



Courage is not the absence of fear, but rather the judgment that something else is more important than one's fear.

*Ambrose Hollingworth Redmoon*

Fresh thoughts, lovely photos and drawings, new developments in Co-Counseling—welcome to another *Present Time*!

How are you using RC in your part of the world? People would like to know. For the next *Present Time*, send your articles and poetry by Monday, November 15. And we'll need changes to the back-pages lists by Monday, November 22.

Lisa Kauffman, editor

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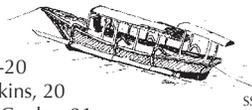
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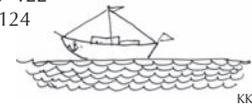
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## Fighting for Ourselves—Guess Who Wins?

*From a talk by Tim Jackins<sup>1</sup> at the Asian Leaders' Workshop,  
in Storrs, Connecticut, USA, July 2010*

All of our distresses take root in our earliest distresses. These earliest undischarged distresses are the ones that leave us vulnerable to being hurt ever after. They are the ones we become most used to, the ones that seem to be the way life has to be. It feels difficult to challenge them. We didn't give up<sup>2</sup> fighting for ourselves easily. None of us gave in<sup>3</sup> to distress quickly. We resisted until it seemed unbearable, it seemed hopeless, or it seemed too dangerous to continue to resist. "I can't try that once more."

Now you get to go back and try again. What feelings will you run into? Your worst feelings—that it is unbearable, that it is pointless to try again, that you have to give up. All of those feelings will be there, I promise. There is no way to avoid that. You didn't give up until things were that bad. The human mind never gives up easily—until the distresses get installed. After that we give up easily; we can give up before we even try. All of the recorded feelings are there, and we believe them and think that reality is as hopeless as it was in our past distress incidents.

You lost back then, but it is important to understand that you had no choice about it. The conditions did not allow you to win. You did not have adults around you who understood children. No one understood RC. None of that is true about your life now. Objective reality has actually changed since you got hurt. You were always worth fighting for, but back then you did not have the conditions

for winning that fight. You are still worth fighting for, and now maybe you have the conditions under which you could win. But you still have all of the old confusing feelings.

So you have to use your mind to decide something, against all of the feelings from the past. You have to stop accepting those feelings as evidence. They are not factual evidence about you in the present. The present-day factual evidence is you, and the person sitting next to you. Lean over and put your cheek on that person's—go on! The reason you wouldn't move to do this until I told you to is in those early defeats. We would not tolerate being as alone as we are except for those early defeats that we have not discharged. We would be closer and closer to each other, every time we had the opportunity.

Defeats are fine. Not discharging them is not. We will have more defeats, and we can learn from them

and gain things from them if we keep discharging. We cannot avoid all defeats, but they are really not the problem. The problem is that we have not been able to recover from them and now we feel like we cannot recover from them. We feel like we cannot get back a fullness of life and that we have to do the best we can with what we have left. It's not true. We get everything back that we're willing to work for.

At this point, it takes a fight to be able to discharge on those early distresses. It isn't possible to just discharge as the victim and get out of the distress. It isn't enough to recognize the injustice of it. We have to oppose it. We could not change what happened back there, and we will not. But we don't have to agree with it. We don't have to agree with what happened to us. We can be opposed to it. We can be opposed to any child ever being mistreated. We can be

*continued . . .*



MARION OUPHOUET

<sup>1</sup> Tim Jackins is the International Reference Person for the Re-evaluation Counseling Communities.

<sup>2</sup> Give up means abandon, stop.

<sup>3</sup> Gave in means succumbed.

## COUNSELING PRACTICE

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opposed to any oppression being acted out at any time at all—even if we can't yet keep it from happening. We can keep our own mind about it.

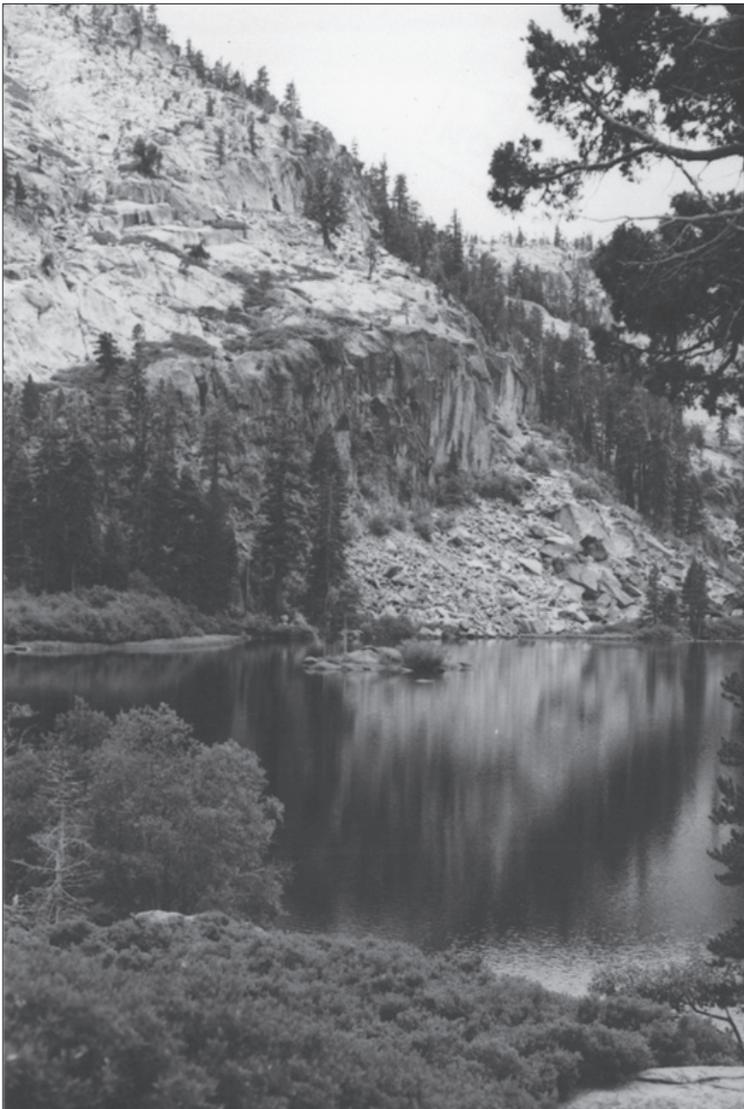
The position I want you to take is something like, "I had no choice when it happened, but I have a choice now and I have changed my mind. I think differently now, and I want it all back. I want every part of my mind back. I insist. Whether I can make it happen right now or not, I insist that I follow the path toward doing whatever will make it possible. I intend to do that whether or not I can make it happen right now."

We get to use our minds to make decisions like this, against our distresses. It seems hard to do because we've been so discouraged. It helps greatly to have someone else talking about it over and over again. That's my job. And it takes us here together daring to hear our agreement with each other about it. Hearing someone laugh when we laugh. Every little supportive sound helps us think a little further, because it contradicts the feeling that this is a lonely, hopeless battle.

So let me say plainly: we will win this. We will win this, without doubt. There is no other possibility. Once

ideas get out where other minds can grab them, though it can be difficult and slow for quite a while, things always go on from there. This group goes on and gets larger and larger. We will make this happen.

I know that at this moment it seems almost not touchable and that you will have trouble working on it in sessions away from the group. We got that badly hurt. But that's all that happened, and once we get it out where we see it and begin putting our minds on it, and once we start discharging on it, it cannot get more powerful. And we can. So guess who wins?



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## Transformations

The wolf and the crow  
visited me one winter night,  
whispering,  
    "Your true self is waiting,  
    Your true self is waiting,"  
and I snuck out  
    into the cold and dark  
where I ate wild grubs  
    of the present moment  
and foraged for bark  
    from the tree of life  
until my clothes turned  
    brown and grey and green,  
    the colors of the woodsfolk,  
and I could run one hundred miles  
    without stopping  
and my wings finally regrew  
    and I disappeared into the sky.

*Jim DuBois*  
Northampton, Massachusetts, USA

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## Lifelong Relationships with Young People

My special-time<sup>1</sup> “child” has just turned sixteen. We have had a twelve-year relationship and are deeply in love with each other. Up until this year we have been meeting twice a week, for one and a half to two hours each time.

When we first met she knew little English and no Greek, since she had just arrived from the Philippines to join her parents. In spite of the language differences, there were no barriers. We played house, drew pictures, did acrobatics, wrestled. After the first year she also had me read a lot of children’s stories to her in English. We had lots of hugs and squeezes along the way.

At twelve years of age she transferred from the migrant school, where the lessons were in Filipino and English, to a local Greek school. Our relationship changed. I began to counsel her more directly on her fears and frustrations and became a source of practical information for her as well as her tutor in Greek. Once she went to the Junior High, I helped her with her lessons and exams, and we laughed and cried together as we each did what we thought we couldn’t do.

For the past two years she has been fully responsible for all her lessons, with no assistance from me. I still see her at least once a week, but she uses my attention to figure out life as a teenager, and the world around her. She asks the greatest questions, and we learn a lot together.

Recently she has been having to face her fears of losing me—which, of course, she never will. She wants more time to be with her friends and is afraid that she will upset me by spending less time with me. I’ve explained to her that I have been expecting this and that it is the most natural thing in the world.

On the other hand, I hadn’t realized that I was subconsciously expecting that I would lose her, that she would get older and make other plans that didn’t include me. My internalized ageism was telling me that someday I would outlive my usefulness. Ugly stuff this ageism!

<sup>1</sup> 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.

I became more aware of my feelings last month when, on my way to a workshop in London (England), I had the opportunity to meet with my first “special-time child.” He is now thirty-eight years old. He took the initiative to see that we would meet. Where I was afraid of intruding on his life and disturbing his program, he insisted and did everything necessary to make sure that our meeting would happen. We had a two-hour-long breakfast during which we talked and laughed and shared all sorts of things. It was wonderful just being together.

He later sent me an e-mail telling me that he had always enjoyed our meetings and that I had been a positive influence on him growing up. He called me a rare non-judgmental adult. He also said that when he meets with his niece and nephew, he uses the “Margie blueprint” (although it gets tested during tantrums).

I was moved and at the same time shocked at myself. In spite of how much I love this young man, and all the good times we have shared over the years, I had assumed that he would not have time for me.

He and I shared special time for about two years, after which his parents decided that we shouldn’t continue. Other members of the family were too restimulated, since he was always ready for discharge after I left. It was hard to insist on solutions. I didn’t know much and was learning as I went along, with little support. Also, my own daughter was even younger than he, and I soon became pregnant with my second child. He and his family have stayed an important part of my life, but the special time stopped about twenty-nine years ago. I had never realized that he was mine for life in a very special way, in spite of the “failure” of the situation.

*continued . . .*



MARTY POTTENGER

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Last weekend I attended a workshop for allies to young people, and I heard Jenny Sazama<sup>2</sup> say that being allies to young people is forever. As adults, our assumption is often that a young person will drift away from us as he or she becomes more independent and pursues his or her own life. It's true that the relationship changes—it has to—but the connections are always there and always meaningful. The older adult can make the mistake of forgetting how important he or she is to the young adult. I knew she was talking about me.

When we interact with young people, it is often difficult to understand the effect we have on their lives. All the love and thinking we put into the relationship stays with them and we are remembered forever.

I now know that being an ally to a young person is a lifelong relationship, a relationship that will change but that always remains special to both people. Holding to this perspective will help me find new ways of staying close and will keep me thinking of what needs to happen as a young person becomes a teen, and then a young adult, and so on.

It has been difficult to maintain organized family work<sup>3</sup> in my Community, but learning to do special time has been one of the most meaningful things I have ever done.

I owe a huge amount of gratitude to Patty<sup>4</sup> and Tim<sup>5</sup> and Chuck<sup>6</sup> and all the other pioneers in family work. They have given my natural desire to always have young people in my life a rational structure. They have given me a way to keep my own shyness and embarrassment from interfering with establishing unique relationships with young people. It has made all the difference to my life.

*Margie Doyle Papadopoulou*  
Kantza, Greece

<sup>2</sup> Jenny Sazama is the International Liberation Reference Person for Allies to Young People.

<sup>3</sup> Family work consists of RC gatherings of young people and adult allies, including parents, in which the focus is on young people and counseling young people in the context of play. These gatherings are designed to empower young people, to give them a setting in which they largely determine what happens (in contrast to the usual adult-young person dynamic). The focus is not on "Co-Counseling," as it is in the usual adult RC.

<sup>4</sup> Patty Wipfler, the International Liberation Reference Person for Parents

<sup>5</sup> Tim Jackins

<sup>6</sup> Chuck Esser, the International Commonality Reference Person for Family Work



### It's here! ***Black Re-emergence No. 11!***

*From the editing team of the eleventh edition of Black Re-emergence:*

*Tokumbo Bodunde:* "It's exciting to read what we collectively are figuring out in so many areas. Black liberation in RC really is a movement, and I'm glad to be part of it in this way."

*Sondra McCurry:* "We have all worked hard with commitment toward the vision of more African-heritage people having the tool of RC and using it for their own liberation and the liberation of our people."

*Alysia Tate:* "As we use this journal to advance our collective work, I encourage each of us to also use it to provide the personal boost we need to challenge any messages that get in our way of noticing our brilliance and power. Read it, enjoy it, use it."

*A small sample of the articles in this issue—*

- "There Were No Slaves," by Barbara Love
- "Discharging Rage and Terror," by Laurenti Wright
- "How RC Changed My Life—Letter from Prison,"  
by Earl C. Amin
- "Relationships Key in Community Building,"  
by Bafana Matsebula
- "Dealing with What May Be Racism," by Rachel Noble
- "Black Women and Caretaking," by Valerie Jiggetts
- "My Life as a Single Woman," by Jackie Kane
- "Connection, Relationships,  
and Internalized Racism as a Darker  
Skinned Female," by Tokumbo Bodunde
- "Racism and Family Work," by Fela Barclift



MARION OUPHOUET

To order *Black Re-emergence No. 11*,  
see page 109 of this *Present Time*.



## Thinking About Food

At a recent young adults' workshop, I participated in a topic group on addictions. The main focus was food addictions. We probably all struggle with them. At the very least, I think we all have distress about food. So what a great opportunity to work on it! Plus, at a workshop we get to do it together and banish any isolation that may have gotten tied to it.

I use food, especially sweet foods, to push down feelings of boredom, terror, loneliness, and isolation. If I get a craving for something sweet and decide not to act on it, I yawn and sometimes shake. If I'm getting some attention whilst I make the decision, I scream and tantrum and laugh.

I've noticed that at workshops we don't, in general, put much attention on food, and I don't think we're thinking well about it. I'm not settling for that. I think that it may be our desperation that makes us want to be sure that we always have something to snack on, even though most of us can function well without eating between meals. We even sometimes provide snacks that contain refined sugar or lots of salt. I think this is inappropriate, given that we know they are not good for our bodies and that they also interrupt discharge. I would even like to question having an abundance of fruit, as it is high in sugar, even if it is unrefined. I've noticed that when I get a sugar craving, if I decide not to eat refined sugar, the focus of my craving turns to anything that is naturally sweet (and then desperately to anything, anything, anything!). Starchy foods, like those made of white flour, should perhaps also be avoided, as starch turns quickly into sugar once in the body and so may be used to satisfy a sugar craving or inhibit discharge in a way similar to sugar.

At workshops we are in complete control over what snacks we decide

to make available. This isn't necessarily true of the main meals. Even at meals, though, we could be more mindful. How about having a mini-session before every meal to decide what and how much we're going to eat, or putting our minds on being present around food and noticing any feelings that are coming up? It's surprising (or perhaps not) how just waiting those extra couple of minutes can bring up terror and panic: "Will there be any left?" or "I'm starving!" (How many times have we falsely made that statement?) Also, given that we often discuss topics at mealtimes, we don't have much of a chance to put attention on eating once we get to the table. So, get a queue buddy,\* or schedule two minutes each way before heading to the canteen.

Thinking well about food also means thinking well about food production and being informed about it. This means thinking well about the environment, not getting caught in oppressive economic systems, and ending racism and workers' oppression. Food is a *huge* deal. We need to use our brilliant minds to work out how to get it just right. We are capable of getting it just right; all hopelessness is old!

Hurts about food come in early, so it's not surprising that we might feel hopeless when we think about them or that the restimulation runs deep.

Having a "treat" that is bad for us must be based in distress. When I tell non-RCers that I don't drink alcohol or caffeine, or smoke, or take drugs, or eat refined sugar, they usually find it hard to see how I could have any pleasure or happiness in my life. Actually I have plenty of both. Our precious bodies need us to love ourselves enough that we always think well about what we put into them.

\* A queue buddy means a companion with whom to wait in the food line.

I've also been thinking about how, in early life, mealtime is a time when we are likely to get some closeness. And how many of us were given sweet things for doing something good or as an incentive for "good" behaviour?

It's essential that we stay relaxed whilst we work this out. I find it useful to remember that the world won't suddenly implode if I eat the "wrong" thing, and that it would take a long time for me to die of starvation so not eating right now will probably be okay. All is well, and we get to have our thinking back. We get to keep trying, keep making mistakes, and keep discharging.

Getting this just right might involve getting some more information about what and how much we need to eat in order for our bodies to function well. One difficulty with this is that there is a lot of "information" out in the world about food that is not rational. This is somewhere where we get to fight for our own thinking and to stay connected to our bodies.

Deciding not to consume addictive substances and foods, especially sugar, has been a big step for me in taking myself and my re-emergence seriously. It is about getting my full self back. I hope that my writing shows that I take each of your re-emergences seriously as well, and that we can do this together.

*Nici Dunkelman*  
Grafton Bampton, Oxfordshire, England



FRED KELLER

## If You Want to Relax, Write a Thesis

I spent the past six months of my life writing my PhD thesis. I would like to share the experience and, in particular, how I used Co-Counselling during this time.

The conditions for writing were fairly optimal: I had all of my experimental results (the topic of the research is solar cells), I had enough money because I was paid a scholarship, and I did not have any direct external pressure in the form of agitated supervisors. The conditions were also optimal for including discharge during each day because I was writing from home. I had never before in my life had a period of six months in which I had complete control over what I did and so much flexible time.

In spite of these perfect conditions, or perhaps even because of them, the fact that I had to write a PhD thesis was overwhelming and brought up huge early feelings of inadequacy, powerlessness, and panic. I decided to prioritise discharge and use the opportunity to boost my re-emergence. To support the process, I committed to stopping eating any sugar for six months, including honey and dried fruit. I knew from a previous experiment that this would intensify my ability to discharge, particularly when working on heavy fears. It went so well for me that I'll probably stay off sugar permanently.

Fairly early into the six months, I got stung by a blue-bottle jellyfish while surfing at the beach. Such a sting is not a dangerous injury; it just hurts a lot. Immediately after it happened I decided to go easy on myself and do whatever I felt like doing that day. I had a big session and then a relaxed day with my husband, enjoying cooking, eating, closeness, and hanging out.<sup>1</sup> The next day I reflected on what had been such a beautiful day and asked myself, "Why do I have to get stung by a jellyfish to be able to let myself relax for a day?" I began to realise how much I had internalised putting pressure on myself and spent several sessions

on deciding to permanently relax and never again do anything under pressure.

This set me up<sup>2</sup> for a huge battle over the next couple of months, because I felt like to finish my thesis I had to put pressure on myself. I discharged and discharged in hundreds of brilliant sessions, but every week that went by without any progress left me feeling bad about myself and terrified that the discharge would not work. Even after my own panic had started to subside, I had to deal with other people (friends and family) worrying about what would happen if I didn't finish on time. My slow progress restimulated them, too. A side effect of relaxing was that I also had to discharge my caretaker pattern, which caused big and little ripples in my relationships with various people.



GREECE • MARGIE DOYLE PAPADOPOULOU

My Co-Counsellors were wonderfully patient and encouraging throughout this time and could all see that I was doing something important and that complete relaxation was a perfect direction for me. One counsellor helped me to stop feeling selfish and indulgent by insisting that what I was doing would change the world. After this comment I realised that my direction was well aligned with two sentences in the RC commitment for wide-world changers: "The future needs me, well-rested, well-nourished, and well-exercised," and, "If I am not enjoying what I am doing, then there is something wrong with how I am doing it and I will correct it."

I also noticed beneficial effects of the relaxation on my body. My digestion was functioning much better than usual, and this eliminated pain that I had previously come to accept. Plus I was waking in the mornings with no tension in my body, which had not happened for a few years. I was also able to remember my dreams, which had only rarely happened before. As a result, I was eventually able to decide that my relaxation was more important than finishing my PhD and that even if it took much longer than the allocated

<sup>1</sup> Hanging out means spending relaxed, unstructured time.

<sup>2</sup> Set me up means created the conditions.

six months, I would still prioritise myself and fight for myself against any consequences.

Gradually, about halfway through the six-month period, I started having a lot of good attention for my writing. Then my progress accelerated, and I could tell<sup>3</sup> that my work was of a much higher quality than anything I could have written under pressure or without discharge. However, I continually recognised ways in which the pressure pattern would try to creep back into my head. One was that I would not be able to focus on the section I was writing because I would be worrying about the other more difficult sections to come and thinking I would not be able to write them. So I decided to always do the hardest bit first, because the reality was that I was completely capable of doing all of the work. The other sneaky way the pattern would put pressure on me again was by convincing me that my work—both the results and the writing—was not good enough. Discharging on this led me back to deep class distresses dating from the start of primary school. I spent hours discharging while saying, “I am just fine. And whatever I write will be just fine. And whatever I write, I will still be just fine. And whatever marks I could have gotten at school would have been just fine. And whatever direction my life could have gone would have been just fine.”

I came up with<sup>4</sup> a list of things that describe what “no pressure” means to me: relaxing, trusting my thinking, doing things when I want to do them and how I want to do them, being proud of myself, liking my work, having fun, being stress free, and doing things a hundred percent for myself. I have been able to use

<sup>3</sup> Tell means perceive, see.

<sup>4</sup> Came up with means thought of.

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On the RC web site is an index covering every issue of *Present Time*. You can search the index by author, title, or topic (from a list of pre-determined topics). To find the index, go to the web site at <<http://www.rc.org/>>, click on “*Present Time*” under Publications on the home page, then click on “Search PT Index.”

this list in sessions to discharge on taking the pressure off many other parts of my life, such as sex, exercise, and food. A wonderful and unexpected outcome is that I have reclaimed my joy of reading and my thirst for knowledge. I am suddenly reading four books in parallel, all non-fiction, and am getting inspired about what I want to do with my life. In particular, I have decided to start a local environmental action group and have taken the first steps toward building the movement within my community. A little bit of relaxation goes a long way!

Being a PhD writer has been a strange stage in my life and has brought up big questions for me about my life. It has been easy to feel isolated and disoriented and like what I’m doing is meaningless. Luckily, I am currently assisting in an RC class on the topic of fighting for ourselves, which has led to huge discharge and re-evaluation.

So, at the age of twenty-six, I’ve figured out some important things about how to make my life work well for me, and I’m proud of myself. I am now writing the conclusion of my thesis and will finish ahead of schedule. It seems that I will rejoin society with a very different perspective on where I fit into it than I had before I withdrew to write this thesis. I can’t wait to see what the world holds for me now!

*Emily Mitchell*  
Sydney, New South Wales, Australia



All Co-Counselors should remind each other that the job of making counseling practice improve and advance toward the theoretical possibilities is in all cases a job for everyone and, in particular, for “first person singular.” It is not something for someone else to achieve and bring to the individual Co-Counselor ready-made, without his or her participation and effort.

*Harvey Jackins\**  
From page 197 of *The Reclaiming of Power*

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

## Perspectives as International Reference Person

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

The positions of leadership and responsibility we take in RC can push us to do what we've wanted to do but would have hesitated to do or given up on because of our confusion from distress recordings.

I am the International Reference Person. I have been in this position for almost eleven years. I recommend it to you, if you ever get a shot at it.<sup>1</sup> It's a position in which you have to think when you might not otherwise. If I weren't in this position, I might not do all the things I do in it. They are all good for me to do, and I should have done them anyway, but . . . . It's a wonderful position. I think you should strive to be in it, or at least put yourself there in your mind so that you can push yourself forward.

I've gotten to watch us for eleven years from this position, and I also did a lot of things before that, as the Alternate.<sup>2</sup> I know how to do this now, and I know that this set of ideas we call RC works for everybody. I am not confused. I'm not worriedly looking for where we didn't think enough.

### RC IDEAS KEEP DEVELOPING

This set of ideas keeps developing. We cycle back and take a second look at ideas we thought we knew well, and then we understand them even better. After a couple of years of discharging, we look back at them and we think more clearly about them. For example, when we

read RC literature (which I highly recommend), we learn things. We put an article aside and re-read it two months later, and we learn things. We put it aside again and read it again two months later, and we learn more things.

It's funny.<sup>3</sup> There's an ongoing depth. It's a bit like a fractal. A fractal has a certain pattern, and if we look closely at it we see within it another pattern that is exactly the same. And if we look still more closely, we see exactly the same pattern again. The farther we look, there is still more pattern in there. Human thought can seem something like that. If we keep thinking, there are more things to figure out about the things we knew fairly well. We get to know them better. I don't know if there is a limit to that or if we go on like the fractal—continually understanding reality and ourselves and this set of ideas better and better and better. It's clear that we haven't reached a limit.

### COMMON CHRONIC PATTERNS

One set of things I have gotten to look at and have been pushing others to look at is our common chronic patterns—patterns that

we all have and don't notice. We accept them on everybody.

In an oppressive society like ours, everybody gets hurt, though not in exactly the same way. We belong to different groups, and we have different families with their own strange twists no matter what group they belong to. We all have unique distress recordings from unique incidents. However, because we are all in oppressive societies, our recordings tend to accumulate in the same piles. We end up with similar chronic feelings and similar chronic isolation. We feel bad about ourselves in similar ways.

Many of the things we have trouble with line up among us all. They cut across all the lines of oppression that separate us. We end up with some in-common distresses. Some of this is because everyone is mistreated in an oppressive society. Some of it is because some distresses happened very early, and in similar ways, before oppression got to us directly.

So there is a set of things we have in common that I want us to get rid of and on which we can be knowledgeable counselors for each other.

<sup>3</sup> In this context, funny means interesting.

<sup>1</sup> A shot at it means an opportunity to do it.

<sup>2</sup> Alternate International Reference Person



NEW YORK CITY, NEW YORK, USA • AMANDA MARTINEZ

## LEARNING FROM A YOUNG PERSON

In my childhood I was interested in observing children younger than me and paying attention to them. I enjoyed doing it, as it would make me feel that babies and young people were smart. This action of mine has made more sense to me since I got into RC.

Now I am a young adult. When teaching RC to people, I use living examples of children. I want to share about one child who is my neighbor. I have observed him from the time he was one-and-a-half years old, and now he is three and a half. He has reminded me of many realities about humans.

For the past year he has started asking us to leave him alone when he does some work. I've wanted to figure out why. I've realized that he thinks he can do things on his own and that we should let him do that. He wants to learn on his own. We have kept directing him on how to walk, eat, and so on, but he is strong in letting us know that he can figure out things for himself without our help. One such thing he did was to step up the step and cross the door. He refused our help and didn't mind getting hurt or failing. Finally, so brilliantly, he figured it out.

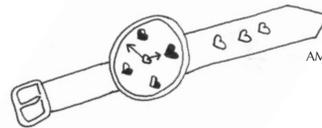
Now he has a younger sister who is two years old. He is being a wonderful ally to her. He supports her in figuring out things. When his mother punishes, he fights for himself and his baby sister. He is bold enough to say, "You can't give me punishment, even if I am a bad boy. But I am good." He tells his mother that his sister is still a

baby and that she will learn things and so doesn't deserve punishments.

I never miss saying, "I love you," to him every day I meet him. He replies slowly, "I . . . love . . . you . . ." Sometimes I fight with him, too, and later apologize and ask, "Can we be friends?" He is so smart in differentiating between a real apology, which he accepts, and when I say I'm sorry without meaning it, which he doesn't accept. He has learnt to ask for forgiveness the same way I ask him and concludes it by saying, "I love you," even with his mother. His mother is very happy with this.

He is full of life. He defines zest every day. Presently I am lively in my life because of him. I love spending time with him—observing, watching him. He knows very well how to use physical closeness and the discharge process. He got hurt recently. It was bleeding, and we put on medicine. He cried a lot. Then later when I met him and asked, "How are you feeling?" he said, "I am fine. My wound will be cured soon, and don't you worry, Shashi."

I have been fortunate enough to have one or another child around to observe, admire, and be an ally to. I wish the same for the rest of my life. It feels great to be an ally to young people, because it's as good as being an ally to oneself and the world.



*S.J. Shashikala*  
Bangalore, India

## Making Friends by Listening

I have been traveling around Ecuador for about three weeks now, and having a blast.\* I've been making a variety of connections and attribute a lot of it to being able to listen well. Free supportive attention seems to be a rarity in society these days (we in RC will change that), and I think I've been able to give people a chance to be heard.

Knowing they are genuinely being heard, people who would otherwise not be very engaging begin to become interested in *my* story. I see this as the cycle of oppression being reversed. Let's call it the "cycle of liberation."

More and more often I have enough slack, or free attention, to run these little listening projects and hear people's stories. I leave these interactions feeling connected, safe, and like I belong everywhere. Talk about positive reinforcement!

I will continue to reach out to people all over the world and listen to them well. Who thought changing the world could be so fun?

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

\* A blast means a great time.

## When People Show Their Difficulties

Dear Tim,<sup>1</sup>

I am a longtime RCer with a question provoked by one of my fundamentals students. I've certainly noticed, and he is noticing too, that as we build slack through discharge and good information, people around us want to use it for themselves and get "sessions" and often this takes the form of their not treating us well. I find this interferes with my enthusiasm for getting close to people, and it's also a problem at work. Harvey<sup>2</sup> used to talk about excusing yourself and crawling out the bathroom window when you couldn't be counselor anymore, and of course there are lots of things to discharge here. Do you have any other suggestions?

Love and thanks,

Ann Bartz  
Berkeley, California, USA

Dear Ann,

My experience is that people, sensing some resource and the possibility of being listened to, more openly show their struggles and unhappiness and can unawarely be asking for a session. I'm not sure this is any worse than their pretending everything is all right, as far as my relationship with them goes. If they show less of their struggles, it is, of course, a bit less likely to restimulate me. But while it's less restimulating, I'm not sure that our relating based on the pretense of everything being okay is actually much better, though I know it usually feels better.

I suspect it would be far better if we could not be startled by other people showing their difficulties but rather be able to decide exactly what we wanted to do with them, given the fact that

they have these struggles. There are many choices we could make. They include turning and quickly running away, "sneaking out the bathroom window," being a listening counselor if we think that would be enough to allow them to discharge and step out of their material,<sup>3</sup> and being an active counselor who works hard to pull their attention away from their distress so that they can interact in present-time reality with us.

It would, of course, be lovely if the people we interacted with had not been so hurt that they were confused by their distress recordings, but, ah well . . .

Love,

Tim Jackins

<sup>3</sup> Material means distress.

<sup>1</sup> Tim Jackins

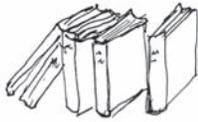
<sup>2</sup> Harvey Jackins



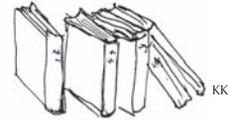
MINNESOTA, USA • TIM JACKINS

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## Eliminating-Racism Basics for White Catholics (and Other White People)



Joanne Bray

*International Liberation Reference Person for Catholics*

Here are a few things I've learned about working to end racism, inside and outside of RC:

To challenge racism, we who are white have to prioritize close relationships with people targeted by racism, in which we get a picture of the battles they face and the sessions they need in order to fight those battles. Isolated from people targeted by racism, we don't "get it,"<sup>1</sup> and they know we don't get it. Close in we start to understand what it takes to face the oppression day to day. In close we can care about the impact of the oppression and about the world being better for everyone. We begin to open our hearts, because that's what humans do. We begin to care about having a world in which everybody is connected, seen, cared for, and flourishing. As we do this, people targeted by racism will lead us on many fronts.

We white people have to understand the ABCs<sup>2</sup> of closeness, as deeply as we can, for ourselves. We can aim to become close in the way young people do—by seeking out closeness, trusting it exists, building it.

Closeness helps people targeted by racism (like all of us) struggle with discouragement and despair from early defeats. They cannot possibly work on the early hurts without someone "going there"<sup>3</sup> with them, for real, against where the defeats (from individual hurts as well as from slavery, colonization, genocide, and imperialism) settled in.

