain point in our early lives. For some, sexual contacts early on with other males contributed to our pinning hopes, desires, sexual feelings, frozen needs,⁴ and so on, on other males. The whole set of feelings that many heterosexual men attach to women, many Gay and Bisexual men have attached to males.

There can be a wonderful human aspect to this. We sometimes have higher hopes for men, especially in terms of closeness and relationships, than non-Gay men are capable of retaining in current Western-dominated cultures. Whether these hopes are based in patterns or not, they have helped some of us build powerful, close, deeply human relationships with each other and have high expectations for those relationships. Because we don't have the same sexual distresses, confusions, and frozen expectations attached to women that non-Gay men sometimes do, and because we have experienced various kinds of abuse at the hands of other men, some of us have been able to be strong allies to women against sexism.

I am pointing out the differences because they are there and they are real, and it is a mistake when we include Gay and Bisexual men in men's work and act like the differences do not exist.

RECOGNIZING THE OPPRESSION

We as a group have experienced some pretty⁵ vicious Gay oppression at the hands of other men. When in a men's workshop that experience and other differences go unmentioned, when there is little validation of our particular experience of being male, many of us end up feeling unsafe, unseen, and like the facts of our lives not only don't matter but are in some way untrue.

When we walk into general men's workshops, we have to handle Gay oppression and the restimulation of Gay oppression in a way that may be similar to how people of the global majority have to handle racism and the restimulation of racism when they walk into a workshop that is mostly white. It is not sufficient for us to go off in a support group and try to discharge fast enough to keep up with the restimulation. As with any other oppressed group that is attempting to meet with a group of its oppressors, the oppression needs to be recognized (and preferably worked on) in the larger workshop if Gay and Bisexual men are going to be able to use the workshop fully for themselves.

continued . . .

¹ "Took on" means assumed, adopted.

² "Show up" means be present.

³ "Played out" means gone.

⁴ Frozen need is a term used in RC for a hurt that results when a rational need is not met in childhood. The hurt compels the person to keep trying to fill the need in the present, but the frozen need cannot be filled; it can only be discharged.

^{5 &}quot;Pretty" means quite.

LIBERATION

... continued

SOME SPECIFIC SUGGESTIONS

Here are some specific suggestions for action:

• Gay and Bisexual men need to be mentioned specifically when people are talking about "men's experience," and general men's leaders need to become expert on what our experience as men has been and is today. The invisibility of our experience, and the assumption that it is the same as other men's, is part of Gay oppression.

• Non-Gay men need to work on Gay oppression. A key part of many Gay and Bisexual men's experience has been being on the receiving end of male dominance. We get blamed for the feelings this mistreatment has left us withthe sense of being separate, different from, not fully male, and so on. We do indeed have work to do to recover from these hurts. However, non-Gay men also need to work on Gay oppression and how it has affected them. Gay oppression is essential to the conditioning of men to accept the limits imposed by men's oppression. It is also one important way that men learn about male dominance. The non-Gay men are dominant, while the "Gay" ones (treated as such even if they don't yet have the identity) are forced to submit. Every man has experienced Gay oppression in some form. Some men have participated in it, some have been directly targeted by it, and some have been bystanders. All of these roles have been hurtful and need to be worked on.

• Work needs to be done on how Gay oppression affects all men's lives now. Although some laws have changed in some countries, Gay oppression continues to be a vicious force in the "training" of men to play oppressive roles, toward each other and toward women. Changing laws is a step toward changing behavior, but our experience has been that behavior does not thoroughly change without discharge.

• Non-Gay men need to do much more work on their sex lives. In my experience, we Gay and Bisexual men have been far more open about where we struggle around sex. There is an assumption from Gay oppression that we are the ones who are badly hurt in this area. As far as I can tell,⁶ most men

have been badly hurt in the area of sex and closeness. The lack of work on it among non-Gay men feeds the message of Gay oppression that we are the only ones who have sexual distresses.

• Work on heterosexual identity would also be helpful. The sexual identities are rigid boxes that combine human and patterned attributes. At workshops I have used directions with non-Gay men such as "I'm not really heterosexual, but fortunately I have been able to pass." After a few minutes of numbness, the men have been able to have big, important sessions on how the heterosexual identity, like all other identities except human, has limited their lives and choices.

• There need to be support groups at men's workshops on eliminating Gay oppression and being allies to Gay and Bisexual men. These are not necessarily the same thing, although there is obvious overlap. Eliminating Gay oppression is something that benefits all men, as well as all humans. Working on it can also be a vehicle for non-Gay men to face how terrifying Gay oppression has been for them and what it would take to stand up against it—openly, fully, and publicly. Being allies to Gay and Bisexual men means being willing to understand the unique mix of humanness and distress we have in our lives and our minds and to find and fight for the human while taking thoughtful stands against the distresses.

When men leading general men's work do these things, when they make visible the differences mentioned above and encourage men to address how Gay oppression has affected all of us, workshops go better for the Gay and Bisexual men and deepen men's work for everyone.

I very much appreciate the men's work in RC and the committed efforts of the men who are leading it. I look forward to closer relationships among all of the men in RC and expect that we will establish fuller unity with each other through recognizing and working on our differences.

> "David Njinsky" Assistant International Liberation Reference Person for Gay Men



MARGO HITTLEMAN

6 "Tell" means see.

Cherie Brown in Jerusalem

Recently twenty-five Jerusalem (Israel) Co-Counselors gathered for an evening with Cherie Brown.¹ We were invited to "face the unfaceable," to feel and discharge "impossible" things—things that stop us. We were reminded that all of our feelings of disappointment and despair are from the past. Difficult things do happen in the present, but our intense feelings in response come from past distress.

We discharged on some common Jewish patterns (some of which are more specific to Ashkenazi Jews²):

• *Isolation and being alone:* As clients we often struggle to notice our counselors and to connect with them.

• *"I need to leave now":* Our people have a history of persecution and being forced to leave places. We internalized needing to be on guard. "Is this the time I need to be ready to leave?"

• *Being busy all the time:* It can be hard to stop or slow down. We may feel like if we run fast enough, we might be able to go back and save the Jews from the Holocaust.

• *Denial, concealment, and lying:* Hard things happened that can feel impossible to face. We may deny that they happened, conceal the facts, or lie about them. This was a common pattern in some of our families. A Jewish client of Freud³ told him that she had experienced incest. In the beginning he believed her and responded accordingly. However, he faced strong pressure to deny it, because "there is no such thing in Jewish families." In the end he recanted and invented the theory of the Oedipal complex, making incest explainable by a fantasy.

• *Swinging between hope and despair:* "Hope" can sometimes be a rigid response to despair. The contradiction to the distress can be to face and discharge the feelings of hopelessness.

• *Riding into battle in every situation:* Sometimes we cannot change things. It helps to face when this is true and then stop looking for more ways to be in battle.

We have a diverse RC Area that includes *olim*⁴ and native Israelis, Ashkenzim and Mizrahim,⁵ people of mixed heritage, several generations of Holocaust survivors, people of various political perspectives, and people representing a large variety of Jewish practice. We were asked to define, in a mini-session, what kind of a Jew we were (in relation to Jewish practice) and then to think of a different kind of Jewish practice we might adopt and notice what we would have to discharge to be that kind of a Jew.

Space was created to feel deeply. The work modeled Jewish unity.

Naomi Raz Jerusalem, Israel Reprinted from the RC e-mail discussion list for leaders of Jews

A New Information Coordinator for Birth Workers

Do you work with families during pregnancy, birth, or postpartum? I am a new Information Coordinator for our group!

A while ago I read an article in *Present Time* by a doula^{*} about how she was sharing RC with local doulas and lactation consultants. I found it inspiring and thought it would be great to increase the communication between all of us—midwives, doctors, nurses, doulas, lactation consultants, social workers, and others—who work with families during the months before and after birth as well as during the births.

As Information Coordinator, I will collect people's thoughts and experiences. Everyone who sends something to me will later receive a compilation of all the communications.

I thought we could start by getting to know each other—who we are, where we work, and what we do with families. If you want to say what you love about your work, and what is difficult about it, please do. How do you use RC for yourself and while working?

You can send something brief or write something longer. I would love to hear from all of us! Please write to me about yourself and your work.

