

We will see the end of the oppression of humans by distress patterns, whether the distresses are ours, or are frozen in our societies. We will settle for nothing less.

Tim Jackins

In this first *Present Time* of 2011, you'll find lots of useful thinking—about affection, love, and sex; overcoming early defeats; counseling veterans; Jewish liberation and Israel; racism and family work; oppressor patterns; global warming; and much more.

We'd like to include your thoughts and experiences in future issues! For the April *Present Time*, please send us articles and poetry by Tuesday, February 22, and changes to the back-pages lists by Monday, February 28.

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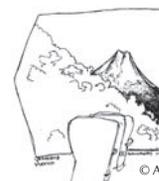
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APPRECIATIONS

Layout: Amanda Martinez

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Editing: Lisa Kauffman, Katie Kauffman

Proofreading, shipping, and other help: Lorena Cuéllar Barandiarán, Jesse Braxton, Alisa Lemire Brooks, Hugh Geenen, Yuko Hibino, Mary Hodgson, Susan Hutchison, Gordon Jackins, Tim Jackins, Truus Jansen, Valerie Jaworski, Katie Kauffman, Lisa Kauffman, Sooja Kelsey, Amanda Martinez, Sandra McDonald, Micaela Morse, Victor Nicassio, Marion Ouphouet, Gale Picker, Ellie Putnam, Jayne Schauer, Diane Shisk, Karen Slaney, Dvora Slavin, Steve Thompson

Cover photo: © Brian Townsend

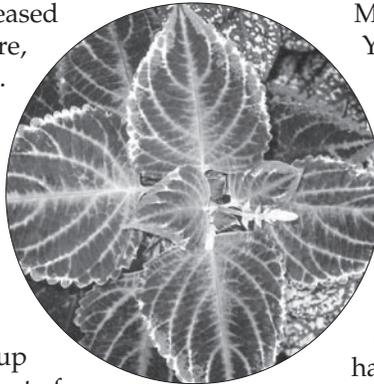
Art and photography: Anne Barton, Barbara Boring, Alisa Lemire Brooks, Roslyn Cassidy, Jana Christopher, Theresa D'Amato, Tressa Diaz, Sue Edwards, Alison Ehara-Brown, Edward Elbers, Julie Anne Forgione, Aaron Galloway, Jo Anne Garrett, Debby Glickman, Pat Gregory, Barbara Harwood, Marti Haymaker, Soren Holm, Bill Horne, Angela Hyland, Kingsley Ibekwe, Quin Jackins, Tim Jackins, Sara Kallai, Yoni Kallai, Lyndall Katz, Katie Kauffman, Lisa Kauffman, Bill Keegan, Mary Klausen, Nancy Lemon, Amanda Martinez, Xabi Odriozola, Marion Ouphouet, Jo Perry, Ellie Putnam, Laurie Rhodes, Phyllis Rose, Kelley Rowe, Samantha Sanderson, Jayne Schauer, Debbie Schmieding, Diane Shisk, Lynne Shivers, Alan Sprung, Steve Thompson, Brian Townsend, Wytse Visser, Lisa Voss, Julia Watt-Rosenfeld, Susanna Witte

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

Overcoming Early Defeats and Discouragement

*A talk by Tim Jackins¹ at the Teachers' and Leaders' Workshop
in The Netherlands in September 2010*

I'm pleased to be back again. I'm pleased to see a lot of people I've seen before, and it's nice that you've added more. The Community here looks good, and, as you know, that doesn't come automatically. It means that you've done work both for yourself and for other people—enough work reaching out that people have been able to stay.



MARTI HAYMAKER

It is difficult for anyone who grows up in our society to feel that he or she is part of something. All of the pressures of society are to split us up into smaller and smaller groups. Often the largest collection of people you're allowed to work for is your family. In this society you're supposed to be working for yourself. So anytime you can get people to come back to an RC fundamentals class the second week, it's a major triumph. If half of them get through the full fundamentals class, that's good. And if a quarter of them take the next class, that's quite good. You've seen the attrition happen around you for years. But you've managed to stay, and you've managed to reach for people effectively enough that some of them could stay with you. Often people feel like they should have done better. "I should've kept everyone in my fundamentals class. They are all good people, and they went away." We've tended to blame ourselves instead of trying to understand what's happening. What's happening is that all of the forces in society are pushing these people to be alone. When they're in class, they look at us and they know that things could be different. Then they go home, and they become doubtful. And if their Co-Counselor cancels a session, they may not be able to figure out what to do. A lot of people do nothing. And we feel so hurt about them that we do nothing, too.

One of the myths of our society is that people make their own decisions. If you don't understand distresses, you believe that. But we know that as long as we carry all these distresses, we are almost never able to use our minds and make our own decisions, because the distresses interfere. We follow the feelings of our distresses a large part of the time.

Most people feel like nobody wants them. You feel that way, don't you? Come on, be honest. Raise your hand if you feel that way. Look around. It's not just you. Remember this. If it's like this for everyone, it can't be your fault, and it can't be an accident. It has to be part of what happens to everyone. Once you understand this, you see why people can't come back. You have offered them the best thing they'll ever have to make their lives better, and they can't come back. That's a strange situation.

They like you. They don't argue with you. They think you're right. They just can't figure out how to go against their distresses. And we haven't been able to give them enough resource, quickly enough, to keep them coming back.

EVERYONE FEELS DISCOURAGED

Each of us who has taught fundamentals has hundreds, maybe thousands, of people who like us but who never came back. They like us, and they hope we're successful, and they hope RC works. They're just hopeless about themselves. You have that same distress material. You just know how to keep going. You are the people who don't know how to give up; you have that set of patterns. You know how to lean into the wind, and you do it all the time—even if there's no wind. It does work better than giving up, but it doesn't mean that you're not hurt. You've just been able to go further because of that particular pattern.

What you have to realize is that you may have gone about as far as you can. On the basis of the pattern, you've gone almost as far as you can. You've gone this far (*gesture*), and your pattern's leash is this long (*gesture*), which means that you're going to have to look at the distress and not just try hard all your life. You are going to have to look at where you are discouraged all the time and you just keep going. You try to look happy, but it's not terribly convincing—although you look better than almost everyone, because you've been able to discharge a lot of your distress and more of you shows through. You've known some of us for ten, twenty, thirty years. You've seen us change in great,

continued . . .

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

COUNSELING PRACTICE

... continued

important ways. You also see some things about us that haven't changed. Some of our patterns look just like they did twenty years ago.

We've given up on other people, and we've given up on ourselves. Back when we got those hurts, it was too much for us. The conditions didn't allow us to triumph. No one understood children, or being in human contact. All of the adults were carrying the results of their own hurts and oppressions. All of them had been badly mistreated in their own childhoods. It wasn't something we could have changed. We had to lose. Those were the conditions. We do sometimes lose. We get defeated by circumstances. Getting defeated wouldn't have been so bad if we could have discharged on it, but we weren't allowed to do that, so the feelings of defeat got heavier and heavier and heavier.

We've been unable to get rid of them. And, as with any distresses, if we can't get rid of them, we get confused about them, and so the feelings go on forever. We not only feel we were defeated, we feel we *are* defeated, and we act like we are. Very successful people, including you, feel defeated.

The feelings of defeat keep us from trying many things and stop our efforts quickly. They're like our feelings of discouragement. We have lots of recorded feelings of discouragement. Most of us are chronically discouraged. We wake up feeling discouraged. Somehow we get started on the day, but not happily. We may know how to keep moving, but the feelings of discouragement are holding us back all the time.



You are the ones who have not been stopped by discouragement. You know people who have. They show it all the time. You don't like being with them; they're simply too restimulating. If you're here, you've learned how to go against feeling discouraged. You know how to keep trying and to look positive for other people. But you probably still have all that discouragement.

We have that distress in common, and it keeps us from doing many things in our lives. It especially gets in our way here, in Co-Counseling. It keeps us from being a counselor as fully as we could be, and from trusting our counselors and using them fully.

CHALLENGING THE DISTRESS

I want us to challenge it. I want us to look at this "unbearable" distress, because I think it will make a large difference. What would it be like if you weren't worried and separate all the time, if you could look at your counselor and actually tell² that he or she was thinking about you? Who would you go after³ in your life that you're too timid to go after now?

What stops you from challenging this material?⁴ Think for a minute about challenging it. Take the idea out of your notes and put it in your mind. What will it feel like? It is possible to discharge on what happened to you, and to also challenge it in the present. In a session you can try to let someone else in—not just think about it theoretically but actually try to do it. What will it be like? Think a minute about turning and

facing that struggle. Maybe somebody really wants to come in. Maybe you could let that happen. At this point "maybe" is as hopeful as most of us can be. When we try to challenge this material, we start to feel how hard conditions were when we closed the door to other people. That's what we need to discharge on. In a way we need to be standing there pulling on that door, crying. We need to be making the effort.