People targeted by racism have experienced a lack of caring from and been hurt by white people many, many times. They are sad and angry around us, which is understandable. If our decision to stay close to them—no matter what—is in place, then we can discharge *our* feelings of discouragement. We can discharge on where *we* gave up in *our* early battles. Then we can get in the ring with<sup>4</sup> them and back<sup>5</sup> them in their early battles. As Catholics, we can also remember that there are no saviors and no victims, that we cannot save anyone. (People do not

want to be saved. Although some may yearn for it, it actually breeds resentment rather than power.) Instead we can genuinely back people to fight their own battles.

The people targeted by racism I know want to work on rage and disappointment. They do not like white patterns and the white racism that permeates institutions and everyday lives. (Do you?) We need to challenge and discharge where we are pulled to shrink away rather than give. We need to stay clear that from time to time people targeted by racism will need to blast<sup>6</sup> us because we are acting oppressively. If we are fragile, if we are vulnerable to being criticized (when we do make mistakes or when we don't), we can't be effective allies. Guilt, feeling bad about ourselves, pretending, lying, and denying are all useless patterns that we must discharge.

To do the above, we *must* have good, solid relationships with other white Catholics who are doing, or want to do, the same work. We need to laugh, cry, ask questions, tell about mistakes, hear what others are doing. One-on-one sessions are useful but inadequate in the long run.<sup>7</sup> We each need a group of people with whom we can put down the struggle and cry. And we need to be open and honest about where we struggle. We can discharge about where we fail, get lost, act dumb, or hate other white people. We can discharge the recordings of fear and guilt that are rolling around in our brains. We can work on where the feelings came from and cry and rage about how we got sucked in. People targeted by racism want each other back, and they want white people to have each other.

Whatever step you can take (and you want to take it) to challenge the recordings of racism in your world will give you a chance to be human, face fears, and discharge. Take whatever step you can. Stop racism when you hear it, see it, read it, know it's running<sup>8</sup> in an organization. Have a Co-Counseling session on it if you could not do it well. Try again. Keep people in close while you do it.

Greenwich, Connecticut, USA

<sup>1</sup> "Get it" means understand it.

<sup>2</sup> ABCs means basics.

<sup>3</sup> "Going there" means mentally going back to the early situations.

<sup>4</sup> In this context, get in the ring with means fully counsel.

<sup>5</sup> Back means support.

<sup>6</sup> In this context, blast means angrily confront.

<sup>7</sup> In the long run means over a longer period of time.

<sup>8</sup> Running means being acted out.



LAURIE RHODES

### Short Talks by Tim Jackins, on CD

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

For a complete list of all the CDs produced up until now, see page 104 of this *Present Time*.

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

The entire 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, and 2009 4-CD sets are also available to anyone, for \$25 per set, while supplies last.

If you are a certified RC teacher, the upcoming four CDs per year are available on a subscription basis, one calendar year at a time (but mailed out quarterly as they are released), for \$25 a year.

*For ordering information, see page 109.*

## How I Use Tim's CDs

*From the e-mail discussion list for RC teachers*

I've got a helpful routine before my weekly RC class: while I clean my house, in preparation for my students, I listen to Tim's CDs.<sup>1</sup> It always serves to remind me of what I'm trying to do and why, helps me think about my class, and inspires my planning.

*Margot Brinn*  
Ithaca, New York, USA



LK

Same here! I listen to Tim every single day. When I come home, I push the CD player button and listen to him while I do chores. In this oppressive society, I think we need to keep being reminded of how good and powerful we are. Listening to Tim really works for me.

*Sangwoo Kwon*  
Seoul, South Korea



KK

Me too! I have a CD player in my car. I counsel regularly with someone who lives forty-five minutes away, and that's enough time to hear an entire CD and to think about what I might try during our session. I also drive more safely and courteously while thinking about RC theory.

Sangwoo, you just gave me an idea. We do five minutes of beauty and order<sup>2</sup> at the end of every one of my classes. We could be listening to Tim during that time!

*Daniel Schaffer*  
Brooklyn, New York, USA



LK

I put of all Tim's tapes into my iPod<sup>3</sup> and carry him with me wherever I go. I never know when I will suddenly have a blank period of time I didn't expect, so I always have company and inspiration at hand.<sup>4</sup>

*Medicine Story Manitonquat*  
Greenville, New Hampshire, USA

<sup>1</sup> Rational Island Publishers has been producing a series of CDs of talks that Tim Jackins has been giving at recent workshops. For more information, see page 104 of this *Present Time*.

<sup>2</sup> Beauty and order means beautifying and tidying up the environment.

<sup>3</sup> An iPod is a small, portable media player.

<sup>4</sup> At hand means readily available.

# The Significance of Music

A talk by Heather Hay, the International Liberation Reference Person  
for Musicians, at the Musicians' Liberation Workshop  
in British Columbia, Canada, January 2010

It's a big deal that you came to this workshop. You decided that musicians' liberation is important to you—important enough to set aside the time. One of the themes for this weekend is to notice how significant musicians' liberation is—in our lives, in the RC Communities, and in the world. It makes a bigger difference than we can always remember.

One of the many things we have in common here, besides being human and deciding to use the discharge process to reclaim all of our humanness, is that we all care deeply, in one way or another, about music. We vary from culture to culture, country to country, style to style, but we have in common our love and passion for music, and we've decided to dedicate a weekend to thinking about that.

Music is so much a part of benign reality. It's one of the ways we remember how good it is to be alive, how exuberant we can be, how much we love to experiment and explore all kinds of different things. We human beings love beauty. We love to move, we love rhythm. If you watch young people, they gravitate toward any beat or music. They want to be right there in the centre. I love that the word "play" goes with music. Human beings are naturally, inherently playful, and when we make music, we are playing.

In RC we talk about intelligence, about reclaiming our complete intelligence. I think creativity is the same as intelligence. So when we are making music, we are using our intelligence. It's the same.

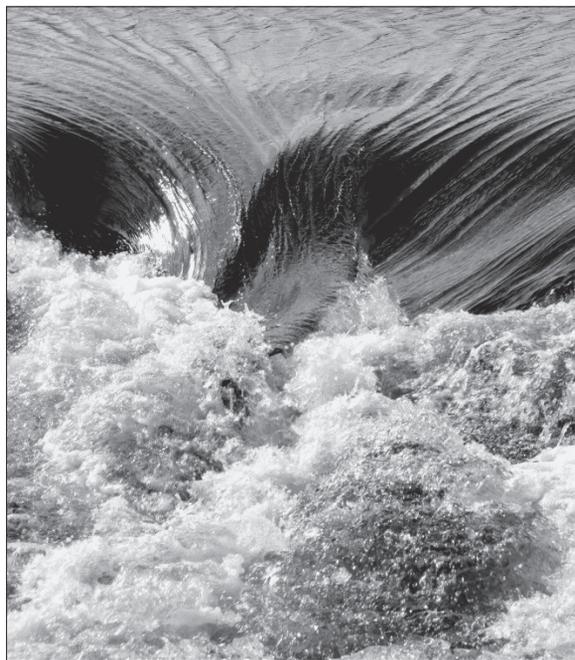
Music can be a wonderful model of using our intelligence and showing our humanness. It's not just something extra that we do on the side or have to apologize for because it's not "real work," not "getting anything done," not "productive." Making music is being human and showing our intelligence. One of the ways repressive regimes try to keep people down is to wipe out their music and books and art. Obviously they know how important these things are to being human.

We're leading as musicians. We're reminding people about being human. When music is happening, people get more connected. The capitalist system is about disconnection, and music reminds us of our connection; it draws us together. We musicians are in the role of counselor in society. We are contradicting hopelessness, despair, and urgency. And we're not just doing it for somebody else, we're doing it for ourselves.

## MUSICIANS' OPPRESSION

I'm going to talk about the terrible "O" word: oppression! One part of musicians' oppression is how creating music is not valued as highly as it should be. (I am speaking from the perspective of the Western world.) An analogy that hits home for me<sup>1</sup> is the job of parenting. We parents make an absolutely key contribution by thinking about young people. It's an extremely important job, like being a musician, yet it's not supported or highly valued.

*continued . . .*



ALAN SPRUNG

<sup>1</sup> Hits home for me means makes sense to me.

... continued

Musicians' oppression has a funny<sup>2</sup> twist to it. As musicians we're also put on a pedestal, treated like we're special and to be applauded. In one way creating music has a low value, but in another it has a high one. It can look like only "special" people—the few, the talented, the gifted—are able to participate in music. Of course that isn't the reality. Everyone is born with an inherent love for music and the ability to explore it in his or her own particular way. It's like leadership. Leadership is for everyone, not just a select few. We simply decide how much time and attention we choose to put on a particular part of life. It's not about the "gifted" few.

Musicians are part of the working class in that we're not paid the full value of our work, we sacrifice our bodies, and we have to push hard to make a living. In feudal times musicians in European society served either the church or the state. In current times, in the capitalist system, musicians are serving the market—are doing whatever the market will support.

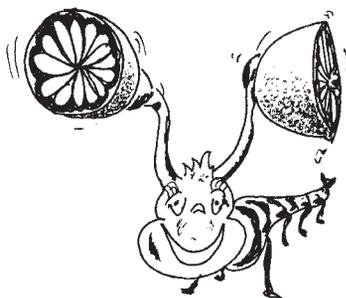
Another part of musicians' oppression is that we have to look good, like we know what we're doing, like we're handling everything. We have to be cool.<sup>3</sup> As performing musicians we don't get to discharge, although our audiences might. There are superstitions that if we show that we're scared it's only going to make things worse, that we've got to keep it together.<sup>4</sup>

Only in the last hundred or so years has there been a separation between what we call amateur and what we call professional. With the music industry we have the passive listeners and the active participants. In many Indigenous cultures, music is a part of everyday life. There is a song for waking, a song for pounding the flour, a song

<sup>2</sup> Funny means strange, interesting.

<sup>3</sup> Cool means composed and aloof.

<sup>4</sup> Keep it together means stay composed.



XABI ODRIOZOLA

for putting one's baby to bed at night. We've kept some of that, but so much of it has been lost. Celtic people would sit around and have kitchen parties and céilidhs<sup>5</sup>: they were a way for people to connect. There was no distinction between who was a musician and who wasn't. Maybe even the title "musician" should be up for question. What role would music have in a rational society? How would it be played? Some people would still put a lot of time in on it and hone a skill, but everything would look quite different. Part of our leadership as musicians is to model that making music is for everyone.

### INTERNALIZED MUSICIANS' OPPRESSION

Part of our internalized oppression as musicians is how we are pitted against each other. I've decided to call it "The Nasty C's"—competition, criticism, and comparison (which are part of the other "C": capitalism).

I want to tell you a story. Recently a fellow musician (someone I didn't know well) was going to perform at a concert. Because she hadn't performed in a while and was worried about it, she asked me if she could play through her piece for me. She came over to my house, and this is what was going through my mind: "She's really nice, I like her, she's a good teacher. I hope she doesn't play too well."

She started out, and it was beautiful. She played the first movement, which was difficult, really well, and I was sitting there thinking, "Damn! That was good. I hope she starts messing up." It was such a beautiful piece, and when she played it was like she was dancing. She continued, and it was going very well. I was feeling like everyone would like her better, would want to play with her and not me, and other unpleasant things. I also thought, "Okay, this is internalized oppression and you really shouldn't be thinking these things." (*Laughter*) I was taking note of it and thinking I'd have to have a good session about it.

Then at some point—I don't know if I made a decision or if it was the music—I thought, "I'm just going to sit here and enjoy this." And it was so beautiful, and she was beautiful to watch. When she finished I said, "That was so beautiful!" And she said, "Really?" and started to tell me all the

<sup>5</sup> A céilidh is a traditional Gaelic social gathering that usually involves playing Gaelic folk music and dancing.

things she'd done wrong, and how scared she was, and so on. It was all about her internalized oppression and how she wasn't going to be good enough and nobody was going to like it. I thought, "Great opportunity. I get to counsel her!" And I was counseling myself at the same time, because when she was playing I had been feeling lots of stuff. Anyway, it was the start of a really good friendship.

I was recently able to tell her a little bit about how I'd felt, which also gave her the opportunity to talk about how something similar goes on<sup>6</sup> for her. It opened up the possibility of our being able to talk, which is another great part of the story. I haven't been able to find many places where I can talk to my colleagues about these kinds of feelings. It has seemed too dangerous.

With music we have the possibility of rich togetherness, but we have to work on the harshness of the oppression that gets internalized as competitiveness, jealousy (that's a really fun one to work on), and the ways we are critical of each another.

Another way the internalized oppression affects us is that there are myths about being a musician that we really like, that we'd like to hang on to. "Being the special one"—I kind of like that; I have to discharge that one. We're a little weird—that's often a popular one. We're talented, we're sexy, we know everything about every kind of music, we're good listeners, we have good rhythm, we were born already knowing how to do it, it comes easily, we deserve applause.

Then there are the ways that other oppressions have influenced us—have separated us from each other and given us misinformation (and no information) about each other and the music of other cultures so that we grow up with negative ideas about other types of music. Internalized classism can make us feel like certain kinds of music are better or worse. Because of racism we don't know about the music of other cultures or we believe that certain kinds of musicians always do such and such or are good at such and such.

<sup>6</sup> Goes on means happens.

There is also the scarcity myth—that there is only so much to go around. I don't think there could ever be too much music. I don't think there could ever be too many choirs, too many bands, too many musical groups. If every meeting (or every gathering of any people) began with people singing, what kinds of decisions would be made and how would meetings go?

### CLASSISM AND RACISM IN MUSIC

Musicians get separated from each other and from the society as a whole, and a lot of that is due to class oppression and racism. I talked earlier about the relatively recent division between the "professional" and the "amateur," which affects everyone whether he or she aspires to being a musician or not. The words in themselves create a division. (This isn't to say that some people can't decide to dedicate a lot of time to music, but there doesn't need to be a hierarchical sense to it.) There's also been an historical division between "art music" and "folk music," which is basic classism. It shows up in the ways we think that one kind of music is better or worse than another. And it's not like one is always on top. In one moment one type of music is idolized, and in the next it gets switched around. Racism fits in there, too—a certain type of music might be higher up because it's exoticized. We've forgotten to take pride in our own music, in our own roots and culture. We need to do this as musicians. We need to go back and work on our class and cultural heritages and take pride in them.

I'm classically trained and raised middle class, and I was taught to think that certain kinds of music weren't good, were "low class." (No one used those words, but that was the underlying message.) I'll give you an example. For a long time I thought that drumming was the stupidest thing there was. I thought that people would just sit around and do this thing, and I couldn't see any merit in it. As I got close to some people who loved drumming, and I loved them, I said to myself, "There's something you've got to discharge here."

*continued . . .*

## LIBERATION

... continued

At a recent RC workshop some people started drumming. I drifted my way over and started to listen, and pretty soon the whole room was vibrating. We had an incredible jam session, with people stepping in. People really got to show themselves, and we had a wonderful time. And I realized that something inside me had shifted. I could see that my attitude that this was not worthy or real music had come from how I'd gotten hurt, the misinformation I'd received, the racism I'd been taught.

Colonization and imperialism have led to a proliferating domination of Western music—similar to how the English language is the “language of the world.” Every time a language or culture, including a musical culture, is lost, we all lose something important.

Often music is “borrowed” from another culture, and somebody makes a lot of money off it without acknowledging its source. Sometimes music is appropriated from another culture because it looks more attractive or interesting or exotic. Discharging on our own roots will help us think more clearly about this.

*Workshop participant:* Three months ago a Haitian friend and I were listening to a U.S. band that was playing music from Haiti. The audience was mostly middle-class Caucasians. Throughout the entire concert there was no mention of how the band got its music, and my friend pointed that out.

*(Mini-session on pride in one's own cultural and musical heritage.)*

*Heather:* There's a way that, because of racism, we white people lose connection with each

other, lose connection with people targeted by racism—basically lose connection. This shows up with music. We lose our connection to music at an early age. For example, classical European music is a wonderful kind of music, but the training to play it can be so harsh, judgmental, and critical that people lose track of their inherent musicality and how they would naturally be able to learn, and think about, and feel music. If people could discharge on what they were like as children before they got any ideas about which kind of music was better or worse, they could reclaim their sense of connection and their inherent creativity.

### WORKING ON THE MUSICIAN'S IDENTITY

I'm inspired by the reminder in RC to work on any identity we have. (“Claim it, clean it up, and throw it out.”) What we are aiming for is to be human beings—all present together, not divided or separated. Music is part of benign reality. It is a wonderful part of being human, and having it in our lives is rational. The identity of musician, however, can carry with it old yucky chronic distress. I want to explore working on the identity of musician. I haven't done this at a workshop before, so you're being experimented on. *(Laughter and whoops from the group)*

Sometimes we are pulled toward music as a way to feel better or to not feel anything, as a substitute for a person or connection, as a refuge from something, a way to “feel normal,” a way to “feel safe.” I've heard people say, “It's what got me through; it saved my life.” If we go back and work on some of our early connections with music, we can see some of the reasons we might have chosen it, or not chosen it. Maybe it wasn't even a possibility.

What was going on when you decided to pursue music, or when you decided it wasn't for you or you couldn't have it, or when someone else decided you couldn't have it?

One thing about being a musician is that we can be quite visible. This can be a frozen need<sup>7</sup> for some people. For others being visible is the last thing they'd want.

<sup>7</sup> Frozen need is a term used in RC for a hurt that results when a rational need is not met in childhood. The hurt compels a person to keep trying to fill the need in the present, but the frozen need cannot be filled; it can only be discharged.



BORNEO • WAKO ONO

Music can really connect people, but sometimes there's a pretense that it's connecting and actually the opposite is happening.

Music can be an addiction, a way to avoid desperate, lonely, rotten feelings. (*Laughter from group*) Grrr!

*Comment from the audience:* You've got a lot of nerve. (*Laughter from group*)

As I mentioned before, we can also think about the myths we really like, the ones we like to cling to—about how we suffer, and we're gifted and special.

All this work is going to help us, when we're making music, to actually be there. We talked about the musician being the counselor. We're not the counselor if we're the client. If we're not really there, we're not connecting with people.

### MUSIC AND DISABILITY LIBERATION

I have been inspired by the work of Marsha Saxton, the International Liberation Reference Person for Disabled People. A few years ago she invited us International Liberation Reference Persons to answer a few questions about how bodies, health, and disability oppression were related to the constituencies we were leading. We all have a body, but it's easy to forget about our body and only remember that we have a mind.

A lot of our earliest hurts were physical ones. Marsha has talked about how when we were babies we were completely dependent for everything. The ways people handled us may have laid in physical hurts. She has also said that not discharging is a physical hurt. I don't know about you, but then I've had a lot of physical hurts. (*Laughter from all*) Some of us started music early. It's a physical thing, playing music. We use our bodies. Physical hurts stay with us just like emotional hurts. Until we discharge them, they're still there.

Musicians' oppression targets our bodies—with overwork, being forced to be in situations in which we don't get to pay attention to our bodies, being exposed to poor lighting, loud environments. One of the prevailing ideas is that "the show must go on"—that the product's more important than the person, that musicians have to ignore pain and other ways the body is saying, "Pay attention to how you are treating me. Discharge!" Musicians

are often discouraged from discharging. Injuries and disability are something we're supposed to "go quiet" about. "Don't tell anybody; hide it" is the message, along with "You're a loser," "What's wrong with your technique?" "Why haven't you figured this out?"

It's not our fault.

In the classical world, musicians are pushed hard and told they should practice an irrational number of hours per day, by themselves, and not ask for any help. The incidence of tendonitis and repetitive stress injuries is high. And the demands on orchestra players are increasing, because of the greater demands of capitalism. People are being pushed to extremes. Is it time to scream yet? (*Everyone in the room screams loud and long, followed by laughter.*)

People can be afraid that injuries might be "contagious." It's like "hang out<sup>8</sup> with the winners and not the losers." We need to discharge and think about our bodies. We can ask in a session, "What if I can't? What if I can't play the cello? What if I can't walk?" We can get a head start on it.<sup>9</sup> (*Laughter and more screaming from the audience*)

How do we work on our physical hurts? Discharge—on noticing we have a body, by telling our body life stories. I remember starting to play the cello when I was twelve. I remember it hurt. I had to hold my arms up, I had to build muscles, I had to get calluses on my fingers. It would have been good to discharge on those things. We can go back and do that work in our sessions now.

*continued . . .*

<sup>8</sup> In this context, hang out means associate.

<sup>9</sup> Get a head start on it means start thinking and discharging about it before it happens.



ROME, ITALY • PHYLLIS KESSLER

## LIBERATION

... continued

There's a lot that we can heal from. This is not what society tells us. If we go to the doctor, he or she doesn't talk about discharge; we usually get a pill. Bodies have a huge capacity to heal, and they would heal much more quickly if we got to discharge on physical hurts.

Because I've had a bunch of injuries, I've had to think about this a lot. My physical symptoms increase with fear. My back has hurt more this weekend than it did in the days before. It goes up and down—almost like a barometer. We can trust our bodies, and get in touch with them and notice what they're saying. They're saying "pay attention."

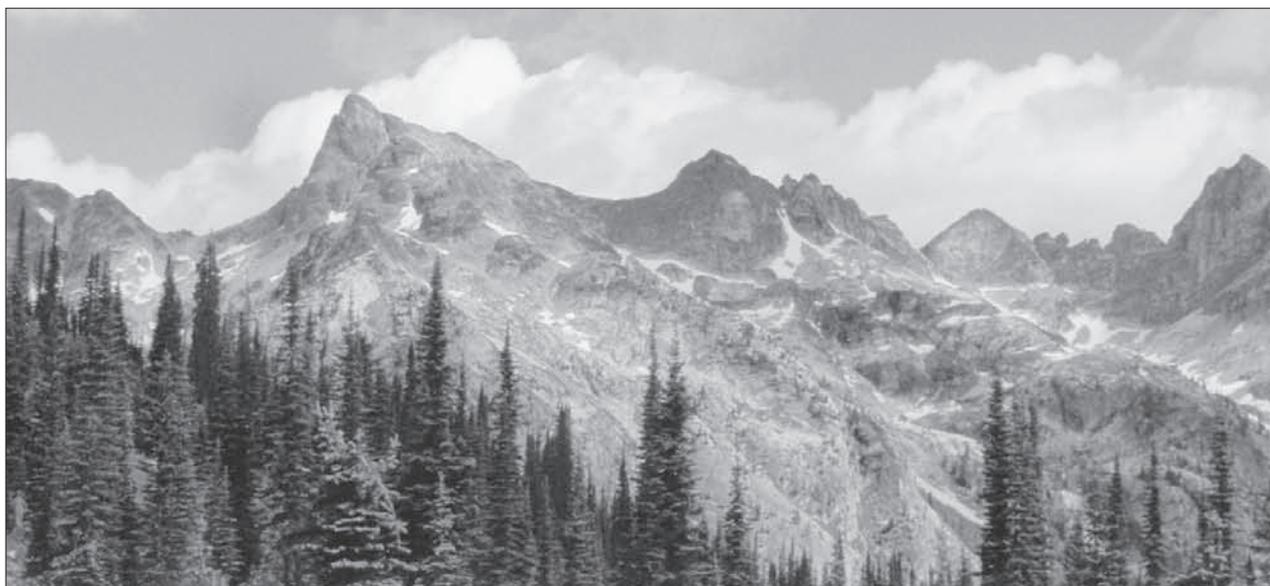
We are worth paying attention to and taking care of, and we need to do that as a contradiction to the "show must go on" myth. (Boo, hiss—horrible thing!)

## STAYING CONNECTED

Noticing our connection with people is also important. I like the direction somebody gave me: "When you wake up in the morning and you feel scared (which is standard for me), think, 'How can I let people love me today?'"

Something else worth experimenting with is playing our instrument or singing in a Co-Counseling session, with someone paying attention to us as we figure things out and notice what's going on. We don't have to go off in some room by ourselves, or already know how to play or sing in some kind of automatic, magical way.

Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada



ITALY • ELLIE PUTNAM

## “The Future Is Always with Us”

*(Harvey, speaking to nuclear disarmament activists):* The balance of forces is always with us. The future is always on our side when we have a good program. It's understandable that we're so timid and slow and confused and often dump our internalized oppression on each other and fight each other harder than we fight the enemy. But reality is always with us, the future is always with us.

*Harvey Jackins*  
From "A Favorable Situation for Reaching Out,"  
on page 109 of *Start Over Every Morning*

## A Proud Working-Class Musician

At the Musicians' Liberation Workshop,<sup>1</sup> Heather talked about how other oppressions intersect with the oppression of musicians. I was particularly interested in class oppression.

As a working-class musician with no formal musical training, my distress tells me I am not really a musician. When Heather talked about musicians, I noticed she did not use the word "professional" to describe working musicians. Instead she said "musicians who make their living playing music." She reminded us that it was only recently that capitalism created an industry that requires the words "amateur" and "professional" to describe musicians. The industry reinforces the illusion that music is played by the few and the rest of us are passive listeners. This keeps us separated from one another.

The workshop helped me to proudly claim that I am a musician. At lunch I attended a topic table for working-class musicians and found that I was not alone in my distress. Many of us seemed to have similar distresses.

That evening we shared our music. I got to stay close to and stand by other working-class musicians who needed support as they shared. One of my regular Co-Counselors, who is middle class, attended the workshop with me. When I shared my music, he was my best ally. He counseled me right up until the moment it was my turn and stood close behind me. As I finished, there was thunderous applause from a circle of smiling people beaming their love at me. I keep this in my heart as I go out in the world and continue my work as a proud working-class woman.

*Margaret Cooley*  
San Francisco, California, USA

\* See article on pages 15 to 20 of this *Present Time*.

## Musicians Are Counselors in Society

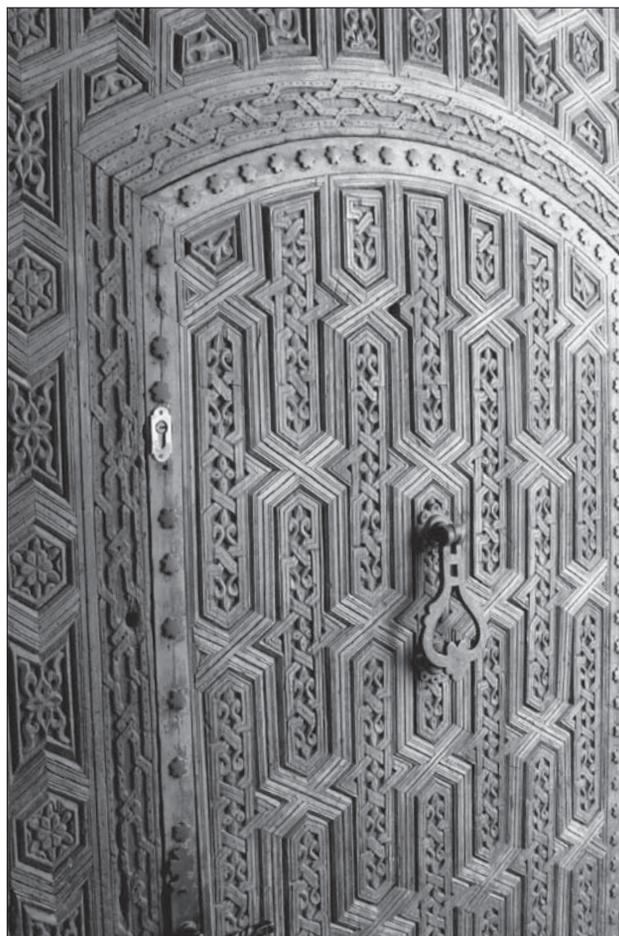
At the Musicians' Liberation Workshop<sup>1</sup> the contradiction<sup>2</sup> of being around a group of Co-Counselors who were either working as musicians or claiming the identity of musician had a big effect on me. It helped me to feel more powerful and confident in my music, and my music aspirations, and to be more clear about the significance of my making music a central part of my life.

We musicians are counselors in society, and it's important for us to remember that we perform and create music for ourselves and not just for others—in the same way that we choose for ourselves, and not just for others, to be counselors.

*Isaac Zones*  
San Francisco, California, USA

<sup>1</sup> See article on pages 15 to 20 of this *Present Time*.

<sup>2</sup> Contradiction to distress



MARRAKESH, MOROCCO • MICHAEL HAND

## We Were Both Musicians and Listeners

The Musicians' Liberation Workshop<sup>1</sup> was a terrific experience for me. It helped me understand that musicians' oppression is universal and that I no longer need to own it as only mine. I also recognized that musical talent is a natural part of human development, not a "special" gift I have so that I can separate myself as an artist, as someone "special," from other human beings.

Throughout my training to play my instrument (upright bass), nowhere was I told that the hours of practicing an instrument could be difficult and discouraging, or what to do when pushed by society to be "better" than other musicians. Somewhere in the process, instead of enjoying playing the instrument, I was trapped into being competitive while interacting with other musicians. That approach to music did not help me become a better person. Instead it pushed me to think that I was not good and that playing my instrument was not worth pursuing. As a result, for a few years I lost contact with my instrument. Music became secondary, and I started to feel tremendously unhappy without knowing the cause. The Musicians' Liberation Workshop gave meaning to my personal struggles and helped me see how others have experienced similar struggles.

<sup>1</sup> See article on pages 15 to 20 of this *Present Time*.

I got to think a lot about racism and musicians' oppression together and how undervalued the work of musicians is in our society. At the workshop there was only one other person targeted by racism, and naturally many feelings came up for me from the get-go.<sup>2</sup> The workshop leader, Heather Hay, quickly included the only other participant targeted by racism and me in her support group and assured us that she would be there for us for the entire workshop and that we could discharge with her if we had strong feelings or got isolated.

My workshop highlight was the music sharing on Saturday evening. We all made a circle, and each of us took a turn to share a piece with the group. No one acted or "performed" from a stage, and the presenter wasn't separated from the rest of the group. We were both musicians and listeners.

Since the workshop, I've noticed less distress around my performing and have developed a special alliance with the musicians I perform with *and* with the listeners who come to our musical events.

*Bishu Chatterjee*  
El Cerrito, California, USA

<sup>2</sup> The get-go means the very beginning.



### 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 109



SARA KALLAI

## Completely Good and Completely Creative

The direct result of my experience at the Musicians' Liberation Workshop<sup>\*</sup> has been an increased sense of spaciousness and a renewed excitement in my musical life. I am finding ways to get closer to other human beings, including fellow musicians, in ways that are both fun for and hopeful to me.

Heather Hay's relaxed and playful leadership and her willingness to be completely present with the group, including taking time to discharge in front of the workshop, modeled the intelligent direction to bring my full, complete self to my music and my concerts. I am no longer clenching my eyes shut when I perform, trying to keep the audience out. I make eye contact with as many members of the audience as I can and notice that they like me and my music. My feelings of isolation are shrinking with every concert I play.

Heather presented the idea that creativity equals intelligence. That is possibly the most hopeful thought I've ever heard. I'm thinking of ways I can nurture my creativity, and support the work of other musicians, while discharging the ways I've been hurt as an artist. I look forward to fully discharging self-doubt, self-criticism, and feelings of worthlessness; sexism, racism, and internalized Jewish oppression. The Musicians' Liberation Workshop touched on most of these in ways that helped me discharge any "thought" that argues with the reality that I am completely good and completely creative.

Mark Summer  
Novato, California, USA

\* See article on pages 15 to 20 of this *Present Time*.

## Asian Jews and Allies

**M**y name is Malana Rogers-Bursen. I am a twenty-two-year-old Indian and Jewish woman, adopted from India and raised in Connecticut, USA. At the North American Asian Liberation Workshop, led by Tim Jackins in July 2010, I led a topic table for Asian Jews and Allies. Over fifteen allies came, as well as two other Jews. Most of the allies came because they had a close relationship with a Jew.

I started by having people say something they loved about Jews. People said wonderful things, which was a huge contradiction<sup>\*</sup> for the Jews. Then I talked about how it's hard for us Jews at an

Asian workshop to be visible about being Jewish. Most people, Jews and Asians, forget that we are Jewish, and this makes it hard for us to feel proud of our identity as Jews and to bring our full selves anywhere. We feel like we have to leave our Jewish identity at home when we're around Asians and our Asian identity at home when we're around Jews. We need to feel like it's okay to be visibly Jewish, and we need to be welcomed as Jews and as Asians. It is also hard for us to remember our goodness and that being Jewish is not only about being scared or urgent. There are wonderful things about being Jewish, and we get to be proud of who we are. I ended by talking about how much I love my Jewish family and how different the world

would be if Jews could be allies to people targeted by racism and people targeted by racism could be allies to Jews.

I then had the other Jews at the table talk about their experience as Asian Jews. Manijeh Moradian, an Iranian Jew from New York City (USA), talked about how people often see her as a symbol of two groups in conflict coming together. In reality, she said, Jews are all very different from each other and become Jews in different ways. She talked about how she never feels like she can show her full self or like her full self is welcome. Leyla Modirzadeh, another Iranian Jew from New York City, talked about how her

*continued . . .*

\* Contradiction to distress

## LIBERATION

... continued

Iranian father acted out his anti-Jewish oppression and her Jewish mother acted out her racism, and how it's been hard for her to claim a Jewish identity.