> Catherine Fischer 503 Little Lake Drive Ann Arbor, Michigan 48103, USA CatherineDFischer@gmail.com

* A doula is a woman who gives advice and comfort to women who are giving birth.

 $^{^{\}scriptscriptstyle 1}\,$ Cherie Brown is the International Liberation Reference Person for Jews.

 $^{^{\}scriptscriptstyle 2}$ Ashkenzi Jews are Jews of Central and Eastern European descent, who generally identify as white.

³ Sigmund Freud (1856–1939), a Jewish Austrian neurologist and the founder of psychoanalysis

⁴ Olim means immigrants to Israel, in Hebrew.

⁵ Mizrahim are descendants of Jews from the Middle East, North Africa, Central Asia, and the Caucasus; they often identify as people of color.

Leading a Workshop on "Class Experience"

I recently had the opportunity to lead a weekend workshop for my RC Area, with about twenty-four hours' notice. I'm an Alternate Area Reference Person, and my Area Reference Person, Sharon Hilberer, needed to leave town abruptly, as her mother-in-law was approaching the end of life.

Sharon shared with me the plans she'd had for the workshop and then encouraged me to make the workshop my own. As it turned out,¹ her travel plans allowed her to lead on Friday evening. Then I took over and led the rest of the workshop.

I am the mother of two and the breadwinner² for my family. If you had asked me in advance to lead a workshop for my Area, I'd have said, "No way. It's just not possible." But with little preparation, a great team backing³ me, and no time to worry, I was completely up for it!⁴

The topic of the workshop, broadly speaking, was classism. We drew heavily from Tim Jackins' article in the July 2014 *Present Time* "To End the Class Society Is in Everyone's Interest." When Sharon and I met for our planning conversation (the morning of the workshop!) and she began talking about class, I immediately thought of my primary Co-Counselor of fourteen years. When a group of RCers would divide themselves by class, he'd often feel uncertain of where he fit and restimulated about not belonging.

I had never had that challenge. I felt very at home in working-class groups and had led a working-class

 $^{\scriptscriptstyle 4}\,$ "Up for it" means willing to do it.



THE NETHERLANDS • TIM JACKINS

women's support group for many years. Recently, however, I had begun to think about my own experiences with more nuance. This was prompted in part by being at a working-class evening led by Dan Nickerson (the International Liberation Reference Person for Working-Class People). I had noted that my husband did not raise his hand, as I did, when Dan asked who was currently middle class. Reflecting on the difference in how my husband and I perceived our current class situation led me to think about the differences in our childhoods, despite our both being raised "working class."

In his article, Tim talks about how in the United States, due to the shifting that has taken place, almost all of us have mixed class backgrounds.

Sharon and I talked about all this nuance and complexity and brainstormed some ways we might incorporate it into the workshop.

On Friday evening at the workshop, Sharon organized us into support groups in a way that was a huge contribution to the remainder of the weekend. Instead of asking us to divide ourselves into the often-used raised-poor, working-class, middleclass, and owning-class categories, she asked us to raise our hands if our parents' work experiences fell into one of a dozen or so categories, including farmers, blue-collar nonunion workers, blue-collar union workers, professional lower-status workers (teachers, social workers, and so on), professional higher-status workers (doctors, lawyers, and so on). She had enough categories that almost everyone fit into at least two of them.

Someone wrote down everyone's responses. Then the leaders' group met and, based on the responses, put together support groups for the weekend. These were a different kind of class-based support group. Rather than having been asked which labels (with all the individual connotations we ascribed to them) best fit our life experience, we'd been asked what our life experience had been and then grouped with other people who shared that experience.

It was this foundation of thinking and creative structure that led me to choose for the remainder of the workshop to talk not about class background but about "class experience." My theme for the weekend was "more is possible"-more is possible for us, for our families and communities, and for the earth. Not in the capitalist "I could have more, earn more" sense. A world is possible in which we no longer have exploitation and there is enough for everyone to lead a good life. That said, often what each of us feels is possible is dependent on our class experience.

¹ "Turned out" means happened.

² "Breadwinner" means person whose earnings are the primary source of support.

³ "Backing" means supporting.

I talked about class experience in a variety of ways. I related it to age and how every age is a great age to be and, in an oppressive society, no age is a good age to be. Our class experience is much the same. It has been great, and it has also been shitty⁵ and oppressive. I think we need to avoid comparisons ("yours was better, mine was worse") and instead focus on through what lenses we now see the world, based on the experiences we've had.

I also talked about how if we are in a different spot than where we started out in our class experience, we get to have all of it. We get to claim the strengths we bring from where we started and the strengths we have gained or are gaining from where we are now. We get to draw on our past experiences and also understand the opportunity of where we are. What can I figure out here and now? What's my possibility? What's my ability to influence things, make things happen, notice that more is possible for me and for the world?

On Saturday evening I talked about how most of us have mixed class experiences and thus have had things change during the course of our life. We may have even shifted classes and then shifted back to where we started out. I did a demonstration with someone on what it had been like to navigate a change in class identity. I felt very much at the edge of my thinking, and the client had a great session.

I wrapped up⁶ on Sunday morning by reminding us that we are okay and that class oppression is alive and well. I asked the group, "How do we take these ideas of more is possible and say, 'Wow, what do I get to do?' and also remember that there is oppression, that it's real?" I talked about how when we go back to our lives, things will probably be hard to figure out. There is no encouragement for us to think about all this. More is possible, *and* it's going to be a fight. We have to do it together. We have to have each other. Classism is one of those things that impact all of us. We've had different class experiences, which means that we've been hurt in different ways, but classism has confused all of us. We have to help each other get clear of the confusions.

I closed by saying, "Wherever you are right now, you are okay. That just has to be true. We are human, and we are all in this oppressive society. Wherever we are and whatever we've figured out is okay. The point, the goal is to actually think about it. Wherever we are, we get to think, 'Oh, this is where I am. What's possible from here? What do I get to do from here? Because this is where I am. There's no better or worse. This is my spot, so what's possible for me from here?' The goal is thinking. The goal is flexibility. Are we thinking about how we move forward individually, and how we move forward collectively?"

I enjoyed leading the workshop using this concept of class experience, and people who attended seemed to appreciate it as well. Here are a few of the comments the participants shared during the closing:

• The idea that it's a class experience and that there can be mixed parts of it, and most people have mixed parts, is a different way to think about it. It makes me feel less isolated.

• I really like this mixed-class stuff, and if I'm ever at a workshop where that option isn't offered, I'm going to make a stink.⁷

• I enjoyed getting a broader sense of class—seeing it as not just a static identity.

More is possible for all of us, including me! Leading a workshop with twenty-four hours' notice was a powerful experience that gave me a clearer picture of where I am and what I am capable of making happen.

> *Kirsten Johnson* Minneapolis, Minnesota, USA

⁷ "Make a stink" means make a fuss, complain.



CLIMATE MARCH IN HELSINKI, FINLAND • KAISLI SYRJÄNEN

⁵ "Shitty" means bad.

⁶ "Wrapped up" means finished.

After Beijing+20

I led several gatherings following our remarkable work together at Beijing+20 in New York City, USA.*

One was a report-back attended by twenty-five female and male Co-Counselors. It included people from different age groups and lots of global majority people. I focused on the highlights of our Co-Counseling workshops at Beijing+20 and some of the debates at the conference about sexism vs. gender equality. In mini-sessions we noticed the ways that sexism is still very much present in our lives.

A couple of weeks later I spoke to the student body of a Catholic high school at a week-long summit on gender (in)equality. Early in my talk I had the females pair up together and the

Classism Must Go

I think that on our Community and our sisterhood of people who are trying to think more clearly every day devolves the job of keeping on saying, over and over again, "We must have a classless society. We must have the end of economic exploitation." We're going to have to find both insidious and open ways of saying classism must go. We must have a society in which all people have all the benefits of the value they produce.

> Harvey Jackins From page 80 of A Better World

males pair up with each other and everyone take turns responding to the question, "What is your earliest memory of knowing you were female or male?" It was great to hear six hundred students come alive as they listened to each other. I also talked about how we are limited when we imagine God only as male. I said that images of God as female could help us transform systems of male domination, particularly in our own church. Students did a mini-session on "What are the images of God you grew up with?" I talked about how all boys and girls are hurt by systems of male domination.