THINGS ARE DIFFERENT NOW

You can put your mind right at that point long ago where you gave up.

² Tell means notice.

³ Go after means pursue.

⁴ Material means distress.

JANA CHRISTOPHER

When you gave up, there was not a choice. Conditions were that bad. It was not your mistake. You didn't give up before you had to. You were small and alone and dependent. It's understandable why you gave up, but it is different now. You're not alone, you are not small and dependent, and you understand what happened. Back then you didn't understand; it just happened. It was wrong that it happened, and it happened. Now you understand. Now the conditions are different than when you got hurt. So now you can make a different decision. It feels like you can't change your mind. That's what distresses do. But you *can* change your mind, even with the distress still there. You can decide to change your mind. That's what I want you to try to do. I want you to go back to that closed door, grab the handle, and say, "I've changed my mind. I can change my mind now, and I have," and start pulling.

Find someone for a six-minute-each-way mini-session.

It's important to discharge the feelings of discouragement and defeat, and they are heavy enough that it's hard to discharge them with only your own motivation. One way it works is with other people who are trying to work on the same things. It works best if there are this many people together, if I can talk about it clearly enough, and if you can then immediately have a session. The longer you wait until your session, the harder it is to get back and work well on this material. So I want to keep you right there, as long as I can. Near that edge is where you can feel alive in this important way. It's working right where you gave up that lets you take heart⁵ again.

How do we dare to take heart? How do we dare to face battles we have lost, with all the feelings of having lost still there? One of the wonderful things about a human mind is that distresses do not stop its ability to make decisions. Distresses confuse us, but they don't take away our ability to decide. We can decide to take on⁶ these struggles. We can decide to try again where we gave up. We can decide to win back our minds this time. To do that, we have to understand that things are different now than they were before.

Look at the people around you. Look at someone's eyes. There are people here you will know for the rest of your life. You've already known them quite a while—ten, twenty, thirty years. Something has changed. You are not alone anymore. Objectively, you

⁵ Take heart means feel hopeful.

⁶ Take on means face and engage in.



OPI, ABRUZZI, ITALY • JULIE ANNE FORGIONE

are not alone, even though you still feel alone. Your world is different, even though your distresses don't let you feel it. You are not small, and you understand things much better than you did. You know about distress patterns. You understand where the feelings come from and why they feel so believable. And you know that you can change them.

All of these things that we didn't have long ago when we gave up, we have now. And we understand this well enough that I think we can win these battles now. I don't think this was true five years ago. I think that all of the work we've done in Co-Counseling has led us to this ability. We couldn't do it before. It was too confusing, and we were too alone. Now it really is different, though it's hard for us to realize it. Our world has changed, and now we have to catch up.⁷

I WANT YOU TO FIGHT FOR YOURSELF

We can win this battle, I'm sure. The question is, "How long will it take?" The more we can do this work together, the faster it will go. Hearing someone else challenge this distress makes our sessions go better. Seeing other people dare to fight for themselves gives us immense power. It's much easier to fight if we have all the support and awareness around us that we can gather. So I want you to fight for yourself. There are many places to do that. This is just one.

One thing that oppressive societies take away from us is our ability to fight for ourselves. This is not just about you. It's about us, and about our being able to fight hard enough to change society. It must start with

continued . . .

⁷ Catch up means get to where it is.

COUNSELING PRACTICE

... continued

you being able to fight for yourself. There's nothing selfish about that. You want every child to keep fighting for herself or himself. It is exactly the same with you.

You have to dare to do this for you not because of what you will do for other people, not because of what you have done, but simply because you are worth fighting for because you are human. That's all the reason you need. When you see babies, you know that they're worth fighting for. They've done nothing, and they're "useless" for a while, but you know that simply because they're human, they're worth every effort. It is exactly the same with you. You are worth every effort. You are worth every challenge. You are worth all of us being behind you. The whole universe can be behind you. You are worth that. Understanding this allows you to take on where you've been defeated.

You have to change your mind now. You had no choice back then. Now you have a choice. Now you know what you are, and you know that these people around you are on your side.

It's time to begin taking our minds back from the defeats we've suffered. One early defeat is where we gave up and went alone. It's time to start pulling on that door as hard as we can. Not carefully, not quietly, but with every bit of energy we have.



BILL KEEGAN

FIGHT ON BOTH SIDES OF THE STRUGGLE

Question: Two years ago you talked about the same theory, but you said that we should go back to the little boy or girl and take our Co-Counselor with us. It looks like now you're saying to go back but take the little boy or girl away from there. Is that a more effective way of handling the situation, or is it just a variation on the same theme?

Tim: I think of it more as a variation. I try to describe different possibilities. No one approach will work in every situation. Two things come to my mind: One is that as we develop closer connections with each other, we are better counselors for each other. We are better reminders of reality for each other, which makes it possible for us to work on heavy early distresses and not get lost in the same ways. When I talk about taking your counselor with you, it's to keep with you a reminder of present-day reality. Your counselor can be the best contradiction to many of the distresses back there—of being alone, of being helpless, of being trapped there forever.

But I also want you, the client, to be powerful. I want you thinking about fighting on both sides of the struggle. You're not going back to get your little girl or boy out of that situation. You're going back to finish the struggle in a way that it couldn't be finished then. You cannot change what happened, but you can change the effect of what happened. I imagine it as going back and making it the way it should've been. You leave it not because you have to get away, but because it's done, because you went back and discharged and completed it. It's a little different perspective. All of these things are useful.

Past Issues of *Present Time* Now on the RC Web Site

Volunteers are continuing their work to post past issues of *Present Time* on the RC web site. You can find them by going to the RC home page <www.rc.org> and clicking on *Present Time* (under Publications).

History Gives Me a "Balance of Attention"

IT has always been true for me that I can discharge best on early abuse, abuse from the medical system, and chronic illness by working on genocide, colonialism, and the destruction of the environment. The worst things that happened to me happened in isolation, were secrets or were denied, and I was blamed for them, so that my feelings are that I'm bad or "crazy" or both. The big-picture societal abuses are not secrets. Even if they're denied, there are millions of witnesses. Even if we're blamed for being targeted with genocide, there are a whole lot of us who know this is nonsense. This is one reason that working on genocide is such a relief to me.

Recently I was trying to find a new way to work on my serious health problems and was feeling stuck. Finally my Co-Counselor asked, "How is this connected to genocide?" and I burst into sobs. I had another session right after that one and talked about how the new diagnoses that keep coming feel just like new armies coming, one after another, to overwhelm us. As soon as I was able to connect my feeling hopeless about winning back my health with the history of Native peoples being overwhelmed by one wave after another of genocidal assault, I felt better. It seems that connecting my personal struggles with a broad history of oppression, going from, "I'm going to die of horrible diseases," to "They have tried to kill us all," allows me to get clear that the many, many ways my physical safety and well-being have been threatened are not because something is personally wrong with me, and also that I'm not alone. Millions of us are in this together.

Twenty-two years ago, when I first remembered the intense group sexual and physical abuse I experienced as a child, I started therapy and graduate school at the same time. As I dug up

the story of the abuse, researching the history of Puerto Rican women ended up being a powerful contradiction.¹ I often went to therapy and ended up talking about the history I was learning and unearthing, and only a little bit directly about the abuse. History gave me a balance of attention.² I felt that I was creating a support group across time, that I was surrounded by women who had faced all kinds of violence in their own times and somehow survived to leave a record of themselves—and who, in many cases, had successfully resisted what was being done to them.

¹ Contradiction to distress

² A balance of attention means enough attention on present-time good reality to be able to work successfully on the distress.

So for me, apparently, looking at genocide is a contradiction to isolation and "mental health" oppression!

The direction I came up with³ in my session, that made me both cry hard and have my attention off distress was, "Because I'm alive, they live." I said that over and over, talking about both my Native and my Eastern European Jewish peoples. It completely changed how I felt in my body and about my health battles. I'm going to write it down and put it on my wall.

Aurora Levins Morales
Berkeley, California, USA

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

³ Came up with means thought of.



Wow! Tim's Talks on CD

Hi Tim,¹

I mistakenly forgot to pay for the quarterly CDs² from 2008 to now, so when I was in Seattle for an Intensive,³ I purchased a few years' worth. Wow! I just wanted to take a moment to thank you for everything. I drove to Gary, Indiana (USA), today and on the way listened to about five CDs. So hopeful. I'm so encouraged and charged just by listening. I especially liked the ones on early defeats and family work. Thanks so much for your connection to all of us, your dedication, and your commitment!