I finished by adding some things that Cherie Brown said at a recent young Jews workshop: (1) The majority of Jews in the world are people targeted by racism, and (2) What if the "weirdest" Jew was the most popular? The most welcome? I cried as I talked about that and said that I'd like it to be true with this group.

I asked Alix Webb, a Japanese-heritage woman from New York

City, to talk about the work she's done as an ally. She talked about how, despite beliefs to the contrary, there are many examples of Asians and Jews being good allies to each other. She gave the example of China writing visas for Jews during World War II. She said that Asians and Jews have a lot in common and that if we had done a go-around on something we loved about Asians, we probably would have said some things similar to what we said about Jews. She also said that while Jews have been told to stand up when something is wrong, Asians have been told to be quiet, and that because her

fear often turns into anti-Jewish oppression, most of what she works on is where she's scared.

We all discharged well during the mini-session.

It was amazing to see so many people (my people) who wanted to be our allies. They really loved Jews! It was also great to get to be visible as a Jew at an Asian workshop.

I hope to continue doing work with Jews targeted by racism, as it is important to me and to the world. I think it is valuable for Jews who are targeted by racism to lead people targeted by racism who are allies to Jews, because the allies targeted by racism may not feel like they have to step over racism to do the work.

I would love to hear anyone's thoughts about Jews who are targeted by racism and people targeted by racism who are allies to Jews. I think it's an important thing for us to be thinking about.

*Malana Rogers-Bursen*

Pomfret Center, Connecticut, USA

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



JANA CHRISTOPHER

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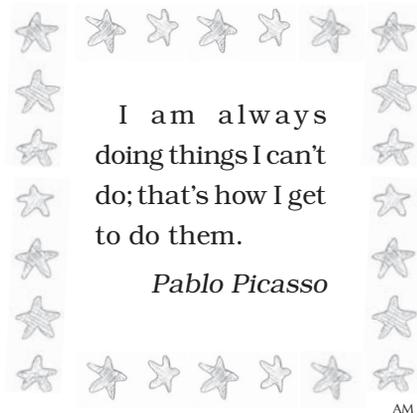
See page 104 for the titles of the talks.

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

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

\* RC web site



## Eliminating Racism Among Jews

Thanks so much for your sharing and leadership, Malana.<sup>1</sup> I am proud of the leadership you continue to take on this pivotal issue.

Key to Jewish liberation is winning allies in the battle against anti-Jewish oppression. For the long-term survival of the Jewish people, we need to enlist as allies people targeted by racism—the majority of the people of the world. Because Jews who are targeted by racism experience both racism and anti-Jewish oppression, their voices are pivotal in bringing Jews and people targeted by racism together.

A few years ago I was struggling with how to work on my racism as an Ashkenazi<sup>2</sup> white Jew. (I want to emphasize Ashkenazi *white*, because there are Ashkenazim who are people targeted by racism.) Tim Jackins suggested that I start working on the racism within the Jewish community, and particularly within my white Ashkenazi community. That meant facing the racism directed at Mizrachi Jews<sup>3</sup> and black, Asian, Indian, and Latino/a Jews.

Facing that racism was different from facing the racism I carry as a white person toward Gentile people targeted by racism. First I had to notice that I was both Ashkenazi and white. I had to face the depth of the hurts from my oppression as an Ashkenazi Jew, which included fears of being exterminated, distresses about the Holocaust, and feelings of being targeted for destruction. To look at the racism, I needed to face feelings about death.

I then needed to notice the particular forms of racism that white Ashkenazim carry—how we have been set up<sup>4</sup> against and divided from Jews who are targeted

by racism. I had to notice how white Ashkenazim have denied or enforced the invisibility of Jews targeted by racism.

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*Because Jews who are targeted by racism experience both racism and anti-Jewish oppression, their voices are pivotal in bringing Jews and people targeted by racism together.*

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As I scanned my material,<sup>5</sup> I realized how many Jews targeted by racism I have some connection with. In my synagogue, a number of them attend services and participate in the community—predominantly black and Asian Jews but also some

Mizrachi and a few Latina/Latino Jews. Some of them have been adopted, often from countries outside of the United States. Many were converted to Judaism as infants or young people.

I have come to understand that the elimination of racism among Jews is key to our liberation as Jews. I have a lot to discharge, a lot to learn.

I hope that Jews targeted by racism and white Jews will look at the questions Malana's letter raises and continue this discussion.

Love,

*Diane Balser*

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

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<sup>5</sup> Material means distress.



IRAN • ANTHONY TASSI

<sup>1</sup> See previous article.

<sup>2</sup> Ashkenazi Jews are Jews of Central and Eastern European descent.

<sup>3</sup> Mizrachi Jews are Jews who are descendants of Jews from the Middle East, North Africa, Central Asia, and the Caucasus. They often identify as people targeted by racism.

<sup>4</sup> Set up means manipulated into being.

## U.S. Ashkenazi Jews Ending Racism

*The following are some thoughts in response to a question Diane Balsler<sup>1</sup> asked, in preparation for the September 2010 Jews and Contemporary Issues Workshop, about U.S. Ashkenazi Jews and ending racism.*

As U.S. Ashkenazi Jews,<sup>2</sup> ending racism is a core part of our liberation. People targeted by racism are our natural allies.

Although Ashkenazi racism is in many ways the same as the racism of any other group of white people, there are also differences, based on the history of anti-Jewish oppression—particularly near-genocide, which left us Ashkenazi Jews with a deep fear for our survival and patterns of being visible middle-agents<sup>3</sup> of oppression.

In many respects, anti-Jewish oppression was a precursor to and a

template for racism. Before there was systemic racism by white people toward the darker-skinned people of the colonized world, Jews were defined as a subhuman group or race. They were different enough to be fairly easily identified, scapegoated, and blamed for the ills of class society. They were subjected to pogroms and expulsion and then allowed to return if some of them played the role of visible agent of the ruling-class oppressor, setting up<sup>4</sup> all the Jews to be targeted in the future.

As the construct of white identity developed, Ashkenazi Jews became “white,” like their European counterparts, and came to see themselves as superior to Mizrachi<sup>5</sup> and Sephardic<sup>6</sup> Jews. Even amongst Ashkenazim, a quasi-racism exists between those who are lighter versus darker, those who look more Christian or northern and whose features are less Semitic versus those with more Semitic or what might

be considered black or African-like features. Also, German Jews have considered themselves superior to their less assimilated Eastern European counterparts.

Ashkenazi Jews participated in the European racism that was used to justify the colonization of Asia, Africa, and the Americas; the attempted enslavement and the genocide of Native Americans; and the African slave trade.

Pre-World War II, some Ashkenazi Jews were revolutionaries who worked to end class society and were targeted in both the non-Jewish and the Jewish world and by anti-Jewish oppression from both the right and the left.<sup>7</sup> Many Ashkenazim escaped Europe and went to the United States, where assimilation and upward mobility were two of the ways they tried to find security and escape anti-Jewish oppression. Some moved into visible middle-agent roles in which they served as buffers between the ruling class and the rest of the population, including people targeted by racism. (Fundamental to the middle-agent role is the distress recording that Jews’ security depends on their aligning themselves with the interests of the ruling class, when their real interests are with the majority, in ending class society.)

The Holocaust destroyed two thirds of all Jews. In response, more Ashkenazim escaped to Palestine and the United States. Those who came to the United States became part of the working class and were greeted with anti-Jewish oppression, which many tried to escape by assimilating and seeking upward mobility. Insecurity about survival left these Jews vulnerable to acting out racism.

<sup>7</sup> The right means the reactionary forces; the left means the progressive forces.

<sup>1</sup> Diane Balsler is the International Liberation Reference Person for Women and a leader of Jews.

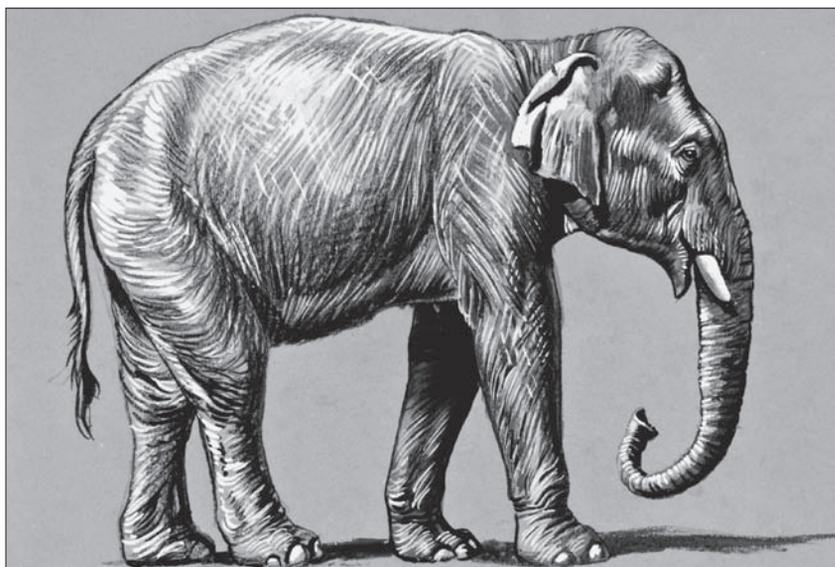
<sup>2</sup> Ashkenazi Jews are Jews of Western and Eastern European descent who were part of the Yiddishkeit culture and ethnic group and who generally identify as white.

<sup>3</sup> Middle-agent refers to a societal role in which a group agrees to oppress another group on behalf of the rulers or owning class in return for the promise of protection by the rulers.

<sup>4</sup> Setting up means predisposing.

<sup>5</sup> Mizrachi Jews are descended from Jews who lived in the Middle East, North Africa, and the Caucasus.

<sup>6</sup> Sephardic Jews are descended from Jews who lived in Portugal, Spain, Andorra, Greece, Italy, Gibraltar, and a small area of France.



ELEPHANT GRAY • © RAYMOND SHEPPARD

In Israel, the Jews' self-destructive distresses from the long history of anti-Jewish oppression and the near-genocide of the Holocaust were turned against Arabs, specifically in the form of mistreatment and oppression of the Palestinians. U.S. foreign policy in the Middle East subverted Arab liberation and put Jews in the visible middle-agent role. Within the U.S. Jewish world, anti-Arab racism was perpetuated and passed on to each new generation.

Post-World War II, the pattern of being visible middle agents became more pervasive throughout Jewish culture. It put some Jews in the position of creating and reinforcing some of the most reactionary policies and programs directed at people targeted by racism. It also kept Jews from being allies to each other.

Many Ashkenazi Jews have led or been part of progressive struggles for the rights of working people, for civil rights, and against racism and imperialist wars and foreign policies.

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***. . . the starting point of ending racism in ourselves is to like and fully value ourselves, each other, and our culture.***

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Being involved in these struggles has been part of what's been great about being a Jew. However, missing from them has been a program for the Jews' own liberation and for the winning over of everyone as allies to Jews. Also, Jewish internalized oppression and distresses from near-genocide have sometimes led the Jews involved in these struggles to identify with victimization and not fully win, or to try to control, dominate, or take over the leadership of the struggles.

As U.S. Ashkenazi Jews, the starting point of ending racism in ourselves is to like and fully value ourselves, each other, and our culture. This contradicts the harshness of centuries of anti-Jewish oppression, which has been internalized as self-destructive patterns that keep

us from fighting fully for our own liberation. These patterns have been woven into Ashkenazi culture and are at the core of how we as a people are vulnerable to moving into the oppressor role.

*Jennifer Wexler*  
Hyde Park, Massachusetts, USA



TERESA D'AMATO



What began as an e-mail discussion list for people in United to End Racism has developed into a list for all RCers who are active in using RC to eliminate racism. This list is a way for people to exchange their thinking about and experience with using RC in eliminating racism.

If you would like to be a member of this list, please e-mail us at <uer@rc.org>, telling us of your interest and including a short description of your eliminating-racism activities. Please also ask your Area Reference Person or Regional Reference Person to e-mail us with his or her support of your membership.

*Tim Jackins*  
*and Diane Shisk*

# From Ex-Psychiatric Inmates

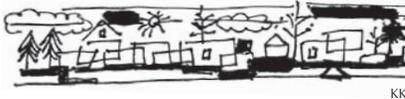
A discussion on the RC e-mail discussion list for leaders of “mental health” liberation

## 1) Why are you proud to be an ex-inmate (ex-psychiatric inmate)?

It’s who I am.

*Jenny Martin*

Birmingham, West Midlands, England

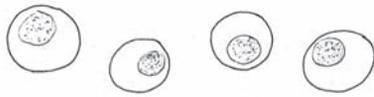


KK

I see the world for what it is—all of its oppression and harshness and stunning beauty. I have very little pretense and am not scared of many things that scare other people. I know the truth about human beings: what they are capable of and their power to heal, to be in charge, to transform oppressive situations.

*Ina Shelomith*

St. Paul, Minnesota, USA



LK

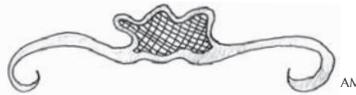
I’m proud that I tackled some heavy real-world sexism and young people’s oppression that was scary enough to have restimulated my whole extended family into silence for decades. I’m proud that I took a big risk in talking about it openly, even though the consequence was that I got expelled from my extended family, which caused me to unocclude early terror, get confused, and ultimately be put in the “mental health” system. I’m also proud of the way I held on, through all the inhumane experiences I went through, to my belief in the importance of human connection.

*Rose*  
USA

The experience of being an inmate has given me a *lot* of perspective on life and “mental health” oppression. They targeted me, and I came out the other side. Now I’m an ex-inmate success story!

*“Henry Church”*

USA

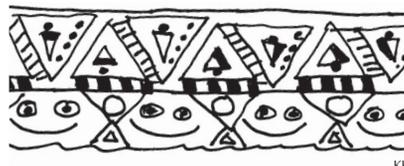


AM

Being an ex-inmate and an RC leader is a powerful combination. It certainly goes against what I was told, during and shortly after my “adventure” in the “mental health” system, my life should be like. I have persisted and figured out a lot. I know that I will never give up. As an ex-inmate young adult, I assume that I courageously tried some things to push the envelope of my liberation.

L—

Aotearoa/New Zealand



KK

I am proud that I figured out how to make it through a very hard time in my life and then how to make my life right—all before I got into RC. As I wrote to Harvey<sup>1</sup> in about 1977, “I have been to the bottom and come back up, by using the discharge process.” I really know the value of discharge and RC.

*Janet Foner*

New Cumberland, Pennsylvania, USA

<sup>1</sup> Harvey Jackins

I am proud of the “ex” part. I am proud I got out and never went back.

*“Ayla”*  
USA



LK

I have a deep understanding of how people can feel bad enough about themselves to take drugs. I also know that I am okay now, which can model that it’s possible to survive off drugs. I know that drugs are not the answer. I feel very strongly about that.

*Mary Gray McGee*

Santa Fe, New Mexico, USA

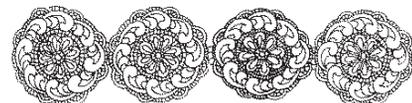


AM

They didn’t kill me. I got away. They told me I would be on drugs for the rest of my life, and I proved them wrong.

*DJL*

Asheville, North Carolina, USA

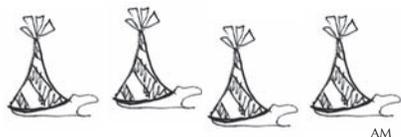


ANONYMOUS

As an ex-inmate, I’m proud of myself for reclaiming the discharge process and making a home for myself in Re-evaluation Counseling. I wish I hadn’t been hospitalized, but I was. And I use the experience of being institutionalized, as well as the experience of getting out of the

“mental health” system, every day. From being an ex-psychiatric inmate, I’ve learned that I am resilient. I am a survivor. I’m smart about relationships and being close to people. I have a good life.

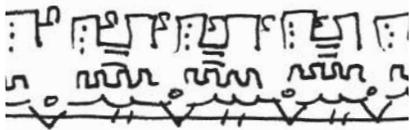
*Amy Strano*  
Queens, New York, USA



AM

I never compromised on having “my world” exactly the way I wanted it. Never! I thought a mental hospital might provide some support and caring. It did not happen, and I left after four days. I am proud that I held out the possibility of getting support and went on to actively and powerfully seek the support I deserve. I am proud to be an ex-inmate fighting for “mental health” liberation, and all other liberations.

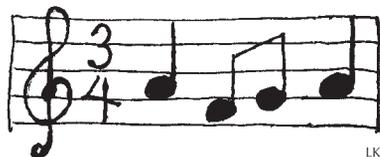
*Gene Galazan*  
Prescott, Arizona, USA



KK

I survived, I never gave up, I wanted to be myself and have continued being myself.

*Gunilla Hasselberg*  
Skarpnack, Sweden

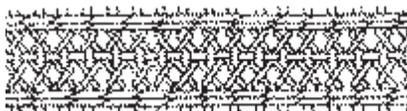


LK

For many years after I was hospitalized (back in 1987), I was terribly ashamed of being an ex-inmate. It took me years

of hard work to overcome that. Since about 1997 I have led many “mental health” liberation classes, and some workshops. I am open in the RC Community about my “mental health” story, and this seems to create a safe environment for other people to tell their stories.

*Rami Ben-Moshe*  
Kfar-Sava, Israel



ANONYMOUS

## 2) What did you learn from being an inmate that has been useful in later life?

To trust my thinking, my endurance, and how fighting for liberation is the sanest thing I could ever do. Ever!

*Gene Galazan*



LK

I learned that things can look bleak and hopeless and later turn out fine; that I am a strong person, emotionally speaking, and can handle very hard things; that people who cared about me were the most important “thing” I needed for moving out of a tough situation. I also learned, from the inside, what’s wrong with the “mental health” system and how it “works.” As my friend in the psychiatric survivors’ movement once said about me, “They locked up the wrong person!”

*Janet Foner*



KK

I learned that I am stronger than I thought I was. We are all stronger than we think we are. I learned a lot about the “mental health” system: It’s more about intimidation and control than about helping people. I learned something about society at large: Because I was removed from society, I could look at it from the outside (like when the astronauts realized there are no borders, no lines, drawn on the globe—that it’s just one small blue planet). I learned that many people are just going through the motions of living—not living mindful, meaningful, purposeful lives; just acting on patterns (though I did not have that word at the time), traditions, obligations. Also, I saw people putting tasks ahead of relationships. People weren’t getting<sup>2</sup> that the most important things are not things at all but relationships with other humans. Despite being heavily drugged, I was able to ponder these things in the hospital.

“Ayla”



KK

I know I will never go back there. I know I will never get that isolated from people who love me.

*Mary Gray McGee*



When I was in and out of the hospital several times over an eight-month period, I met a few people who had nowhere to turn once they got out. I realized that though my nuclear family was

*continued . . .*

<sup>2</sup> Getting means understanding.

## LIBERATION

... continued

scared for my well-being and not quite sure what to do, they were a hundred percent willing to support me in whatever ways they could. I understood that my family and close friends were the reason I didn't end up on the street.

When I came out of the hospital and while I was still on drugs, I began making decisions about who I wanted to be in the world. I made commitments to end oppression—formally for eight years as an activist and informally in my interactions with people. I learned that it didn't make sense to be judgmental about people's struggles, which has made it possible for me to reach out for relationships with people who don't look or act "normal" and to see not just their struggles but the wonderful person inside. As a result I've been able to form relationships with many people I treasure.

I learned that everything worth doing takes time. I now have a long-term perspective on getting close to people, overcoming difficulties, and pursuing dreams and goals, so I don't find myself trapped in disappointment when things don't work out as I hoped the first time around. (I still feel and discharge disappointment; I just don't drown in it.)

I learned is that it is okay to take big risks, make mistakes that are obvious to everyone but me, and try again when something doesn't work.

All of these things I learned when coming off drugs, and I try to remember them when other people (in and out of RC) come to me for support with their struggles.

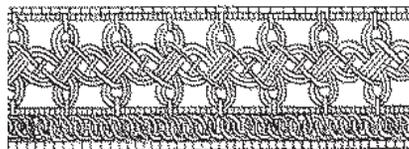
Rose

I learned that it isn't helpful to insert myself into a "mental health" system that recreates the dysfunctionality of my childhood and, at the same time, punishes me for discharge. That pretty much<sup>3</sup> sums up my experience in mental hospitals (all three of them). I went into the hospital seeking empathy and support but found neither. I've learned to gather people around me who support rather than punish discharge.

I learned how to get off of psych drugs safely. I use the difficult experience of four years of withdrawal and detox to counsel others on getting off of drugs.

I learned that I was misdiagnosed with "major depression" and drugged, when the underlying real medical problem was hormonal in nature. Because I was put on and cold-turkeyed off<sup>4</sup> of as many as fourteen different psych drugs, I get sessions whenever the possibility arises of taking any pharmaceutical. I won't get fooled again.

DJL



ANONYMOUS

*The experience has taught me that I have to trust my own thinking, because the "thinking" of the system is not really something you can trust.*

Gunilla Hasselberg

<sup>3</sup> Pretty much means basically.

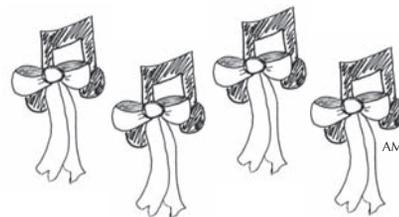
<sup>4</sup> Cold-turkeyed off means abruptly taken off.



KK

The experience of being an inmate started the process that helped me become more sensitive to my own emotions, which after some more years made me ripe for RC. Before that there was no chance I would have even considered opening up with people I hadn't known for at least twenty years.

Rami Ben-Moshe



### 3) How did you get out, and stay out, of the "mental health" system?

One day I decided I'd had enough, and I walked out and went home. When I returned the same day, I was asked if I wanted to become a day patient (home each evening and back each morning). That was the beginning of my getting discharged. At one of my out-patient visits, I was crying and the doctor asked if I wanted to come back to them. I said no, and I decided I was never going back.

Jenny Martin



KK

At the age of thirteen, I decided to have the appearance of conformity and I agreed with whatever I needed to in order to get out. Then I got out! And I kept making decisions until I was completely away from the system and the people who put me there. I moved away from my primary parent and in with the other one, who I didn't know at all but who was a lot safer. That involved

moving halfway across the country, with no friends. I listened to a lot of music, drew, meditated, sewed, danced around my bedroom, played guitar, wrote in a journal, and made new friends and spent time with them.

*Jna Shelomith*



I got myself out of the hospital four times by doing what I understood from the hospital staff was expected of me. I got out of the “mental health” system by deciding to do an experiment. My doctors told me that because I had a permanent chemical imbalance in my brain, I would need to be on drugs and see a therapist for the rest of my life. Around my twenty-fifth birthday, I decided that I didn’t want to take pills, I didn’t want to feel fragile and be dependent on the “mental health” system for the next seventy-five years, so I did an experiment to see whether they were right that I needed the drugs to function. Because I was on some heavy stuff, and was in a state (of the United States, not a state of mind) where people can be hospitalized if they refuse to take their drugs and their doctor gets scared, it took me two years and seven months to convince my psychiatrist to help me wean off and then stop taking psychiatric drugs.

I changed my line of work to something I believed in and wanted to do. I changed my living situation to support me better. During the last phase of stopping drugs, I learned RC, which made things a lot easier. With discharge I’ve been able to make and stick to decisions that keep me on the road

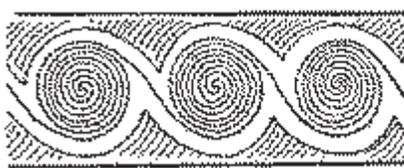
to being powerful in my life. Plus discharge and RC theory prevent me from getting confused by the old feelings that come up to be discharged when my life in the present contradicts them.

*Rose*



*To get out, I figured out what the staff on the psychiatric ward thought was “normal” and acted that way. Using slang, I would say that “I kissed ass”<sup>5</sup> to get out. I was looking for information on how to keep crying, as I knew that crying was important and that it was getting harder for me. I think it was inevitable that I would get into RC. I remember reading and re-reading the description of RC on the back of Present Time and thinking, “This is it; this is what I’ve been looking for.” I have been having lots of Co-Counseling sessions, and that’s how I’ve stayed out of the system.*

*“Henry Church”*



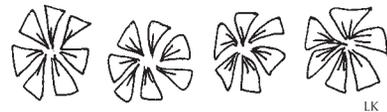
ANONYMOUS

How I stayed out: Getting in an RC ex-inmate support group, almost immediately. Becoming an assistant to the group’s leader. Setting up my life to have lots of Co-Counseling sessions. Living my life fully, not backing off of anything. Building lots of contact with people into my life and work and living situations. Having great allies, especially

<sup>5</sup> “I kissed ass” means I acted subservient to gain favor.

my RC Reference People. My close family being supportive of my thinking and decisions (for example, my walking away from the urgent offer of psychiatric drugs for life). One especially close friend, on one particular occasion, staying close to me and helping me sleep instead of pointing me toward the “mental health” system.

*L—*



My parents were going out of town on vacation and were unwilling to leave me in the “hospital” while they were gone, so they got permission from my psychiatrist to take me with them. Once I was out of the “hospital,” I realized it wasn’t any harder to be outside than in (I had been feeling like I couldn’t function outside, largely because I was on a lot of psychiatric drugs). I went back to the “hospital” for a month of “observation” and then was released. Also, my insurance had run out, which was probably an additional factor.

I knew deep down that I was *never* going to go back there, no matter what. I saw my psychiatrist (who was a young resident physician and a great listener and was okay with me discharging) twice a week and then once a week for about a year and a half. During that time (and prior to it) he gradually reduced the drugs I was taking so that about six months after I left the “hospital” I was no longer on them. I got an apartment with a friend from the “hospital,” so I didn’t have to live at my parents’ house, and found a part-time job. Later I married an old friend and left the city I’d grown up in so that no one around me knew I was an ex-inmate and I had a completely fresh start. A few years after that

*continued . . .*

## LIBERATION

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(1973) I accidentally found RC and discharged up a storm.<sup>6</sup> I discharged through breakfast, lunch, and dinner at some workshops. Five years later (1978), I began helping to build “mental health” liberation work. That, along with other things, led to my having to figure out how to get myself in present time and how to stay present.

Janet Foner



The psychiatrist told me, “You are very sick. I would like to send you to Shepherd Pratt (an expensive private psychiatric hospital), but your parents are too poor, so I will have to send you to the state facility in Sykesville, Maryland (USA). As soon as I got out of that meeting with “Dr. Lock-up” (what all of us young people called him, because he loved locking us up in long-term facilities), I ran around begging everyone for fifteen cents for a phone call. I got the fifteen cents and called my mother. I was a minor (less than eighteen years old), which meant that I could not just leave the hospital or even sign myself out AMA (against medical advice). I told Mom that the doctor meant to lock me up and throw away the key and that she should come and sign me out against medical advice. She did. It helps to have allies.

How I stayed out: I was determined to prove them wrong and never go back, and I have been living a fine life not locked up. Shortly after leaving the hospital, I was introduced to RC. That was extremely helpful. After my first RC class meeting, I decided that RC

<sup>6</sup> Discharged up a storm means discharged a lot.

theory included me, and the logical conclusion was to flush the psych drugs down the toilet. So I stopped taking Stelazine cold turkey (*not something I recommend*). I knew about withdrawal from alcohol. I had witnessed it, so I knew it was rough. Intellectually I understood that the vivid hallucinations, the inability to sleep, and the hyperness were not symptoms of “insanity” but rather withdrawal symptoms from a powerful major tranquilizer. Because I did not have a job and was not in school, I had the time to let myself recover. I did not seek support. Partly that was Catholic internalized oppression, but I also feared telling my RC teacher I was on psych drugs, as she had made it clear she would not let anyone in the class who was on them. Somehow she was oblivious to the fact that I was drugged, which turned out to be a good thing for me. Even if it was inside my distress to tough it out on my own, it was much better to not be on psych drugs. Sometimes the end justifies the means.

(Interestingly enough, I found that quitting smoking was a hundred times harder, because smoking felt “good.” Taking psych drugs did not feel good; in fact, it was painful—physically, emotionally, and spiritually. I think I quit smoking twenty times before I really quit.)

So RC, my determination, and getting off psych drugs helped me stay out of the “mental health” system.

“Ayla”

DJL

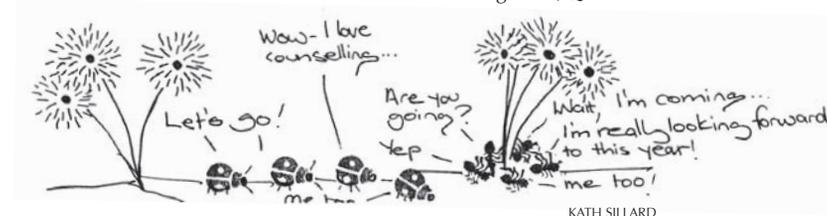
First I fought to get a psychiatrist, and then I got him to listen to me and allow me to cut down the dosage. Then I was off drugs completely but would go back on for a few months every time my job got too oppressive. He let me be in charge of that. Finally I walked away from my job.

Mary Gray McGee



*I started reading everything I could get my hands on about safely getting off psych drugs. Early in 2001 I tried unsuccessfully to get off an antidepressant. I was ill with a withdrawal syndrome for eighteen months and used that time to educate myself so I would not fail again. The book that influenced me most was Call Me Crazy: Stories from the Mad Movement, by Irit Shimrat. I found it in an LGBTQ bookstore. It included information about the Mad Pride Movement, the Support Coalition International (Mindfreedom), and online anti-psychiatry support groups. It even made mention of RC. Almost ten years earlier a close friend had offered to teach me RC. I wasn't ready then, but after reading Call Me Crazy I was eager to add the tools of RC to my toolbox.*

<sup>7</sup> LGBTQ stands for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer.

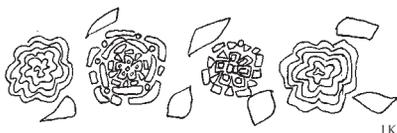


KATH SILLARD

A large way I survived my experiences in the “mental health” system was by assimilating into what a white middle-class woman “should” be like: pretty and straight. I remember distinctly my psychiatrist commenting on how much better I was doing and relating that to the fact that I was wearing lipstick. It was that direct. (Years later in reading through my chart, I saw that every visit documented my appearance.) I learned that “looking good” was my best shot<sup>8</sup> at getting away from the label of “depression.” The intersection of sexism and “mental health” oppression is infuriating.

While conformity and the appearance of conformity played a big part in my getting out of the system, I also made a decision to learn how to break the ancient habit of getting sunk by my chronic material.<sup>9</sup> I stopped listening to the music that got me down. I stopped watching sappy<sup>10</sup> movies and TV shows that made me long for a life other than mine. I moved to be closer to friends and do the things I wanted to do.

Amy Strano



LK

Eight years before I began thinking about getting off of psych drugs, I spent six consecutive years in three psych hospitals. That was more than enough time for them to brainwash me into believing their misinformation, confusion, and biological models of “mental illness.” The first hospital

<sup>8</sup> Shot means chance.

<sup>9</sup> Material means distress.

<sup>10</sup> Sappy means overly sentimental.

threatened me with a commitment hearing when I said I wanted to leave because being there wasn’t helping. It would be three suicide attempts and five more years before I again asked to leave. During the relatively short eight months I spent in the third hospital, it was clear to me that the hospital model still wasn’t working. The third hospital operated under a different therapeutic philosophy than the first two and agreed to let me out when I said I wanted to go. I spent eight more years compliantly taking the psych drugs. I was aware on some level, with every dose I took, that they were ineffective. I just didn’t have any other answers and felt all alone—until I started reading anti-psychiatry literature.

Fury at the “mental health” system for failing to “help” me got me through four years of nasty withdrawal and detox from two drugs. And so, I am out!

DJL



KK

I got out because they let me out. I tried to get attention from other people, not doctors. When I really left the “mental health” system, forever, was when I started Co-Counseling.

Gunilla Hasselberg

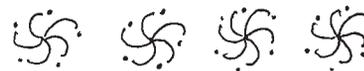


PAT GREGORY

#### 4) What makes it hard for you to identify as an ex-inmate?

I think some people in RC are confused and think that my claiming the ex-inmate identity means that I identify with patterns of victimization. Actually, to claim the identity and work on it are very much *outside* of my victimization. Pretending that my inmate experience didn’t happen was causing many problems in my life. Claiming the identity and working on it are part of the way out. Claiming the identity is the *opposite* of victimization for me. One thing that makes it hard to claim is that ex-inmate liberation theory is not generally understood or worked on in the RC Communities.