Lastly I offered a reflection to a group of two hundred and fifty parish and community-organizing leaders, including seventy male priests, from twenty-two states who are preparing for Pope Francis' visit to the United States. Our work together is being called "Confronting an Economy of Exclusion." I urged everyone to keep asking questions that would allow us to make women's issues as visible as men's. How are global majority and white women impacted by an economy of exclusion? How are global majority and white men impacted by an economy of exclusion? Often the answers are different. Also, the struggles of poor and working-class women go invisible if we're not specifically asking questions about them. Following my remarks I had people pair up and listen to one another.

My Co-Counseling sessions before, during, and after Beijing+20 have made a big difference in my willingness to speak out about sexism and male domination. Either I've become more courageous or it is becoming more fun to bring our Co-Counseling perspectives and listening tools out into my wide-world communities.

> Ellie Hidalgo Los Angeles, California, USA Reprinted from the RC e-mail discussion list for leaders of women



BRYN MAWR COLLEGE, BRYN MAWR, PENNSYLVANIA, USA • CARLY FRINTNER

^{*} In March 2015, No Limits for Women (a project of the RC Communities) sent a delegation of Co-Counselors to the non-governmental-organization Women's Forum held in conjunction with the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women Beijing+20, in New York, New York, USA.

For Men, Too

I just attended a report-back on the No Limits for Women project done at Beijing+20 in New York (USA) a few months ago.¹

I walked away feeling "de-isolated" in my concern to end sexism and male domination as a man. In my day-to-day life, it is hard to find allies in this among other men. It was good to feel that I have a team.

Women are *not* helpless victims of sexism. Men carry the oppressor material² but *are good* nonetheless. And it's cool³ when we can work together and help each other in the battles to end this oppression.

I left feeling reinvigorated about the struggle, and with some people in mind I could reach out to, to keep the momentum going.

Ending sexism and male domination is for men, too.

Benjamin Altman Flushing, New York, USA

² "Material" means distress.

³ "Cool" means good, satisfying.

NO LIMITS The Liberation of Women

In March 2015, No Limits for Women, a project of the Re-evaluation Counseling Communities, sent a delegation to the non-governmental-organization Women's Forum held in conjunction with the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women Beijing+20, in New York, New York, USA.

This twenty-page pamphlet was created to help the delegation inform other delegates about the work of No Limits.

We can continue to make good use of it—in communicating ever more widely what we've learned in RC about women's liberation.

> \$3.00, plus postage and handling Ordering information on page 110



ADIRONDACK MOUNTAINS, NEW YORK, USA • STEVE BANBURY

¹ In March 2015, No Limits for Women (a project of the Re-evaluation Counseling Communities) sent a delegation of Co-Counselors to the non-governmental-organization Women's Forum held in conjunction with the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women Beijing+20, in New York, New York, USA.



ANNE KOPLINKA-LOEHR

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

Challenging Age-Related Oppression

Why do we do age-specific work in RC?

Both young people (ages zero to twenty) and young adults (ages twenty-one to thirty) face oppression because of their age, but their oppressions are different.

The oppression of young people is based on the false idea that they are not fully intelligent human beings. Adults often don't listen to young people or take their ideas and thoughts seriously. They control almost all aspects of young people's lives. And there is widespread mistreatment of young people in other ways as well.

We who are young adults have more autonomy and control over our lives than we did as young people. We don't get mistreated in the same ways. However, we face systemic pressure, particularly from the class system, to give up on the dreams and goals we had as young people and conform to a narrow and oppressive picture of what it means to be an "adult": having a steady job, earning as much money as possible, settling down with a long-term partner, giving up on other relationships, and giving up on changing the world.

The oppression of both young people and young adults helps to "cement in" all the other oppressions—including racism, sexism, and classism—as well as the degradation of the environment.

In RC we have recognised that undertaking age-specific liberation work for young people and young adults is the best way of challenging these oppressions and seeing that all of us—young people, young adults, and our older allies—get to fully reemerge; have joyful, human lives; and work toward a world free of all oppressions.

Recently in RC there has been a move toward organising people between the ages of thirty-one and forty. This is different from young people's and young adults' liberation work, because there is no age oppression of people in this group. However, there is an age "gap." Most of the people in RC and leading in RC are over forty. (This is probably because it took a while for our Communities to understand young people's and young adults' oppression and to combat it in a way that makes RC attractive to younger people.) One of the central goals of the International RC Community is to have more younger people in it. Key to achieving this goal is having people in their thirties connected to each other and central to and leading in RC. This age group can also play an important role as allies to young adults and young people.

Co-Counsellors over forty can be important allies in combating young people's and young adults' oppression and in building an age-diverse Community. We also recognise that people over fifty face very damaging elders' oppression.

Challenging age-related oppression works best when people of all ages are working toward having full, fun lives; going after* their dreams and goals; and seeking wide world change. In other words, this is a project we are all in together!

> Barb Molanus Alice Springs, Northern Territory, Australia and Brooke Greenwood Katherine, Northern Territory, Australia

* "Going after" means pursuing.

The Large Women and Female Allies Workshop

I was very pleased to attend my first Large Women and Female Allies Workshop a few weeks ago. It was great to be with almost a hundred women who are actively thinking about how to stand against sexism, reclaim their minds, and take charge of their health.

I appreciated the wide range of body sizes and types and having the opportunity to connect with women who are at different points along the journey and see how they are approaching things. Demonstrations highlighted the major effects of the oppression and how it sits differently within the various constituencies of race, class, age, religion, and so on. Diane¹ consistently linked the current struggles to early hurts. I got a clearer picture of how the early place where I wanted to give up shows up now as an inability to think about or take action on my health.

Allies met separately for much of the workshop, so we large women had a lot of time together in largewomen-only spaces. This created an enormous safety for me to work on really hard things. The physical counseling² sessions were not available to allies. I wondered why not and then remembered that this was a large women's workshop and the time was for us. Some of the topic groups were for large women only, and some were for both large women and allies. There were no topic tables at meals, so we could pay attention to our bodies and our connections with the people at our table.

DOING THIS FOR OURSELVES

On Friday night Diane announced that Marion Ouphouet³ would be taking over the leading of large women's work in RC. She said that the RC leadership had not pushed any large woman to lead the project because it is so hard for us to figure out how to do this work for ourselves. It blew me away⁴ that they had made so much space for the large women who started the project to do the work for themselves first without worrying about leading anyone else. Diane has been leading the project for twelve years, and I hadn't understood why until she explained it this way.

I am amazed at what Diane has been able to do to move large women's work forward in RC, especially from the position of ally. She was incredibly helpful to me as I worked on getting my large women's support group started. I also appreciate her ability to clearly articulate what she has found useful to do, and not do, as an ally. Nevertheless, I am excited to have Marion leading us now. She knows the oppression from the inside, and that creates a level of safety for me that I don't find with allies. I am interested to learn how she figured out how to do the work for herself, and what support she might need from us in the constituency to keep her own re-emergence at the center.

FLEXIBLE INTELLIGENCE, NOT RIGID PLANS OR PATTERNS

Marion is taking on⁵ her health using her flexible intelligence instead of a rigid plan or pattern. I had read her article about forming a new relationship with her bathroom scale.⁶ She also talked about this during her class on Sunday morning. She shared a great quote about the importance of setting goals: that if you don't know where you are going, then any road will take you there and you will never know when you arrive. She said that she had avoided the scale for a long time but that now she used it to help her know where she was, which helped her notice each day what the next step was to keep the number going in the direction she wanted. I asked her if she had a target number, and she said that she didn't, that the goal was to have her mind and to remember that she could think at each step. The more I think about this, the more I am excited about her leadership.

continued . . .

 $^6\,$ See "A New Relationship with My Bathroom Scale," on pages 9 to 10 of the October 2014 Present Time.



PAINTING OF UPPER BLUE LAKE • NANCY LEMON

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¹ Diane Shisk, the Alternate International Reference Person and the leader of the workshop

² "Physical counseling" is counseling in which a counselor, who has been trained to do it, provides aware and thoughtful physical resistance for a client to push and fight against.

³ Marion Ouphouet is an RC leader in Seattle, Washington, USA.

⁴ "Blew me away" means amazed me.