Marian Fredal
Madison, Wisconsin, USA

¹ Tim Jackins

² Rational Island Publishers has been producing a series of CDs of talks given by Tim Jackins at recent workshops. Certified RC teachers can purchase a subscription and receive a new CD each quarter. Anyone can purchase the already-existing CDs. The series is called RC Teacher Updates. For more information, see page 104.

³ An Intensive is twenty hours of one-way Re-evaluation Counseling, for a fee, at Re-evaluation Counseling Community Resources, in Seattle, Washington, USA.

Indifference

Yesterday I watched a documentary, *The 800 Mile Wall*, about the U.S. government's inhumane strategies to keep Mexican immigrants from entering the United States. The policy makers and enforcers portrayed in the film exhibited the most calloused indifference toward those dying in the desert.¹ The documentary pointed out several times that if cattle or horses were dying in these numbers, something would be done about it.

As I was discharging recently on an early sexual memory, I realized that back then I was so caught up in a pattern that I was oblivious to the experience of the girl I had acted out on. As I looked out at my three female counselors (the man in our group wasn't there that night), I found myself laughing with embarrassment and terror as I kept saying, "Ohh!" as in, "I am kind of getting² it."

Since that session I see how a large piece of male domination is obliviousness, which is tied somehow, I think, to indifference. I'm guessing that someone acted stuff out at me and that part of what got recorded was that person's obliviousness of me and my feelings.

By the time I got home from the documentary, my obliviousness had kicked in.³ I kept wondering, "Why are the policy makers at fault when it is the Mexicans who are choosing to risk their lives crossing the desert?"

I asked my wife (who was raised poor) my question, and without pausing she replied, "No one 'chooses' to risk his or her life out in the desert." "Ohhhh . . ." In that moment my heart broke, and for a few minutes I could see past the obliviousness and just let myself cry for those people who had no choice but to risk everything, including their lives, to provide for their families.

As painful as it is, I am grateful for all the ways we are figuring out in RC to work on oppressor material.

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

¹ Many people die in the desert while attempting to illegally cross the border between Mexico and the United States.

² Getting means understanding.

³ Kicked in means started operating.



QUIN JACKINS

It's here!

Black Re-emergence No. 11!

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*

To order, see page 109 of this *Present Time*.

If You Move

Once again, here's an appeal.
(Repetitive, but it's for real.)

Your address change, quickly sent
Means there's money that's not spent.

Present Time, with postage due
Won't show up here, make us stew.*

Enjoy your move, we send our best—
Just take care of all the rest.

* Stew means feel agitated.

Affection, Love, and Sex

*A transcript of a talk given by Harvey Jackins¹
at the University of Maine, in Maine, USA*

(This talk was given in 1977, over thirty years ago, and shows the state of our awareness at that time of the oppressions of women, young people, and other targeted groups. Since then we have made tremendous progress in our awareness of these oppressions, and this talk, if given today, would be different in some significant ways. It remains, however, a rich presentation of some basic, important ideas about human nature that are central to Re-evaluation Counseling and, in addition, is a good introduction to the mind of Harvey Jackins. The complete version of this talk is newly available on CD and provides an even fuller and richer introduction to Harvey's mind. [See pages 22 and 104 of this Present Time.]



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the way. It isn't surprising that our society has come to regard love as a precious sometimes-jewel and to teach us that once, perhaps just once, the peacock's wing dips and touches us with its iridescence, and then *love*.

We're quite sure that what people really mean by "love," when they speak of love between humans, is no more or no less than exactly the way that human beings naturally feel about each other, except when they have some hurts that get in the way. And that everyone feels this feeling toward another human being, where hurts don't obscure or interfere with it, just exactly to the extent that he or she knows the other human being. That you cannot really know another human being and not love him or her.

Now at this point someone usually asks, "What do you mean by *love*, buster²? Are you talking about mother love, or sex, or . . ."

I'm talking about love. We're quite sure that this is the actual fact: that any human being loves, deeply, any other human being that he or she gets to know—regardless of age, sex, or anything of the sort—except where painful emotion has interfered and gotten in the way.

My guess is that, for most of us, ninety percent of our humanness is tied up in hurts that have gotten in

Of course, for many of us it is just about that rare. But we think that an accurate explanation would be much more like this: that the thorn hedge of hurts that has come to surround us (the loneliness, the rejection, and all the rest) has a few holes in it, maybe. And that what we take³ to be this wonderful happenstance that love has come into our life is really just where the hole in our thorn hedge has happened to line up with the hole in somebody else's thorn hedge so that we take a quick peek through and meet somebody else's eyes. And, by God, *love*. That this precious, rare thing (and it has been rare in our culture) is existing in tremendous amounts all around us. That all people are ready to love us except that they're afraid; they're hurt; they're sure of, or fearful of, rejection; they're embarrassed. That they're just as anxious to love us as we are to love them, except that we're scared, we're embarrassed, we're afraid that we're going to make fools of ourselves or get involved in sex before we're ready, or something like that.

I think you all know this. Everybody knows this, but nobody dares talk about it to anybody else.

I love you. I love you very much. Now I don't know many of you very well. I got acquainted with some of you over supper, and you're lovely people. Some of you I knew last year, briefly. But I have by now enough experience and enough tried-out theory, tested over and over again, to say with confidence that I love you, that you are lovable.

If I could get through your embarrassments and my embarrassments, I know that I would find you a warm, wonderful person whom I would be very happy to know. I'd like to look into your eyes for long periods.

continued . . .

¹ Harvey Jackins was the founder and first International Reference Person of the Re-evaluation Counseling Communities.

² Buster is a somewhat confrontational way to address a male person.

³ In this context, take means believe.

COUNSELING PRACTICE

... continued

I'd like to communicate back and forth. I'd like to listen as well as talk. I'd like to touch you. I'd like to touch your hands. I'd like to feel your cheeks, whether they're soft, downy rose-petal or they've got a big bristly beard on them. You've got a good, touchable cheek.

HUGGING

I'd like to hug you. That may sound strange (maybe not to this generation so much), especially to the fellows. If you ever get up the nerve⁴ to really hug another guy—just hug him, and do it several times, get over your embarrassment—you'll find that it's real nice to hug a man, too. Just not quite the same as hugging a woman (*laughter*) but nice. Now, women know this a little better because they haven't had the "big boy" conditioning dumped on them to the extent that we men have. Women are allowed to hug each other without somebody automatically jumping up and screaming, "Lesbian!" We big boys have this threat of being called "queer" that's kept us apart. Whereas girls can turn to other girls (pretty much,⁵ they're walled off, too, of course) and can also turn to guys, we guys can only turn to girls, under particular conditions. And generally we've been so conditioned that we're ashamed and embarrassed to act warm and gentle unless we've got *sex on our mind*, you see, because we've been told that that's the manly thing and it's expected of us, even though we're awful damn tired⁶ of trying to live up to the expectation. (*Laughter*)

The truth of the matter is that we human beings love other human beings, and I don't have to explain why or give reasons. Observably this is the way we function, if we get a chance.

⁴ Get up the nerve means find the courage.

⁵ Pretty much means in general.

⁶ Awful damn tired means extremely tired.



ROSYLN CASSIDY

Now I didn't start out knowing this. When I stumbled on the beginnings of Re-evaluation Counseling twenty years ago, I was an uptight⁷ Norwegian Lutheran who was scared to death⁸ to shake hands with his girl unless he had a marriage license or something on the wall. I had to learn this from my clients, step after step, as their hurts peeled off. As they shed their tears, and they shook off their fears, and they laughed off their embarrassments, it became plain that though we're all unique and quite wonderful in our own special way, there's a common denominator that human beings are real⁹ good people, that human beings want to love and be loved. And that all of the dumb, stupid things we do, like hurting each other and hurting ourselves and acting at cross purposes,¹⁰ we do simply because of the recordings of distress experiences that were jammed on us when we were too small to understand how to fight them off, before we had information. They are recordings that were put on us by older people's recordings that were put on them before they were old enough to throw them off. And so there was this endless chain of contagion down the generations.

How many of you hugged someone else real good, and satisfied your need for that, at least once in the last week? Let's see your hands. Well, that's not bad. Being snowbound helps, I think. (*Laughter*) I've asked at other colleges and gotten a much lower percentage than that. I congratulate you.

It's plain that at least a large minority of us didn't get a hug this last week, and that's living hard. It's living very hard not to get at least four hugs a day. The loneliness, the restimulation of being lonely, creeps in. We wonder why we have trouble studying. It isn't because we're dumb. None of us are dumb. It isn't just because we spend too much time doing other things (although many of the things we do are in a search for contact). It's because we are too lonely.