“Henry Church”



LK

I don’t want anyone confused about it. In my mind, my ex-inmate status communicates very little about me or my struggles (past or present), so I don’t tell anyone about it, except my Co-Counselors and a select few friends and family members. Recently it has been useful for an ex-inmate Co-Counselor of mine to push me on this a bit.

L—



LK

Shame, humiliation, fear of not being taken seriously, fear of having my mind and my thinking invalidated.

“Ayla”

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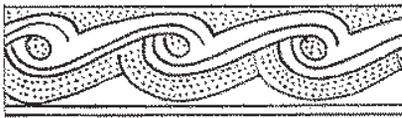
## LIBERATION

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I don't like having to give people sessions that they suddenly and unawares feel free to take about their own "mental health" stories.

For a long time, when I was working as an activist, it was important not to give people who were against the positions of my organization an excuse to attack me as a leader in it.

Rose



ANONYMOUS

*Sometimes it makes others uncomfortable to hear about it and it's easier to be silent. My family does not like to hear about it. The subject is so heavy for the general public.*

Mary Gray McGee



MALMÖ, SWEDEN • TIM JACKINS

I am freely open about this identity within RC. Many Co-Counselors have done "mental health" liberation work and thus feel safe to me. I also share in an attempt to educate others and encourage them to start working on "mental health" liberation. The more practiced I get at being open about the identity within RC—for example, by discharging on my "mental health" story—the easier it becomes for me to be open outside of RC. Sometimes I surprise myself by opening up to a relative stranger. I've yet to regret opening up, but before I do, I do size up<sup>11</sup> someone's ability to listen.

DJL



KK

I often have feelings about how people feel about my status as an ex-inmate, but I try to not let it stop me from sharing the identity.

Gene Galazan



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### 5) If you've done so, what has been useful about claiming the identity publicly?

In 1981 I wrote a draft policy for "mental health" liberation and then asked Harvey Jackins if Dewey Bandy and I could be invited to the RC World Conference to represent

ex-"mental patients." Harvey invited us both. At the conference I had to stand up in front of two hundred RC leaders from all over the world and say that I was there to represent ex-"mental patients." I felt completely terrified but had to do it, so I did. By the end of the conference, which was a week long, I'd had many opportunities to "come out," and to shake while doing so, and it didn't seem so hard to do it anymore. I had also made a hugely important internal decision to see that "mental health" oppression was ended.

A few years later, from 1987 to 1989, I worked for a wide-world organization in which my job was to set up and direct a state-wide organization of U.S. "mental health" consumers (ex- and current "mental patients"). I had to train "mental health" workers and advocates, and others, about our issues as former and current "mental patients"; represent us on the boards of a lot of "mental health" organizations and at many types of "mental health" conferences; and write about our issues for journals and newsletters. I met many wonderful ex-inmates who were active on a national level in the psychiatric survivors' movement and were not shy about "coming out" in that context. More important, I saw how much respect others had for our having been "mental patients" and then making our way back to being in good shape,<sup>12</sup> fighting for our rights, leading others, and so on. All of that experience (and discharging about it) got me to where I was able to be pretty relaxed, in most contexts, when talking about myself as an ex-psychiatric inmate. For me it is no longer such an uncomfortable "big, dark secret."

Janet Foner

<sup>11</sup> Size up means evaluate.

<sup>12</sup> Shape means condition.

I have “come out” as an ex-psychiatric inmate in another organization I am in and have found that there is something liberating about coming out, not having it secret. It goes against the shame and humiliation.

“Ayla”



*I often speak up about the misuse of drugs and feel that I can be heard because I myself used drugs to control a “bipolar” condition. In other words, I have been there.*

Mary Gray McGee



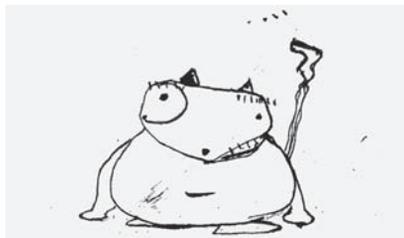
I have a hard time publicly identifying as an ex-inmate. I feel like I got out by not looking or acting like one, and the old fear that people will once again label me as “depressed” or “less-than” impedes my mentioning it. “Mental health” oppression is intense, and I feel like I have to avoid it at all costs. However, to not mention that part of myself fails to give people a true picture of who I am: a survivor, someone who has been through hell and built a really good life for herself. As I become closer with Janet Foner and other ex-inmates in RC, I feel braver about being “out” in my RC Community and even in my wide-world life.

Amy Strano



It is a powerful way of bringing in allies. People want to get through their feelings about someone “being institutionalized,” and publicly claiming my identity and sharing my story (my humanity) allows this to happen.

Gene Galazan



SANDRA McDONALD

**6) How does internalized oppression affect you, and what have you done to go against that?**

*My inmate experience reinforced a chronic pattern that said it was not okay to show how scared I was. Once I got out, I felt, even more than before, the pressure to function at a high level, to appear unafraid and unaffected by anything hard that might happen. I’m learning to tell my Co-Counselors how scared I am and to work on how scary things get sometimes.*

“Henry Church”



ww

The internalized oppression comes up most visibly to me before I go to an RC workshop or take on<sup>13</sup> especially difficult goals. Things go best when I get a good session on my “mental health” system story before I go to a workshop or shortly after I get there.

L—

<sup>13</sup> Take on means adopt.

I still hold back from going all out.<sup>14</sup> I discharge deeply on that and take bold directions and make bold decisions against it.

Gene Galazan



KK

One way the internalized oppression affected me was that I had an image of myself as not capable, confident, good enough, or acceptable, and I felt hopeless and humiliated. Deciding to see that “mental health” oppression is ended was of great benefit to me. It meant that I had to lead RCers around me, which meant that I had to act on being confident and hopeful, though I didn’t feel that way at all. I am guessing that I haven’t discharged all the feelings yet, but they must be almost gone since they rarely come into my mind and I have a much better image of myself. I am way<sup>15</sup> more confident and hopeful than I used to be in 1978, when I started leading “mental health” liberation.

Janet Foner



LK

Since I was told that I needed to be locked up forever (at least that is what I internalized—that I was “sick” forever), living my life outside the hospital is a contradiction.

I often don’t trust my thinking—when leading people and presenting my thinking publicly, even answering these questions. Am I answering them correctly? (Of

*continued . . .*

<sup>14</sup> Going all out means living fully.

<sup>15</sup> Way means much.

# LIBERATION

... continued

course I am, but the feeling is quite the opposite.)

I still struggle with being marginalized (like being removed from society and put in a “mental hospital”). Staying close to Janet Foner, going to her support group, and getting closer with my Area<sup>16</sup> and Regional<sup>17</sup> Reference Persons are helpful. I recently led a gathering for my Area on the current economic situation. All these things help me to be more central in RC.

“Ayla”

<sup>16</sup> An Area is a local RC Community.

<sup>17</sup> A Region is a subdivision of the International RC Community, usually consisting of several Areas.



CARRIE LINCOURT

*Except in very safe places, I am still hesitant to tell people out in the world about my being an ex-inmate. Harvey used to say that we do not have to be martyrs. I feel I have no reason to tell people unless I suppose it will give me some support.*

Rami Ben-Moshe



KK

I often feel I am not able to explain very well what I know. I feel I’m not smart enough to be leading, but leading actually helps. Hearing feedback from groups I lead reassures me that I am okay.

Mary Gray McGee



LK

Restimulation sometimes still leads me to feel that I want to take psych drugs to numb out or that I need to be in a hospital. It gets ever easier to remember that since neither of those options worked in the past, it’s pretty doubtful that they will work now or in the future. When I’m feeling really sunk, my Co-Counselors help me to remember.

DJL



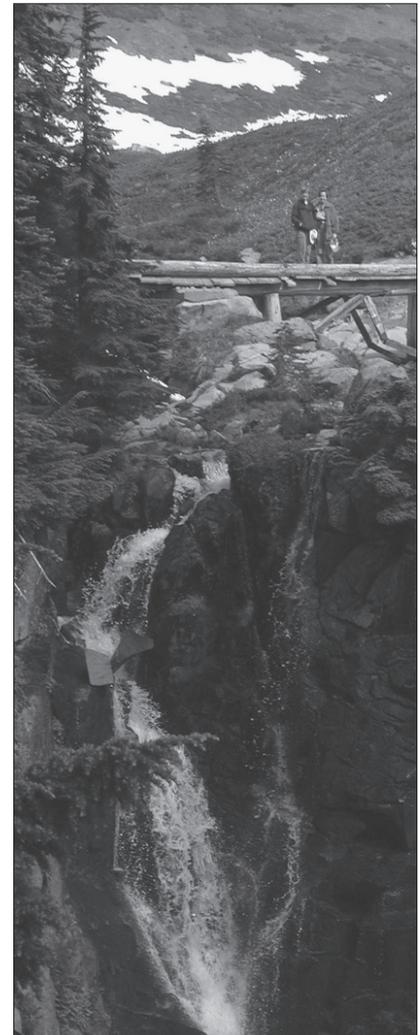
ANONYMOUS

The internalized oppression keeps me quiet and small, and I try to go against it. I often feel like I have nothing to add in conversations, but I force myself to say things and participate because it just can’t be true that

I have no thoughts. I sometimes feel like I’m babbling, but to believe my material leaves me feeling terrible, so I continue to take the risk. I also risk, more and more, calling attention to myself by making jokes or being goofy.

I find that teaching RC is a huge contradiction to the oppression of having been a “mental patient.” Clearly there is nothing wrong with my mind or my “mental health” if I can clearly articulate RC theory, counsel people well, and be close and connected with people.

Amy Strano



WASHINGTON, USA • NEIL SOLOMON

At a recent Raised-Poor Leaders' Workshop, I read a poem I composed a few years ago in a writers' class. I wrote it to a young student I had at the time.

## To Kim

Don't listen to that voice you hear,  
"You ain't good enough."  
It's just other people's voices. None of it is true.  
What is true is you.  
Good and wonderful you.



Erase that noise.  
In its place put  
my voice whispering in your ear,  
"Sweetie, you're the best."

Don't listen to that voice you hear,  
"You can't do that."  
It's just other people's voices. None of it is true.  
What is true is you.  
Good and powerful you.

Erase that noise.  
In its place put  
my voice encouraging you to dare,  
"Honey, you can do anything you want."

Don't listen to that voice you hear,  
"Be quiet. No one wants to hear it."  
It's just other people's voices. None of it is true.  
What is true is you.  
Good and courageous you.



Erase that noise.  
In its place put  
my voice urging you to soar,  
"Tell me more. Tell me more."

Don't listen to that voice you hear,  
"Well, that's stupid."  
It's just other people's voices. None of it is true.  
What is true is you.  
Good and brilliant you.

Erase that noise.  
In its place put  
my voice laughing,  
"Darlin',<sup>1</sup> you say the cleverest things."

<sup>1</sup> Darlin' means darling.

Don't listen to that voice you hear,  
"Who do you think you are, anyway?"  
It's just other people's voices. None of it is true.  
What is true is you.  
Good and remarkable you.

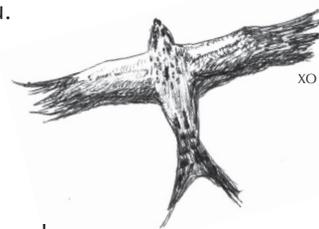
Erase that noise.  
In its place put  
my voice trembling,  
"My friend, you matter."

Don't listen to that voice you hear,  
"You ain't gonna amount to nothing."<sup>2</sup>  
It's just other people's voices. None of it is true.  
What is true is you.  
Good and astounding you.

Erase that noise.  
In its place put  
my voice shouting,  
"You! You can change the world!"

Don't listen to that voice you hear,  
"What do you want?"  
It's just other people's voices. None of it is true.  
What is true is you.  
Good and tender you.

Erase that noise.  
In its place put  
my arms wrapping around you,  
"Come in, come in."



Sue Devokaitis  
Pomfret Center,  
Connecticut, USA

<sup>2</sup> You ain't gonna amount to nothing means you aren't going to amount to anything.



## After Reading the Draft Middle-Class Liberation Policy Statement

I finally read the draft middle-class liberation policy statement.<sup>1</sup> I don't know why it took me three years. (It's been sitting on my night table for that long!)

What an astoundingly accurate picture of middle-class reality and upbringing it is! Especially helpful was the description of the confusion, misinformation, and hiding we middle-class people were made to internalize. I appreciate everyone who thought about it and wrote it. It also spurred my own thinking, as a raised and currently middle-class white man:

- I live in the United States, where our society is awash with contradictions and confusions. I have tended to try to look good, conform to norms,<sup>2</sup> and avoid any appearance of difference—since I have seen how others (immigrants, people targeted by racism, poor and working-class people, Gay people) are treated. There is almost an encouragement to tell lies, to “get along.” Integrity is expendable.
- I often wonder how much of people's distrust of leaders (inside and outside of RC) is the result of confusions from growing up under capitalism. We are subjected to misinformation and then reassured that everything is fine. I imagine this could form a pattern that makes us feel like we're continually being lied to by our leaders.
- I remember Harvey<sup>3</sup> talking repeatedly about how the collapse of capitalism was imminent. Consistent with how the policy statement describes middle-class confusions, I thought that Harvey made sense but didn't take the time to discharge about what he actually meant or

what such a collapse would mean for me. At the same time, the jobs I held were allowing me to save toward retirement. I remember thinking, “Harvey is usually right, but if this collapse takes longer than he thinks, having some retirement income might be a good idea.” I didn't realize this thought was within a pattern of taking a wait-and-see attitude about liberation, of distancing myself from the problem of capitalism. With the “security” of money for retirement, I was not able to see the dismantling of capitalism as my struggle or to make a commitment to liberation.

- In the ongoing RC classes I teach, it's clear that many people, and I, have failed to grasp the radical agenda that is RC. We're focused on how our sessions are going for ourselves and how we can make our immediate lives (jobs, relationships, and so on) better. I've realized that my introductory lectures have focused primarily on freeing ourselves from past hurts and less on liberation. My next intro will have liberation as a primary and central focus.
- It took me a long time to consider writing this. When I thought of things to say I felt like they weren't original or any good. As a middle-class person, I tend to feel like I have to look good, and writing something that might make me look stupid or wrong can feel humiliating.
- I'm not sure if it is a middle-class pattern or a Jewish one, but one thing that gets in my way of fully taking on<sup>4</sup> liberation work of any kind is the feeling that I need to get support before doing things and recognition afterward. Admitting this openly and honestly has been useful.

- I often talk to people about class oppression and the collapse of our economic system. People are more interested these days, but they are still largely unconvinced that a collapse will happen. I hear (and used to think myself), “It's always bounced back before, even after the Great Depression,” and, “It can't fail—there are too many powerful forces that won't allow it.” Middle-class conditioning has made me feel like I have to take a political position and convince others that RC theory is correct. Then I often feel discouraged when they don't agree with me. More useful is listening, presenting a liberation idea, and listening some more—listening to what people's lives are like and what's hard about having or not having money, listening about the struggle to hold or get employment and about being isolated. Maybe we need to listen ninety percent and talk ten percent. If people see us as being able to listen, having good ideas, and living with integrity, they will join us.

- We can look directly at class oppression and the inconsistencies and contradictions of capitalism, including the lies of political figures, and then discharge. When I do this, I am forced to face my discouragement about our system ever becoming right. Fortunately I now find myself eager to face this discouragement.

I am so grateful for the middle-class liberation policy statement and the large number of people who are committed to moving middle-class liberation forward.

*Alan Epstein*

Watertown, Massachusetts, USA  
Reprinted from the RC e-mail discussion list for leaders of middle-class people

<sup>1</sup> See pages 5 to 22 in the RC journal *Our True Selves* No. 2.

<sup>2</sup> Norms means what is considered normal.

<sup>3</sup> Harvey Jackins

<sup>4</sup> Taking on means undertaking.

## “How Can You Tell a Chronic Pattern?”

People say, “How can you tell<sup>1</sup> a chronic pattern?” Well, pay a little attention. It is sticking out of your client like spines out of a cactus. It is sticking out all over.

Standing up here, I watch all of your faces during the workshop, and when you are discharging, you are just beautiful. As soon as the laughter or other discharge starts—just beautiful, you know, so human looking. But in between the discharge, you want to see what I see? (*Imitates facial expressions—group laughter*) Now, those are not you. Those are not your expressions. Those expressions are chronic patterns. You are beautiful, handsome, lovely to look at, but as soon as the discharge stops, you know, the repose. . . . (*Imitates chronic expressions again—group laughter*)

Notice the tone of your client’s voice. Now the human voice is wonderfully various. It can say, “I love you,” or, “ALL RIGHT; THAT IS ENOUGH OF THAT!” It is a beautiful instrument. It belongs to you. Reclaim it.

Reclaim your face. Your face belongs to you, not to that stupid chronic pattern. Get in front of the mirror and make faces. You will discharge all over the place. Just try it. (*Makes expression—group laughter*) You will discharge just thinking of doing it, and that is fine.

The tone of your voice . . . . Ah, let’s see. Who can I pick on? M—, you love me, don’t cha?<sup>2</sup>

M—: Yes.

Harvey: Okay, will you tell me so?

M—: I love you.

Harvey: Would you tell me you hate me, even if you don’t?

M—: I hate you (*same tone of voice as above*).

Harvey: Would you tell me to please pass the cold mashed potatoes? (*Group laughter*)

M—: (*pause*) I’m afraid it will all sound the same.

Harvey: It will. (*Group laughter*) It has so far.

M—: Please pass the cold mashed potatoes (*almost the same tone as above*).

Harvey: Okay, it sounded a little different because you were discharging on the edges. But the love and the hate were identical. Now, if I pick on someone else, he or she won’t say it like M— did. (*Imitates gruff voice saying all three in the same tone—group laughter*)

*Harvey Jackins*

From the workshop La Scherpa 54,  
in California, USA

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<sup>1</sup> In this context, tell means recognize.

<sup>2</sup> Don’t cha means don’t you.



JO PERRY

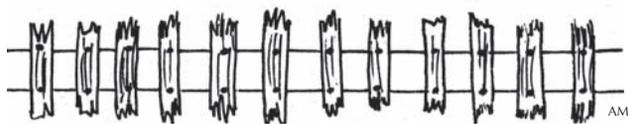
## Discharging on Heterosexual Identity

From a discussion on the e-mail discussion list  
for RC Community members

*Our Area<sup>1</sup> has been doing a class series for allies to people who are Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transsexual, Queer, and questioning.*

*Any suggestions for helping us heterosexual people discharge on our heterosexual identities would be welcome. Thanks!*

Dana Robinson  
Lansdowne, Pennsylvania, USA



The first time I looked at my own heterosexual identity in a Co-Counseling session, I remember laughing at the idea that there was an identity to look at—something I had never thought about before. Simply saying, “I’m heterosexual!” lightly and proudly, brought discharge.

After a while I started asking myself exactly what the identity meant. What had I been taught about being heterosexual? It was helpful to use these directions: “As a heterosexual, I’m supposed to . . .” and, “As a heterosexual, I’m *not* supposed to . . .”

Many of the people I came in contact with who had identities other than heterosexual (Lesbians, Gay men, and so on) were interesting models of flexibility in building family and community relationships. That helped me notice the rigidities in my own life. Besides plenty of discharge, I also read books about people in cultures other than mine who lived in communities that looked different from what was around me (nuclear families with a wife, a husband, children, and a house in the suburbs).

It was good when I started having my own thoughts (after I cleared tons of “supposed to’s” out of the way) about how I wanted to build a life in community with people I loved. What was a rational way to have plenty of people close to me in all the ways I wanted to have people in my life, and what was I going to do about it?

Andrea Blum  
Austin, Texas, USA

I highly recommend counseling on early sexual memories. (See the RC pamphlet *Discharging on Early Sexual Memories*, by Joan Karp.) Our sexual identities are all tied up in our early experiences. If you want to be a good counselor for GLBTQ<sup>2</sup> people, it’s crucial to be able to counsel them on early sexual memories, and the best way to get good at that is to get lots of practice discharging on early sexual memories yourself!

Scott Miller  
Minneapolis, Minnesota, USA



To me, heterosexual identity (and there are many different kinds of heterosexual identities) has a large component of sexism. If men were not put in roles in which they were dominated by some small group of men and then dominated women, there would still be heterosexual activity, but not the identity as we understand it. To discharge sufficiently to come to terms with heterosexual identity, one would have to discharge all aspects of sexism.

I would also add that traditional heterosexual patterns, male and female, are reinforced by homophobia.

Diane Balser  
Jamaica Plain, Massachusetts, USA



*I identify as a heterosexual man. Looking at how Gay oppression affected me as a boy—how it separated me from other boys and jammed in a rigid heterosexual identification—has been a good way to work. It’s also made it clear that eliminating Gay oppression is in my own self-interest. Making a decision to get close to Gay men, and acting on that, create lots of opportunities for me to discharge about sexual identity.*

Johnny Lee Lenhart  
Brattleboro, Vermont, USA

<sup>1</sup> An Area is a local RC Community.

<sup>2</sup> Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer

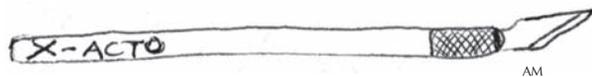
A Lesbian friend of mine was telling me a story and was trying to describe a couple she knew. She was struggling to find words to describe how much their house and lives fit the U.S. norm.<sup>3</sup> Finally she burst out with, "They are blatant heterosexuals!"

I have gotten a fair amount of discharge in sessions by taking on<sup>4</sup> the identity of "blatant heterosexual."

For those not familiar with U.S. language and culture, the word "blatant" has often been attached in an oppressive way to the word "homosexual." It is our society's way of saying that it is bad to be very "out." To me it is funny to use the word to describe something like heterosexuality, which is supposed to be "normal."

I love taking on the identity of a "blatant heterosexual." For me it is a good way to start to discharge the patterns and sort out my experience. It makes me realize how little we get to examine, discharge on, and think about things that are thought by society to be "normal."

Dan Nickerson  
Freeport, Maine, USA



This is a great discussion, and it's a contradiction<sup>5</sup> for me as a Gay man to hear people talking about this.

I think heterosexual identity is formed in part from the hurts of passively witnessing people get oppressed for acting outside of rigid gender roles. Speaking and acting on behalf of Gay people will be a contradiction to this and will bring lots of discharge.

<sup>3</sup> The U.S. norm means what is considered in the United States to be normal.

<sup>4</sup> Taking on means adopting.

<sup>5</sup> Contradiction to distress

It may also be helpful for heterosexual people to think of some small way to step out of their rigid gender roles and reach for closeness with someone of the same gender. I say small way because I think these hurts are heavier than people sometimes realize and it doesn't take much to bring up a *lot* of feelings.

Sometimes heterosexual people look weird and scary when they are trying to "break the rules" about same-sex closeness. I have been scared when men try to hug or hold hands with me in public as a way of challenging their homophobia. They don't know how much fear we live in, as Gay men trying to avoid being attacked, and don't see that their heterosexuality gives them some protection that Gay people don't have.

I have appreciated the new perspective in RC on sexism in which we are looking at patterns of male domination. As a Gay man, male domination has been a horrific part of my life, and this new perspective is opening up more attention for me to work on it. I'm sure it is also making me less likely to act out at women the domination I've experienced.

The policy in RC of using pseudonyms in RC publications<sup>6</sup> has helped me to notice that we still have much work to do before Gay people are safe from persecution. It reminds me that our Community is international and that there are still parts of the world where acting outside of rigid gender roles can cost you your life.

So this work is important, and I thank you for doing it.

"Henry"  
USA

<sup>6</sup> Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer people are required to use pseudonyms when they write in RC publications.

## RC Electronic Mailing Lists

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

(For details, see page 86.)



## Interrupting Young People's Oppression

I made it a policy a few years ago to always interrupt oppressive behavior directed at children. Some of my attempts have been useful.

The other day a child, maybe seven, was walking along a low brick wall near our public library. Her father, a big guy, was bellowing at her something along the lines of,<sup>1</sup> "What don't you understand about no?! You heard me!" and so on.

I walked over to him and put my hand on his shoulder and said, "It's hard to be a parent, and it's hard to be a child." He smiled at me and said thank you. We talked a minute, and when I walked away he was speaking kindly to his daughter.

Another day, in a grocery store, a small child was crying loudly. Both the mom and dad were yelling at him to quiet down. I didn't want to go over, because I was finished with shopping and wanted to go home. But a policy is a policy, so I did. I said that I didn't mind children crying; that it was hard for children in stores, as they see so much that they want and of course the parents have to say no to most of it. There were the two parents, and their four children, from what looked like ages ten to two, and they all looked at me with surprise. The parents thanked me profusely and said that most people come over and criticize them when their children cry, which gave me an opportunity to say a bit about the importance of tears. They came and thanked me again as I was leaving.



AMSTERDAM, THE NETHERLANDS • PETER STRATON

In general, when I can't come up with<sup>2</sup> anything else, I have two lines: "You have such a beautiful child," and, "It's hard to be a parent." People usually respond with relief.

Margot Brinn

Ithaca, New York, USA

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

<sup>1</sup> Along the lines of means like.

<sup>2</sup> Come up with means think of.

## Ground-Breaking Literature

Dear everyone who contributed to writing, editing, producing, and dispatching the contents of the new Teachers' Packet,<sup>1</sup>

Thank you so very much.

If I were the only RCer left alive in the world, with this small package I would be fully equipped to begin another RC Community. The updated *Guidelines*<sup>2</sup> are clearer than ever, especially the sections on

finances and psychiatric drugs, and the new edition of *The RC Teacher* is full of ideas about how to teach in a variety of situations. A new society could be developed using those alone. But when I add in the new *Heritage*,<sup>3</sup> with which to begin all over again following the lead of Indigenous people whose vast knowledge would ensure the survival of our planet and its people; *and* the new *Sisters*,<sup>4</sup> with its focus on all the contemporary issues facing women, *and* the CD containing the deeply

honest *Thoughts About Men*<sup>5</sup>—well, there is nothing in the way of *An Unbounded Future*<sup>6</sup> for our societies, as Harvey's final writings make clear.

I am proud to be part of the organisation that has produced such ground-breaking literature.

Roslyn Cassidy

Fremantle, Western Australia, Australia

<sup>1</sup> When Rational Island Publishers has produced a number of new pieces of RC literature, a Teachers' Packet containing a copy of each piece is sent out to every RC teacher.

<sup>2</sup> The 2009 *Guidelines for the Re-evaluation Counseling Communities*

<sup>3</sup> The RC journal about Native liberation

<sup>4</sup> The RC journal about women's liberation

<sup>5</sup> *Some Thoughts About Men*, a CD of a talk by Tim Jackins—one of the CDs in the series *RC Teacher Updates* (see page 104 of this *Present Time*)

<sup>6</sup> A book containing the writings of Harvey Jackins from 1995 until his death in 1999

## An Important Step Forward for Allies to Jews

Cherie Brown  
International Liberation  
Reference Person for Jews

I want to share a recent success in RC allies-to-Jews work.

In August 2009 I convened a table at the World Conference of the Re-evaluation Counseling Communities for those RC leaders who had been instrumental in leading allies-to-Jews work. I thought three or four people would come. Instead over twenty people came, and they requested that I lead another small gathering for leaders of allies to Jews.

That gathering took place at my house last month, and fifteen allies-to-Jews leaders came—from England, the United States, and Australia. Many of them were Regional Reference Persons or International Liberation Reference Persons (ILRPs). The ILRPs attending were those for Catholics, Native Americans, trade unionists, elders, raised-poor people, and Gay, Lesbian, and Bisexual people. Each of them had committed to making eliminating anti-Jewish oppression central in the work of his or her constituency. Two Jewish leaders—Jevera Temsky<sup>1</sup> and Leah Thorn<sup>2</sup>—came to support me.

I emphasized several themes:

1) A key goal for us Jews is to be willing to face the unfaceable—to discharge our feelings about annihilation, the Holocaust, attempted genocide, “mental health” oppression—and we can’t do that with our allies if they haven’t done similar kinds of work in their own sessions. To be good counselors for us, they need to be willing to face openly their own “unfaceable” material.<sup>3</sup>

Each morning I first had Diane Shisk<sup>4</sup> counsel me. Because I had just finished a week of sitting Shiva<sup>5</sup> for my father, I was quite raw and was able to client on deep early material about death and annihilation. After my sessions I then counseled a number of the allies, with the goal of their working as hard as they could on similarly difficult chronic material.

<sup>1</sup> Jevera Temsky is the Area Reference Person for Washington, D.C., USA.

<sup>2</sup> Leah Thorn is the Regional Reference Person for Essex, Kent, and London East, in England.

<sup>3</sup> Material means distress.

<sup>4</sup> Diane Shisk is the Alternate International Reference Person for the Re-evaluation Counseling Communities.

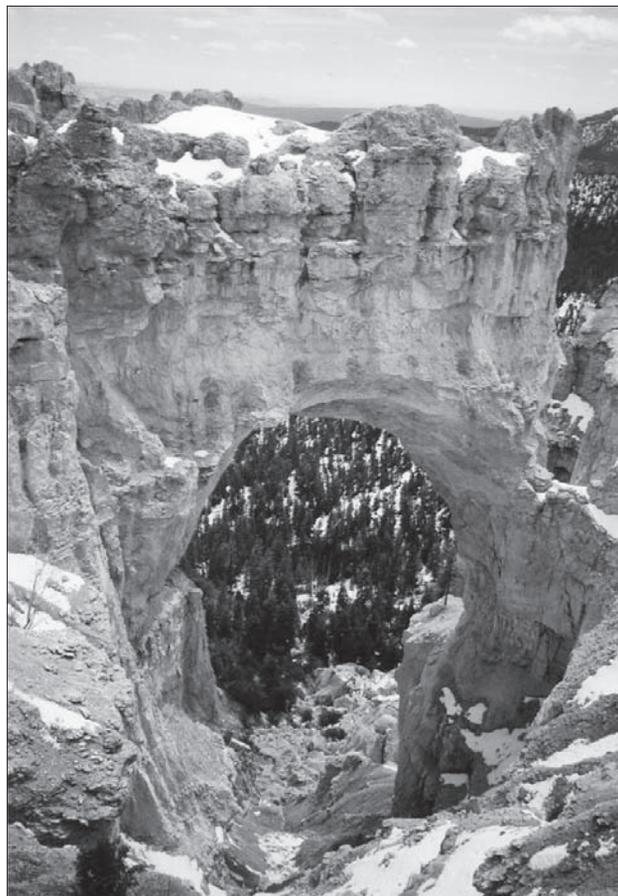
<sup>5</sup> Sitting Shiva means engaging in the Jewish tradition of observing a seven-day period of mourning after a close relative dies.

2) A key goal in Jewish liberation is for us Jews to work on where we have been compromised and lack integrity, both individually and as a people (which leads us to accept the oppressor middle-agent role we have been set up to take<sup>6</sup>). If we can openly share some of the smaller incidents in which we have compromised our integrity, we will be more able to work on the bigger ones (the underlying chronics<sup>7</sup> are the same for both). I shared stories of stealing chocolate, hiding things from others, and so on. Then our allies shared their stories. Our allies, to be effective counselors for us in this area, have to take the lead in working openly on all the places where they lack integrity and have been compromised. Otherwise it will look like we Jews lack integrity more than other peoples (which is *not* true).

*continued . . .*

<sup>6</sup> Set up to take means manipulated into taking.

<sup>7</sup> Chronic patterns

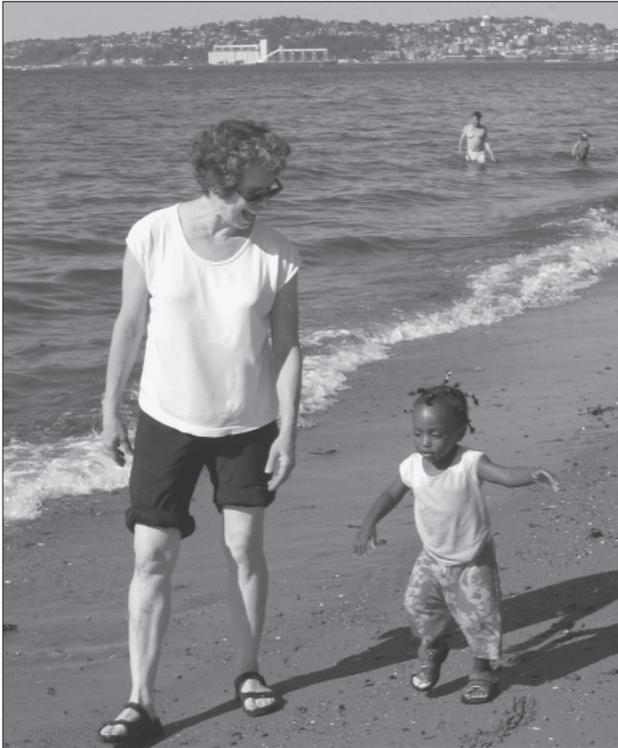


BRYCE CANYON NATIONAL PARK, UTAH, USA • JOE M. RODRIGUEZ

## LIBERATION

... continued

3) A key direction for our allies is to build an independent Gentile movement against anti-Jewish oppression. To do this they need to have their own thinking, independent of ours, on all issues related to Jewish liberation. I spent a lot of time at the gathering getting everyone's thinking and encouraging our allies to think fully, and independently of us. In one class we did "anti-Jewish or not anti-Jewish." I asked the allies to share times they had witnessed



SEATTLE, WASHINGTON, USA • DIANE SHISK

anti-Jewish oppression, and then everyone voted on whether or not each incident was an example of anti-Jewish oppression (there was significant disagreement on a number of them). Then the allies had to say why they thought each incident was or wasn't an example of anti-Jewish oppression.