⁵ "Taking on" means taking charge of.

LIBERATION

. . . continued

AN UNACKNOWLEDGED OPPRESSION

Diane said that it is good for us to rage against the oppression but that this is hard to do when it is not understood as an oppression in our society. She compared fat oppression to racism, saying that in each case individuals are targeted every day but that with racism there is a movement against it and it is understood to be an oppression and to be wrong. There is no movement or understanding like that with fat oppression.

BARIATRIC SURGERY

I appreciated the attention put on bariatric surgery. It was helpful

to discharge on it and to hear what others are thinking, including those who have had it. Diane said that it is not a "magic bullet"—that it requires a lot of work and discipline in the places where we struggled before the surgery—but that she wants there to be more space in RC for people to discharge on it, on a case-by-case basis. In some situations the surgery might make sense, especially if it lets the person have a longer life or a better quality of life. She asked us to discharge on these questions:

• Does it make sense for you now? Will it ever make sense for you in the future? If so, under what conditions?

• Does it make sense for any other woman? If so, under what conditions?

SEX AND SEXUAL EXPLOITATION

Teresa Enrico⁷ led a class on sex and sexual exploitation. She got the group laughing a lot at the beginning but in a way that did not seem vulgar to me. She encouraged us to remember that sexual abuse is a form of sexual exploitation and said that to build the "muscle" to counsel on it, we need to face the way it is systematically used to keep us restimulated and feeling powerless. She said that lots of the feelings that come out of sexual exploitation—like self-hatred, blame, and shame—are ground in like nobody's business⁸ by large women's oppression. She also said that if we close the



BALTIMORE, MARYLAND, USA • AMANDA MARTINEZ

Diane said the following:

• Being an ally lets you see how your own internalized sexism is in the way. It is also a great road out of it. A key issue in the battle against sexism is how to live your life not based on the standard set by sexism of how to be attractive to men. That's an unhealthy road.

• You must pay attention to where you are scared to be fat or to gain weight. Lots of allies tell themselves that their fight to stay thin is for their health when they are really fighting to meet the standard set by sexism. Look at what you are motivated by. Sexism is dangerous to your health (purging, laxatives, excessive exercise, and so on), and identifying the internalized sexism and discharging it gives you a shot at being¹⁰ an ally.

• You must understand the oppression that large women face every time they are in public and that being large is based in early hurts; it is not due to a lack of willpower. Don't get confused that you're better than large women because you don't have the distress.

• Internalized sexism among large women makes it hard for them to stay in touch. They will love and fight for each other, but having a weekly check in can be hard. They need a strong group of allies outside the oppression to help them do the work.

• Don't think you know enough to be a good ally yet. If you think you know better, that your way is the right way, then you don't know enough to be an effective

door on dating or sex, the discouragement we carry about them does not get challenged. This section of the workshop allowed me to access rage, and I have been generally pissed off⁹ ever since and having huge sessions.

ALLIES

Diane and Teresa said that no one has done enough work on the oppression to be considered an ally to large women. They seemed to include themselves in that, which surprised me. I don't think I have ever heard an ally to large women state so explicitly that she still has a lot to work on. They put the word *allies* in quotes.

⁷ Teresa Enrico is the International Liberation Reference Person for Pacific Islander and Pilipino/a-Heritage People and a leader of women and physical power work and early sexual memories work.

⁸ "Ground in like nobody's business" means tremendously reinforced.

^{9 &}quot;Pissed off" means angry.

¹⁰ "A shot at being" means a chance to be.

ally. You need to do lots of listening. Put your hand over your mouth. Whenever you feel a pull to give advice, or you want to say what has worked for you or share something you've read, even if you are a hundred percent sure you are right, take all of it to sessions with other allies.

• If you want to build relationships with large women, don't wait for them to ask for help. Most of them gave up on that a long time ago. Say, "I love you. I am committed to your liberation. Is there any way I can be helpful?" If they have an idea, go with it. If they don't, have a session. Keep coming back. What do you think might be useful? Don't have an agenda, for their body or their life. They have great goals and agendas. Support them.

• You need to have lots of sessions on any place where you feel worried or scared, where you are sure they will die. Have those sessions.

• Large women can't show rage when the oppression isn't acknowledged. You must start personally. Allies

are perfect targets for upsets. Welcome the rage against the oppression. Often it comes out first as grumpiness. It can take some work to get it to blow up. Work toward the rage. Say, "I know the oppression is hard. It is unfounded, vicious, and horrible. Kill me as an agent of the oppression. I would love to hear what it's like for you."

I am curious about what Teresa did with the allies when they were not with us, because I noticed a difference in my relationships with them and I would like to be able to tell some of my other counselors what they need to do.

I am worrying that this post is too long and that I am taking up too much space. But know that it matters that I show myself, what I learned, and how my mind is working—as a contradiction to my internalized oppression.

> Betsy Ames Wendell, Massachusetts, USA Reprinted from the RC e-mail discussion list for leaders of women



COSTA RICA • SHIRA ROSEN

The Importance of Play

Play, which is often treated by the distress patterns of the oppressive society as if it were "amusement" or "entertainment" or even "wasting time," is a very basic, profound, and effective learning process. Young people who are allowed to play together without mistreatment and given access to information learn very, very rapidly.

Harvey Jackins From page 72 of *The Kind, Friendly Universe*

The Decision to Have (or Not Have) Children

At the Middle-Class Women's Workshop last February, a woman suggested counseling for a year about not having children, then for a year about having children, before making any decisions. I decided that I would do this.

Since February I've been counseling about the decision to not have children. I've dedicated roughly half of my session time (usually the second half of each session) plus some mini-sessions to it. Some of the distresses and topics that seem connected include the following:

- What it means to be a "true" woman, and my "worth" as a female
- My "legacy" and carrying on my family line
- What I will "do" with my life if I don't have children
- Focusing on myself first
- Parents' oppression and getting overwhelmed
- Fear of passing on distress to my children and acting oppressive toward them
- How well equipped I am (or am not) to have children
- Capitalism and the pressures of the economic system
- · Global issues, such as climate change, economics, and global population
- · Lots of grief and disappointment
- The possibility of adoption
- Not meeting my frozen needs* by having children
- The birth process (wanting to experience it)

• My partnership and whether I want to continue it (or fear that my partner may not want to continue it if I decide not to have children)

- Pressure from friends, family, and myself, and competition for who will have children first
- Urgency to make the decision quickly
- Remembering that I'm in charge and have the final say

I've been amazed at how counseling about this has freed up some attention. I now feel more relaxed about the decision. I'm also less attached to a particular outcome. (For example, I could see myself not having children and still having a rich, full life.)

In the coming year I plan to counsel on how I would like to set up my life to get lots of support if I do decide to have children and how I could maximize the time I spend with them.

I'm interested to hear what other young adults think and about any work people have done in this area.



Brattleboro, Vermont, USA Reprinted from the RC e-mail discussion list for leaders of young adults

Anne Koplinka-Loehr

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



Intergenerational Movie-Going

I am a thirty-year-old woman living in western Massachusetts, USA. I just got home from seeing *She's Beautiful When She's Angry*, a movie that tells the story of the feminist movement in the late 1960s and early 1970s.

I had planned to go with a friend, but she was feeling sick and cancelled. Then I remembered that an RCer had talked about seeing the movie with other RCers, so I texted A— and K—, two young-adult female Co-Counseling leaders in my Region,¹ to see if they would be interested in seeing the movie and having a Co-Counseling session afterward. The three of us are close and had recently gone to an RC middle-class women's workshop together.

A— replied that she already had a date to see the movie that night with her partner (who is also in RC). K— hadn't heard of the movie and asked for a link to the trailer. I sent her one, and she wrote back, "I just started crying from watching the trailer. Let's do it." Success!

Since the middle-class women's workshop, A—, K—, and I have been thinking and discharging about intergenerational connections and relationships, particularly among women. After we'd made a firm plan to go to the movie, K— suggested that we invite some "grown-ups" as well, so we decided to invite our Area Reference Persons. We weren't able to reach them on such short notice, but doing the asking put us in a mindset of fully respecting older women and being excited to learn from them—a good way to go into the movie.