This is why it's hard and our brains fog up—we're too dang¹¹ lonely. If we'd just establish a relationship with each other such that when we feel bad we'd go to each other and say, "I need a hug," which is what people in the Re-evaluation Counseling Communities (which are beginning to spread across the country) are learning to do, we'd be amazed at how much better we could think. With just four large hugs.

⁷ Uptight means tense.

⁸ Scared to death means extremely scared.

⁹ In this context, real means very.

¹⁰ At cross purposes means in opposition to each other.

¹¹ Dang is a slang word that adds emphasis.

HUMANS NEED WARM CONTACT WITH EACH OTHER

All of us, or nearly all of us, are conceived and then live the first nine months of our lives in warm, intimate contact with another human being—our mother. (The old myth that babies are little vegetables and are insensate until they are born has, of course, been pretty¹² well exploded. *Life Magazine* has even gotten some cameras up into the uterus to see the lively life of a baby before he or she is born. There are a lot of indications that babies are very aware of their environment long before they are born. There are a lot of indications that newborn babies understand most of the language that's spoken around them. They don't speak it yet—that requires a lot of development. There are a lot of indications that babies are born enormously intelligent, with a much greater grasp of what's going on¹³ than has usually been considered.) Each baby, and that was every one of us, emerges having been used to warm, intimate contact with another human being and is of such a nature that intrinsically he or she cannot function well alone. Human beings cannot function well alone. I'll say that flatly. To do well, they need warm, intimate contact with other human beings.

And yet in our society, in the name of sterile conditions, and so on, most of us were taken from our mamma, had steamy drops put in our eyes (in my generation) and were slapped hard to make sure we started crying. Then we were wrapped up tightly and bundled into a glass-fronted nursery with about twenty or thirty other very unhappy little babies, and we screamed our despair at each other and once in a while got picked up and changed¹⁴ and were taken down to feed, or something like that.

The loneliness was jammed on us very quickly at a time when we desperately needed reassurance because we'd just been through this tough emergence from water-breathing to air-breathing. That was a tough one. Even if it was natural childbirth, it was a tough one. And most of us had anesthesia. A newborn baby who has had a beautiful delivery, has been given attention right away, will focus on you. It is nonsense that children don't see you right away. They do. It's the anesthetized babies who don't see you for several days. And they will start yawning right away. They'll start discharging the tension.

¹² In this context, pretty means quite.

¹³ Going on means happening.

¹⁴ In this context, changed means had our diaper changed.



LYNDALL KATZ

Birth was a traumatic experience. Just when we needed warm reassurance, we were given intense loneliness. In effect a plastic bag was wrapped around us, and for most of us that plastic bag has seldom been pierced. We continue to grow up lonely. We reach out for somebody, and the recorded response is, "Be a big boy," or "Dear, I'm busy," or whatever.

None of the adults meant to hurt us. Those were just recordings that were infesting them and hurting them before they passed them on to us. But the loneliness continues, as we grow up lonelier, lonelier, lonelier.

SHYNESS, EMBARRASSMENT, INHIBITIONS

In our teens there's a sort of permission to break down the loneliness a little bit and maybe go out and touch another human being. We're expected to sort of get in contact with the other sex sometime in our teens, if we haven't already been made too embarrassed, too shy, too scared, to dare to do it. There's a considerable percentage of children, of course, who are just scared to reach out, scared to make contact.

Even when it's at its best, there are all sorts of inhibiting cultural factors. A boy is teased if he's interested in girls—from the time he's five (or four or three or whenever it starts) up to the time he's fifteen. Then he's supposed to be a warm, outgoing date. No. He's still full of the embarrassment and shyness that was dumped on him by the teasing.

I guess this generation is breaking through on this one, but in my generation girls were terribly shamed if they made any reach at all. They were supposed to wait. The old dances used to set it up. The girls used to sit on these damn folding chairs against the wall and

continued . . .

COUNSELING PRACTICE

... continued

wait (you know the expression, “wall flower”), and wait, and wait. Or they were supposed to stay home and wait for a boy to call them, and if they called a boy, without the most elaborate strategy to make it seem accidental (*laughter*), they were “forward.”¹⁵

I actually grew up thinking that this was the intrinsic nature of girls—to be shy and withdrawn and not interested in boys. I really thought that, until I was grown up. Only when I began having a lot of women clients who told me everything (and I mean everything) many thousands of times over, did I begin to realize that girls are far more interested in getting the show on the road¹⁶ than the average boy is (*laughter*)—that most of the arrangements, and so on, most of the drive, has had to come from the girls. The boys have been so “big boyed” that they’re frozen. They can’t reach, or if they do, they do it so awkwardly they fall on their own feet—if the girl doesn’t somehow deftly rescue them from the situation.

As we boys grow up, we start reaching out and yet by then we’re so embarrassed and uptight and tense that we do it very poorly. We have few guidelines for a relationship between the sexes. No one ever talked to any of us about what it meant to be a boyfriend, a husband, or a father. We had to figure it out. We picked it up¹⁷ from the example at home, which often wasn’t too good because he’d been raised the same way. Or we picked it up from dirty stories from the other children, and that wasn’t very helpful. Women wonder, “What in the world¹⁸ is wrong with men?” Well, what’s wrong with men is the way they were treated when they were little boys.

WE MARRY ON A PATTERNED BASIS

And the guidance that girls got, in my generation at least, was very weird. How to choose who will be your mate, for example. Well, all the love stories used to say, and the mothers used to say, and the whole culture said, “You’ll know.” (*Laughter*) “But Mother,” she persisted, “how will I know?” “Oh, you’ll know. I remember when I first met your father . . . I went around in a kind of fog. I couldn’t eat for days.” (*Laughter*)

¹⁵ “Forward” means overly aggressive.

¹⁶ Getting the show on the road means making something happen.

¹⁷ Picked it up means figured it out, learned it.

¹⁸ In the world is an expression that adds emphasis.

The love story says, “Suddenly she confronted Jeffrey on the path. Her throat was dry. When she tried to speak, her breath caught in her lungs.” (*Laughter*) How did you know when Mr. Right came along? He made you sick. (*Laughter and applause*)

This is a deep strain.¹⁹ All love stories have it. Didn’t Cole Porter²⁰ write, “This can’t be love, because I feel so well”? The thing that restimulated your distress pattern and made you sick—that was true love. You knew that was right.

I have by now counseled many, many married couples who married on this basis: “I just knew she was right for me.” (*Laughter*) And you give the guy a couple of sessions, “Who did she remind you of, who did she remind you of?” “Oh, I can’t think, I can’t think,” and finally he bursts into tears and cries loud and long: “It was Grandma . . .” (*Laughter*) “Grandma died when I was four, and I always wanted Grandma back, and the way her little beady eyes glittered through her spectacles reminded me of Grandma. And I have never until now been able to believe it was a mistake, even though she could never cook and the house was always dirty and she was terrible with the children. I kept waiting for this wonderful fulfillment when she would be Grandma.”

We marry on a patterned basis, over and over. And when you realize how much of this goes on, you become filled with overwhelming admiration for human beings that any of them have ever made any success out of any relationship. And yet they have. Marrying for all the reactive button-pushing reasons, they have stuck with it, fought their way through to a human relationship, raised good children who are in far better shape²¹ than they were, and made a “success” out of their marriage.

A “SUCCESSFUL” MARRIAGE

Of course, what’s a success in a marriage depends on how you judge it. All married couples have distress patterns, which if they live together very long get tangled with each other. The one pattern pushes the button on the other pattern, which pushes the button on the other pattern . . . This happens with roommates,

¹⁹ In this context, strain means theme.

²⁰ Cole Porter was a U.S. composer and songwriter.

²¹ Shape means condition.

as you well know. There's a reason they take the guns away from the guys in the barracks²² at night: they'd shoot each other otherwise. (*Laughter*) Restimulation happens to anyone who lives together. And it happens in every marriage. These sorts of things pile up. You become filled with admiration for people who have been able to make a go of it²³ despite this.

By the U.S. cultural standards, a successful marriage is one in which the couple recognizes there are certain areas that they better stay out of with each other, that they better leave alone. They communicate around these areas. They give up on sex, but they discuss the future of the children, and they keep a neat yard, and they are active in the community club together. They have a "good marriage."

You never know which will be the tough area. The next couple says, "Boy,²⁴ we can't talk to each other, and certainly not about the children, but if we can just get to bed, ahhh . . . that's all right." You don't know which will be the area they can reach.