To have an independent Gentile movement, one of the allies needs to take the lead in supporting the work of building it. I proposed (and Diane Shisk and Tim Jackins agreed) that Dorann Van Heeswijk be the contact person for allies-to-Jews work. Dorann is a Regional Reference Person in England and has been leading allies to Jews for many years. She has done pioneer work in supporting black and white Gentiles' working together as allies to Jews. I am thrilled that she will be the new contact person.

It is a huge contradiction<sup>8</sup> to have such strong allies-to-Jews work in RC.

One goal for the weekend was the allies-to-Jews leaders becoming a close gang with each other, and that definitely began to happen. I am proud of how we are moving forward as a Community on Harvey's<sup>9</sup> direction for Jewish liberation: "Anti-Jewish oppression is everyone's concern." I think it will be an important step to have this strong gang of allies-to-Jews leaders, led by Dorann.

Silver Spring, Maryland, USA  
Reprinted from the RC e-mail  
discussion list for leaders of Jews

<sup>8</sup> Contradiction to distress

<sup>9</sup> Harvey Jackins'

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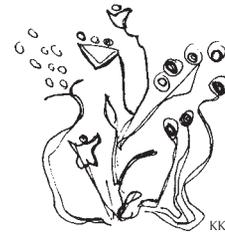
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Gordon Jackins, Publisher



## An International Liberation Reference Person for Men?

From a talk by Tim Jackins at the  
Midwest USA Men's Workshop, April 2010



*Question:* What's the progress on choosing an International Liberation Reference Person for Men?

*Tim:* It's great, and there isn't one. I'm not going to appoint one for a little while.

The Liberation Reference Person position has been good and important. Re-evaluation Counseling grew so large that my father<sup>1</sup> couldn't keep track of it as the International Reference Person, so he chose various structures that other people could take part<sup>2</sup> in. One of those was the position of International Liberation Reference Person (ILRP); another was what we now call the International Commonality Reference Person (ICRP). The ILRPs and ICRPs are leading constituencies that are either fighting for their liberation or are involved in certain struggles, such as wide world change, that aren't a liberation struggle exactly.

These roles work very well, and they involve a lot of work. We've had Men's Liberation Reference Persons, and it has been hard on people to be in that position. It's not easy for any ILRP, but the particular ways that guys' distresses stack up make it really tough for one guy to be held up and not be destroyed by being isolated, by other people not being able to support him, by so much being expected, and by so much disappointment.

So I have been trying to create the conditions where it would make sense to have a guy in that position. I think this is the best formulation of it so far: When the conditions are such that men almost don't need an ILRP, when people aren't leaning on one individual to solve things, I will appoint one.

Every few months over the last decade I've gathered fifteen or twenty experienced guys from around the world and we've spent a weekend together. We work as men. We get closer. Then they go out and use this resource to move men's liberation forward in different parts of the world. We've been quietly developing the work instead of having a target out in the open. This has worked well. Men's liberation has moved nicely in this last decade. If you weren't involved in men's work fifteen years ago, you don't know how hard,

confused, and difficult it was and how far past that it is now. We men are not apologizing for our existence anymore. We have a much better sense of ourselves and of each other.

What I recently proposed to this small group<sup>3</sup> is that they continue to lead men's work more and more widely. I want them to share with and learn from each other so that it's not only one person out leading. I've proposed that they be a part of somebody else's men's workshop—that one man lead it and the other man be there not only as a participant but also to learn about leading workshops and as extra resource for the leader and the workshop. Good men are leading good men's workshops, and their workshops look nothing like each other's. These men have much to learn from each other, and about supporting each other.

*continued . . .*

<sup>3</sup>Chris Austill <caustill@pobox.com>, Goof Buijs <bunic@planet.nl>, Lorenzo Garcia <lgrc@aol.com>, Karl Lam <karl@parsonage1.plus.com>, Rudy Nickens <rudynickens@charter.net>, Joel Nogie <jnogic@comcast.net>, Gerry Pechie <gpechie@snet.net>, and Steve Thompson <stevedt@comcast.net>



ISRAEL • LYNDALL KATZ

<sup>1</sup> Harvey Jackins, the founder and first International Reference Person of the Re-evaluation Counseling Communities

<sup>2</sup> Take part means participate.

## TEACHING, LEADING, COMMUNITY BUILDING

... continued

I've also proposed that these guys make themselves available to you, that they be there as your points of reference and that they share their referencing of you with each other.

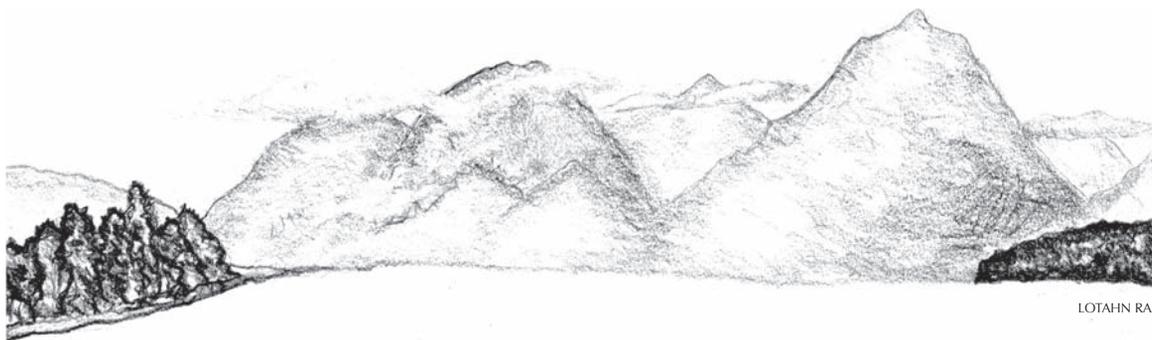
We are building a network of guys who can do this work well and do it together. When that is solid, one of them (or somebody else) will become the International Liberation Reference Person for Men. Will you guys stand up so that everyone can get a look at you? (One who could not make it<sup>4</sup> here is Lorenzo Garcia.) It isn't that these are the only

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<sup>4</sup> In this context, make it means get.

guys, or even necessarily the best guys, but they are among the best we have. They are who we are going to start with. So look at these guys. They are your points of reference. (*Clapping*) When you have questions about men's liberation, send them an e-mail, give them a call, or write them a letter (if you still do that). They know a lot. They've done a lot of work. They are committed to this work, and they're going to go on together.

At some point there will be an International Liberation Reference Person for Men. I have tried to re-think this and not simply apply the old model. I may be wrong. We'll see. That's where we are now. Be grateful to these guys.



LOTAHN RAZ

## Our Significance as Counselors

The Co-Counseling session usually involves just two people; but it is an exquisitely delicate and complex interrelationship, one of the most complex interrelationships that human beings have. The relationships in a symphony orchestra are wonderful. If any of you have ever played in one, you know how great it is to be in the middle of the orchestra, contribute your part, and hear ninety-nine other people contributing their parts, all just right. Boy!<sup>1</sup>

Because we're dealing with the inherently confusing situation of combating patterns, the complexity of a Co-Counseling session is at least as great. It's more demanding of excellent thinking from both parties than one can easily imagine. Of course, it's also enormously important. If a pro<sup>2</sup> golfer sinks his or her putt,<sup>3</sup> he or she may win \$120,000, but we Co-Counselors, if we sink our putts, people have their lives back—the only lives they'll ever have, which would otherwise be spent completely under the lid of patterns.

The significance of what we're doing is enormous. We're trained not to think of ourselves as significant, we don't think of our work as significant, but that's just patterns. The actual significance of this effort we make is huge! It may determine whether evolution has to start over after three and a half billion years.

*Harvey Jackins*  
From "Efficient Co-Counseling,"  
on pages 134 to 135 of *Start Over Every Morning*

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<sup>1</sup> Boy is an exclamation that in this context means something like "wow."

<sup>2</sup> Pro means professional.

<sup>3</sup> Sinks his or her putt means successfully hits his or her ball into the hole.

## RC Touching the Hearts of Young People in Thika

My weekly RC classes with teenage boys at a local boarding school in Thika (Kenya) have been satisfying.

The school is for students who are having social, emotional, and academic difficulties. The principal of the school heard about Co-Counseling from his wife who has been in my RC class. She told him she thought that Co-Counseling would be a wonderful tool for the young people in recovering a sense of their own goodness and intelligence.

When I agreed to teach the class, some of the teachers wanted to attend as observers to learn more about their students, but I told them I could only let them attend if they chose to be members of the class.

The first meeting was mostly introductions and self-appreciations. I demonstrated by introducing myself first, being sure that the students called me by my first name, just as I would call them. "There is only one Adelaide in the whole world," I told them. "In all of Africa, in all of Asia and Europe and Australia, there is no other Adelaide like me. I am unique in all the world." I made sure that they also introduced themselves with a tone of celebration.

That first class changed them so much that the principal asked me what I had done and what the students had said. Partly because of confidentiality and partly because I wanted him to experience it for himself and not simply hear about it from me, I said, "Are they happy with themselves, and are you happy with them? That is what is important."

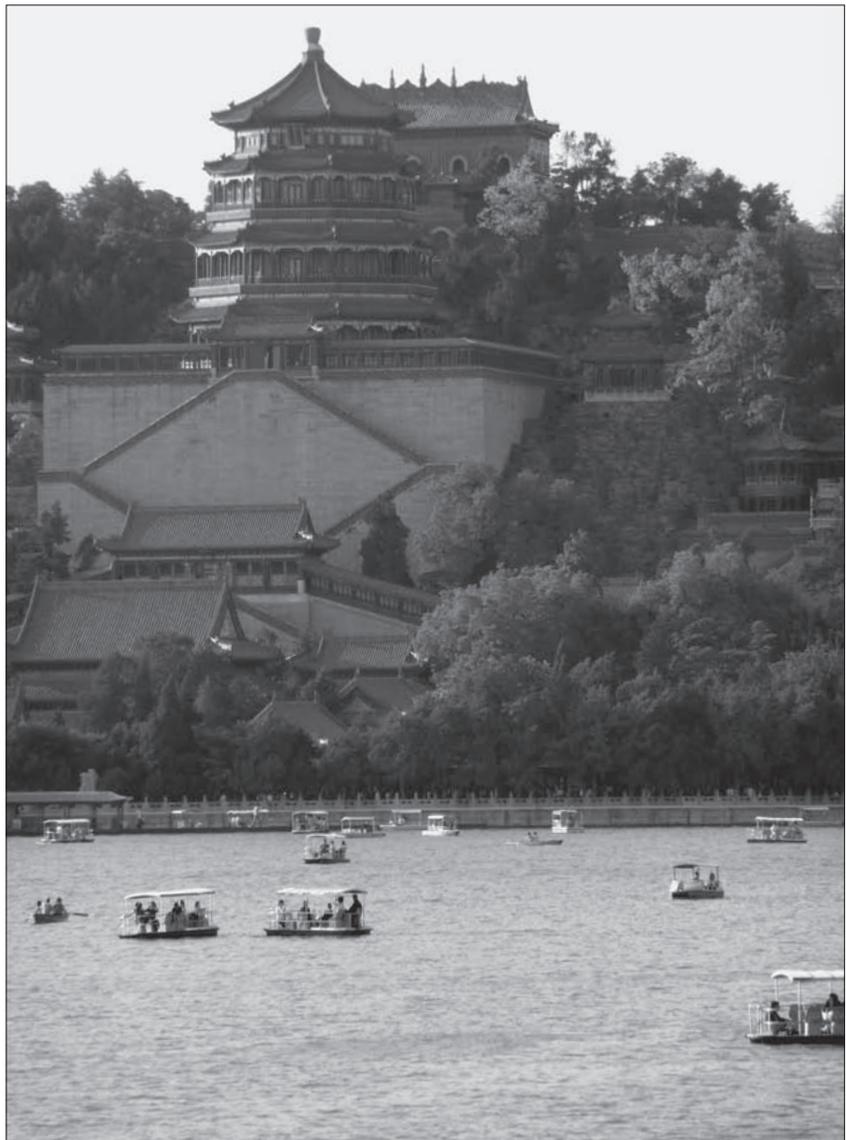
Our weekly classes focused on basic RC theory and the naturalness and importance of discharge. The students told stories of what had been difficult and good for them growing up and discharged easily in front of each other. They became close to each other and were delighted to see me each week and wanted to be near me when I came to and left our class.

The class has been one of my highlights of this year. There is

so much to be done to restore people's knowledge of their own goodness.

The headmaster has transferred to another school, in Nairobi (Kenya), and the boys have a new head teacher now. I hope she will allow us to continue with our Wednesday sessions. I plan to visit the school as soon as the schools open in the first week of September.

*Adelaide Chemutai Kariuki*  
Thika, Kenya



BEIJING, CHINA • TIM JACKINS

# Rawr! An All-Female Leadership Team

Dear Diane,<sup>1</sup>

This is a report from an all-female leadership team.

Last fall our Area<sup>2</sup> women’s-work point person,<sup>3</sup> Jennie Evans, went to the Contemporary Women’s Issues Workshop.<sup>4</sup> After hearing her report on the ideas discussed there, especially the “nation of women,”<sup>5</sup> all the women in our ongoing class became electrified. That idea, along with your harkening back to the Amazons,<sup>6</sup> has lit a spark for us.

I am part of a newly-formed all-female team that leads two Area-wide support groups—one for women and one for artists. Jennie leads us, I assist, and we have two brilliant organizers.

The four of us have kept central the idea of the nation of women. We’ve used it to set the tone for our work together and our relationships. We’ve used it to “keep our eye on the prize”<sup>7</sup> of eliminating sexism and off of our internalized sexism or other distresses that could get in the way of our having each other completely.

<sup>1</sup> Diane Balser, the International Liberation Reference Person for Women

<sup>2</sup> An Area is a local RC Community.

<sup>3</sup> Point person means person in charge.

<sup>4</sup> An International RC workshop led by Diane Balser

<sup>5</sup> “Nation of women” is a term used by Diane Balser at the Contemporary Women’s Issues Workshop to describe the power women can have together when they dominate their own space and fight from a united place. It also comes from the idea that there was once an Amazon nation in which women dominated.

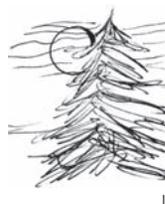
<sup>6</sup> The Amazons were a group of ancient Greek female warriors.

<sup>7</sup> “Keep our eye on the prize” means stay focused on our goal.

We regularly refer to ourselves as part of the nation of women, and we call ourselves the “rawr women” or the “rawr gang.” “Rawr!” is our war cry against sexism, and every oppression (but perhaps sexism first), as well as our war cry *for* each other (please forgive the war metaphor, but it feels that fierce). Keeping our female identity central has been a unifying force. We come from different class, religious, and regional backgrounds and span a few decades age-wise, so working together has already been a rewarding exercise in building the unity of women across other oppressions.

Your clarity about the nation of women, and Jennie’s strong leadership in our Area, have strengthened my already committed relationship with my female best friend and helped me to build a “girl gang” with two other Co-Counselors who are close to my age (thirty-three). This has helped me to feel much less worried about finding a boyfriend or getting married and having children. (I feel I have more of a choice with the nation of women behind me, and I know I can fill my needs for closeness without necessarily having a male partner.) And this is just the beginning!

We would love to hear from other women about how they have been using these directions and ideas.



Love to all sisters—and rawwwwwwr!

*Sarah Harre and the RAWR women*  
Somerville, Massachusetts, USA  
Reprinted from the RC e-mail discussion list for leaders of women

## RC Teachers, Communicate Anew ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

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

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

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

*Tim Jackins  
and Diane Shisk*



## The No-Socialising Guideline and Young Adult Liberation



Anna Van Heeswijk  
*International Liberation Reference Person for Young Adults*

Teaching RC to anyone is a revolutionary act. It is giving people the tools to discharge what gets in their way of being fully alive and thinking and acting to change the world. Teaching RC to people when they are young adults is a revolutionary act.

Young people's oppression systematically installs patterns on us that make us feel like we are too small, too stupid, and too inexperienced to make changes in the world. It robs us of power at the time in our lives when we are most easily connected to what it is to be fully alive and human; when we can most easily and automatically feel and discharge; when we understand the importance of relationships and being connected; when we wholeheartedly object to any form of unfairness, mistreatment, or being divided from one another; and when we are still excited about trying things, having fun, and making things go well. It does this to train us to fit into an oppressive society and to stop us from joining together to challenge it.

When we become young adults, and young people's oppression is lifted from us, we are given recognised power for the first time in our lives. We are allowed to make our own decisions and to be part of making decisions for the whole of society (through voting, work, community meetings, and so on). It is an exciting time. Although we have been hurt by young people's oppression, which has made us doubt our power, we have not yet taken on<sup>1</sup> the adult patterns that

would make us conform to and accept things as they are. Things are still new for us—we are making new decisions, trying new things, and figuring out what we want in our lives and in the world. This makes us a challenging and potentially dangerous force for the oppressive society.

To make sure that we fit into the adult oppressive society and don't use our new-found influence to change the world, the system comes down on us very hard. Young adults' oppression systematically restimulates our early fears for survival by telling us that there aren't enough jobs or partners for everyone and that our futures depend on conforming to what is expected of us and not speaking out. This sets us up<sup>2</sup> to compete with one another and makes us vulnerable to playing out<sup>3</sup> oppressor roles and using any privilege we

<sup>2</sup> Sets us up means predisposes us.

<sup>3</sup> Playing out means acting out.

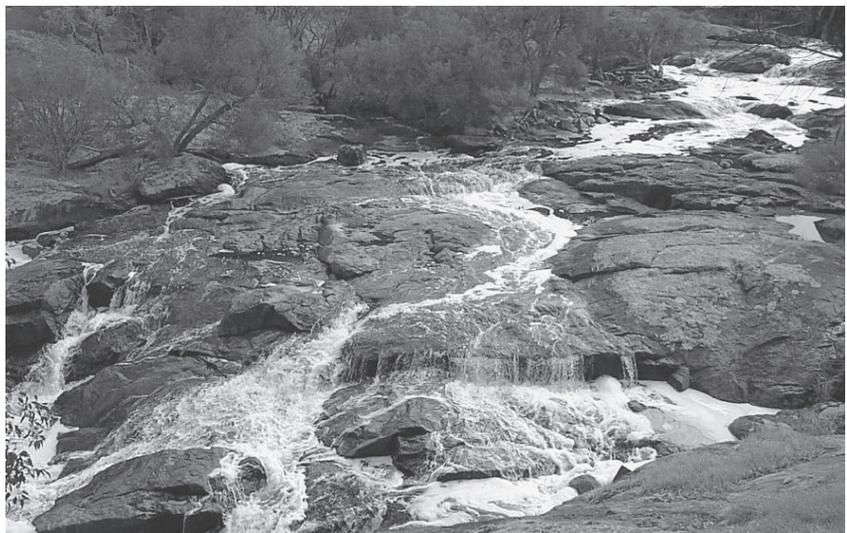
have to "get ahead." Young adults' oppression makes us believe that as adults we have to do things on our own and that we can no longer rely on our previous support networks. It systematically divides us from our peers—as we are told that there is only one path for us to take, depending on our gender, race, class, and so on.

Having the tools of RC at this point in our lives allows us to discharge the hurts from young people's and young adults' oppression so that we can keep finding new ways to unite with each other, live the lives we want to live, and challenge the oppressive system rather than try to fit into it. This is revolutionary.

### THE IMPORTANCE OF THE "BLUE PAGES"

The relationships we are able to build with one another through exchanging discharge time, sharing our minds, and re-evaluating together are central to everything

*continued . . .*



AUSTRALIA • BARUCH SCHUR

<sup>1</sup> In this context, taken on means assumed.

... continued

we do as RC Community members and leaders. At this time in history, with the level of hurt we carry in relation to closeness, the guideline on socialising<sup>4</sup> is vital to safeguarding and allowing us to build these relationships.

The no-socialising guideline does not mean that we shouldn't fall in love with our Co-Counsellors. It is very human to love other humans. The guideline provides a framework so that we can discharge all of the frozen longings and other feelings that we experience as or attach to "falling in love." It stops us from acting out our feelings in one of the narrow ways that society says we should act them out.

Discharging the frozen longings that we attach to people in the present, and the embarrassment that can come up when we allow ourselves to like somebody, allows us to get better at building close and loving relationships in all areas of our lives, including with our Co-Counsellors.

As young adults we haven't been as worn down as many older adults have been by the oppressive society and the pressure to conform. It can be easier for us to remember the importance of relationships and being close, to be joyful and playful, and to enjoy showing ourselves and being interested in other people. However, young adults' oppression can make us feel lonely. We are isolated and told that now, as adults, we have to figure out our lives on

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<sup>4</sup> The no-socializing policy of the RC Communities states that Co-Counselors should not set up any relationships, other than Co-Counseling, with other Co-Counselors or with people whom they first meet in a Co-Counseling context. In the early *Fundamentals of Co-Counseling Manual*, this policy was written on blue pages. That is why it is sometimes referred to as the "blue pages."

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***There is safety to discharge the loneliness, desperation, frozen needs, and "crushes" precisely because we agree to discharge the feelings rather than act on them.***

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our own, that it is immature to want to play with our friends, and that the only way we are allowed to be close is by pursuing one romantic relationship. We are pressured to find and settle down with that one "special person" and are often made to feel like failures if we don't. (This one "special person" is supposed to be somebody of the opposite sex. The Gay oppression aimed at people who do not identify as

with one another so that we can discharge the hurts and confusions. To be able to do this, it is important that we rigorously uphold the no-socialising guideline and not give in<sup>7</sup> to the internalised oppression that could make us want to be liberal about it. There is safety to discharge the loneliness, desperation, frozen needs, and "crushes"<sup>8</sup> precisely because we agree to discharge the feelings rather than act on them.



YONI KALLAI

### **YOUNG ADULTS, SEXISM, AND THE "BLUE PAGES"**

The "blue pages" provide safety for all of us to work on our distresses. Because of the way sexism operates, they are especially important in challenging the sexism that can lead males to act out on females their frozen needs and "crushes."

In our societies, we young and young-adult women are targeted as being the ultimate "objects of desire."

Our bodies are sexualised in advertising, the media, and the sex industries. Males of all ages are manipulated into being fascinated by and attracted to young and young-adult women in ways that are driven by sexist distress. "Falling in love" feelings and "crushes" are affected by this dynamic of sexism—another reason to discharge rather than act on any "romantic" feelings, and to do this in separate women's and men's groups.

heterosexual and refuse to fit into this "norm"<sup>5</sup> is harsh.) The pressure to find our "special person," along with the loneliness, frozen needs,<sup>6</sup> and other hurts related to closeness can leave us feeling desperate about relationships.

We need to be able to build solid, close Co-Counseling relationships

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<sup>5</sup> "Norm" means normal behavior.

<sup>6</sup> Frozen need is a term used in RC for a hurt that results when a rational need is not met in childhood. The hurt compels a person to keep trying to fill the need in the present, but the frozen need cannot be filled; it can only be discharged.

<sup>7</sup> Give in means succumb.

<sup>8</sup> A "crush" is an infatuation.

## CHALLENGING INDIVIDUALISM

The no-socialising guideline is also important in challenging individualism—challenging the ways we are manipulated into thinking that to ensure our own survival we have to “look out for ourselves” above others. This is a central part of capitalism—the drive to have more and more for oneself.

Young adults of our generation have grown up in a time when neo-liberalism (the belief system that goes with modern global capitalism) has been systematically enforced on societies across the world by means of global class systems and imperialism. Our experience of this—whether or not we have been exposed to alternative perspectives or have witnessed or been part of a struggle of opposition—will depend on various factors, including our class background and whether we live in an imperialist country or a country that has been or is being colonised. But we have all been affected by the messages of neo-liberalism. Part of our liberation as young adults is to discharge all the ways these messages have been internalised and have left us vulnerable to being manipulated into acting out patterns of individualism and greed. The “blue pages” provide a useful context for doing this. They give us an opportunity to decide to put the well being of the RC Communities and the RC project above any pull to pursue what might feel like an “ideal” relationship.

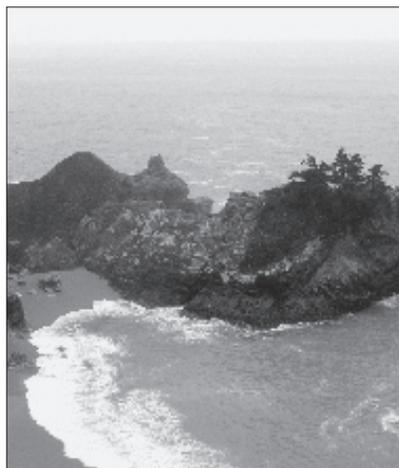
Of course, we know that there is no real conflict between our own well being and the well being of every other human. We know that our personal lives go better when the RC Communities are strong, flourishing, and robust and that discharging any longings we attach to our Co-Counsellors is way more re-emergent than pursuing a

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*. . . our personal lives go better when the RC Communities are strong, flourishing, and robust . . . .*

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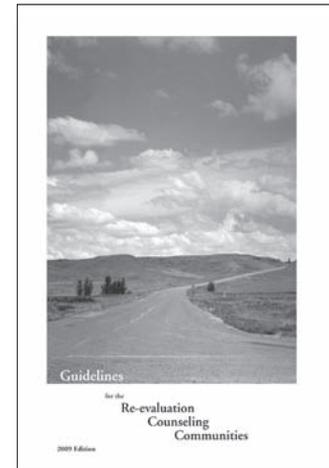
romantic relationship. And, we get to discharge something important when we decide that even in the midst of restimulation, even when we really “believe” that our lives would go better if only we could have a “blue pages” relationship, we will still put the well being of the Community above pursuing a personal desire (distress pattern). This is revolutionary for ourselves, and creates and supports a robust Community. It provides a route to discharging all of the places where our isolation and discouragement leave us vulnerable to being manipulated by the oppressive society and settling for small lives. It allows us to keep our minds on wanting big changes for everyone and wanting to be part of a movement committed to changing the world. This is what young adults’ liberation, and all forms of human liberation, are about. Using the no-socialising guideline in this context is exciting. It makes it possible for us to build the relationships, and provides the conditions for discharge, that will allow us to make real change.



CALIFORNIA, USA • KIERAN REICHERT

Young adults: What have been your experiences of working on, teaching about, or handling issues related to the no-socialising guideline? And how have you found the guideline useful in your re-emergence and in building the young adults Community?

London, England  
Reprinted from the RC e-mail discussion list for leaders of young adults



### **The 2009 Guidelines for the Re-evaluation Counseling Communities**

#### **Revised and updated to**

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

#### **Also rewritten and re-organized**

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

\$3.00 (U.S.)

To order, see page 109.

## A Workshop in Lagos, Nigeria

Lagos State, with a growing population of over seventeen million, is the commercial nerve center of Nigeria. Re-evaluation Counseling has a presence in nine strategic cities within the state. A total of forty-six persons, five from each Community, attended a recent RC workshop in Lagos.

We started with a song composed by a member of the Okota Community: "Where there is love, there is happiness. Where there is love, everything is okay. We are one family, and we need one another because we care, we love each other. Give me your hand. You are my friend, because what we share is RC love." This started us on a good note.

Mama Melphy<sup>1</sup> said that RC gives us the opportunity to re-evaluate about ourselves. She explained Co-Counseling and how it works. The class was participatory. Many questions were asked, and answers given.

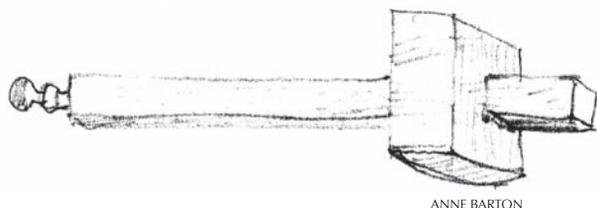
Then we met in support groups centered on oppressions of various kinds, including internalized oppression. Also touched upon were expectations, politeness, religion, gender, culture, racism, peer pressure, and more.

The next day, after an ice-breaker<sup>2</sup> of ball playing, Mama Melphy said that she noticed that many young adults were present. She asked what they liked best about their parents, and what they disliked, and there was lots of discharge. The young adults asked their parents to just *listen to them* and also *admit when they (the parents) were wrong concerning any issue*. Mama Melphy encouraged the parents to *listen to their young-adult children*. When parents do not listen, it shows they have a *distress pattern* that needs to be discharged. In conclusion, the parents and their young-adult children expressed love to each other. Many families were revolutionized by that.

Chioma Okonkwo  
Lagos, Nigeria

<sup>1</sup> Melphy Sakupwanya, the Regional Reference Person for Sub-Saharan Africa

<sup>2</sup> An ice-breaker is an activity that helps people relax with each other.



ANNE BARTON

## “Nigerian RC Communities Coming Alive with Young Adults”

The first national Nigerian RC workshop,<sup>1</sup> held in May 2010, couldn't have come at a better time, considering that RC is almost ten years old in Nigeria. Also, this year has been declared the United Nations International Year of the Youth, which has as its slogan "Our Year. Our Voice."

The number of young adult Co-Counselors who came to the workshop was fabulous. I was excited because I knew the possibilities that having them there provided for the growth of RC and for our country in general.

They played a major role. I could feel their intelligence and powerfulness in handling issues that concerned them. Even in the distribution of general duties, they took about forty percent of the roles and handled them perfectly well.

I will cherish their input as it concerned Community developments, and their leading. I see a brighter horizon for RC in the future when all the outlined plans and aspirations of the young adults come into play.<sup>2</sup>

A highlight was the sessions I did with teams of young adults from the various RC Communities. I played my role as an ally, reminding them that they are intelligent and good and that their contributions toward the development of RC in Nigeria are greatly appreciated. I listened to them, one after the other, and also told my story as a young adult and talked about the work I had done in young adult liberation. We discharged about what was hard and also what was great about being a young adult. This made it possible to build close relationships and sustain networking after the workshop, which will enable us to form a common front in putting our ideas forward.

My report would not be complete without mentioning the presence of an infant at the workshop. She had a wonderful time receiving attention from most of the adults. At one point she wanted us to shout and laugh out loud, and she followed with the same. I was quick to notice the full excitement in her eyes. As I write this, the memory comes back to me of her eyes holding on to mine, with lots of attention, love, and excitement. Oh, how I miss her now!

I see the Nigerian RC Communities coming alive with young adults' participation. It's our year. Our voice will be heard!

Kingsley C. Ibekwe  
Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, Nigeria

<sup>1</sup> See previous article.

<sup>2</sup> Come into play means start taking effect.

## Sharing RC with Nigerian Teachers

The day dawned cloudy (the rains have been more frequent than usual, which is to be expected in the rainy season), but we were undaunted by the threatening clouds. In contrast our spirits were high—and our expectations, too. In this high spirit we left Awka (Nigeria) for Abagana (Nigeria) to lead a workshop for a group of teachers.

We were a lively group, comprised of Kingsley<sup>1</sup>; Mike<sup>2</sup>; two young adults, Meg<sup>3</sup> and I.K.<sup>4</sup>; and me. The group was later to swell to include the Professors Nnabuife and Anayo.<sup>5</sup>

After transversing the challenging road, we arrived at Abagana Girls' Secondary School. We were warmly welcomed by Princess Chinwe Agwuna, an RCer and our contact person in the school.

On entry into the venue of the meeting, my first observation was that a lot of effort has been put into decorating the hall. It was festive, lively, and welcoming. My second observation was the large number of persons interested in the RC workshop. It was thanks to Princess that we had not only a large audience but an attentive one, too. It appeared that she had whetted people's appetites for RC and they were all ready for the complete meal.

Once we were seated, Kingsley, who led the workshop, got everyone to relax with the introductions. Then he quickly went into the big question: What is RC? The answer was what they had all come expecting to hear. He taught what Re-evaluation Counseling is all about, but what got everyone's attention was when he said that RC is what we do every day of our lives.