The movie was wonderful. I encourage everyone to see it. After the movie the four of us stood in the lobby, talking about our favorite parts, what we'd noticed, and so on. Five older women who had also seen the movie stood talking several feet from us. K— said, "I wish our groups could combine!" We agreed and laughed for a few seconds about the awkwardness of approaching this group of strangers. Then A— walked right up to them and with a big smile said, "We'd like to hear what you're saying!" They all smiled back and welcomed us in.

We proceeded to have an hour-long conversation with them in the lobby of the theater. We talked about their reactions to the movie, the feminist activism they had been a part of in their youth, and what they were involved in now. They asked us what we thought



of the movie and about present-day feminist actions. We told them about the recent march in New York City (USA) on the day before Beijing+20,² which some of them hadn't heard of and were excited to know about. They said repeatedly how nice it was to be having a conversation across generations and were interested in finding ways to continue it.

After A— and her partner went home, K— and I had a session in the car. As soon as I had someone paying sweet attention to me, the feelings came right up. I am angry on a daily basis about present-day sexism and don't always find it easy to discharge, because I feel hopeless about it. It was hopeful to see a movie that showed not only what is left³ to fight but also where real gains have been made. One of the women in the movie talked about careers being open to women that had never been open before and said, "I think we really won that. I don't think that will change. I think it's done." I cried thinking about the possibility of winning something and having the change be permanent, not constantly in danger of being taken away.

I feel thankful for all the women who have fought before me, for the women who are fighting now, for my relationships with younger and older women, and for my involvement in the RC women's liberation project.

> Emma Roderick Northampton, Massachusetts, USA Reprinted from the RC e-mail discussion list for leaders of women

³ "Is left" means remains.

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

² Beijing+20 was the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women held in New York City, New York, USA, in March 2015 (twenty years after the Fourth United Nations World Conference on Women, in Beijing, China). No Limits for Women, a project of the RC Communities, sent a delegation to the non-governmental organization Women's Forum held in conjunction with the United Nations event.

Appreciating Present Time

Dear Tim and Diane,*

Yesterday the October PRESENT TIME arrived in my mailbox. I immediately started reading and loved the first article on moving forward while challenging ourselves and facing reality. I also loved reading about facing fear.

Thank you both so much for thinking this big and helping us all with clear directions and solid theory. I am so glad to be in RC with both of you as my and our leaders.

> *Wytske Visser* Fryslân, the Netherlands



PRESENT TIME is super, as usual. I could not be more impressed by the thinking and by the projects, actions, and programs designed and executed.

Pam Maccabee Glastonbury, Connecticut, USA

Thanks for PRESENT TIME, which I so enjoy reading.



Ellie Hidalgo Los Angeles, California, USA Thanks for the July 2015 PRESENT TIME. I just loved the way quotes from Harvey Jackins' writings were interspersed throughout and related to the themes of the other articles. They each gave me an opportunity to think freshly.



Vicky Grosser Geelong, Victoria, Australia

The last issue, July 2015, was just superb! I often use information in the articles for the ongoing class that I teach, and it was extra relevant and important for my Community this time.

Joan MacKenzie Asheville, North Carolina, USA

Thanks for all the work that many people do to deliver on schedule—a quarterly compilation of high-quality insights and information!



Dale Evarts Durham, North Carolina, USA

I love reading PRESENT TIME.

Betsy Ames Wendell, Massachusetts, USA



DAMIEN COOK

The RC Website

There is a website for Re-evaluation Counseling at <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, The Human Side of Human Beings*, and the RC postulates)

• Introductory talks (in audio) by Harvey Jackins (1986) and Tim Jackins (2008)

• RC practice (how to start RC, what to do in a session, counseling techniques, how to lead support groups)

• The Guidelines for the Re-evaluation Counseling Communities, 2013 edition, and forms

• Updates to the Fundamentals Teaching Guides

• Translations of articles into many languages, and language liberation information

- Articles from recent journals and Present Time
- Resources for workshop organizers

• Contact information for ordering literature from Rational Island Publishers

• An online fundamentals of Co-Counseling class

• Outlines for teaching fundamentals classes, in English and Spanish, and articles about teaching RC

• An ever-growing collection of back issues of *Present Time* (currently 1974 to 1998)

• "Today's Thought"—a short daily thought from a Re-evaluation Counseling perspective

- International Reference Person Perspectives
- And more

How to Contact Us Online

- 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 website 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

Online Fundamentals Class

An online 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 email 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.

Please see the RC website at <www. rc.org/onlineclass> for more information about how to sign up for membership in the online 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 <www.rc.org>. 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.

Sustaining All Life

Sustaining All Life (SAL), a project of the RC Communities, sent a delegation to the United Nations Climate Change Conference in Paris, France, November 30 to December 8, 2015. SAL presented workshops, held public forums and caucuses, and led support groups, fundamentals classes, and listening projects as part of the work of taking the tools of RC to climate change activists. For reports on our activities, see <www.rc.org/ sustainingalllife>.

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 International Reference Person at <ircc@rc.org>.
- **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 <bjlove.rc@gmail.com>.

- Leaders of **Artists:** <artists@mail.rc.org>. Contact John Fehringer, International Liberation Reference Person for Visual Artists, at <rc@fehringer.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>.
- Leaders of **College and University Faculty:** <colleagues@mail.rc.org>. Contact Ellie Brown, International Liberation Reference Person for College and University Faculty, at <ebrown@wcupa.edu>.
- Leaders on **Disability**, **Chronic Illness**, and **Health**: <health-disability@mail.rc.org>. Contact Marsha Saxton, International Liberation Reference Person for People with Disabilities, at <marsax@wid.org>.
- Leaders of **East and Southeast Asian- and Pacific Islander-Heritage People:** <asian@mail.rc.org>. Contact Francie Chew, International Liberation Reference Person for Chinese-Heritage People, at <franciechew@gmail.com>.

Leaders of **Educational Change**:

<education@mail.rc.org>. Contact Marilyn Robb, International Commonality Reference Person for Educational Change, at <joyfulplace@yahoo.com>.

RC ON THE INTERNET

Leaders of **Elders:** <elders@mail.rc.org>. Contact Pam Geyer, International Liberation Reference Person for Elders, at <pgeyer@medcetera.com>.

Leaders of **Family Work:** <family-work@mail.rc.org>. Contact Chuck Esser, International Commonality Reference Person for Family Work, at <ckesser1@gmail.com>.

Leaders of Irish-Heritage People: <irish@mail.rc.org>. Contact Sheila Fairon, Regional Reference Person for Northern Ireland, at <fairon@fastmail.fm>.

Leaders of **Jews:** <jewish@mail.rc.org>. Contact Cherie Brown, International Liberation Reference Person for Jews, at <ncbiinc@aol.com>.

Leaders of **Latinos/as and Chicanos/as:** <latino@mail.rc.org>. Contact Lorenzo Garcia, International Liberation Reference Person for Chicanos/as, at <lgcrc@aol.com>.

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>.

Leaders of **Native Americans:** <natives@mail.rc.org>. Contact Marcie Rendon, International Liberation Reference Person for Native Americans, at <mrendon703@aol.com>.

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>.

Leaders of **Parents:** <parents@mail.rc.org>. Contact Marya Axner, International Liberation Reference Person for Parents, at <maryaaxner@gmail.com>. Leaders of Raised-Poor People:

<raised-poor@mail.rc.org>. Contact Gwen Brown, International Liberation Reference Person for Raised-Poor People, at <gbbrown@udel.edu>.

Leaders of **South, Central, and West Asian-Heritage People:** <scw-asians@mail.rc.org>. Contact Azadeh Khalili, International Liberation Reference Person for South, Central, and West Asian-Heritage People, at <azikhalili@gmail.com>.

Leaders of **Union Activists:** <unions@mail.rc.org>. Contact Joanie Parker, International Liberation Reference Person for Union Activists, at <jep7ok@aol.com>.

Leaders of **Wide World Change:** <wwc@mail.rc.org>. Contact Julian Weissglass, International Commonality Reference Person for Wide World Change, at <julian@weissglass.net>.

Leaders of **Women:** <women@mail.rc.org>. Contact Diane Balser, International Liberation Reference Person for Women, at <dibalser@comcast.net>.

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>.