A good marriage, by the U.S. standard, is one in which the couple walls off certain areas under a tacit or sometimes spoken agreement. They agree that they can't handle them, and they maintain a relationship around them. A bad marriage, by U.S. standards, is when they can't stay out of that tangle and they're in there beating each other over the head with it all the time. There isn't a marriage that doesn't have a tangle in it.

A NICE STORY

I only know of one that came close to not being tangled, and I only heard of this one after the fact, but it's kind of interesting. I was doing an introductory lecture, and after the question period was over and people were getting ready to go home, a woman in the audience came up to me and said, "Have you got a few minutes? I'd like to tell you something. I've never told anyone before, because I promised I wouldn't. But I think the person I promised would want me to tell you, because now I understand something that I never understood before. I'm a widow. I've been a widow for five years, but I was married for twenty-seven years and it was a good marriage. Now wait a minute—I know what you think about a 'good marriage.' I really mean this. We were close. We communicated. We cared for each other and supported each other in all respects.

²² Barracks means military barracks.

²³ Make a go of it means make something out of it.

²⁴ Boy is an exclamation.



OREGON, USA • ELLIE PUTNAM

We never had a quarrel that lasted more than a few minutes. For twenty-seven years."

She said, "I think I know why. When we got married, we were just kids. We went off on our honeymoon. We were at one of those resort lodges, and of course we were very eager to get in bed. When we got to bed and we tried to reach for each other, both of us started crying. We cried and cried. And when we tried to touch each other, we stopped crying and we started to shake. We cried and we shook. We didn't know what to do. Both of us were just as frightened as could be. We thought we were 'crazy.' We didn't know what was going on, but both of us were scared of anybody on the outside more than we were of each other, so we just lay there and cried and shook. We'd get calmed down and turn and try to touch each other, and it would start all over again. It was very alarming, and it kept going. We just cried and shook and went on with it, and by morning we managed to hook our little fingers together. And when daybreak came, we talked. We decided that we couldn't tell anybody else, because they'd have us locked up (*laughter*), and that we'd just make the best of it. So we got up and went out to see the sights around the place."

She said, "You know, it was a good day. We laughed a lot. And we kept reassuring each other that that foolishness the night before was over—until we got back in bed again and we started to cry. We went on crying and shaking and laughing. Gradually we got closer and closer together. We got our arms around each other, but if we tried to even think of sex, we started shaking and crying again. That went on for about two weeks (*laughter*), through the entire honeymoon. By the end of that time it was over. We could get real close, and it was just lovely. We agreed that we would never tell anybody, because everybody would think we were 'crazy.' But we went home and we had a good life, all

continued . . .

COUNSELING PRACTICE

... continued

through the twenty-seven years, and now I think I know why.”

Isn't that a nice story? It's the only one I ever heard like that.

DATING

Now most of you people aren't married, or close to marrying, yet. The problem is, what do you do with all this affection you have pent up in you? What do you do to break down the loneliness? How many here have at least one date a week, on the average? Let's see. Okay, that's about like it was when I was in school. The majority of us are lonely.

Do you men know that all girls like boys? (Laughter) Do you know that? I didn't know it until I was in my thirties, but I'm glad to share this fact with you: that all girls like boys. If they appear not to, it's because they've got a hurt running around and they just need a nice boy to stand and smile at them until they can cry and call him names for a while, and then they'll like boys. (Laughter)

All girls like boys. Mark that²⁵ fellows. All right, you don't believe me? I see some skepticism. Will the girls here who feel that I've made a correct statement—that all girls like boys—please hold up their hands? Now look around fellows. (Laughter) Isn't that great? Doesn't that change the complexion of the world? (Laughter) Okay, you have a remaining shyness. You think that all girls like other boys, but not you. (Laughter) Okay, is there a man here who feels that girls like other boys but for some strange reason they don't like him? Can I see your hand? (Laughter) Okay, come on up, would you? Come on. (Laughter and applause)

(Demonstration with the young man, on dating. Harvey asks him to describe what he does on dates—first date, second date, third date, fourth date—whether he holds hands. He doesn't, because he was teased and still feels tense about it, so Harvey invites a young woman up and asks them to hold hands. The demonstration contains some beautiful counseling by Harvey and is clearly presented in the CD of this talk. [See pages 22 and 104 of this Present Time.] It provides a great example of how to be a counselor and of Harvey's use of the ideas of Re-evaluation Counseling.)

²⁵ Mark that means take note of that, remember that.



YOSEMITE, CALIFORNIA, USA • LYNN SHIVERS

Harvey: Okay, let's try it. (Laughter) Now (laughter) the only way to get over this uneasiness is by laughter. So I'm going to ask you a few things that might bring a couple of chuckles, okay? (Laughter, shuffling noises, more laughter) Isn't this beautiful? It's working, it's working. That laughter is the only thing that will solve it. Now Billie, I want you to look at Paul, and Paul you look back at her. Just look at him like this, Billie. Look at him and go (Harvey makes satisfied noises). (Laughter from crowd and clients) Don't stop laughing. We're only doing this to make you laugh, because the laughter is what makes the difference. Paul, you look at her and go, "Ahhhh." (Both clients and crowd laugh) Don't wait on each other. (General laughter) That's the big mistake. You wait on the other one.

(Harvey directs them to make the sounds back and forth, for a good while. Much laughter.)

Harvey: This is the language of love—that you're embarrassed, because unless you discharge the embarrassment you're going to have a tough time, you see. You'll be going on a date with icicles all around you, and you'll wonder why it doesn't work. All embarrassment,

like this. But if you keep going, "Ahhhh" (Crowd claps, laughs, cheers)

Harvey: To really work it out, these two need to do this and laugh and laugh and laugh and laugh and laugh. To do it right, they need to do it for hours. For the first four dates, you shouldn't do anything but hold hands and look at each other and go, "Ahhhh" (Laughter) You'll have a marvelous time, you really will! It will be a fun evening.

(Demonstration continues. Harvey asks them whether it's nice to hold hands and has them each say so to the other. He helps them with their tone of voice. He asks them to ask each other questions about what they are interested in. He has them say what they like about each other. All done with much laughter. He asks each of them if it's okay if the other hugs them. They say yes.)

Harvey: All right. Now I'm going to coach you a little bit. You're out of practice. (Laughter and clapping) When you hug a woman, don't get all uptight about

the fact that you're "touching her body" euuuuuuu
(Crowd laughs) It's a perfectly good body. *(Laughter)*
 But think of the woman, not her body. I mean, she's all
 one. When you hug her, take a real good grip on her,
 but don't jerk her, see? Don't jerk her or try to squeeze
 her because you're scared. You may be scared, but keep
 your arms relaxed, though not standoffish either. Don't
 hug yourself behind her back. *(Laughter)* That feels
 terrible. You'll notice when you hug her that she has
 breasts. *(Laughter and clapping)* But that's just one of
 the facts of life: she's supposed to have them. *(Laughter)*
 And actually, it really improves the hug—the fact that
 she's got them. It feels real good, see. Now, they don't
 have to be big breasts *(laughter)*; or little breasts; or
 sharp, pointed breasts; or *(laughter)* anything like that.
 That's all nonsense. The playboy type of stuff is just
 nonsense. It's pushing buttons on patterns that were
 put on guys because they were scared. Any woman's
 breasts are just right for her. Any woman's breasts
 are just lovely. They're just right for her, and they feel
 real good. I have hugged thousands and thousands of
 women *(laughter)*, and they feel just right. So when you
 hug her, you notice her. You get your arms around her
 and touch her—with your hands, with your fingertips.
 You hold her close, and you hold your head against
 her, and you just enjoy this warm, wonderful human
 being.

Now if you've been real shy, the bats may start to
 fly through your head and make you think, "Oh, my
 God, what am I doing? I'll be involved in sex, or she'll
 think I'm an ungodly person," or something like that.
 That isn't true. You're just a warm, wonderful human
 being. If you do get all stirred up sexually, fine, enjoy
 it. You don't have to do anything about it. *(Laughter)*
 Just enjoy it. It's not a bad feeling at all. *(Laughter)*

Don't expect to do this well the first time. I've had
 lots and lots of practice. *(Laughter)* But go in and do
 the best you can on your first try. *(Laughter)* I'll hold
 your jacket. *(Laughter, applause)* Don't let go of her until
 I tell you to, okay? *(Laughter)* Try to pay attention to
 her instead of the crowd. They'll have their own fun.
(Hugging demonstration continues.)

Harvey: Okay. Now, I'd like to propose to you not
 that you fall in love, or anything of the sort, but—just
 because both of you need this, obviously, from the
 way the laughter spilt—that you spend an evening
 a week together. If you can't think of anything else
 to do, spend half of it looking at each other, holding
 hands while you do it, and saying, "Ahhhh," *(laughter)*
 and the other half hugging. Okay? For the next three
 weeks, would you spend an evening a week together?