He then called me up to continue. Some people wanted to know how it is possible not to give someone advice when he or she comes to you. I told them that they can remember that the person seeking advice is intelligent and able to get to the solution of his or her problem after enough discharge on the distresses occluding his or her intelligence. I also told them that most times people seeking advice already know what they are going to do, they only need confirmation, and that when the advice does not agree with their decision they discard it. Most of the group attested to this, from their personal experience.

Professor Nnabuife spoke about the confidentiality policy. Then Meg spoke at length about parents listening and giving attention to their children. She said that society would have fewer murderers, kidnappers, and armed robbers if parents learned the tools of RC.

The workshop ended on a high note, with the teachers requesting another one. Kingsley led the self-appreciations and goodbyes. People were also encouraged to appreciate anyone they admired in the meeting. A group photograph brought this interesting workshop to an end.

*Tochukwu Udoji*  
Awka, Anambra State, Nigeria



FROM THE NATIONAL WORKSHOP

<sup>1</sup> Kingsley Ibekwe, an RC leader in Awka, Anambra State, Nigeria

<sup>2</sup> Mike Omelu, an RC leader in Awka, Anambra State, Nigeria

<sup>3</sup> Margaret Osifo, an RC youth leader in Unizik, Anambra State, Nigeria

<sup>4</sup> Ikechukwu Ihunegbo, an RC youth leader in Unizik, Anambra State, Nigeria

<sup>5</sup> Professors Ezimna Nnabuife and Anayo Nkamnebe, RC leaders in Unizik, Anambra State, Nigeria

## More on the Nigerian Teachers' Workshop

Before the July 2010 workshop for teachers at the Abagana Girls' Secondary School,<sup>1</sup> I was battling with lots of feelings about bringing RC to people I had not met before. Most of the other introductory workshops I had organized were with people I already had relationships with.

I did Co-Counseling sessions with my Co-Counselor, Professor Anayo, and my support groups (I had developed a wide range of experienced Co-Counselors as a resource for me). After enough discharge I had a clear and defined idea of what to share at the workshop.

The leadership team was made up of eight teachers. Three of them were certified RC teachers. The others were growing in leaps and bounds in handling RC basics.

Below are some highlights of the workshop participants.

*Kingsley Ibekwe*  
Awka, Anambra State, Nigeria

<sup>1</sup> See article on page 53.



CASABLANCA, MOROCCO • MICHAEL HAND

“The experience I want to take away is listening to people without interrupting, and helping them arrive at solutions without providing advice to them.”

“I personally learnt that effective listening and confidentiality are essential in RC. I also learnt that giving advice to a Co-Counselor wouldn't help. However, guiding the person to discharge and regain his or her intelligence would help.”

“It has been a discharging experience—a forum for dusting off the bad emotion I had this morning when my tire became flat as I was coming to the workshop. I appreciate RC as one of the antidotes to numerous vices in Nigeria today.”

“I have learnt a new way that I can re-emerge to be a better person. Secondly, discharging distressful situations helps people live long. I must start this RC with people around me.”

“The workshop I witnessed here helped me discharge my feelings about life. I even forgot that I was in a stressing school environment, especially during the self-appreciating moment. It was really enjoyable.”

“The workshop made me understand the need to ease off my distresses to a Co-Counselor, to ensure healthy living.”

“It is today that I am hearing of RC in my life. I learnt a lot, especially about how to take on<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> In this context, take on means do something about.

distresses through discharge. Above all, I want to practice RC in my life from today.”

“I feel very happy, having eased off lots of bottled up distresses at the workshop. I see RC as an important tool for human development.”

“Our gathering was a wonderful, joyous, stress-easing one, and should be regularly held. I especially loved the self-appreciation, and the cross-appreciation of others.”

“This was my first experience with RC, and sincerely it was an eye-opener to some of the old negative beliefs I have had in my mind.”

“The workshop was fantastic. It taught us how to appreciate and share other people's problems by being a good listener.”

“The workshop was commendable and should be continued here in our school. It should also be spread to all nooks and crannies<sup>3</sup> of Nigeria. What I have learnt so far would make me relieved of my family distresses.”

“One thing that I have learnt today is that it is not good to beat a child and stop the child from crying. I do such to my children, but I will stop it from today.”

“A highlight was the way my colleagues appreciated the theory, principles, and practices of RC. I foresee a unique Community springing up in the school.”

<sup>3</sup> Nooks and crannies means parts.

## Nigerian Students Learn RC

Dateline: June 26, 2010. Chioma Okonkwo, Area Reference Person for Lagos, Nigeria, and my humble self honoured the invitation to do an RC introductory class for students and teachers of Civil Service Senior Model College, in Igbogbo, Ikorodu (Nigeria). It was to round up<sup>1</sup> a week-long Junior Engineers and Technical and Scientists Club Week coordinated by our RC members Kelechi Onwuzirike, Akodu I. Kamardeen, and Osiyemi Folasade. We were asked to give a talk on the topic, "Cultism and Exam Malpractice."

My first task was to appreciate how RC could be used as a tool among students to resist cultism and exam malpractice. Co-Counseling sessions with Chioma prior to the workshop were helpful.

With over two hundred and fifty students, besides their teachers and the principal, in attendance, the class was certainly a big challenge for me. How does one get the full attention of such a massive audience? Fortunately Chioma and I had agreed that we would make the class as participatory as possible.

I began with a quick introduction of my humble self and proceeded to tell them what was good and new for me on that beautiful day. I then requested that some of the students introduce themselves and say what was good and new for them. That done, I briefly commented on how good natured and intelligent we humans are, how certain experiences and encounters can distort and confuse us, and the need for us to re-evaluate the distress recordings, reclaim our lives,

and re-emerge better persons, able to think and figure things out. I explained distress recordings, patterns, discharge, the art of listening, Co-Counseling, confidentiality, and so on.

I encouraged the participants to pair up and have a session, after which I asked some of them to say what it had felt like being listened to. I also asked questions such as, "How did you feel when somebody failed to listen to you?" "Do your parents listen to you?"

With the students' interest aroused, Chioma took over<sup>2</sup> and took the class through the concept of oppression. She talked about patterns of oppression associated with culture, religion, peer group, adults, gender, and so on. With intermittent demonstrations, she pointed out how these patterns, if undischarged, could lead students into aberrations such as cultism, exam malpractice, and similar vices.

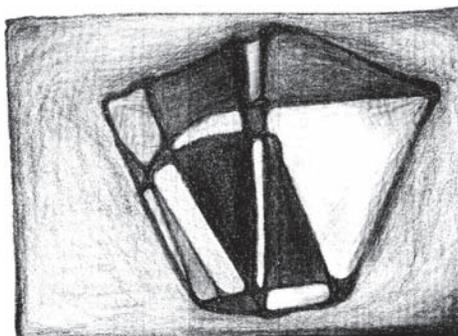
She reminded the students that they are powerful, with vast intelligence. She told them about regular self-validation and encouraged them to believe in themselves, and know that they had always done and would always do their best, instead of cheating on an exam or looking to be powerful through cultism.

It was a beautiful and memorable moment, one that made me proud to be an RCer. A big thanks to Kelechi, Akodu, and Folasade. Do keep the flag flying!

*Oni Nwangwu-Stevenson*  
Lagos, Nigeria

<sup>1</sup> Round up means complete.

<sup>2</sup> Took over means assumed leadership.



WYTSKEVISSE

You, dear beloved, who hold equal power  
With every other human on the planet,  
You, whose warm confidence and loving wisdom  
Are eagerly awaited by the rest,  
How helped you cage injustice this last twelve-month?  
What leverage-points found you to right old wronging?

*Harvey Jackins*  
From "Christmas 1964,"  
on page 26 of *The Meaningful Holiday*

## Share Your Glimpses of Reality

Many of you have sent us your photographs and artwork for use in *Present Time* and our other journals. The effect of your work has been wonderful for all readers, and we greatly appreciate your assistance in providing clearer and clearer views of reality.

We publish *Present Time* quarterly and are also publishing the many other journals a bit more often than we have in years past. Because of this, we could use more photos and artwork from you, our readers.

You don't need to be someone who thinks of herself or himself as an artist or photographer. Many people who do lovely, thoughtful work still have undischarged distresses that leave them feeling unsure and confused about themselves in this area. Please don't let any feelings stop you from sending us what you have done. (Or have some sessions on the feelings and then send us your work.)

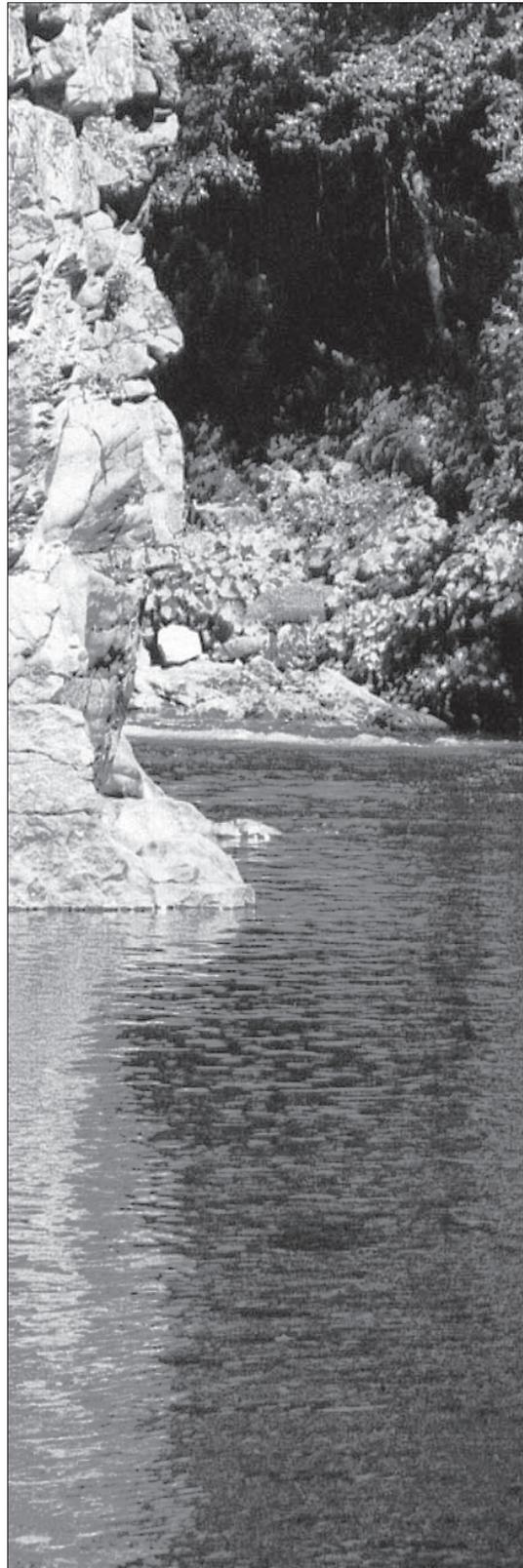
The photos can be of nature, large-scale to microscopic; of objects, familiar or not. They can be about human endeavors, light-hearted or serious. But they need to be *your* photos that help you remember the real world. Drawings can be simple or more involved and need to communicate your enjoyment of the world. For *Present Time* covers, photos need to be in a vertical (portrait) format. For all photos, please indicate what is in the picture, where it was taken, and when.

You can send scanned photos and drawings to <photos@rc.org> (e-mail us for details) or mail hard copies to Rational Island Publishers (see address below). We won't be able to return hard copies. If you're sending photos by e-mail, please send them at a resolution of 300 dpi or greater.

*Important:* We need your written permission to use your photos and drawings. (If you've already sent us photos or drawings but not permission, we still need your permission.) You can find a permission form on the RC web site at <<http://www.rc.org/>>. If you don't have access to a computer, call or write Rational Island Publishers requesting a permission form. Our address is 719 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue North, Seattle, Washington 98109, USA. Our e-mail address is <photos@rc.org>. Our phone number is +1-206-284-0311.

Please do send us your photographs and artwork. We would love to let other people see them.

Hopefully,  
*Tim Jackins*



SUSAN FREUNDLICH



RED DEER • © MARTY TWO BULLS, JR.

Don't miss ...

## ***Heritage No. 4!***

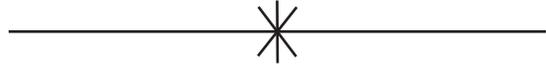
**The new issue of the RC journal  
about Native liberation  
(the first since 1995)**

- A hundred and twenty-eight pages filled with interviews of Native people from many tribes
- The Draft Liberation Policy for Indigenous People
- Beautiful photos
- Sharing about reclaiming language, victories with families, wide-world Native liberation, counseling on genocide, and much, much more

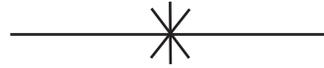
For ordering information, see page 109.



DARLENE DANIELS



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



ALAN SPRUNG

# Counseling on and Accommodating Disability

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

*I start teaching a new fundamentals class this week. This class is a little different from the previous ones in that I've got two blind men in it. Would it be better to talk about and have people do a mini-session on oppression of disabled people starting from the first class or in a later class? Do we have literature for blind people?*



Sangwoo Kwon  
Seoul, South Korea

I would be sure to give the other people a chance to discharge about being in a class with people who are blind. Setting this up so that it is respectful for the people who are blind will be very important.

You might ask the people who aren't blind to focus in a mini-session on

1. What has been your experience being with someone who is blind?

2. What feelings do you notice about being in class with someone who is blind?

3. What do you think you need to know to function well in a class with someone who is blind?

You might have the people who are blind respond to different questions in a mini-session, such as, "What do you need from people here to be able to function well?"

*Barbara Love*  
Amherst, Massachusetts, USA

I am excited to know that you are involved with people with disabilities. I have cerebral palsy and have been in RC since the early 1970s. Co-Counseling is certainly a big part of who I am and continues to make a huge difference as I figure out the many parts of my life.

It has been important to me that my Co-Counselors do not let me act as a victim at any time. I expect to be challenged and pushed beyond

what I think my limits are, because for me many limits, though not all, are the results of early hurts and big restimulation. At the same time, I want people to be gentle with me—gentle and kind without buying into\* my distress.

I also want to say that we folks with disabilities are all different. No two of us are the same, and Co-Counselors must listen well and try different things as they counsel us—just like with anybody. It is also true that people with disabilities will need time to build safety with any class or group. Many of us need the opportunity to just tell our stories, because we are not always given that chance.

(You did not ask for suggestions, but I am so impressed that this work is happening that I had to write!)

Also, non-disabled Co-Counselors should have sessions away from disabled Co-Counselors. I think that, in addition to the great suggestions from Barbara, they should counsel privately on their fears and be honest about all the things that they don't feel comfortable about when thinking about blind people, deaf people, people who use wheelchairs, or people like me who walk and talk "differently." It will make a big difference in their ability to think well about us.

The most important thing is for non-disabled Co-Counselors not to assume anything about anybody!

\* Buying into means believing.

Please let me know how all of this proceeds.

*Laurie Summers*  
Silver Spring, Maryland, USA

Counseling on our feelings about various disabilities does help us think better about people in our Communities or people we would like to include. My husband has had a very visible disability from birth. As always in the role of ally to people targeted with oppression, we gain a great deal. Since anyone can become disabled at any time, it is useful for everyone in RC classes to discharge feelings about disability and the recordings our capitalist society installs about our worth and value as humans based on what we are or are not able to do independently of assistance from others. I have found mountains of discharge in this way.

*Asherah Cinnamon*  
Limington, Maine, USA

*Editor's note: Almost all of the RC literature in English is available on audio cassette and, for people with vision difficulties, is the same price as the printed version. Also, beginning with the 2005 issues, digital text versions, rather than audio versions, of Present Time and the other journals are available. (To order, see page 109.)*



## Learning About Racism and “Mental Health” Oppression



I started working on the intertwining of racism and “mental health” oppression in the late 1980s and early 1990s, when a few people targeted by racism began to come to my workshops on “mental health” liberation. I got close to an African-heritage ex-psychiatric inmate. I was to lead a workshop in the city where she lived, and I asked her to teach a class on racism and “mental health.” She said that she would listen to me think about it and that I would do just fine teaching the class. She thought it was important for me to discover and talk about my own view of racism and “mental health.” I felt terrified, but once I was teaching the class I realized she was right.

Around the same time I was attending two five-day workshops a year led by Charlie Kreiner (a former International Liberation Reference Person for Men) during which he focused on ending racism. That a white man could focus on how ending racism was key for white people, and also have close relationships with a number of African-heritage people, was life changing for me. I connected with and discharged on the ideas that we white people are not bad, that we were forced to take on<sup>1</sup> racist patterns, and that we can reach out for and get close to people targeted by racism, putting aside worries about our racism.

My biggest insights into racism, particularly as it affects African-heritage people, came from leading, with Barbara Love,<sup>2</sup> the Black People and “Mental Health” Workshop in 1999. That workshop was the “dream child”<sup>3</sup> of LG Shanklin-Flowers.<sup>4</sup> LG, Alysia Tate,<sup>5</sup> and I were “hanging out”<sup>6</sup> at a workshop, and LG said that she thought I should lead a Black People and “Mental Health” Workshop with Barbara. I said that that would be a *long* way off. She said

---

*They could barely talk, let alone discharge, about the subject. . . . they all had a story, and most of them had rarely told it to anyone.*

---

that she didn’t think so. I said that she would see one completely terrified Jew. She said that she had seen that before, which got us all laughing. The next thing I knew, the workshop was on the Black Liberation schedule and LG was organizing it.

To practice leading the work, I led several daylong black people and “mental health” workshops. They allowed me to see that I could lead African-heritage people and learn from what they worked on in demonstrations. I realized it would not be as difficult to lead in this area as my fears had suggested. I also started thinking about how white people are affected by racism and “mental health” oppression. I saw more clearly that people are made to believe that racism is normal. I saw that white people grow up acting that out and that people targeted by racism often feel “crazy,” partly because they don’t fit into what is considered by white people to be “normal” and partly because they see and experience the racism that white people often don’t see.

*continued . . .*



IPSWICH, MASSACHUSETTS, USA • TIM JACKINS

<sup>1</sup> In this context, take on means adopt.

<sup>2</sup> Barbara Love is the International Liberation Reference Person for African-Heritage People.

<sup>3</sup> “Dream child” means idea.

<sup>4</sup> LG Shanklin-Flowers is the Regional Reference Person for Wisconsin, USA.

<sup>5</sup> Alysia Tate is the Regional Reference Person for Illinois, USA.

<sup>6</sup> “Hanging out” means spending relaxed, unstructured time.

## TEACHING, LEADING, COMMUNITY BUILDING

... continued

By the third workshop I began to understand more how “mental health” oppression, on top of racism, holds back the re-emergence of African-heritage people. Each of the ten people attending that workshop took a turn in the group on how the combination of “mental health” oppression and racism had affected them. They could barely talk, let alone discharge, about the subject. It felt “too heavy,” and it seemed “not okay” to show feelings about it. Yet they all had a story, and most of them had rarely told it to anyone.

Later I found out that two African-heritage people I knew who knew each other well and who had told me they were ex-psychiatric inmates had never told each other. While similar behavior is found in many other groups, it looks to me like the racism combined with “mental health” oppression restricts people so much more. It makes it unsafe to show a lot of feelings (lest one be called a “crazy” black person, be locked up,<sup>7</sup> and so on).

<sup>7</sup> Locked up means put in prison.

I saw that I could step outside of some of my racist patterns of feeling awkward and not knowing what to say around African-heritage people. All I had to do was be friendly, remember that they were just like me (both of us humans), and ask them about themselves. The responses I got back were so encouraging that I began to move out of that “distant, scared” pattern altogether.

When I look back on where I was fifteen years ago, I can see how far I have moved. I am pleased to find it so much easier to discharge and talk about racism and to connect with African-heritage people and have them in my life more fully.

*Janet Foner*  
International Liberation Reference Person  
for “Mental Health” Liberation  
New Cumberland, Pennsylvania, USA



### Some Basics of RC Family Work

(CD 20)

An overview of RC family work,\* given by Tim Jackins at the African Pre-World Conference in July 2009. An excellent introduction for people new to family work and a fresh review for experienced Co-Counselors.



(This CD is part of the RC Teacher Update series.)

\$10 (U.S.) plus shipping and handling

To order, see page 109.



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



MARION OUPHOUET

“

In each person I catch the fleeting suggestion of something beautiful and swear eternal friendship with that.

*George Santayana*

”

## A Summer Class on the *Guidelines*

I had been thinking about the *Guidelines*<sup>1</sup> and how every four years so many minds are asked to think anew about what is in them and how to improve them and make them grow with our organization. I realized how important they are to our organization and yet how little time is spent actually reading and talking about them. So I decided to offer a five-week summer class on the *Guidelines*, expecting a dedicated few to show up.<sup>2</sup> Instead fifteen people signed up—to my surprise and delight.

As it turned out<sup>3</sup> people were interested not so much in the *Guidelines* but in RC and what we are all about. The *Guidelines* were a gateway to talk about RC and how we function. It was a fabulous class. Here's how I organized it:

Each week we began with a series of group games. (I announced from the beginning that I wanted our work on the *Guidelines* to be fun and playful as well as informative.) We did mini-sessions afterward, since a number of people are restimulated by these kinds of games. At the end of the class many people mentioned the games as a highlight and that they had taken them to share with other groups.

I went through the *Guidelines* and grouped sections that I felt went together thematically. I handed out a curriculum that outlined what we would talk about each week, with readings for in between classes. And of course everyone got a copy of the new *Guidelines*.

<sup>1</sup> The *Guidelines for the Re-evaluation Counseling Communities*—the policies guiding the functioning of the RC Communities

<sup>2</sup> Show up means come.

<sup>3</sup> Turned out means happened.

Each class involved some reading out loud from the *Guidelines*. People would take turns reading a paragraph. I would give some theory on each section and then open it up for questions and comments. This turned out to be useful because people got to push and pull the ideas around. Of course I had picked out the sections that I thought would be the most interesting for a diverse group, and this kept the interest high. I would also do demonstrations and have lots of mini-sessions.

A major awareness people gained about the *Guidelines* was how thoughtful they are and how they take on<sup>4</sup> real human situations and offer procedures for resolving difficulties, such as in the case of attacks, criticism, and no socializing.<sup>5</sup> They are good human guidelines, and not just for RC.

Early on when we were talking about guidelines in general, I sensed some resistance from folks and did a long demonstration on early hurts from thoughtless rules and abusive or neglectful authority. That set the stage for everyone to express his or her feelings and work on early stuff that had gotten attached to RC, with great results. People came to see the value of the *Guidelines* and improved and deepened their understanding of RC

The “one-point program”<sup>6</sup> was interesting to people. They “got

<sup>4</sup> In this context, take on means deal with.

<sup>5</sup> The no-socializing policy of the RC Communities states that Co-Counselors should not set up any relationships, other than Co-Counseling, with other Co-Counselors or with people whom they first meet in a Co-Counseling context.

<sup>6</sup> The “one-point program” of the RC Communities: to use RC to seek recovery of one's occluded intelligence and humanness, and assist others to do the same.

it” that it is the foundation for all of RC and what binds us together. All the rest builds on the powerful connection and commitment we make with and to each other for our personal re-emergence. When we disagree on or question policies or theory, we can come back to the one-point program and see all the rest with a more realistic perspective.

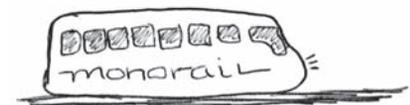
The last class was on our International goals. We worked on racism mostly, and then I gave folks a chance to think about their own personal goals and what chronic patterns stood in their way of achieving them. This put a personal spin<sup>7</sup> on the whole notion of goal setting, and people left with some ideas for how to move their own lives forward.

For me, one of the most rewarding parts of the class was my own deeper understanding and appreciation of the *Guidelines*. It helped me, as an Area Reference Person, view my Community in a more thoughtful way and see RC more clearly as the smart and organically growing organization I have come to know and love.

It was a fun way to spend some summer weeks: building Community and deepening our commitment to and appreciation of RC. As someone said at the end, “Who knew the *Guidelines* could be fun?”

Philip Rose  
Syracuse, New York, USA  
Reprinted from the e-mail  
discussion list for RC teachers

<sup>7</sup> Spin means emphasis, interpretation.



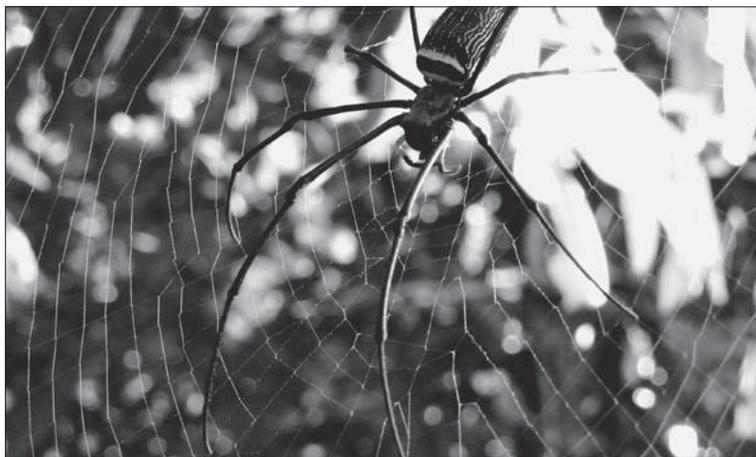
AM

## White People: Take Initiative to Get Close

The separation of white people from people targeted by racism is a great topic for discharge. It is also a great topic for action. It was a challenge for me to desegregate my life (make it not all-white), and it had a tremendous impact on me. (I grew up in a completely white suburb of Detroit, Michigan, USA, where I had no people targeted by racism in my life.)

In my white RC classes and support groups, I advocate taking the bold step of initiating relationships with people who are different from ourselves, specifically people targeted by racism. Often the “decide-act-discharge” paradigm is the most helpful. It can seem wrong, bad, and awkward for us white people to take the initiative in making friends and real relationships with people targeted by racism, and we need encouragement and counseling from each other in order to persist, but it is so worth it!

I have assisted several white people in making friends with people targeted by racism. White people sometimes comment that “it seems racist” to “go after”<sup>1</sup> someone just because he or she is black. I believe that without racism we would all have in our lives many people targeted by racism—from acquaintances and casual friends to close friends and intimates. Racism has manipulated us so much that this seems out of reach for most of us white people, even though we want it. I work with white people on closeness and their goodness and then try to get as concrete as possible with them. I encourage them to discharge on who and how.



WAKO ONO

One young woman wanted to work on getting closer to a black co-worker from her summer job in a restaurant. She hadn't seen her since the summer, but they did live in the same city. They had gotten close but since the season ended had not been in touch at all. With encouragement and discharge, she reached out on Facebook,<sup>2</sup> but alas, there was not a response. She was at a loss as to what to do next and was ready to give up.<sup>3</sup> Calling her friend seemed “too awkward.” (As she asked in a session, “What would I say?”)

Many of us white people have been very hurt in the area of connection, initiative, and persistence in relationships. I applaud all white people who are in this project for the long haul and are willing to take the small steps to make a big change. I would love to talk or counsel with any of you about it.

*Marian Fredal*  
Madison, Wisconsin, USA  
mhfredal@wisc.edu

### *If you move . . .*

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Thank you,  
*Rational Island Publishers Staff*

<sup>1</sup> “Go after” means pursue.

<sup>2</sup> Facebook is a social networking site on the Internet.

<sup>3</sup> Give up means stop trying.

## UER at the U.S. Social Forum

### MONDAY, JUNE 21

Greetings from the United to End Racism (UER) delegation to the U.S. Social Forum, in Detroit, Michigan, USA. Ten thousand social activists are gathering here this week to declare “Another World Is Possible. Another United States Is Necessary. Another Detroit Is Underway.”<sup>1</sup>

The U.S. Social Forum is part of a growing global justice movement that is developing as an alternative to neoliberal capitalism. This year (its second year) the forum is being held just before the G20 Summit of twenty of the world’s wealthiest nations, which will meet this coming weekend across the border in Toronto, Ontario, Canada.

Sixteen U.S. RCers from many diverse backgrounds make up our delegation. Alysia Tate<sup>2</sup> is leading and M’Lis Bartlett<sup>3</sup> is organizing the

<sup>1</sup> Underway means in progress.

<sup>2</sup> Alysia Tate is the Regional Reference Person for Illinois, USA.

<sup>3</sup> M’Lis Bartlett is an RC leader in Ann Arbor, Michigan, USA.

project. All of us are eager to learn a lot and to share the tools and perspectives of RC with the many activists and social movements represented here. It is especially exciting to be in Detroit, a part of the country with large African-heritage and Arab-heritage populations. Detroit also has the highest unemployment rate of any major city in the United States. Many jobs have been lost in the automotive and related industries. People at the neighborhood level are taking action and developing strategies for economic survival.

We arrived yesterday and will have a one-day workshop with our delegation today. On Tuesday the forum starts, and on Wednesday we will present three workshops. More reports will follow in the coming days.

*Malana Rogers-Bursen*  
Pomfret Center, Connecticut, USA

*Victor Nicassio*  
Los Angeles, California, USA

### TUESDAY, JUNE 22

*U.S. Midwesterner Commitment (from The List<sup>4</sup>):*

*I promise that, from this moment on, I will be proud of the strong cities and beautiful cornfields, lakes, and forests that are my home. I will remember that my people are special and worth every effort it takes to reach them. I will boldly lead all humans from the solid center of my country, firmly trusting my thinking and speaking my mind. The world can depend on my power and intelligence for its survival.*

Hello to all from the UER delegation to the U.S. Social Forum! Yesterday we had our one-day workshop to prepare ourselves for the forum. Alysia talked about not feeling bad about ourselves—that there is enough to fight out there without having to fight ourselves. We met in support groups for Asians, African-heritage women, and white people. These will be our support groups for the rest of the forum.

All of the leaders of our workshops are African-heritage women. Alysia worked with them in front of the group so that we could all get to know them better. The rest of us got to work on how we can think better about African-heritage folks in our RC Communities. We have the specific goal here at the forum of going after<sup>5</sup> African-heritage people, both because of how Goal 1<sup>6</sup> is worded and so that our RC Communities, specifically in Midwestern cities but also all over the world, can reflect actual demographics

*continued . . .*



HAWAII, USA • PHYLLIS KESSLER

<sup>4</sup> The book *The List*, by Harvey Jackins, which Harvey described as “everything I know about Re-evaluation Counseling (and the world) until now”

<sup>5</sup> Going after means making contact with.

<sup>6</sup> Goal 1 of the Re-evaluation Counseling Community, as adopted by the 2001 World Conference of the RC Communities and reaffirmed by subsequent World Conferences: That the elimination of racism, in particular the racism aimed at people of African heritage, be actively made an ongoing, central piece of the work of the Re-evaluation Counseling Community.

## WIDE WORLD CHANGING

... continued

and keep people targeted by racism central.

After three-way Co-Counseling sessions we met in our workshop-leading teams to plan the three workshops we are leading tomorrow. After dinner we talked about logistics. We had a lot to talk about, with all of our different schedules. We will be staffing the literature table, planning our workshops, leading the workshops, and conducting listening projects.<sup>7</sup> Tomorrow is another full day, but we are ready. We are going into it with attention, connection, and enthusiasm!

*Malana Rogers-Bursen  
Victor Nicassio*

### WEDNESDAY, JUNE 23

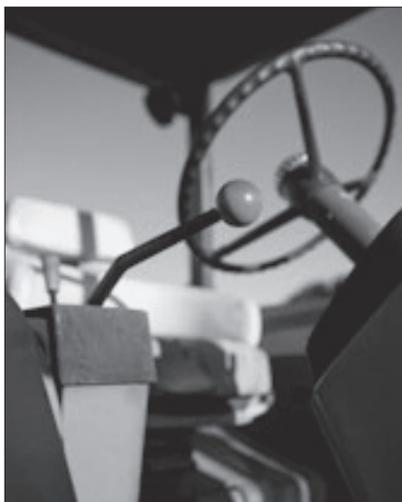
Yesterday a steady stream of activists began entering Cobo Hall, one of the sites where the forum is taking place. We set up our literature table and began selling literature, giving out workshop flyers, and making human contact—from a smile or a nod as people passed, to long conversations about our work, to everything in between. Several people who had participated in RC in the past, one many years ago, were delighted to find us and be welcomed. The artwork on our UER posters worked well to draw attention to us. It is great to be among large numbers of people working for similar goals, many of whom are open to and interested in learning about us.