POUGHKEEPSIE, NEW YORK, USA • ALAN EPSTEIN

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

TRADES OR OCCUPATIONS

- ADULT EDUCATION TEACHERS: SUSAN SCHACHER P.O. BOX 19309, OAKLAND, CA 94619 USA Tel. +1-510-482-0973 e-mail: susan4@jps.net ALEXANDER TECHNIQUE TEACHERS: ELIZABETH HUEBNER 327 SOUTH ST., WILLIMANTIC, CT 06226 USA
- Tel. +1-860-456-1529 e-mail: huebner.ccat@gmail.com BIRTH WORKERS (MIDWIVES, DOCTORS, NURSES, DOULAS, LACTATION CONSULTANTS, SOCIAL WORKERS, & OTHERS WHO WORK WITH FAMILIES DURING THE MONTHS BE-FORE & AFTER BIRTH AS WELL AS DURING THE BIRTHS): CATHERINE FISCHER
 - 503 LITTLE LAKE DRIVE, ANN ARBOR, MI 48103 USA Tel. +1-734-395-5244 e-mail: catherinedfischer@gmail.com
- CLERGYPERSONS: BRIAN SMEATON BEARNA GHAOITHE, DRUMCAVNEY, TRENTAGH, LETTERKENNY, COUNTY DONEGAL, IRELAND Tel. +353-74-91 37917 e-mail: smeatonbrian@gmail.com
- CONSTRUCTION WORKERS: ELIZABETH SKIDMORE 50 ATHERTON ST., ROXBURY, MA 02119 USA Tel. +1-617-780-6792 e-mail: eskidmore2@aol.com
- EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATORS: DAN CORLEY 31 WESTMORE ST., PROVIDENCE, RI 02910 USA
- Tel. +1-401-467-9709 e-mail: dcorley@communityprep.org ELECTED OFFICIALS, CURRENT AND FORMER:
- RUTH ATKIN Tel. +1-510-653-6003, +1-510-915-0167 e-mail: ratkin1@aol.com FUNDRAISERS FOR COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS:

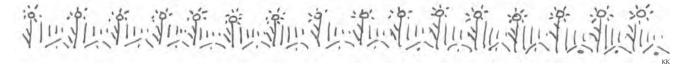
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- P.O. BOX 437, LAKEMBA, NSW 2195 AUSTRALIA Tel. +61-2 9740 3508 e-mail: roewen.wishart@gmail.com
- MACHINISTS, TOOLMAKERS, AND MOLDMAKERS: BETSY BEACH
 - 31 WESTMORE ST., PROVIDENCE, RI 02910-1045 USA Tel. +1-401-467-9709 e-mail: betsybeach@verizon.net

- MANAGERS, ADMINISTRATORS, AND EXECUTIVES: MIKE MARKOVITS 25 FOREST STREET, UNIT 17C, STAMFORD, CT 06901 USA Tel. +1-203-536-5413 e-mail: mjmrkvts@aol.com OCCUPATIONAL THERAPISTS: JAN FROEHLICH
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- PHYSICAL SCIENTISTS: JEFFREY HINKLEY 604 TABB LAKES DR., YORKTOWN, VA 23693 USA Tel. +1-757-867-7909 e-mail: polymers1@aol.com
- PHYSICIANS: STEVE BROMER 73 DEL MONTE ST., SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94112 USA Tel. +1-415-309-8912 e-mail: sbromer@mac.com

BACKGROUNDS AND AVOCATIONS

- ADULT CHILDREN OF ALCOHOLICS: WENDE WOOD 3600 MAGNOLIA BLVD. W., SEATTLE, WA 98199 USA Tel. +1-206-783-7253 e-mail: wendej.wood@gmail.com
- ALLERGY AND ENVIRONMENTAL POLLUTANTS SURVIVORS: LAWRENCE AUBURN PLUMLEE 5717 BEECH AVE., BETHESDA, MD 20817-2563 USA Tel. +1-301-897-9614 e-mail: lap@laplumlee.us
- ARAB-HERITAGE PEOPLE: BETSY NAJJAR 916 19TH ST. NW, ALBUQUERQUE, NM 87104 USA Tel. +1-505-242-4646 e-mail: betsynajjar@gmail.com
- ASIAN-HERITAGE PEOPLE IN AUSTRALIA: RIE SHIRAISHI 198 NELSON ST., ANNANDALE, NSW 2038 AUSTRALIA Tel. +61-2-9692-9628 e-mail: deanrie@ozemail.com.au
- BLACK "MENTAL HEALTH" LIBERATION ACTIVISTS IN ENGLAND: JENNY MARTIN 144 CLARENCE RD., HANDSWORTH, BIRMINGHAM, B21 0EE ENGLAND Tel. +44 121 240 0998 e-mail: families52@hotmail.com



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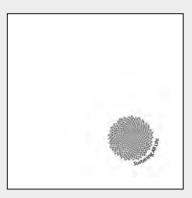
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WOMEN'S REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS	DVD
(1 hour, 5 minutes) with Diane Balser	211
<i>Women's reproductive rights. A talk, demonstrations,</i>	VHS
<i>and questions and answers.</i>	211
HOW PARENTS CAN COUNSEL THEIR CHILDREN	DVD
(1 hour, 50 minutes) with Tim Jackins	212
<i>Questions and answers at a gather-in for parents and</i>	VHS
<i>allies of parents.</i>	212
MEN'S LIVES: PANEL #1	DVD
(1 hour, 54 minutes) with Harvey Jackins	213
<i>Five men share what it's been like growing up male,</i>	VHS
<i>from infancy to the present, in U.S. society.</i>	213

CLIMATE MARCH IN HONOLULU, HAWAII, USA • KRISTIN LARSON

NO ANCESTORS, NO DESCENDANTS (53 minutes) with Harvey Jackins <i>A short talk and several demonstrations. (The notion</i> <i>that we "descend" from each other can be dispensed</i> <i>with.)</i>	DVD 214 VHS 214
FRONTIER COMMITMENTS	DVD
(2 hours) with Harvey Jackins	215
Advanced theory, and six demonstrations, on the	VHS
"frontier" commitments.	215
COUNSELING THE VERY YOUNG	DVD
(1 hour, 14 minutes) with Tim Jackins and others	216
<i>Tim Jackins on counseling the very young. Patty</i>	VHS
<i>Wipfler, Lenore Kenny, and Tim respond to questions.</i>	216
BREAKING FREE FROM RACISM	DVD
(1 hour, 40 minutes) with Harvey Jackins	217
Methods for white people to discharge racism and	VHS
reclaim their full humanity.	217
PEOPLE OF COLOR AND BLACK PEOPLE: TWO PANELS (1 hour, 24 minutes) with Harvey Jackins <i>Twenty-one Co-Counselors targeted by racism answer</i> <i>questions and discharge. Black RCers answer ques-</i> <i>tions about being black and about being black in Re-</i> <i>evaluation Counseling.</i>	DVD 218 VHS 218
SUPPORTING LEADERS AND HANDLING ATTACKS	DVD
(1 hours, 20 minutes) with Tim Jackins	219
<i>Why leaders get attacked and what to do about it. How</i>	VHS
<i>to discharge our fears of handling such attacks.</i>	219
ADVANCED RE-EMERGENCE AND FRONTIER COUNSELING (1 hour, 55 minutes) with Harvey Jackins Planning for steady re-emergence. How to keep think- ing while counseling on chronic patterns, and how to use the frontier commitments.	DVD 220 VHS 220
MEN AGAINST SEXISM	DVD
(1 hour, 35 minutes)	221
Charlie Kreiner counsels a man and several women on	VHS
sexism.	221
BATTLING INTERNALIZED SEXISM (1 hour, 20 minutes) with Harvey Jackins <i>A woman discharges on internalized sexism</i> .	DVD 222 VHS 222