Now this is not intended to send you off together on
 the rosy road to romance, you see, but you will both
 find it much easier to relate to the opposite sex as a
 result of doing this. Okay? Can you do it? Shake on it.²⁶
(Laughter) Now hug on it. *(Laughter)* Okay. *(Applause
 for the two volunteers)*

If you decide at the end of that time that you like
 each other, I'm not forbidding you to continue, but
 there's no obligation on either of your parts. This is
 just a simple exercise in breaking down walls. Does
 everybody understand that? Okay.

*(Harvey then asks the audience how many of them would
 have liked to have had such a "practice session" with
 someone. He has them stand up and look at each other and
 commit to setting up pairs after the meeting and doing the
 same things he did with Billie and Paul, so that they can
 laugh and discharge some of the tension.)*

WE'RE NOT POWERLESS

I'd like to ask a question here. How many of you
 think it would actually be a good idea if we could
 get to the point where people met each other and did
 hug? *(Clapping)*

Okay now, we're not powerless. We feel like it,
 because we feel so isolated, but we're not powerless.
 We had just about unanimous agreement. Now I'd
 like to see the hands of those who will promise me
 that for at least the next three weeks, anytime they
 meet anybody who was at this meeting, or anybody
 else with whom they think they can get away with it²⁷
(laughter and applause), they will stop and say, "I want
 a hug," and hold out their arms. Let's see the hands of
 those who will promise to do it.

Okay, that's fine. That's enough. If you people
 who held up your hands will do it, by example and
 contagion the entire campus will be giving hugs.
(Applause)

continued . . .

²⁶ Shake on it means shake hands to show agreement on it.

²⁷ Get away with it means do it without there being any bad repercussions.



JULIA WATT-ROSENFELD

COUNSELING PRACTICE

... continued

At the last workshop I led, we had sixty-seven people who had learned to hug each other thoroughly in the eight days they'd been there. No one ever passed anyone else without a good long hug. They wouldn't dream of it being any other way. The last evening, when we were having dinner, a bunch of uptight high school students came in from one of the well-to-do Presbyterian churches around Los Angeles (California, USA). (*Laughter*) And they looked at our crowd, you know, like this (*Laughter*)

We were a little amused. These were real nice young people, just beautiful, and they were all stiff with each other. So during the indoctrination that the camp director was giving them about how they must be on time for meals, blah, blah, blah, and so on, I got up and asked for their attention. I said that I wanted to make an announcement

"The point is to have a caring, aware, loving relationship."

that we were leaving the camp now but that we had firmly established a tradition there and we wanted to pass the tradition into their hands. That we'd established a tradition that no one ever passed another person without giving him or her a long hug, and that if they would take that tradition and carry it on, then the ghosts who used to haunt the grounds would stay quiet and not wail and howl all night.

They looked incredulous for a minute. Our gang was getting ready to leave, and we were saying good-bye with all kinds of hugs, and they looked at each other and began to giggle. A bunch of the girls laughed real hard, and started to come over, and slowly the fellows followed them. They came over and inserted themselves in our group and started asking for hugs from us. Then after three, four, minutes they started hugging each other. And when we left, when we drove out of sight, the entire gang was just hugging the hell out of each other.²⁸ (*Laughter and applause*)

It will spread. It will spread. And if you see somebody you don't feel like hugging, because he or she is looking like this (*laughter*), remember that that's the very one who needs a hug. Someday you may be very tense, and you'll need someone to come up and get you. Do I make sense? That's the very one who needs a hug. And don't worry that you'll do too much of it. You can't possibly do too much of it. We're all several years behind on getting enough closeness.

²⁸ Hugging the hell out of each other means hugging each other a lot.

THE INSTITUTION OF MARRIAGE

Person: How do you feel about a couple living together before they get married?

Harvey: Marriage as it has operated in the past certainly is not going to be long for this world, and for good reason. The institution of marriage, as it's been pushed on us, has been a property relationship. Its roots are in slavery and the ownership of a woman, and in tying down the man to make sure that he stays home and takes care of his children. You know, all a kind of anti-human enforcement. And it really hasn't helped for a good human relationship.

If people are going to be really human, they are going to care about each other and they're going to have a caring relationship. In the past, society didn't know what to do but try and enforce everybody. And, of course, it still does that. But what matters is not the particular form—whether you have a marriage license or not. The point is to have a caring, aware, loving relationship.

Learn to exchange caring help with each other, and as you peel off your distresses, you'll have a good relationship—whether you've got a marriage license on the wall or not. And people will stay together and take care of their children because they really care, not because they've been coerced by rules that of course don't work anyway. Marriage as an institution is obviously breaking up at the present time. I think probably something good will survive, but I don't think it will be the old shotgun, handcuff, don't-do-it-until-the-judge-says-it's-all-right type of relationship.²⁹

LOVING MORE THAN ONE PERSON

Person: Do you think it's possible to love more than one person at a time?

Harvey: I think it's impossible not to. This is one of the things we learn in Co-Counseling. You cannot counsel well with another person without loving him or her. Not only are you not effective until you love the person, but if you're effective in your counseling, you get to see that person for who he or she is and you love him or her.

This is true. I work as a professional counselor, and very, very disturbed people come into my hands—very

²⁹ Shotgun, handcuff, don't-do-it-until-the-judge-says-it's-all-right means enforced.

disturbed. And yet, once you lift the lid of the distress that's on them and look inside, they are dear, good, kind human beings who are trying really hard to just be warm and loving, and it's only the old scars, the emotional scar tissue, that leads them to do bad things. I fall in love with everyone I counsel. I fall in love with all my clients—the women and the men—and I stay permanently in love with them.

In the modern period, the suburban husband discovers that he loves the next-door-neighbor's wife, you see. Oh God, he's got to do something about it. He's got to sneak around and have an affair, or propose that he and his neighbor trade wives or set up a group marriage, or whatever variation is going on in that particular suburb. Well, that isn't so. It isn't. It's quite possible to love a whole lot of people very well, and just love them. You don't have to run and crawl in bed with every one of them at all. In fact, if you do, pretty quick you're going to acquire a bunch of painful emotion and you'll lose the love. Just love them.

The compulsion to go make a mess—you know, sneak around, have an affair, all that kind of thing—basically flows out of the terrible patterns that are jammed on us “big boys” when we're little that say that we're not really a man unless we assault them sexually. If you love somebody, you're expected to do something—be the bull of the woods or something like that. That's just nonsense. Sure, people enjoy sex. They don't enjoy it very much without love, and the ones who claim they do are generally in the grip of some kind of compulsion: “Got to have sex, got to have sex.” And that hasn't anything to do with the real enjoyment. That's just a pattern of anxiety riding and running them. If they discharge, they'll find that sex, as well as the love, is a very relaxed thing.

A person should certainly not ever have sex unless he or she loves the other person. It's a mistake. This is not putting down³⁰ the desperate people who have so many blocks in the way of loving, that they can't find their way out of, that they just resort to sex, hoping it will open a door. Sometimes it does. I don't mean to pick on³¹ anybody. But in a human sense, no one would ever have sex with anyone unless he or she really loved the person, because it's so unsatisfactory otherwise. It's shallow. It's meaningless. The real thing about sex is that it gives you that extra closeness, that extra measure of closeness and humanness, with someone you love deeply.



JO ANNE GARRETT

But you can love someone very much, and even want to have sex with him or her, and you don't have to do it. Now that doesn't mean that it might not be reasonably healthy to have sex with somebody once in a while, but you don't have to be promiscuous just because you find that you love lots of people. And basically, I think everyone does love lots of people.

The ones who say, “Oh my³² no, that's terrible!” you question them. “Don't you love other people, too?” “Well, yeah, I love my children, but that's different.” “Do you love anyone else?” “Well, maybe my parents.” “Anybody else?” “Well, I suppose you could call it love. I'm very fond of my girlfriend” (this is a woman talking). “Anyone else?” “Well, I certainly don't let myself think about it.” But if you insist that she think about it—sure, she loves several men. She doesn't let herself, because she has this pattern, from what was put on her, that says it's so wrong, But the more she can face the fact that she's very loving, that she's got love enough in her heart for all humanity, the better job she'll do of loving the guy she's got at home.

To say to yourself, “You've got to only love this one,” when his patterns may be driving you up a tree,³³ is to put yourself in a kind of cage where you will start running around and having affairs and doing something stupid. See? But if you face the fact that you can love other people, then, in a Co-Counseling relationship in particular, you can go lean your head on somebody's shoulder, get a hug, and cry like hell for a couple of hours. You'll feel the love there, and then you can go home and handle the guy you're sleeping with, and find that you can get back your sense of him.

continued . . .

