



# A New Goal on Care of the Environment

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Here is the new goal on care of the environment 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.*

The proposal for a goal on care of the environment had been thought about, counseled on, and discussed for many months by many people, including at each of the ten Pre-World Conferences preceding the World Conference.

Two weeks before the World Conference, I wrote a first draft of the goal—after reading all the notes from all the Pre-World Conferences and many e-mails about the goal. Everyone at the World Conference met in small groups and discussed this first draft. Based on the input from these groups, some changes were made to the goal. Everyone agreed that it was a very important goal and wanted it to be the single goal from the World Conference.

People brought up and discussed many important topics related to the goal. They could not be added to the goal itself, but they will be the basis for articles, in our publications and on our e-mail discussion lists, about the goal and its implementation. I encourage everyone to write, on our lists and for *Present Time*, about their understanding of, the implications of, and their plans for implementing this goal.

Final adoption of the goal by the entire World Conference involved many hours of discussion over

two days. This was very useful and educational for people.

## WHY THIS GOAL

The World Conference adopted this goal because we all realized the seriousness of the challenge to end the ongoing degradation of the environment of, essentially, the entire world. The evidence of this degradation has become clear enough that no one at the conference expressed any doubt that it was happening or that human activities had played a large and significant role in it. Many groups of people across the world understand this and that humanity's existence is inseparably bound to the flourishing of the rest of life on Earth.

The causes and the effects of the environmental degradation have become clear. However, the steps needed to end it are not well understood by many, not agreed to, and not committed to by the people and the institutions needed to make change. Our individual distresses (powerlessness, discouragement, greed, and so on) are built into our economic systems in the form of profit, cutting corners,<sup>1</sup> ignoring the effects of our actions, and so on. These distresses interfere with our individual thinking and actions. They have stymied attempts to change the functioning of the institutions that continue to cause a great deal of the damage to the environment. We have discharging to do in order to think clearly and take action guided by our thinking.

Many groups have had rational perspectives on humans' relationship to the rest of the world. However, these perspectives, and related practices, have been trampled on and ignored by the thoughtless and patterned drive to produce more in order to generate profit. We need to recover all these perspectives and together determine our path forward in recovering from the damage that irrationality has caused.

## A STARTING POINT

We have many issues and much information to explore and understand so we can be part of choosing good paths forward. This new goal is our agreed-upon starting point.

*continued . . .*

<sup>1</sup> "Cutting corners" means doing the expedient thing without regard for its effects.

## COUNSELING PRACTICE

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Each one of us can do our own learning, discharging, thinking, and acting, with the encouragement and support of our Community. And we can share with each other everything we come to realize, including how environmental destruction has been deeply connected to the oppression of groups of people and the distressed drive to cut corners in order to generate more profits.

Although the World Conference unanimously supported this goal, no one in RC is required to agree with it or to support it.<sup>2</sup> It is simply our collective best thinking about what is important and what we want to commit ourselves to at this time.

### RC COMMUNITY GOALS

In RC we use our goals to help us keep a clear perspective on present-time reality. They remind us of our decisions and intentions, especially when restimulated distresses, such as discouragement, cloud our perspective.

Our goals aim us toward areas in which more needs to be accomplished. This often means that they are directed at the distresses that have compromised our thinking and functioning. Our goals are not easy, nor should they be.

This new goal is not easy to understand quickly and completely, nor is the situation it addresses. It talks about a challenging and immediate problem, and facing both the immediacy and the size of the challenge can be restimulating. This is not a mistake. It challenges us to face and discharge our restimulation and the early distresses that leave us vulnerable to being restimulated.

Stopping the destruction of the environment will be a huge triumph for humans. It will require us to face and conquer many of the ways that we have been hurt, and have been limited by that.

### WHEN A GOAL CAN BE EFFECTIVE

Our goals have a particular purpose and, in the right circumstances, can be useful in moving us forward. Most of our goals from the last several World Conferences have been quite successful.

For a goal to have a large effect, much work in the area addressed by the goal needs to have been done already. The ground needs to have been prepared.

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<sup>2</sup>The one-point program of the RC Communities, as stated in the *Guidelines for the Re-evaluation Counseling Communities*, is "to use RC to seek recovery of one's occluded intelligence and humanness and to assist others to do the same."

Simply stating something without that preparation has little effect.

Our goal on ending racism has been effective because of the large amount of work done in the years before it was adopted. Our goals about creating opportunities in RC for young people and beginning the work on caring for the environment have also been effective, because of the work done in those areas before the goals were adopted. The goal of getting RC to people with whom we have close relationships has not been widely effective, because insufficient work was done ahead of time.

People have made several good and important proposals for goals for the RC Community. Some of them address issues that are already being successfully addressed, so adding a goal would not likely have a large effect. There are also issues for which a goal could be very useful but we have not yet done the preliminary work. These include a goal on RC growth and a goal on ending class oppression. We have four years before the next World Conference to do the necessary work.

*For more on this goal and the World Conference, see the "Wide World Changing" and "Teaching, Leading, Community Building" sections of this Present Time.*

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My counselor and I  
Place a little pillow on my lap  
And pretend that it's my young self.

I hold him and tell him,  
"I will protect you from this moment on."

I tell him,  
"You can trust me completely."

And I tell him,  
"I will raise you just like I raised my own two sons."

Only then can I feel him reach out and  
Put his arms around me,  
Burying his head in my chest and  
Sobbing great big sobs.  
And only then  
Do my own tears flow.

*Peter Gruenbaum  
Seattle, Washington, USA*

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