VIDEOCASSETTES AND DVDS

FOUNDATIONS OF FAMILY WORK (1 hour) with Tim Jackins and Chuck Esser <i>Talks on showing caring, common distresses that come</i> <i>up in family work, and moving things forward for chil-</i> <i>dren and their families.</i>	DVD 223 VHS 223
AN INTRODUCTION TO RE-EVALUATION COUNSELING AND FAMILY WORK (1 hour, 10 minutes) with Tim Jackins An introduction to Co-Counseling with a focus on young children and how they heal from hurts. A de- scription of RC family work. Questions and answers.	DVD 224 VHS 224
COUNSELING WITH ATTENTION AWAY FROM DISTRESS (2 hours) with Harvey Jackins The importance of counseling with attention away from distress. The Exchange of Roles, "Why Do You Love Me, Counselor?" the Understatement.	DVD 225 VHS 225
ELIMINATING WHITE RACISM NOW (1 hour, 10 minutes) with Tim Jackins A talk on the central importance of eliminating white racism, and a demonstration with an African-heritage woman, on racism.	DVD 226 VHS 226
"PAIRED COMMITMENTS" (1 hour, 37 minutes) with Harvey Jackins Forming "paired commitments" (in which two people make a lifelong commitment to each other and take responsibility for each other's re-emergence).	DVD 227 VHS 227
"THE UNDERSTATEMENT" (55 minutes) with Harvey Jackins <i>A talk on Understatements and three demonstrations</i> <i>illustrating the use of them.</i>	DVD 228 VHS 228
UNDERSTATEMENTS (AND MORE), IN SPANISH AND ENGLISH (2 hours) with Harvey Jackins <i>Several demonstrations using Understatements.</i>	DVD 229 VHS 229



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THE ENDING OF RACISM (1 hour, 33 minutes) Video interviews with twenty Co-Counselors repre- senting African-heritage, Asian-heritage, Chicano/a, Indigenous, Latino/a, Mizrachi, Palestinian, and mixed- heritage people, showing the effects of racism on their lives and the effectiveness of RC in ending racism. A project of United to End Racism.	DVD 230 VHS 230
THE ROLE OF WHITE PEOPLE IN ENDING RACISM (1 hour) with Tim Jackins <i>A talk at a United to End Racism workshop at the NGO</i> <i>Forum of the United Nations World Conference Against</i> <i>Racism, in Durban, South Africa, August 2001.</i>	DVD 231 VHS 231
UNITED TO END RACISM (1 hour, 24 minutes) Undertakings and experiences of United to End Racism at the United Nations World Conference Against Rac- ism, in Durban, South Africa, August 2001.	DVD 232 VHS 232
REACHING NEW PEOPLE WITH OUR WORK TO END RACISM (1 hour, 51 minutes) Ten- to fifteen-minute segments from ten of the United to End Racism workshops at the United Nations World Conference Against Racism, in Durban, South Africa, August 2001.	DVD 233 VHS 233
WORKING FOR MEN'S LIBERATION (1 hour, 48 minutes) with Tim Jackins <i>Men's panels, two demonstrations, and several talks on</i> <i>applying RC theory to men's liberation.</i>	DVD 234 VHS 234
VIEWS OF RC 2005: TALKS FROM THE PRE-WORLD AND WORLD CONFERENCES (4 hours) with Tim Jackins Two-DVD set of talks, for \$30.	DVD 235 VHS 235
RC LEADERS, ON CLASS ISSUES (19 minutes) Talks by Tim Jackins and the four Interna- tional Liberation Reference Persons who lead class-based constituencies.	DVD 236 (RCTU 13)
SPECIAL PACKAGE: A FOUNDATION OF HARVEY JACKINS <i>A set of six DVDs of Harvey's talks and demonstrations:</i> <i>DVD numbers 2, 8, 9, 204, 225, and 228 (see descriptions</i> <i>under those numbers). \$100</i>	DVD set 1
A VIDEO INTRODUCTION TO THE WORK OF HARVEY JACKINS <i>Eight excerpts from the large collection of videos of Harvey</i> <i>doing lectures and demonstrations, spanning the decades</i> <i>of RC.</i>	DVD 237
MOVING TOWARD LIBERATION Reports from the International Liberation Reference People and International Commonality Reference People in San Jose, California, USA, in September 2011. \$15	DVD 238

All videocassettes are available in NTSC, PAL, or SECAM (L) format. Cost for videocassettes and DVDs is \$20.00 (U.S.) each, unless otherwise indicated, plus postage and handling.

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How to Find RC in a Particular Geographical Location

If you are looking for information about Re-evaluation Counseling in a particular geographical location, we suggest that you first look in the section "Reference Persons for Organized Areas" to see if there is an Area Reference Person for that location. If there isn't, check to see if there is an RC teacher, by looking under the section "Authorized Teachers of Re-evaluation Counseling in Developing Communities." If there is no Area Reference Person and no teacher, check the following section, "Re-evaluation Counseling Contacts," to learn whether there is someone (who is not an RC teacher) who has expressed an interest in meeting others who might join with him or her in getting Co-Counseling started. If there are none of the above, you can contact Re-evaluation Counseling Community Resources at 719 Second Avenue North, Seattle, Washington 98109, USA, Tel. +1-206-284-0311, e-mail: <ircc@rc.org>, for information on how to get RC started.

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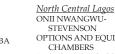
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WORKSHOPS

wheelchair accessible

not wheelchair accessible

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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 e-mail workshop information (dates, place, accessibility, leader, organizer and how to contact organizer, title of workshop, and who the workshop is for) to ircc@rc.org.

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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 15-17/16	Perth. Western Australia. Australia	۰	Chuck Esser	Liz Wright Iizw@iinet net.au	Allies to Young People (includes Family Work)
January 16-17/16	near Helsinki, Finland	\$	Kaisli Syrjänen	Eeva Hamalainen. Tel. +358-40-5579046, eeva hnen@gmail.com	International Finnish Liberation
January 22-24/16	Sydney, New South Wales, Australia	٥	Chuck Esser	Lyndall Katz. Tel. +61 410 531 243. lyndallk@gmail.com	Family Workshop
January 29-31/16	Hampton, Georgia, USA (near Atlanta)	\$	Cornelia Cho	Ruthie Pumphrey, Tel. +1-678-643-9652, ruthieap@bellsouth.net	People of the Global Majority Eliminating Racism, primarily for Southeastern USA
January 29-31/16	Hampton, Georgia, USA (near Atlanta)	•	Dvora Slavin	Barbara Larsen. Tel. +1-770-331-1533. barbaralarsen@me.com	Eliminating White Racism, for Southeastern USA
February 19-21/16	Los Angeles, California, USA	•	Cherie Brown	Randi Wolfe. Tel. +1-707-356-8010, randiwolfe@gmail.com	Jewish Leaders. for West Coast USA
March 3-6/16	Wallingford, Pennsylvaia, USA (near Philadelphia)	\$	Alysia Tate	Hao-Li Loh, tai_loh@msn.com	Area Reference Persons of the Global Majority
March 4-6/16	Wisconsin, USA	4	Dvora Slavin	Marian Fredal, Tel. +1-608-658-5272, mhfredal@wisc.edu	Eliminating White Racism, for Wisconsin & Illinois, USA
March 10-13/16	Warsaw, Poland	\$	Diane Balser	Susanne Langer, susannelanger44@gmail.com	Contemporary Women's Issues, for Central & Eastern Europe, Israel, & non-native English-speaking European countries
March 11-13/16	near Philadelphia. Pennsylvania, USA	٥	"Jeanne D'Arc" & "Bill Dry"	"Laura Secord." laurasecord2@yahoo.ca	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, & Formerly Family Workers
March 18-20/16	St. Paul, Minnesota, USA	\$	Cherie Brown	Judy Tilsen, Tel. +1-651-491-3881, judymtilsen@gmail.com	Jewish Liberation, for Midwest USA
March 18-20/16	Wallingford, Pennsylvania. USA (near Philadelphia)	•	Janet Foner	Rachel Noble, Tel. +1-971-212-5768, rocnoble@msn.com	International "Mental Health" Liberation for ILRPs/ICRPs/RRPs (Leaders 3/17-18)
May 18-20/16	Jefferson, Maine, USA	\$	Beth Edmonds	Bonnie Tomash, btomash@msad54.org	Women's Liberation, for Québec & New Brunswick, Canada, & Maine, New Hampshire, & Vermont, USA
April 14-17/16	Warwick, New York, USA	•	Diane Balser assisted by Azi Khalili	Rachel Landsberg, landsrach@yahoo.com	Jewish Women, for East Coast North America
April 15-17/16	central Manchester, England	\$	Joanne Bray	Sheena Mooney, sheeneymooney@yahoo.com	Catholic Liberation, for United Kingdom plus Ireland
May 5-8/16	Location to be announced	\$	Barbara Love & Tim Jackins		Wygelian Black Liberation & Community Development (BLCD)
May 12-15/16	Denmark	\$	Jo Saunders	Matilde Maribo Kohler. matildemk@gmail.com	European Owning Class
May 13-15/16	Becket, Massachusetts, USA	\$	Beth Edmonds	Beth Bannister, Tel +1-607-227-9532, beth.bannister@yahoo.com	Raised Rural (for people raised rurally & in small towns)
May 27-29/16	London, England	•	Marsha Saxton	David Ruebain, Tel. +44 7778 134271, davidruebain@hotmail.com	Disability Liberation for Everyone, for Great Britain
May 27-30/16	near Philadelphia. Pennsylvania, USA	÷	Seán Ruth	Leslie Kausch. Tel. +1-336-509-3680, singonki@gmail.com	Middle-Class Liberation for Eastern North America
May 27-30/16	Northern California, USA	¢	Tim Jackins	Mary Ruth Gross. Tel: +1-510-243-5934, maryruthgross@gmail.com	Teachers & Leaders, for the Northern California Regions
June 3-5/16	near Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, USA	Ŷ	Janet Foner	Bob Ketcham. Tei +1-610-932-8719, rketcham@udel edu	Ex-Psychiatric Inmate Leaders, for East Coast USA
June 3-5/16	Rindge, New Hampshire, USA	•	Pam Geyer	Virginia Fulton Tel. +1-860-428-2470, vmtulton@earthlink.net	Elders' Liberation, for Québec & Ontario. Canada, & Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Connecticut, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, & Eastern New York State USA
June 10-12/16	Kent, England	•	Cherie Brown	Stella Mason. Tel. +44 208 392 0605, stellamason@blueyonder.co.uk	Jewish Liberation, for Wales, Cornwall, Scotland, Mainland Europe, & England (Leaders June 9)
June 10-12/16	Kent, England	•	Dorann van Heeswyjk	Amanda Harrington, Tel. +441509 416348. amanda@harringtonyoung.co.uk	Allies to Jews, for Wales, Cornwall, Scotland, & England (Leaders June 9)