³⁰ Putting down means criticizing.

³¹ Pick on means criticize.

³² Oh my is an expression that adds emphasis.

³³ Driving you up a tree means irritating you greatly.

COUNSELING PRACTICE

... continued

SEX ISN'T THE BIG ISSUE

Other questions?

Person: Okay, you're affectionate and loving and hugging and hugging. Well, what happens when you've gone the five or six days and thoughts turn to sex?

Harvey: I think the first thing you better do, if you are going to fool around with sex, is get a little relaxed about it, because if you don't, it isn't going to be much fun. And sex should be fun. It's ridiculous to ever have sex that isn't fun. So don't be in a rush about it. If somebody is uptight, or you're both equally uptight, talk about it. Agree that you'll sit there in the parked car, or where do you have your dates here? (*Laughter*) Well, sit there in what privacy you've got and agree that you'll take turns, five minutes each way, saying to each other with an anguished look on your face, "I want S-E-X," using a scared tone of voice. (*Laughter*) Or, as the case may be, "I don't want S-E-X," using a scared tone of voice. (*Laughter*) You'll find that you both discharge a lot. The one who's uptight and wants sex will think, "Oh hell, I don't need it. Let's go have a coke." And the other one may even come around to saying, "In due time . . ." (*Laughter*)

Now, I don't know. Do you have a big information gap still, or do you all know all about contraceptives? Well, if you don't know all about them, there should be some place to find out. Is there a place on campus where a shy guy or girl can go and find out?

Contraceptives are just chemicals that work more or less well. (*Laughter*) The one outstanding rule is that they don't work if you leave them in the medicine cabinet. If you aren't prepared to have children, you should certainly know something. If you're going to play around with sex, you should know about

contraceptives and you should know the laws of averages, and the batting averages³⁴ of the different kinds. If you are very concerned and anxious, you should use at least three of them at once. (*Laughter*) That helps. It's much better not to have that fear present, you see, in your first adventure.

But generally—talk about it, laugh about it, relax about it. Most people who rush into sex do so because they think it's the only way to get close. You'd be amazed at how much the hugging—the long, slow, good hugs—takes the edge off your supposed sex drive. You're really wild to be close, you see. That's the real drive. That's the real, heavy drive, because people need that to survive.

You'll find as you get more relaxed (speaking as a man who's had lots of Co-Counseling sessions on it) that the so-called sex drive isn't much of a drive at all. It's an ability. It's very much under the control of your rational faculties, if you get the tension off the subject. You plan what you do with sex, you plan it to be real good, real pleasant, so that it has good results for everybody concerned, and you don't fool around unless it does.

You get away from that desperate feeling, you know, "I'm going to go 'crazy' unless I make out³⁵ tonight," or something like that. Because it isn't true. You're going "crazy" from loneliness, from not having a chance to touch. That's the real thing. But it's given this light coat of paint that says it's the sex, you see. And maybe you get an erection whenever you think of hugging a woman, so you think it must be sex. No. Just hug for a while, whether you get an erection or not, and you may find that it goes away and you're just very happy.

You see what I'm saying, don't you? That really sex isn't the big issue. I'm not knocking it,³⁶ you know. It's great stuff in its place, if you go about it³⁷ rationally.

You don't make love unless you love. If you are perceptive and caring and pay attention to your partner and ask, "What would you like to do?" and "What's your favorite approach to this?" and if both of you are agreeing completely, you both experiment very carefully. But don't feel that you have to rush over the cliff at any particular time.



ANGELA HYLAND

³⁴ The batting averages means the chances of success.

³⁵ Make out means am sexual.

³⁶ Knocking it means finding fault with it, criticizing it.

³⁷ Go about it means do it.

The big thing is that you get acquainted and you get to love each other. If you don't have sex or you do have sex, that's fairly unimportant once you get down to being close and warm and loving. And you can do that right out here on the sidewalk. A great deal of it. You don't have to have that desperate urge to hide away in a corner somewhere because that's the only way you can get closeness, which you think is sex.

DISCHARGING FEELING IN LOVE

Now, I learned these things the hard way, because I sure started uptight. I remember a client I had, a woman who was quite a bit older than I, and she was a very lovable character, but she was a character. One night she had a crisis and called; she had to have a session. That was about the first year I was working as a counselor, and I came down to give her an evening session. (I was foolish about that in those days; I didn't save my own time.) She talked about what was bothering her, and then she said, "I want to tell you something." "Yes, what?" She said, "I want to tell you I love you."

I thought, "Oh, God." (*Laughter*) "What will I do? I've got to remain true to my boy counselor's oath. I don't want to break up my marriage." I had all kinds of "crazy" thoughts. I said, "That's fine, but now let's get at what you need to work on." She said, "I am getting at what I need to work on." And through green lips I said, "Yes?" And she said, "I love you." I objected. She said, "Look, this is my time, and I know what I need to work on. I just want you to shut up³⁸ and sit down there and listen. I want to tell you I love you."

I said I'd shut up and sit down and listen. And she said, "I love you. I love you. Oh boy, but I love you." And she started to cry. And she cried. And she told me she loved me, and she cried and she cried and she cried. She had a real good session. Well, I felt a little better about it by then. I knew about crying. I didn't know about this other. (*Laughter*)

And she went on and she cried a long while, and she kept telling me that she loved me. And she shuddered, she shivered, she shook, and she told me she loved me. And discharge was going on just the way it's supposed to. And then she laughed. She said, "I love you," and she howled. It was getting late, and finally she sat up, put on her shoes, and said, "Well, I feel a lot better. I feel quite a lot better. You're a good kid, but you're really not much." My relief was enormous.

"If you don't have sex or you do have sex, that's fairly unimportant once you get down to being close and warm and loving."

You run into³⁹ this in Co-Counseling all the time. You do a good job, you counsel each other, you see how human the other person is, and, oh my God, you love that person. And he or she loves you. And beginning Co-Counselors go,⁴⁰ "Oh, what will we do?" If you take Co-Counseling classes, you'll see that we have some instructions called the "blue pages," in the back of the elementary manual, which say in effect, "Do not socialize with somebody you met as a Co-Counselor. It won't work. Do not romance your Co-Counselor." Now if you knew him or her beforehand, that's different. You had another relationship. But if you met him or her in Co-Counseling, keep it to counseling.

But this doesn't keep people from falling in love with their Co-Counselors. You have to help people with it all the time and basically have them work on it in a session. See?

You gave me a hug a while ago, didn't you? Do you love me?

Person: Yes.

(*Harvey calls the woman up to work on it with him. He has her tell him that she loves him, over and over. She laughs and laughs. He asks if she'd like to hug him while she says I love you, and she says yes. She continues saying I love you and laughing. He asks for her thoughts, and she refuses to say. He has her say, "That was an interesting thought," which brings more laughter.*)

Other questions?

Person: Does repetition ever make the word "love" meaningless?

Harvey: Not in the real sense, but it will take off the charged up, phony meaning that you may have associated with it. "This can't be love unless I'm sick to my stomach." That sort of meaning will disappear, because it's just the fear and embarrassment and grief that are tied to the love. But the real meaning of the word, no.

continued . . .

³⁸ Shut up means be quiet.

³⁹ Run into means encounter.

⁴⁰ Go means say.



DEBBY GLICKMAN

... continued

You try to say, “I love you,” to a girl or a guy, and you mean to say it, “I love you” (*with a loving, warm tone*) and it comes out “I love you” (*with a scared, tense tone*). You’ll notice the embarrassment and tension in your voice, and sometimes the tension will masquerade as meaning to you—you’ll feel the vibration and think, “I’m near to something.” Actually, you’re near to discharge, which is why it feels so significant. If you can discharge, then you’ll wind up⁴¹ with, “God, I love you” (*with a warm, loving tone*)—your relaxed, warm, caring love that doesn’t have to do foolish things or be jerked by puppet strings. It’s so much better.

LOVE LOTS OF PEOPLE

And there’s lots of that in the world. There’s lots of love. You’re surrounded by oceans of it. All of you here want to love at least six other people, don’t you? See? And everybody here is dying⁴² to be loved by six other people. Right? Help yourself. (*Laughter*) You have this ocean of caring for each other.

I’m saying that really, love is love. And you should go to bed with the one it make sense to go to bed with. You should love as many people as possible, and only go to bed with the one it makes sense to go to bed with and only marry the one it makes sense to marry.

I’m saying that love is really wide and that there aren’t different kinds of it, there aren’t different kinds of love. You have different degrees of openness, but you can work toward more openness.

⁴¹ Wind up means end up.

⁴² Dying means desperate.