We also spent time exploring other tables and organizations and joining in the march through the streets to the opening ceremonies at Cobo Hall. During the ceremonies some of us did listening projects, using the question, "How has racism affected your life?" People were open and shared a lot. Many appreciated that we were interested and engaged. We

<sup>7</sup> In an RC listening project, several Co-Counselors go to a public place and offer to listen to passersby about some important issue, such as racism or a current war. They may hold signs that invite people to share their thinking about that issue.

also spent time working out many details of our upcoming activities. It is impressive to see our delegation move through the sometimes hectic process of problem-solving and reach more clarity and confidence through discharge and discussion.

*Malana Rogers-Bursen  
Victor Nicassio*



LAURIE RHODES

### THURSDAY, JUNE 24

Yesterday we led all of our workshops. They were filled with people, and there were many joyful responses. Many people were excited to use the discharge process. Although we didn't have enough time to share as much as we know, people seemed to get a picture of what's possible by observing our relationships as leaders and from what we shared about how discharge has made our lives better and our activism more effective. It was also powerful to have three African-heritage women leading the workshops.

The first workshop, led by Njoki Kamau,<sup>8</sup> was "Putting Ourselves in the Movement: Facing Discouragement and Finding Real Hope in Midwest Activism." Njoki gave a brief description of the UER project and affirmed all the important work the participants were doing to make the world a better place.

<sup>8</sup> Njoki Kamau is an RC leader in Evanston, Illinois, USA.

She then had people try three short mini-sessions, answering the questions

- What is your vision for the world?
- Where have things gone well in your activism?
- What has been challenging, hard, discouraging, about being an activist and realizing your vision?

During the debrief one man talked about how isolated he often feels and how this keeps him from being an effective activist. Njoki then had other people on her team—Sondra McCurry, Amisha Patel, Victor Nicassio, and Cindy Tobias—share basic RC theory, liberation theory, and personal experiences of how the discharge process has made them more effective activists. They shared a lot about themselves and how hard things have been in their lives. The sharing and discharge moved people. When Victor talked about the Arab and Jewish work he had seen done using RC, a number of people's faces lit up. Then he and an Israeli-born woman did a mini-session that was full of discharge. Many of the other participants were also able to discharge during the mini-session. People seemed to leave excited, hopeful, and wanting more.

Sharon Campbell and her team led our four-hour workshop "Healing the Hurts of Racism in Detroit and the Midwest: Ending Oppression and Undoing Its Effects." Many mini-sessions and short breaks kept people attentive and the workshop flowing, and Sharon used personal examples that helped people connect with her. Highlights were demonstrations with an African-heritage woman and an African-heritage man. JeeYeun Lee spoke about racism against Asian-heritage people and did a demonstration with an Arab American UER delegate. Alysia Tate spoke about mixed-heritage issues and in a more general way about how we all feel like we don't belong. Pam Oatis

and Cindy Tobias spoke as white allies and began some important work with some of the white participants, which continued after the workshop. Several African-heritage women who had been activists for many years appreciated hearing that white women had been working for decades as allies. Njoki told her story as an immigrant from Kenya. Christina Kelly and Victor translated for two Spanish-speaking participants from Guatemala. The response was overwhelmingly positive. Many people showed an interest in continuing to learn about RC.

In the afternoon Apryl Walker led a workshop on young adult activism entitled "Our Role in the Midwest Movement: Facing Discouragement and Finding Real Hope as Young Adult Activists." (Most of the people at the forum are young adults targeted by racism.) On Apryl's leadership team were Eric Braxton, Russell Vanacek, and me. People did a mini-session in which they introduced themselves, told why they had come to the workshop, and said one thing they were passionate about as a young adult activist. Apryl and Eric then talked about discharge and oppression. The next mini was on "What is or was hard about being an activist in your twenties?" People were able to discharge. During the debrief people talked about how

relieving it was to have someone really listen to them. Then I talked about the effects of racism on people targeted by racism and Russell talked about the effects of racism on white people. I chose an African-heritage young adult man for a demonstration. He was able to notice the attention and tried to take in that I really wanted to know how things were in his life. During the questions and answers people asked brilliant questions about how to use the discharge process and how to be a good ally to people targeted by racism. Apryl was great at keeping people targeted by racism at the center.

We are feeling proud of our team. Today we are trying to make deeper one-on-one connections with people and continuing to work with some of the people from the workshops who want to keep going with RC.

*Malana Rogers-Bursen*

#### FRIDAY, JUNE 25

Yesterday we saw clearly the results of the work we've been doing. Here are a few highlights:

- Many, many people have filled out our contact cards and are enthusiastic about getting in touch with UER, especially in the U.S. Midwestern states. For example, a working-class black man from Detroit wrote on his card, "Great! Keep up the good work, and please contact me!"
- Several people new to UER were overheard planning together about getting UER work going in Detroit.
- The literature table has become a beehive of activity (a place with lots going on<sup>9</sup>). Our delegates are taking greater initiative in sharing RC openly with new people and

steering them toward our mini-workshops, support groups, and fundamentals classes. One African-heritage woman said that out of the many tables she'd seen at the forum, the UER table was the only one that had used the word "racism."

- Some of us have begun meeting as a white allies discharge group with white activists we have met at the forum. A fundamentals class has also begun meeting.
- Some of us have been able to attend non-UER workshops to expand our contacts. Victor attended a workshop with twenty Arabs and had two opportunities to share information with them about our work in UER. Some of them talked about their work in the Arab community with the U.S. Census and about their slogan, "Check it right, you ain't<sup>10</sup> white" (meaning, "Mark the box on the census form that reflects your Arab identity, not the 'white' one").
- Several of us walked around one of the main gathering areas with signs saying, "Tell us your story of how racism has affected you. We want to listen." People came and told their stories. Sometimes we needed more listeners!

As one of our delegates said, "It has been a big challenge and a marvelous experience." We are a little tired but are thrilled with the work we've done. We've learned a lot about what works well and what doesn't.

*Malana Rogers-Bursen*

*Victor Nicassio*

*continued . . .*



IRELAND • TIM JACKINS

<sup>9</sup> Going on means happening.

<sup>10</sup> Ain't means aren't.

## WIDE WORLD CHANGING

... continued

### SATURDAY, JUNE 26

Although the forum was starting to wind down (slow down), Alysia pushed us and we pushed ourselves to reach out even more boldly to communicate RC fully and widely. In the morning she distributed a challenging schedule for the day, including rage and terror work at the literature table and a listening project at the Leftist Lounge party from 10:00 PM to midnight. We looked at the schedule silently. Then she told us it was a joke, and the room exploded with discharge. Our leader has a sense of humor. But we did work hard to use the last full day of the forum. Here are a few highlights:

- Two more mini-workshops were well attended, powerful, and occasionally difficult. We were reminded that sometimes we need to consider a person's level of free attention when inviting him or her to a group. The successes were profound. After hearing clear information about the effects of racism, and experiencing listening and discharge, one African-heritage man said, "From now on my life will not be the same." Another said, "I never heard a white man talk about racism and oppression before." The fact that approximately fifty people—most of them people targeted by racism—participated in four short workshops that were not previously scheduled reflects the interest our work has generated.
- Listening projects continued to draw in more people and gave many a chance to answer the question, "How have you been affected by racism?" People talked, laughed, and sometimes cried.
- Many of our delegates were able to share basic RC principles with

friends and co-workers who are at the forum.

- Amisha Patel was on a panel for community organizers. She talked and discharged about being an organizer and then had the group do mini-sessions. Alysia shared some RC theory at another forum workshop, and people were excited to hear what she had to say.
- Contacts with Arabs and Muslims were increasingly relaxed and warm as we continued to get acquainted. We found agreement with our approach to healing the effects of oppression.
- A few of us took a risk and invited people who came to our table to do a mini-session. Those who accepted seemed moved by the closeness and discharge. It was an excellent way to give people a picture of what we do. Many told us that our table was the only place where someone would really engage with them. One UER delegate said in her farewells, "I'm realizing this is really about caring about people."
- More people filled out cards with their contact information.
- We sold literature and other materials, including the

*Fundamentals of Co-Counseling Manual, Working Together to End Racism*, and artwork from the Durban conference.<sup>11</sup>

- In the evening, back at the hotel, we did appreciations of each person on our team. Our experience at this forum has brought us all much closer, and we look forward to future work together.

This morning we packed up and prepared to leave after an amazing week that contradicted many of our fears and worries. We made plans for organizing the contact information of people we had met and for getting those people in touch with the RC Communities in their various locations. It is clear that we made a big difference at the forum. There were struggles, but we did well. We're all walking a little prouder as we return to our homes and looking forward to a little rest. What a team! Thanks to all of you in the International Communities for being with us in this work.

With much love,

*Malana Rogers-Bursen*

*Victor Nicassio*

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<sup>11</sup> The NGO (non-governmental organization) forum of the 2001 United Nations World Conference Against Racism, in Durban, South Africa, to which United to End Racism sent a delegation

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## “Enormously Effective”

I'd like to remind you of some of the published White House<sup>1</sup> notes about the Vietnam War. There's a little piece in there I remember well. This was when all the activists were feeling despairing and hopeless, were saying to their confidants, "No matter how much we do, we never have any effect." Of course, the War Department and the White House were issuing bulletins four times a day saying, "You never have any effect." (It's hard not to be influenced by them.)

During a discussion the general staff were urging President Johnson to bomb Hanoi, to just flatten Hanoi out. He said, "Well, what do you think the results will be?" And the general says, "We will break their will completely, we'll be able to bring the troops home. It will take care of everything," and a couple of other staff joined in supporting the general. President Johnson said, "Yes. And the people will tear down the

White House fence and lynch their President." This little item makes it obvious how often, when people are feeling they are having no effect at all, they are really striking right to the heart of the matter and being enormously effective.

. . . Actually, the people in the oppressive, war-mongering positions are far more afraid than you are. Their roles are case-hardened<sup>2</sup> on them. They don't feel they have any choice to get out of them, and they probably can't unless one of us asks the right questions so they can discharge. In general they are far more afraid than you are. . . . The oppressors are always far more uneasy than people they oppress. I don't know if you believe me when I say that or not, but it's true.

Harvey Jackins

From "A Favorable Situation for Reaching Out,"  
on pages 107 to 108 of *Start Over Every Morning*

<sup>1</sup> The White House is the residence of the acting president of the United States.

<sup>2</sup> Case-hardened means calloused or bereft of feeling.

## Have You Read the Latest *Sisters*?



DEE SMITH

I led a workshop topic group for women who wanted to read and discharge on the new issue of *Sisters*. We took turns reading one of the articles, stopping frequently to laugh and shake and make light jokes about the material. We also stopped once or twice for short mini-sessions. After reading more than half the article, we split up the rest of the time and each of us had a turn as client.

The topic group gave us a good introduction to the wonderful new issue. We left eager to read and discharge more. We also got to begin discharging on the sex industries. And we had a lot of fun together!

Ruth Hartman

Castro Valley, California, USA

To order *Sisters* No. 12, see page 109 of this *Present Time*.

The future is an infinite succession of presents, and to live now as we think human beings should live, in defiance of all that is bad around us, is itself a marvelous victory.

Howard Zinn

## A Synagogue Welcomes Striking Workers

Three months ago, in the Boston (Massachusetts, USA) area, some warehouse workers from a grocery chain went on strike. Three weeks later the company cut their health care. The company is not making any concessions during a time when its profits are going up.

To call attention to the plight of the workers, the union set up a five-day sixty-mile march. The workers and their supporters would walk from the warehouse to downtown Boston, spending the night in churches and synagogues along the way. I was asked if I knew any synagogues that would host, and I said I'd try to get my synagogue, which is in a town near the route of the marchers, to do it.

Fortunately the synagogue board was meeting that evening. I called the key people ahead of time. Although our synagogue usually takes a long time to make these kinds of decisions, an overwhelming majority of the board voted in favor of hosting the workers. Then the temple Social Action Committee decided to co-host a breakfast to see them off on the last morning of the march.

As it happened, the union decided that the sleepovers were too risky because of liability, so they cancelled that part of the march and bussed people home at night and then back to their starting point. Our breakfast went ahead as scheduled. In addition to the workers, temple members, city officials, labor activists, and other activists from our town were invited to join us at the breakfast and support the workers. Many of them came.

At 7:15 AM about forty workers showed up.<sup>1</sup> The event was a contradiction<sup>2</sup> for everyone involved.

<sup>1</sup> Showed up means appeared.

<sup>2</sup> Contradiction to distress

Most of the workers had never been in a synagogue before. They were deeply moved to be welcomed. Our synagogue community was deeply moved to welcome the workers and to see them in our synagogue.



LOUISIANA, USA • DIANE SHISK

Throughout most of its history our synagogue community has been largely working class. Although many members have become middle class, the culture of the community is still working class. There was a feeling of solidarity.

Before the breakfast I said a blessing over the bread in Hebrew and then in English. Then a worker translated it into Spanish. Later our rabbi made a blessing for the workers for the last day of their journey. During the breakfast the governor called in to speak to the workers and give his support.

After the breakfast I told the workers that Mark, my husband, would be happy to take them up to the sanctuary and show them around. When I broke away from talking to people, I followed upstairs. Some of the workers were looking at the Torah<sup>3</sup> with interest. One of our temple members read a verse from the Torah: Exodus 23:20: "See, I am sending an angel before you to guard you on your way and to bring you to the place that I have made ready." The passage was just right for the day ahead of them and made them even more happy.

I can't tell you how pleased it made me to see these workers in my synagogue. For me it was a victory that came from many years of counseling on Jewish and working-class liberation and acting on what I've learned in RC about reaching for allies. After the breakfast I walked with the workers on their march for part of the day. It was all splendid.

*Marya Axner*

Somerville, Massachusetts, USA

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

<sup>3</sup> In this context, the Torah is a scroll of parchment containing the first five books of the Hebrew Scriptures.



## Distresses That Prevent Us from Restoring the Environment



LK

In the past few meetings of our care-of-the-environment support group, I have been thinking about the distresses that have led to “discouragement about taking the actions necessary for [the environment’s] restoration” (the second part of Goal 3<sup>1</sup>). Here are my thoughts so far about the distresses that have led to inaction, as well as some thoughts about relationships.

### FEAR

We have many fears about the consequences of environmental degradation—for us, our children, humans generally, and other life. People commonly speak about environmental degradation with a kind of fear of the “great unknown.” Mass-media coverage of environmental issues often includes lots of restimulation about “catastrophe,” making people less able to think about the reality of environmental degradation. Some environmental damage is irreversible, some has a very long impact, but there is also some to which natural ecosystems can and do adapt. I was struck when an ecologist where I work said that the phrase “delicate Australian environment” is overused. She said that in reality, natural ecosystems, when still functioning, are resilient and can adapt to some human-induced disturbances.

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<sup>1</sup> Goal 3 of the Re-evaluation Counseling Communities, as adopted by the 2001 World Conference of the RC Communities and reaffirmed by subsequent World Conferences: That members of the Re-evaluation Counseling Community put increased attention on discharging the distresses that have led to the continued degradation of the environment of the world and to discouragement about taking the actions necessary for its restoration.



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Restimulated fear causes us to lose our ability to think and to assess the severity of human impacts. Therefore, it is useful to discharge on fears and on experiences of catastrophes, displacement, war, disasters (natural or social). The distresses (either our own, or prior generations’ by contagion) can attach paralysis and fear to the natural world and natural processes. (I have understood this from reading some of Wystke’s<sup>2</sup> insights from workshops she has been leading.)

### POWERLESSNESS AND DISCOURAGEMENT

I find the wording of Goal 3 enlightening. It draws our attention to discouragement about taking action. Helping people discharge discouragement is one of the most useful contributions RC has to make to the care of the environment. Out in the world, people have done some clear thinking about the distresses that cause degradation (such as the effect of capitalism on consumption), but they often have little understanding about how to assist people with feelings of discouragement. Effective public involvement campaigns and charismatic individuals can inspire people by telling stories about the beauty and wonder of the natural world or by calling up righteous indignation about degradation. People have been inspired to overcome discouragement by decision, but decision is only part of the solution.

Powerlessness and discouragement are not quite the same. It looks to me like old powerlessness recordings get in the way of thinking, organizing, and acting, while old discouragement recordings often get restimulated the moment after our thought, or after an action appears not to succeed. Personally, my difficulty is more discouragement than powerlessness. I can often think clearly about something useful to do, but the moment after the thought, my recordings tell me the pseudo-barriers to acting.

Problems and their causes can feel too large and complex to understand. The natural systems involved in climate change are complex and only partly understood, as are the possible policy measures, but to conclude that the situation is beyond understanding must be distress. In our support group I have noticed that people often need to discharge on not knowing what to do more than on not being able to do it. This sometimes presents itself as, “I don’t know where to start.”

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<sup>2</sup> Wystke Visser, the International Commonality Reference Person for the Care of the Environment

Our powerlessness and discouragement recordings also tell us that the problems are too hard to solve. These recordings can get attached to the challenges of confronting economic interests and political systems. We can feel like our taking any step (however small or specific) will lead quickly to the need to confront the whole economic system. Of course, some of the causes of environmental degradation are as big as the consumption imperative of capitalism, but each step toward more rational use of resources is worthwhile, and some remedial actions can start evolutionary changes in capitalism. Often the campaigns that capture the public imagination involve simple actions (consumer boycotts, recycling, eating local food). While the campaign organisers are usually not under any illusion that the solution is that simple, people's powerlessness recordings are contradicted by an action that contributes something.

### FEELINGS OF LOSS

Associated with recordings of powerlessness and discouragement are feelings of loss. These often attach to the loss of a species or to the degradation of a particular favourite place. When I talk to my daughter about the bushland where I played and explored as a child, I feel sad that a particular creek has since been substantially modified by housing, urban stormwater, and a sewage system. Losses of places and species are real, actual hurts in the present, but being paralysed by sadness is distress.

### EXHAUSTION AND BUSYNESS

Many environmental activists, like other activists, carry distresses that can leave them exhausted and busy but not very effective. I've been using the RC world-changers' commitment<sup>3</sup> as a good contradiction<sup>4</sup>—especially the phrase about “well rested, well nourished, and well exercised.”

<sup>3</sup> The world-changers' commitment:

I have chosen to change society, but I also choose to be intelligent in the way I go about it.

The future needs me, well-rested, well-nourished, well-exercised, and well-organized.

The past is useful as a source of information but never as a substitute for my own fresh thinking. Mao (or any more recent leader) respected Marx (or any more previous leader) but did his own fresh thinking. I will respect all past thinkers, but my thinking will necessarily be more brilliant than theirs because I stand on their shoulders.

If I am not enjoying what I am doing, then there is something wrong with how I am doing it and I will correct it.

<sup>4</sup> Contradiction to distress

### RELATIONSHIPS

Successful organisation to reverse environmental degradation will involve alliances of people with differing interests and motivations, for example, people in labour unions and conservationists, or farmers and the consumers who buy their products. A current campaign in Australia for conservation of the Coral Sea has brought together conservationists and veterans. (The Battle of the Coral Sea was a naval conflict during World War II in which many Japanese, Australian, and U.S. military personnel died.)

It will be useful to discharge about people who are not like us. If we rely only on our own group, then everyone will be struggling with similar internalised oppression and we will likely become discouraged. This discharging will also help to eliminate the distresses that contribute to the causes of environmental degradation in the first place—for example, racism and classism.

*Roewen Wishart*

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



NEW YORK CITY, NEW YORK, USA • AMANDA MARTINEZ

## Taking RC to the Tule Lake Pilgrimage

FRIDAY, JULY 2 .....

We are happy to be reporting to you about our United to End Racism (UER) activities at the Tule Lake Pilgrimage. This weekend is the second time UER has been bringing RC to the pilgrimage.<sup>1</sup> It is already clear that the work we did last year has laid a solid foundation on which to build.

The Tule Lake Segregation Center was one of the internment camps formed during World War II, when racist hysteria led the U.S. government to intern 110,000 U.S. residents of Japanese heritage. Two thirds of those interned were U.S. citizens. The Tule Lake internment camp was the largest of the ten camps, holding at its peak eighteen thousand people. It was also designated as a segregation center, where those suspected of being disloyal to the United States were sent.

The UER team is a group of ten RCers, led by Jan Yoshiwara, the International Liberation Reference Person for Japanese-Heritage People. We are largely a group whose lives, and families' lives, have been directly affected by the internment experience. We have discharged on the hurts linked to the internment and are now taking the tools of RC back to our communities and families to help others heal from racism. Eight of our delegates—Jan, Sue Yoshiwara, Keith Osajima, Paul Ehara, Carolyn Kameya, Karen Young, Betsy Hasegawa, and Lois Yoshishige—were on last year's team. This year we are delighted to welcome Gayle Yamauchi-Gleason and Joe Gallagher.

<sup>1</sup> For a report on last year's UER delegation to the Tule Lake Pilgrimage, see pages 57 to 67 of the October 2009 *Present Time*.

Because of the closeness and wisdom we developed last year, this year's preparation went more smoothly, quickly, and easily. We again contacted nearly forty former internees and listened well to their stories. We also developed a pool of non-RC facilitators to help us with the intergenerational discussions.

Like last year, we did several telephone conference calls in which various configurations of the team Co-Counseled. Many of us also set up support groups in our local Areas,<sup>2</sup> which were tremendous contradictions to our patterns of self-reliance and isolation.

<sup>2</sup> An Area is a local RC Community.



AT THE 2010 TULE LAKE PILGRIMAGE • SUEYOSHIWARA

Today we converged at the Oregon Institute of Technology (OIT) where most of the activities will take place. Buses arrived with folks from Seattle and Olympia (Washington), Portland and Eugene (Oregon), and San Jose, San Francisco, Berkeley, and Sacramento (California).

The bus rides, which are several hours long, are a great time to talk with people and make connections. The organizers of the pilgrimage figured this out long ago and make sure that a microphone gets passed around so that everyone shares a little bit about himself or herself. Rest stops and a lunch break offered us UER team members opportunities to reconnect with folks we'd met last year and to develop new relationships.

When we arrived at OIT, we spread out amongst the group of three hundred people. We helped elders find their rooms, moved luggage, and had conversations with many. It was special to make connections with some of the sixty-five Japanese Americans over age eighty who had been incarcerated at Tule Lake and are now at the pilgrimage.

Jan's and Lois' work as members of the Tule Lake Committee has helped to bring RC ideas into the pilgrimage. Acceptance and inclusion and sharing stories with respect were mentioned in the opening meeting, and Jan reported that in another meeting people talked about internalized racism.

During the Welcome Program, Jan again led the entire group of over three hundred participants in a one-minute-each-way mini-session. She explained the value and importance of listening well to each other so that we could share our stories and heal the hurts of the internment, and

she presented information in such a light and relaxed way that people moved easily into sharing time with their neighbor. Perhaps because this was the second year in a row that she had given the brief presentation on how to do a mini-session and people were familiar with the process, many began talking before she could finish what she had to say. After the session the atmosphere in the room was noticeably different. It felt lighter and more connected.

We also did our first listening project this evening, asking folks to talk about “How is the pilgrimage going thus far?” and “What do you hope to get out of the weekend?” This gave us more chances to connect with people and distribute our UER materials.

Anyone who’s taught RC fundamentals, and seen how people take to<sup>3</sup> the theory and watched how it changes their lives for the better, knows how hopeful that can be. There’s also something reassuring about putting RC theory out there in broader settings and watching it take hold in small but noticeable ways—watching the graceful, gradual coming together of RC and the wider world, seeing how people come to understand RC theory from where they’re at, and how as Co-Counselors we meet them there and walk with them. Re-evaluation Counseling and the real world are not separate. Re-evaluation Counseling is a part of the real world.

We’re off to a wonderful start. More to come.

*Keith Osajima*  
Redlands, California, USA  
*Paul Ehara*  
Richmond, California, USA

<sup>3</sup> Take to means respond enthusiastically to.

**SATURDAY, JULY 3** .....

We have come to the end of our second day at the Tule Lake Pilgrimage. It was a full day, starting with mini-sessions before breakfast and ending with minis and highlights near midnight.

On bus rides we listened as people shared stories of their relationship to the internment. Many of us also had long conversations with people about UER and RC. People were excited and interested that RC has tools for and perspectives on healing from racism. We spent hours getting closer to the former internees, giving them a chance to tell their stories. We also helped to bring together intergenerational discussion facilitators with the former-internee resource people assigned to their groups.

Throughout the day the power of appreciation was made clear over and over again. Jan told how appreciating Tule Lake organizers helped to cut through critical tendencies and helped them notice how significant appreciation was for people and how well the pilgrimage was going. A brief contact with a young mother, and the simple words, “It’s clear you’re a great mother, and your child is beautiful,” brought instant tears.

For the evening’s listening project we wrote the question, “What’s been meaningful for you at the pilgrimage?” on a large piece of paper. Then we went up to people and said we would love to hear what they thought. After some initial surprise and embarrassed laughter, they invariably offered

wonderful, thoughtful responses and appreciated the opportunity to reflect on the events of the day.

Tonight we also had the facilitator training for tomorrow’s intergenerational discussion groups. For many people these groups are a highlight of the pilgrimage. Each group consists of about fifteen pilgrims, ages ten to ninety. People in our elder Nisei generation get to remember their incarceration experiences and educate succeeding generations. Many release long-held emotions. Last year the UER team took the main responsibility for organizing the groups, training the facilitators, and leading the discussions. Of the twenty-one groups this year, approximately half will be facilitated by UER delegates and half by thoughtfully selected volunteers from the pilgrimage roster.

Once again Lois Yoshishige explained the purpose of the discussion groups, provided a suggested outline for the groups, and had us share listening time with a partner as we each thought through how we would organize our own group. She modeled the appreciation of self and others by appreciating the Tule Lake Committee as well as asking for appreciations of her own leadership. A few of the non-UER facilitators were moved to emotion as they described how much the discussion groups had meant to them and how honored they felt to be selected as facilitators.

*Gayle Yamauchi-Gleason*  
Santa Cruz, California, USA  
*Keith Osajima*  
*continued . . .*



CONVERTED BARRACK AT THE TULE LAKE SEGREGATION CENTER • KEITH OSAJIMA

## WIDE WORLD CHANGING

... continued

**SUNDAY, JULY 4** .....

We write at the end of another amazing day—our last at the Tule Lake Pilgrimage. We continued to reach out and make human contact with people. We made a habit of fully appreciating those who had worked hard to organize the pilgrimage and the participants who had courageously faced the impact of racism on our community. We reached out to young people and parents who needed a hand,<sup>4</sup> doing impromptu playtime and listening to their struggles.

It is not unusual for Japanese and Okinawans to play this kind of behind-the-scenes role. Racism has left us with the feeling that we must remain invisible. But that distress recording does not have long in this world. Today it was undeniable that our work has been acknowledged as vital and central to the pilgrimage. In the debriefing on the intergenerational discussions, we could hear how RC ideas have been

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<sup>4</sup> A hand means some help.

accepted, adopted, and appreciated. The non-RC facilitators had used dyads effectively to deepen connections and move people's thinking forward.

In the afternoon Jan and Paul led an introduction-to-RC workshop. Twenty-eight people attended. After a five-minute mini-session, Jan and Paul talked about UER, RC, the hurts of racism and internalized racism, and the healing power of respectful listening. Then we did a mini-session on how racism had affected our lives. Following this a Japanese American woman raised her hand and began talking about how she didn't want to have anything to do with being Japanese. Jan then did a demonstration with her. In reflecting on the workshop, Jan remarked on the noticeable difference from last year. As RC tools have been woven through the pilgrimage, people seem more comfortable with doing mini-sessions and eager for a chance to think together with the attention of another human being.

The day ended with cultural performances at a local theater: dance, shorts stories, singing, and brief plays.

As we reflected on the weekend in our closing circle, we realized how fortunate we've been to be a part of such a high-functioning team. The basic theory and practice of RC (and applying them consistently) were all it really took to accomplish what we did. Those of us who were on the team last year noticed how much easier and effortless the work was this year and how much more confident we felt. We could see better the power of integrating RC into our everyday lives. All of us in the delegation had reached beyond what we could imagine for ourselves, because we had the support of the team. We felt proud of the work we had done, proud of being in RC, and confident that we are changing the world.

*Gayle Yamauchi-Gleason  
Keith Osajima*

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

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## The Power of Listening Projects

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I wanted to write about how much I loved and learned from doing a listening project at the Tule Lake Pilgrimage.<sup>1</sup> I've known about listening projects for a long time but had never done one, so it was great to get this new experience.

I joined the Saturday evening listening project team. We set up a table with our UER<sup>2</sup> and RC literature and wrote the question, "What's been meaningful for you at the pilgrimage?" on a large piece of paper. At that point I wasn't quite sure what to do next. Should I wait for people to see the question and come up to us, or take more active steps to make contact? I decided to do the latter. I went up to people whom I'd already had some contact with, greeted them warmly, and said, "Hey, we're just asking people to think about this question. It's part of our UER project." Often people were a bit embarrassed or unsure of what to do, but the chance to think out loud

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<sup>1</sup> See previous article for more information about the Tule Lake Pilgrimage.

<sup>2</sup> United to End Racism

with loving attention proved to be irresistible. Each of the four people I approached gave the question serious thought and appreciated the chance to take a break from the pilgrimage's hectic schedule to reflect on their experience. When they were finished, I invited them to come to our Introduction to RC workshop and gave them some information.

I have often asked people questions and listened to them well, and I've often talked to people about RC, but the listening project produced a powerful combined effect. Having a UER sign and a posted question made my outreach more than an act of individual interest. Instead I was asking people to be part of the United to End Racism project. Their chance to think with attention gave them a real taste of what we do in RC. After their positive experience, it was then easy to hand them a flyer and talk about RC. Now that I've seen the power of a listening project, I'm hoping to use this tool in my RC Community.

*Keith Osajima*  
Redlands, California, USA

## Even More Successful This Year

I am pleased to report on the United to End Racism (UER) project at the 2010 Tule Lake Pilgrimage. [See article on pages 72 to 74 for some background on the Tule Lake Pilgrimage and a list of the Co-Counselors who participated in this year's UER project. The author of this article, Jan Yoshiwara, was the overall leader of the project.]

Given our successes last year, I did not think it was possible to exceed that work, but we did! I am learning that just as we can continue to build, over time, better and closer relationships with individuals, we can also build a closer and more trusting relationship with an organization.

It was so much easier this year to get UER into the program. Rather than flying down to California (USA) to pitch<sup>1</sup> our workshop proposal, I simply sent an e-mail to the Tule Lake Committee. Our workshop was the first one approved for the program.

Because the large-group welcome session was to be reduced to announcements only, the committee was going to eliminate the mini-session we did last year. I called the person in charge of the program and reminded her how valuable it was for the participants to listen to each other, even for a few minutes, and how it set a positive tone for the entire pilgrimage. She agreed and put us back in the program. (It was a big push for me to assert that something I would lead was important enough to get in front of three hundred and thirty people.) This year the participants were so eager to do the mini-session that they started talking to each other before I could say "start," and kept

<sup>1</sup> Pitch means present.



PLAYING TAIKO AT THE 2010 TULE LAKE PILGRIMAGE • KAREN YOUNG

talking after I said "stop." There were big smiles and relaxed faces all over the auditorium.

The Intergenerational Discussion Groups are a valued feature of the pilgrimage. This year the committee assumed that our team would organize them and that Lois Yoshishige would train all the discussion-group facilitators. We didn't have to volunteer. And they listed the training session in the program booklet, even though it affected only twenty-three of the three hundred and thirty people who would be attending the pilgrimage.

Last year we had a literature table off in a corner and hardly anyone talked to us. This year we had a table in the main lounge outside the meeting rooms, with a UER poster, and big signs with daily questions on them like, "What is your relationship to internment camps?" It was a big success. Lots of people talked to us, and some cried.

This year our UER team interviewed fifty elders who were incarcerated at Tule Lake during World War II. We called them before the pilgrimage and listened to their stories of what had happened to them and their families during the war. I know it was one of the principal reasons the Intergenerational Discussion

Groups went so well. The people who were asked to tell their incarceration stories in front of their families and others had already gotten a session from one of us.

A man who works as the senior administrator of the Manzanar Internment Camp loved the facilitator training so much that he asked Keith Osajima to do a workshop for his staff to teach them to listen to the internment camp stories of former prisoners who visit Manzanar. Betsy Hasegawa led a group that included eight members of her extended family, and both her sister and niece came to our UER workshop and signed up for fundamentals classes. At our UER workshop more than half the people who came filled out contact cards indicating that they wanted to pursue learning RC at home. Carolyn Kameya, Gayle Yamauchi-Gleason, and Joe Gallagher will be holding a UER introductory workshop in Japantown<sup>2</sup> in San Jose (California, USA), for people from the bus, and others, who are interested in learning more about RC.

A personal highlight for me was the demonstration I did as part of leading the UER workshop. After

*continued . . .*

<sup>2</sup>Japantowns are geographic hubs for Japanese businesses and community centers in cities with large Japanese-heritage populations.