continued . . .

WORKSHOPS

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	ACCESSIBILITY CODE		LEADER(S)	ORGANIZER	DESCRIPTION
June 10-12/16	Los Angeles area. Calitornia, USA	*	Julian Weissglass	Jennifer Ramos, ucrjennifer@gmail.com	Wide World Change/ Care of the Environment for West Coast North America
June 16-19/16	Northern California, USA	¢	Diane Balser & Dan Nickerson	Randi Wolfe Tel +1-707-356-8010 randiwolfe@gmail.com	Working-Class Women's Liberation for West Coast North America
June 17-19/16	Hancock, New Hampshire, USA	¢	Emily Feinstein	Deirdre Haynie deirdrehashby@gmail.com	Reclaiming Creativity & Artist Liberation, for Vermont. New Hampshire, Maine, western Massachusetts, & Albany, New York, & Connecticut, USA; & Québec, Canada
June 24-26/16	Malmo, Sweden	0	Azı Khalili	Sujata Maini, sujata maini@gmail.com	South. Central. & West Asians. for Europe
June 24-26/16	near Asheville. North Carolina, USA	•	Janet Foner	Joan MacKenzie, Tel. +1-828-606-8470, joanmac@bellsouth net	"Mental Health" Liberation for Everyone for North & South Carolina, & Tennessee USA
July 13-17/16	East Coast North America	Ø.	Alysia Tate		BLCD, for East Coast North America
July 15-17/16	near Denver, Colorado, USA	¢	Cherie Brown	Julie Fox-Rubin, Tel +1-970-319-1744, julie@toxrubin.com	Jewish Liberation, for Southwest USA
July 21-24/16	West Coast North America	٥	Olivia Vincenti		BLCD, for West Coast North America
July 28-31/16	Midwest North America	ŵ	Cliff Jones		BLCD for Midwest North America
July 28-31/16	Sydney, New South Wales. Australia	Ŷ	Diane Baiser	Lyndall Katz Tel +61 410 531 243, lyndallk@gmail.com	Contemporary Women's Issues, for Australia, New Zealand, Mainland China, Japan, Taiwan, Thailand, & Korea
July 29- August 2/16	Northeastern USA	\$	Russ Vernon-Jones	Eileen Nemzer Tel. +1-905-881-5827, nemzer@gmail.com	Educational Change
August 3-7/16	Berkeley, California, USA	0	Tim Jackins	Jan Yoshiwara. Tel. +1-360-951-5852, jyoshiwara@gmail.com	Asian Liberation, for North America
September 15-18/16	East Coast USA	٥	Drane Balser & "Jeanne D'Arc"	"Aliza Maggid Tel. +1-617-921-8664	Women's Liberation & Lesbian Liberation for North America
September 23-25/16	Location to be announced	٥	Marya Axner & Cherre Brown	Wendy Ganz wiganz@aol.com	International Jewish Parents
October 6-9/16	Trinidad	٠	Barbara Love		BLCD, for the Caribbean
October 13-16/16	outside of Philadelphia. Pennsylvania. USA	\$	Fela Barclift. Teresa Enrico. & Chuck Esser	Alıx Webb alıxmw@gmail.com	People of the Global Majority Family Workers, for East Coast North America.
October 21-23/16	Los Angeles, California, USA	\$	Pam Geyer	Mary-Linn Hughes Tel +1-323-313-4432. marylinhughes@gmail.com	Elders' Liberation, for Southern California, USA
October 26-30/16	Europe	۰	Fela Barclift		BLCD, for Europe
October 28-30/16	near St. Louis Missouri USA	9	Tim Jackins	Russell Vanecek. Tet. +1-314-249-5089, redvan71@gmail.com	Men. for Midwest USA
November 4-7/16	West Coast North America	Ŷ	Dan Nickerson Gwen Brown, Seán Ruth & Jo Saunders	Mary Ruth Gross. Tel +1-510-243-5934. maryruthgross@gmail.com	Working Together to End Classism. for Western & Central North America
November 10-13/16	Chevy Chase Maryland USA	4	Dan Nickerson, Gwen Brown, Seán Ruth & Jo Saunders	Leslie Kausch. Tel +1-336-509-3680. singonki@gmail.com	Working Together to End Classism. for Eastern North America
December 2-4/16	Chicago, Illinois, USA	\$	Alysia Tate	Russell Vanecek, Tel +1-314-249-5089, redvan71@gmail.com	ARPS. Midwest/South USA
December 2-4/16	Los Angeles. California. USA	\$	Emily Feinstein	Sarah Leddy Tel. +1-323-350-2509, dancetheater.clma@gmail.com	Artists' Liberation, for Southern & Mid-Coastal California, USA
February 2-5/17	East Coast USA	\$	Joanne Bray & Diane Balser	Mary Ruth Gross. Tel. +1-510-243-5934, maryruthgross@gmail.com	International Women's Liberation for Catholic Women
March 9-12/17	near Copenhagen. Denmark	•	Diane Balser	Trine Maribo Carstensen, trinemc@msn.com	Women, for Denmark, Norway, Sweden West, Poland, Frisland, the Netherlands, & Germany
April 21-23/17	West Coast North America	\$	Diane Balser	Randi Wolfe. Tel. +1-707-356-8010 randiwolfe@gmail.com	Jewish Women's Liberation for West Coast North America
April 28-30/17	Boston, Massachusetts or New York City, New York, USA	\$	Emily Feinstein	Hannah Goodwin hrgoodwin@comcast net	Artist Leaders, for East Coast USA
July 13-17/17	East Coast North America	÷	Leader to be announced		BLCD, for East Coast North America
July 20-23/17	West Coast North America	٥	Leader to be announced		BLCD: for West Coast North America
	Midwest North America	9	Leader to be announced		BLCD, for Midwest North America
July 27-30/17					
July 27-30/17 October 5-8/17	Caribbean	ä	Leader to be announced		BLCD: for the Caribbean

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Re-evaluation Counseling

Re-evaluation Counseling is a process whereby people of all ages and 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 or her interaction with other human beings and his or 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 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 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 website <www.rc.org>.





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