## WIDE WORLD CHANGING

... continued

I talked about internalized racism, an older woman raised her hand to ask a question. I quickly realized it was an opportunity for a session, so I walked across the room, offered her my hand, and asked her to come up to the front to tell her story. I held her while she talked and cried about being attacked as a young person and how scared she was to show her Japanese heritage. After the workshop she and I hugged every time we saw each other.

Last year I noticed that toward the end of the pilgrimage restimulation was affecting our team's functioning and that many of us went home with a lot of feelings stirred up.

This year we had six discharge conference calls, four in the months before the pilgrimage and two after, and I was able to connect with each member of the team at least once before the pilgrimage.

I wanted us to use this project to challenge ourselves on our visibility, significance, and being pleased with ourselves, so I asked each team member to set up a support group for himself or herself that would meet at least once before the pilgrimage and once after, and to do a report-back to his or her local RC Community. We have been reporting to each other about our support groups and Community

gather-ins. I want us to remember what a big deal this project is, what great things we accomplished, and what an impact we are having on liberation in our Communities.

Thank you for the opportunity to lead; stretch myself; challenge my old, inaccurate views of what's possible; and show how much I love people. It has made a big difference in my life and my leadership.

With love and appreciation,

Jan Yoshiwara  
International Liberation Reference Person  
for Japanese-Heritage People  
Olympia, Washington, USA

## The Internment Experience Has Affected Us All

In my Intergenerational Discussion Group,<sup>1</sup> the two people who had camp experience were an eighty-nine-year-old man who was partially deaf and a seventy-seven-year-old woman. The group also included five young people, ages six to thirteen. I was determined to come up with<sup>2</sup> a format that would include everyone, and I used everything I knew about young people and play. I was also careful to pick games that people with limited hearing and mobility could play.

I had people introduce themselves and say who they came with, their age, and something they liked about being their age. Then we played a group game called "Gotcha," in which people try to capture their neighbor's finger while also trying to not get caught. That quickly got us laughing. Then we played a game in which we lined up in a circle, without talking, in age order, after which I paired people up with people of different ages and told each pair to write down four questions they would like to ask someone in camp. (Unfortunately at that point the eighty-nine-year-old man announced that he had to leave and got sick and threw up.<sup>3</sup> The pilgrimage brings up heavy feelings for people.)

We then came together, and each question was folded up and put into a bowl. Everyone got to take a turn pulling out a question and asking it. The seventy-seven-year-old woman had felt like she had nothing to say (which is how many women feel when asked about their camp experience), and the direct

questions helped her to share her stories. The young people liked taking turns asking questions.

After a break I separated us into a youth group and an adult group to prepare for a speak-out. (I went with the youth.) In each group people answered the following questions: What do you like about being your age and Japanese? What's hard about being your age and Japanese? How do you think the internment experience affected your generation? What are five slang terms that you think the other age group won't know? They also worked on a skit that would represent issues of their generation.

When we got back into the big group, I talked about how racism and the internment experience had affected all of us, not just people who were in the camps, and gave each group time to speak out. The adults talked about what it was like to know that their parents had lived through camp and to not know how to get them to talk about it. The young people talked about racism and young people's oppression. People also talked about how their families weren't close and struggled. The young people did a skit (the adults opted out), and in the end each group tried to guess the meaning of the slang words the other generation had come up with, which made people laugh. Then we appreciated each other and talked about what we had liked about being together.

I was pleased that everyone had good attention for the others and that we were able to make room for the young people while also respecting the elders.

Karen Young  
Jamaica Plain, Massachusetts, USA

<sup>1</sup> See article on pages 72 to 74 for more information about the Tule Lake Pilgrimage and the Intergenerational Discussion Groups held there.

<sup>2</sup> Come up with means think of.

<sup>3</sup> Threw up means vomited.

## An Ally at Tule Lake

Dear Jan,<sup>1</sup>

I have to start by writing this report as if it were a letter to you. Otherwise I get lost in the uncertainties of who I'm writing to and why I'm writing.

The Tule Lake Pilgrimage was a big deal for me. From the pre-pilgrimage workshop at Carolyn Kameya's house to the final mini-session, I had a lot of different experiences and thoughts. I'll group them into three different categories: (1) Things I learned about the internment and its effects on Japanese Americans. (2) Things I noticed about the pilgrimage and the people who attended. (3) My reactions and thoughts, as a white man of Irish heritage, as a result of going on the pilgrimage. I think the rest of you are all in a better spot to write about the impact of United to End Racism on the pilgrimage.

1) Growing up on the East Coast (USA), I had heard a little about the internment. My best guess is I learned about it at high-school age, either at school or at home. Several people asked me where or when I heard about the internment, since it is often not taught about in schools now.

Since I've lived in Watsonville (California, USA), I have had opportunities to meet men who were in the 442<sup>2</sup> and have heard a little bit about people from Watsonville being sent to an Assembly Center in Salinas (California, USA) and then to the camp at Poston, Arizona (USA). At the pilgrimage, I learned that the conditions at the Assembly Centers were pretty<sup>3</sup> awful. In Salinas the rodeo grounds were converted to house people. As a result, people lived in horse stalls for three months or more while the camps were being built. The camp at Poston was way out in the desert where daytime temperatures were as high as 115 (Fahrenheit). Someone referred to the Poston camp as "Roastin"<sup>4</sup> in Poston."

I learned that the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) administered the camps. I knew the BIA had an appalling record in their dealings with Native Americans, and I doubted it was any better with the internees. I also learned that the army, FBI,<sup>5</sup> and border patrol all played a part in the imprisonment of U.S. citizens of Japanese heritage in the camps.

In the days before going to Tule Lake, I learned about the loyalty oath and about people being deemed disloyal to the United States and being sent to Tule Lake, as it was a segregation center not just an internment

*continued . . .*

<sup>1</sup> Jan Yoshiwara, the International Liberation Reference Person for Japanese-Heritage People and the leader of the United to End Racism delegation to the Tule Lake Pilgrimage

<sup>2</sup> The 442 is the 442nd Regimental Combat Team of the United States Army, an Asian American unit composed of mostly Japanese Americans who fought in Europe during World War II. The families of many of its soldiers were subject to internment. The 442nd was a self-sufficient fighting force and fought with uncommon distinction in Italy, southern France, and Germany. It became the most highly decorated regiment in the history of the United States Armed Forces and included twenty-one Medal of Honor recipients.

<sup>3</sup> Pretty means quite.

<sup>4</sup> Roastin' means roasting.

<sup>5</sup> Federal Bureau of Investigation, a U.S. agency that serves as both a federal criminal investigative body and an internal intelligence agency



AT THE 2010 TULE LAKE PILGRIMAGE • KEITH OSAJIMA

## WIDE WORLD CHANGING

... continued

camp. The loyalty oath posed questions that were “lose-lose.” No matter how you answered the questions, or even if you didn’t answer them, they made life worse. One of the people I interviewed as part of helping to organize the intergenerational discussion groups said that life in camp got much harder after the loyalty oath in 1943.

I was shocked at how families were torn apart. I heard several stories about how many people’s fathers were taken away by men in dark suits on December 8<sup>th</sup> (1941). Japanese American men who were even minor leaders in the Japanese American communities on the U.S. West Coast and in Hawaii were arrested, soon after December 7<sup>th</sup>, without any charges being brought. Several people talked about how they didn’t see their dad again for a couple of years.

I was dumbfounded when I heard that the U.S. government kidnapped people of Japanese heritage from countries in Central and South America and used them in hostage exchanges to trade for non-Japanese USers who were stuck in Japan when the war broke out.

There were many other stories of harsh conditions in camp; mistreatment by guards, soldiers, and police; the disruption of families; and the loss of nearly all people’s property and possessions.

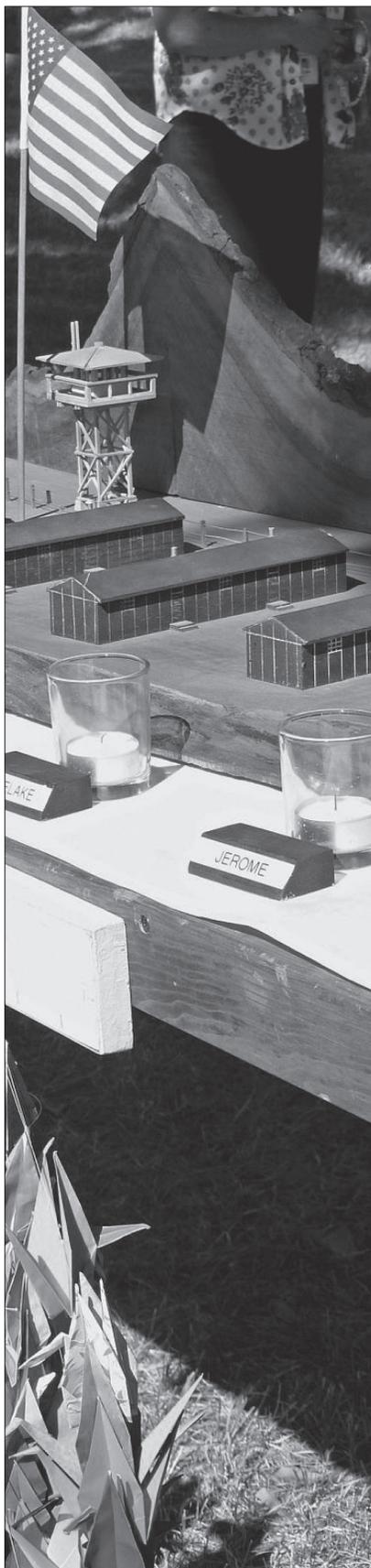
I ate several meals with older couples who had been in camp. I often asked how they started over when they got home again. Most answered simply, “You just did.” When the camps closed, people got twenty-five dollars and a bus or train ticket to where they wanted to go. Most had lost their homes and all their property. Some people’s property had been protected by friends or neighbors, but even these people had a hard time starting over. One woman told me that there were so many people living in her house after the war, she was sent to live at a church. As I listened to these couples, it sounded like it took ten years or more for them to get their feet back on the ground and put their families back together, as far as that was possible.

2) I have thought Co-Counseling events were well-organized, but this pilgrimage was at least as well-organized. Five or six busloads of people traveled from Washington, Oregon, and California. I was on a bus from San Jose (California), and the buses from California all stopped at a Protestant church in Redding for lunch. En route we watched videos about the internment and took turns introducing ourselves and telling a bit about why we were on the pilgrimage.

On our bus, the bus driver got introduced. Many people remembered him from the last pilgrimage and said hello. There seemed to be a near absence of hierarchy among the people on the bus. People interacted with an ease that I don’t see in many places. Even the major leaders of the pilgrimage were referred to by first name—Jimmy, Roy, Yoshi—and were all approachable.

There were lots of older couples everywhere I looked. They had relationships that looked alive. Many women seemed task oriented or busy with the details of what they were doing next. They seemed to direct their husbands actively but not in a bossy way. The men seemed to accept the direction without obvious annoyance.





AT THE 2010 TULE LAKE PILGRIMAGE • SUEYOSHIWARA

I hadn't known what to expect, but I was surprised to see people be a bit flamboyant. That older man who sang at the show on Saturday night stood out in the white cowboy hat he wore all the time. The older women who started the dancing showed how much they loved it. I was also surprised at how much people teased each other, but I thought it was all kind hearted and gentle. This group of people looked like an intact community to me. People really seemed to care deeply about each other.

3) Restimulation tugged at me much of the time. I don't think I got sunk, but the water level was at least moderate all the time. As a contradiction to my shy stuff, I like the leader role. As an ally and support person, I was in unfamiliar territory. I came away from the pilgrimage unsure whether I had actually been much help. I was able to support Lois, Paul, and you at the designated times. I tried to show up<sup>6</sup> as a support person when I could figure out where and when it might help.

As the weekend went along, I noticed that I got quieter. I saw it as a sign that I was getting more restimulated and therefore not doing my job. What actually happened as a result of my being quiet was that people that I had met on the bus or elsewhere started to approach me and strike up<sup>7</sup> conversations. That made me laugh, or at least smile a lot.

Being in a non-white group, I noticed how loud and obnoxious the few white people seemed to me. I myself felt crass. More than a few times, pretty good jokes or wisecracks<sup>8</sup> of mine didn't work. I'd be having an easy conversation with someone; then I'd make what I thought was a pretty good joke and the person would politely turn to someone else and start a new conversation. It was almost as if a gong had sounded as a result of my failed joke. I tried to think about the things that I find funny, and the common threads seem to be irony and sarcasm. I'm not sure if they didn't translate well into Japanese American culture, but I sure laid an egg<sup>9</sup> a few times.

Much of what I remembered during the pilgrimage was about my own Irish heritage. Specifically, I thought a lot about my family's immigrant experience, my own growing up Irish Catholic in Philadelphia (Pennsylvania, USA) in the 1950s, and recent things I've read about Irish history. I also thought about other immigrant stories and other liberation struggles that I know about. The summary thoughts I had were about the difficulties that our peoples have endured and the resilience, kindness, and goodness of human beings.

*Joe Gallagher*

Watsonville, California, USA

Reprinted from the e-mail discussion list for RC  
Community members involved in eliminating racism

<sup>6</sup> Show up means appear.

<sup>7</sup> Strike up means start.

<sup>8</sup> A wisecrack is a clever or sarcastic remark.

<sup>9</sup> Laid an egg means failed.



WYTSKE VISSER

## Fifth Graders Learn About Civil Rights

Hi dear Tim,<sup>1</sup>

Thank you for your help with my thinking about my work as a classroom teacher. I am managing to work fewer hours—at times I decide to do a less “perfect” job. The ever-present mountain of work gnaws at me, but I am setting some limits on the number of hours I work, as you and I talked about.

I have been teaching my fifth-grade students about the history of the U.S. Civil Rights Movement. I have conducted each day’s class basically as an introductory RC class, with mini-sessions, information about the nature of human beings, information about racism, and so on.

I cried despite myself<sup>2</sup> when I told them that I planned to work with others to end racism in my lifetime. I have briefly described the oppressive system behind racism, slavery, and genocide and talked about how good all people are. They have been reading, creating timelines, and talking and writing about the people and the issues. We have read together about the long struggle for racial integration in the United States, including the

<sup>1</sup> Tim Jackins

<sup>2</sup> Despite myself means even though I tried not to.

stories of Ruby Bridges,<sup>3</sup> Rosa Parks,<sup>4</sup> Jackie Robinson,<sup>5</sup> Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.,<sup>6</sup> and Brown versus Board of Education.<sup>7</sup> My friend, whose grandparents were held in slavery and whose parents were sharecroppers in rural Texas (USA), and who helped desegregate the military, came as a guest speaker.

Yesterday we finished reading a wonderful novel that had us laughing and crying together. At the end it described the 1963 bombing of the church in Birmingham (Alabama, USA) in which girls about the students’ age were killed, and we had quite a discussion.

<sup>3</sup> Ruby Bridges was the first African American child to attend an all-white school in the South (the states in the United States that seceded from the union prior to the U.S. Civil War).

<sup>4</sup> Rosa Parks was an African American civil rights activist who in 1955, in Montgomery, Alabama, USA, defied the law of that time and refused to give up her seat on the bus to make room for a white passenger, sparking the Montgomery Bus Boycott.

<sup>5</sup> Jackie Robinson was the first African American Major League Baseball player of the modern era.

<sup>6</sup> Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., was a major leader of the U.S. Civil Rights Movement.

<sup>7</sup> Brown versus Board of Education was a landmark decision of the United States Supreme Court that declared unconstitutional state laws that required separate public schools for black and white students and denied black children equal educational opportunities.

Students are coming forward to have sessions with me. One said that she is African American but that she doesn’t tell people. Now she is talking and writing stories about it. An autistic African American boy has started talking in class for the first time. The students ask many penetrating questions. Yesterday they asked me about my family and my family’s racism, and I cried again, talking about how important ending racism is.

I am asking them to write about what all this has to do with power. (Clearly, studying this subject is releasing *their* power.) I am moved by the unity among this diverse group that studying this subject together has brought—it is tangible. They were astounded that just sixty years ago they could not, by law, have been in the same school together. They are now beginning to feel safe enough to talk openly about the racial issues within their class. It is all very hopeful.

Tim, I keep you with me as I lead them. I can picture you and hear you inside my head. Thank you for your ongoing clarity about uniting to end racism being the highest priority. I look forward to seeing you next week at the Raised-Poor Leaders’ Workshop.

*Gail Mandella*  
Berkeley, California, USA



PAT GREGORY

## To Peace Activists

*(Harvey, speaking to peace activists):* The economic crisis is creating enormous opportunities. Everybody is in trouble. *Everybody*. The collapsing society is collapsing on the necks of a large number of people, not just the hopelessly discouraged permanent poor, who are supposedly trained to just die quietly. The damage is reaching all sections of the population. Peace activists, I think, starting from their key issues, must tie peace into all the other places people are hurting.

*Harvey Jackins*  
From “A Favorable Situation for Reaching Out,”  
on page 115 of *Start Over Every Morning*

## The Economic Crisis

*How is the worldwide economic crisis affecting you, and what are you doing about it? How is Co-Counseling helping? What do you work on in sessions that helps?*

In some ways things are going okay for me economically. I'm employed as a nursing assistant, and my housemate just found a new factory job after almost two years of unemployment. On the other hand, there's always the concern that things could change quickly. We've had lay-offs at the hospital, even though health care is supposed to be a relatively secure part of the economy. The stress of my job continually increases as more work is assigned to fewer people. The restimulation has been so intense at times that I often go to work telling myself that I can quit that day if I can't tolerate the conditions anymore (though I don't know where I would find better conditions). People close to me have financial problems due to lack of employment, and I have had to figure out how much I can help and still take care of myself.

My regular Co-Counselor also works in health care, and we do daily short sessions on the phone and in person, often before going to work. It's interesting and somehow a contradiction to my distress to notice how similar the issues are, even though we work in different hospitals. I work on all the hard things that happen every day and on not blaming myself, not having to be a perfect worker under capitalism, and so on. I also remember the positive responses I get from people around me as I make efforts to be human. I work a lot on early memories, fear, my birth, and closeness with people. These sessions and others keep me going.

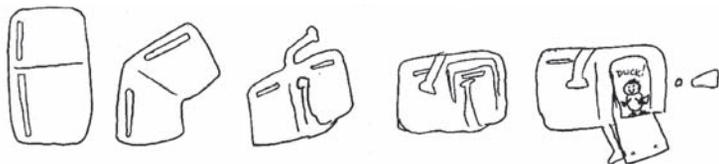
I also communicate important ideas and encourage people who are helping to spread them. My close friends have grown a lot in their awareness about liberation and are sharing good thinking in many diverse communities in Los Angeles (California, USA).

It helps to know we are all in this together.

*Victor Nicassio*

Los Angeles, California, USA

Reprinted from the RC e-mail discussion list for leaders of working-class people



REFRIGERATOR TRANSFORMS INTO DUCK • AMANDA MARTINEZ

★ **STOP!** ★

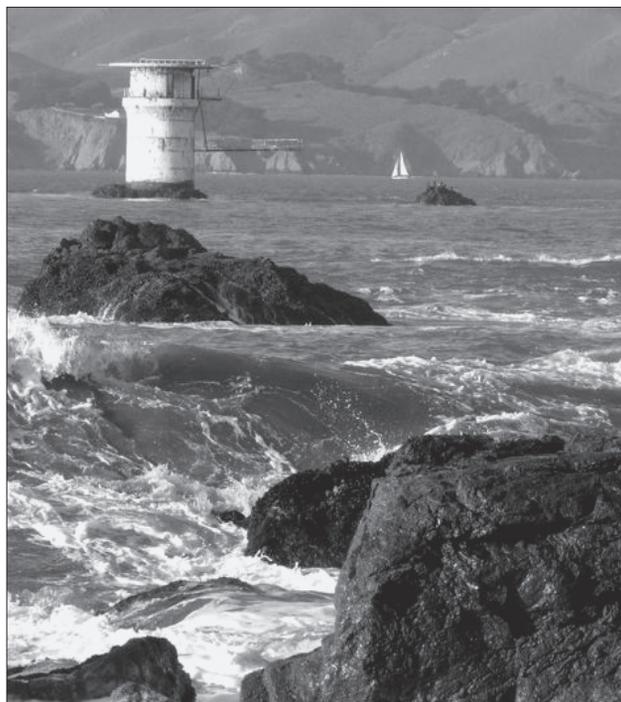
**GO! NOW!**  
to the lists in the back of this *Present Time*.

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

**LET US KNOW!**  
if you find any inaccuracies.

**SEND!**  
e-mail corrections to <publications@rc.org>  
or mail them to Rational Island Publishers,  
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SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA, USA • GREGG WAGNER

## “Mission Accomplished”

Last week I attended a highly respected seven-day national playwrights’ conference. Its purpose was to showcase new plays and for playwrights to network with and get feedback on their work from other well-respected playwrights. I submitted a play last spring and was thrilled to be accepted.

Starting from my acceptance, I had to fight male domination and sexism. The first battle was with my husband. I am the mother of two-year-old twins. I am the main caretaker while also teaching and writing. As proud as my husband was that my play was chosen out of over five hundred scripts, he immediately started clienting. “What was he going to do without me?” I told him we had plenty of time to set up ample support to accommodate his work and our children’s needs. He asked his mother and my mother for support and increased our baby-sitter’s hours, and at the airport he hugged me and said, “Go, and remember who you are as a woman and an artist. Have fun. We will be fine!”

To counteract women’s and mothers’ oppression, I included in my biography for the program that I was a mother of two-year-old twins. Women in my profession are often told to hide the fact that they are mothers, in order to appear to be more serious artists.

When I arrived at the conference, I noticed that only two out of the twelve evaluators were women. That meant that men would evaluate most of the plays by women. The play I had written was a two-woman show and was immediately labeled a “chick play,”<sup>1</sup> although it deals with universal struggles. And, sure

<sup>1</sup> “Chick play” means women’s play. (Chick is sexist slang for woman.)



SILVER FALLS STATE PARK, OREGON, USA • LANCE CABLK

enough, I was evaluated by two men, both ten years younger than I am. During my critique the men in the audience kept saying that my play was a women’s play because it dealt with parenthood, birth, and death. I calmly explained that so often women’s work gets marginalized when, in fact, we all come from mothers. Immediately after my play came a two-man show that dealt with video games and making a new kind of potato chip, and themes of objectifying women. The critics never said anything about it being a man’s play.

I decided to get busy. At lunch I had a long conversation with another woman and asked if she’d noticed the lack of women evaluators, and other sexism, at the conference. Indeed she had! So I had my first ally. Both of us were gregarious and forthcoming in our objections to the marginalization of women’s work.

The next day an elderly Gay man who was attending the conference came up to me and proclaimed how much he enjoyed my work and how I should meet another male playwright whose work was of the same caliber. So I met this other man. His script had powerful women characters, and I complimented him on his choices and thanked him for creating parts

for multi-dimensional women. I had another ally. I also attended all the plays I could by women playwrights, supporting each woman for her vision and art, and brought up sexism whenever I could. I started backing<sup>2</sup> the young-adult women playwrights. I was outspoken and often challenged the men at the conference when I felt they were being unfair.

Then an interesting thing happened: I didn’t have to speak up as much. My male colleague starting challenging his other male colleagues about the roles they had created for women. The other women playwrights started speaking out against sexism. And the young adults were constantly telling me how grateful they were that I had put in my biography that I am a mother. They wanted to know that they didn’t have to choose between being an artist and being a mom. I told them, “There are no limits! You just need to get support.”

I had a blast.<sup>3</sup> I had my own girl posse<sup>4</sup> at every meal.

Then at the end of the conference I got a chance to speak to one of the coordinators. He asked me what I had liked about the conference and what I would change. I told him I had loved the opportunity he’d created for playwrights but that as a woman I wanted to have more of the evaluators be women. He said, “You know, I’ve been hearing that a lot from other people, too. I will do something about it next year.”

Mission accomplished.

*Jennifer Berry*

Glendale, California, USA

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

<sup>2</sup> Backing means supporting.

<sup>3</sup> A blast means a wonderful time.

<sup>4</sup> A posse is a large group with a common interest.

## A Sermon on Racism

LK

This past fall I taught a class at my church on racism. Then during the winter I began to think that I might want to say more, in a sermon. I asked my clergyman if a member of the church could give a sermon and told him what I had in mind. He asked me to write it out and send it to him, which I did. He liked it but said that it had to be shorter and refer to some Holy Scripture, so I found a story from the Hebrew Bible (what Christians call the Old Testament) and one from the New Testament. The Hebrew Bible story is from the book of Daniel. It tells of three Jewish leaders named Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego who refuse to bow down to the king's golden idol, even when they are threatened with certain death. They are thrown in a furnace but survive without even smelling like smoke! It's a great story. The New Testament reference was to Jesus teaching people to pray to God, "Thy will be done on Earth as it is in Heaven."

The congregation consists mostly of European-heritage people, but there are a number of people of African, Asian, and Native American heritage, too. I set out<sup>1</sup> to say something that would not make people feel guilty but would still challenge them to work toward ending racism.

I started by saying that as babies we were born in God's image but that we "fell into a sinful world" and that racism was a big part of the "sinfulness." I said that this "fall" had hurt us all—had undermined our hearts, minds, and spirits. I described how our hearts were made for getting close and making connections, our minds for making sense of things and understanding people, and our spirits for imagining Heaven on Earth. I described in harsh terms the reality of racism today, using language from Tim's pamphlet.<sup>2</sup> Then I repeated how racism had broken our hearts, confused our minds, and crushed our spirits—had invited us to bow down to golden idols of separation, confusion, and despair. I said that, like Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, we could refuse to bow down.

I outlined several practical things we could do to go after<sup>3</sup> connection with people like ourselves and people who seemed different from us, ways we could learn and understand more about people who seemed different, and ways to interrupt the spreading of confusion and hate. Then I said that we could simply decide to follow Jesus' instruction to pray for Heaven on Earth as a way not to bow down to despair. I said that I thought that Jesus wanted us to expect Heaven on Earth with all our energy. I dared people to imagine an end to racism in this century; an end to hunger,

poverty, ignorance, conflict, and war. I used Julian Weissglass<sup>4</sup> idea of asking people questions about the possibility of ending race problems or war as a way to get them thinking beyond their current hopelessness. Then I tried to provide as many signs of hope as I could and listed a lot of hopeful and unexpected things that had happened in recent history.

I ended by saying that we could trust the deepest longings of our own hearts for closeness with all people, that we had no idea how many people our hearts could take in. That we could trust the deepest longings of our own minds, that we had no idea how much we could understand about the people of this world. And that we could trust the deepest longings of our own spirits to hope for, speak out for, and lead others toward Heaven on Earth, that we had no idea how much hope we could inspire in others.

My son, who never attends church, was kind enough to attend my sermon and has told me three times this week what a great message it contained. One of the African-heritage women in our church, a woman who upholds high standards for everything, took time to thank me, and a man who looked quite surprised to hear that I was giving a sermon (I suspect a bit of sexism and ageism) has asked if he could have a copy of it.

We in RC know so much that the world wants to hear. Many of us could do something like I did, in our religious or organizational settings. When I speak in public, I try to think like a good counselor. If I am presenting a difficult challenge, then I have to present lots of contradictions to old distress. I probably practiced my sermon twenty-five times, listening to it over and over again on the tape recorder, to get my tone of voice right. I think it came close.

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

<sup>4</sup> Julian Weissglass is the International Commonality Reference Person for Wide World Change.



WINTER IN FRYSLÂN, THE NETHERLANDS • ANNIE HOEKSTRA

<sup>1</sup> In this context, set out means planned.

<sup>2</sup> *Working Together to End Racism*, by Tim Jackins and others

<sup>3</sup> In this context, go after means pursue.

# Appreciating PRESENT TIME

It is always a treat, a gift, a pleasure, to receive PRESENT TIME. I eagerly wait every three months to read it. I appreciate the articles and artwork and the putting it all together, on time!



*María Lorena Cuéllar Barandiarán*  
San Salvador, El Salvador

Thank you for the copy of the July 2010 PRESENT TIME. It's very nice!



*Kamal Bishara*  
Yafia, Israel

Hey PRESENT TIME,

I want to thoroughly appreciate the excerpts of letters from Harvey.<sup>1</sup> They are nice bite-sized morsels with a big impact. I never met Harvey, so it's a pleasure to get to know him.



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

I am just taking a break from reading PRESENT TIME cover to cover and am thrilled with it all. Tim Jackins' article "Human Connections, and Sex" explains and expands RC theory in a way that I find really helpful. We read some of it aloud in our Area<sup>2</sup> class this week and discharged along the way. It was a great way to learn.



*Fio Adamson*  
London, England

I always love PRESENT TIME, but in July's issue I particularly appreciated all the wonderful poems. They moved me, inspired me, and made me cry. Poets, I thank you. More please!



*Julia Cameron*  
London, England

Thank you for PRESENT TIME. I just got my entire fundamentals class to subscribe last night.



*Karen Young*  
Jamaica Plain, Massachusetts, USA

A huge appreciation for making PRESENT TIME available to all of us.



*Elaine Clément*  
Lafayette, Louisiana, USA

<sup>1</sup> Harvey Jackins

<sup>2</sup> An Area is a local RC Community.



JP

The new Teachers' Packet<sup>3</sup> and the July PRESENT TIME are wonderful.



JO PERRY



LK

*Margie Doyle Papadopoulou*  
Kantza, Greece

We appreciate the wonderful work you are doing by giving us a voice and connecting us with other RCers.



LK

*Wanjiku Kironyo*  
Nairobi, Kenya

PRESENT TIME is one of the many books, journals, and pamphlets published by Rational Island Publishers that are a dependable reminder of the nature of our amazing project called Re-evaluation Counselling. It connects us here in Australia to the International RC Communities around the world, which makes it a powerful resource against the confusing, addictive pull of patterns. Reading it helps me to keep discharging based on the benign reality and to remember that heading for my full humanity means fighting the oppressive society. It is a mighty force sent through the mail every three months.



*Anne Barton*  
Melbourne, Victoria, Australia

I have found the July PRESENT TIME to be incredibly useful in recent Co-Counseling sessions.



LK

*Dorothy Lorig*  
Aruada, Colorado, USA

In the last PRESENT TIME Tim Jackins' article "Human Connections, and Sex" and Diane Shisk's articles on the women's and men's workshops she led with Steve Thompson are fabulous. What marvelous resources. I've read them half a dozen times to try and soak them in on a cellular level. And the overall quality of PRESENT TIME and the new journals is incredible—fresh thinking, vital policy, insights, personal stories.

The RC publications are stunningly good. I just watched the Emmys,<sup>4</sup> and I feel like the nominees who say, "I'm just proud to be in this category."



KK

*Joanne Bray*  
Greenwich, Connecticut, USA



JP

<sup>3</sup> When Rational Island Publishers has produced a number of new pieces of RC literature, a Teachers' Packet containing a copy of each piece is sent out to every RC teacher.

<sup>4</sup> The Emmy Award, often referred to simply as the Emmy, is a television production award and is considered the television equivalent of the Academy Awards (for films), the Grammy Awards (for music), and the Tony Awards (for stage productions).

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# Re-evaluation Counseling

Re-evaluation Counseling is a process whereby people of all ages and of all backgrounds can learn how to exchange effective help with each other in order to free themselves from the effects of past distress experiences.

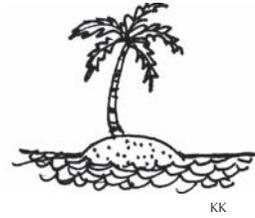
Re-evaluation Counseling theory provides a model of what a human being can be like in the area of his/her interaction with other human beings and his/her environment. The theory assumes that everyone is born with tremendous intellectual potential, natural zest, and lovingness, but that these qualities have become blocked and obscured in adults as the result of accumulated distress experiences (fear, hurt, loss, pain, anger, embarrassment, etc.) which begin early in our lives.

Any young person would recover from such distress spontaneously by use of the natural process of emotional discharge (crying, trembling, raging, laughing, etc.). However, this natural process is usually interfered with by well-meaning people ("Don't cry," "Be a big boy," etc.) who erroneously equate the emotional discharge (the healing of the hurt) with the hurt itself.

When adequate emotional discharge can take place, the person is freed from the rigid pattern of behavior and feeling left by the hurt. The basic loving, cooperative, intelligent, and zestful nature is then free to operate. Such a person will tend to be more effective in looking out for his or her own interests and the interests of others, and will be more capable of acting successfully against injustice.

In recovering and using the natural discharge process, two people take turns counseling and being counseled. The one acting as the counselor listens, draws the other out, and permits, encourages, and assists emotional discharge. The one acting as client talks and discharges and re-evaluates. With experience and increased confidence and trust in each other, the process works better and better.

For more information, you can go to the web site: <http://www.rc.org/>.



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