You get this argument about the U.S. love marriage versus the European planned marriage. In the U.S. love marriage, you follow your heart. (*Laughter*) In traditional U.S. culture it’s considered ridiculous to check on how much money he makes, or whether he drinks too much, or anything. No, you act on your heart. Anything else is crass and intellectualizing, and so on. This is a deep tradition in all the love stories: you just know who it is; you follow your feeling. Well, feelings are not a good basis for human beings to act on.

Now, it’s nice to have good feelings and do logical things at the same time, and we find that the more distress people get rid of, the more they do this. But feelings are a guide for other mammals, and for birds and possibly reptiles. They were a great improvement, a great step forward, over the more primitive clockwork as a guide to action. The seeking of pleasure, the avoiding of pain, was an improvement for mammals and birds and reptiles.

But a human being has the ability to think logically. For a human being to act on feelings, against logic, is to take a step back, and this is what usually happens, because of the distress patterns that we accumulate. We do just that. The U.S. culture says you should act on your feelings. You should marry the one who sets your heart pounding and makes your throat dry. *Love!* In the European planned marriage, the families get together and discuss whether or not the two people are suited to each other in tastes and temperament and the amount of dowry; whether or not they could make a go of it and would be good parents together. Then they tell the young people, “You’re going to marry so and so.”⁴³

Now the USers have derided the European planned marriage, and with good reason because there’s enforcement involved. You’re not allowed to think for yourself about who you want to marry; somebody tells you. And the Europeans have replied, “But the planned marriage works out at least as well, on the average, as the U.S. love marriage.” And they’re right, you see, because two kinds of mistakes are being made.

What I’m saying is that everyone should be open to and close with a lot of other people. You should love lots of people, and then from all the people you love you should, on the basis of good sense, choose the one you go to bed with, choose the one you marry. I think we have the best of both worlds there.

⁴³ So and so is a way of indicating somebody’s name.

In the United States, when you ask, “Why did you marry him?” so many young people say, over and over, “He was the only one who asked me.” Well, this is terrible, because lots of people would have asked her except that she was too shy, or the culture was too inhibiting for her to get out and swing her hips where anybody could see her, or something like that. She didn’t get around; she didn’t know how to make friends. So she’s caught in this thing.

I’m saying that all of us should love a lot of people. Every guy should date lots of girls and get to know them well and fall permanently in love with at least fifty of them, with whom he’ll have warm, loving relationships all the rest of his life regardless of how often he sees them. Every girl should have the same, at least fifty. It would keep you busy, but what the hell are the youthful years for? And then from all these people you know, choose wisely and with logic the one who will make a pair, the one who will make a good husband and with whom you want to settle down. But you’ll never quit loving the other forty-nine. That’s my proposal.

GETTING MARRIED

There comes a time when you want to get married. And you don’t have the overwhelming push on you anymore that you’ve got to have children or the human race is going to die out. Up until about now, people have had this on them, you see. Two generations ago, people had twelve kids, and ten of them died before they were six, so they had this enormous push on them to procreate before the human race got wiped out by disease or weather or something.

As soon as we have a rational society, we’re going to say openly to people, “Please don’t have children until you’re prepared to be a good, warm, loving parent to them and not pass on any of your hurts.” People will hear us if we say that right. And boy, the birth rate’s going to drop awfully⁴⁴ fast, because it takes getting rid of your own hurts first to keep from passing them on to the children.

A lot of the urge now to have children is simply loneliness. For many women it’s the first time they’ve had somebody they could be really close to, and they tell you this: “My little baby, he’s mine Mmmmmmmmm, how good he smells,” or something like that. Well, babies are that nice. I get a little one in my hands, and I say, “Oh God, how can I stand not to have one every day?” until I think of the work involved.

⁴⁴ In this context, awfully means very.



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But a lot of this is just loneliness. Actually, there are so darn many children waiting for parents, waiting to be adopted, that there’s no need to push the population. We’ve got to clean up the environment and allow the biosphere to flourish again. So you’re not under any kind of pressure to get married.

Even so, there’ll come a time when you’ll want to try living with somebody and seeing how deep of a relationship you can get. You’ve worked out the stuff, you know you can get along for a few days maybe. What would it be like if you just got to know each other better, and better, and better? And you do that. Of course, if you’re smart you don’t get any idea that you’re just going to sit and look into each other’s eyes all the time, because you’d bore each other to death. A good marriage certainly has independence in it as well as togetherness.

Old Kahlil Gibran⁴⁵ said it so well in his little marriage ceremony: that the pine and the palm do not grow well in each other’s shadow, or something like that—that you are always two, you are never one. And of course that is true. But it doesn’t mean that you can’t have a lovely relationship. So, I think you’d want to get married (if that’s the term we’re still using).

DISCHARGING POSSESSIVENESS

Person: Have you ever found yourself in a bind in which the opposite sex has taken on⁴⁶ possessiveness in her love—a demand? Whereas your kind of love would be different toward her? Have you ever run into complications like that?

continued . . .

⁴⁵ Kahlil Gibran was a Lebanese American artist, poet, and writer.

⁴⁶ In this context, taken on means adopted.

COUNSELING PRACTICE

... continued

Harvey: Sure. Often a woman client will feel love for me, and I'll reassure her that I love her, because I do. But then, because she has some hang-ups⁴⁷ about sex, she'll ask, "When are you going to bed with me?" And I'll say, "Maybe never." "But I want to go to bed with you!" And I'll say, "Again." And if she says it three times, she's either crying or shaking or laughing so hard that the edge comes off.⁴⁸ And I'll keep her at it,⁴⁹ and we'll wind up very much in love with each other but with no hang-ups, no enforcement. The stuff will discharge, you see, and dissipate like that.

Person: I just wanted to say, not possessive like wanting to go to bed but possessive like, "You're

⁴⁷ Hang-ups means distresses, confusions.

⁴⁸ The edge comes off means the tension dissipates.

⁴⁹ At it means doing it.

not going out with⁵⁰ other girls," or, in my case, not wanting her to date other guys. I think there are girls like that, and guys like that.

Harvey: You need to have a session in which you take turns saying to each other, "Me, only me." (*Laughter*) When you've both done it a lot, you'll say, "Okay, once a week," or something like that. Now, I hope you all understand that I'm not saying step out on⁵¹ your true love. That isn't what I'm talking about. I'm talking about loving, not being promiscuous or round-heeled⁵² or anything like that. Okay?

⁵⁰ Going out with means dating.

⁵¹ Step out on means be unfaithful to.

⁵² Round-heeled means yielding readily to sexual intercourse.



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My Intensive About Hearing Aids: Deafness Is Benign



I grew up with nobody in my family, or anyone else, noticing my forty to fifty percent hearing loss, which was not diagnosed until I was seventeen years old. I have had no shortage of distresses and restimulations about trying to hear.

Recently I decided to get hearing aids, hoping that my capacity to live the big life I have set up for myself would be maximized to the fullest by this project.

I decided to get some *significant* help, as I wanted to get through the trial period with the hearing aids without giving up. So I asked Louisa Flander, the Area Reference Person for the Melbourne (Victoria, Australia) RC Community, if I could come down and have sessions with people from the Melbourne Community. (Melbourne is where I learned RC.)

Louisa is one of my most significant allies. In one of my first RC classes she reminded people to speak up and speak clearly and look at me when they spoke. She



PHYLLIS ROSE

let them know that it was no use speaking quietly and mumbling and forgetting I was deaf. She repeatedly over the years helped me to claim my deafness. Even if I don't see her or talk to her often, she is a bit like one of my vertebrae, keeping me upright and strong.

She thought an intensive would be good and that the people involved would benefit greatly from giving me one-way time. I chose a group of people (including Louisa) whom I know love me and can think well about me. I had an average of three one-hour sessions a day, for five days, and worked on my "project" from many angles.

Louisa gave me the simple direction, "I am deaf," to be said in a completely relaxed tone. I was able to be at ease, like a happy baby. The idea that deafness is benign is a new and remarkable perspective for me, and my struggle to hear is evaporating, allowing much deeper and more profound discharge to surface.

I greatly appreciate my Co-Counsellors' generosity of time and intelligence. Having tried determinedly to hear for the past forty-four years, I have now decided to try being deaf as well.

Yes, hearing aids can help you to be deaf as well as help you to hear!

I highly recommend to anyone wanting to shift a big chunk of old distress to take some time out and organise a bunch of sessions, and not stray from the project. I felt like a dog chewing an old bone. Some of the time I wanted to give up and just go home, but I had a plan and support.

Thanks everyone. You will be *hearing* from me.

Lazuli Kubenk
Dunoon, New South Wales, Australia

I was excited when I got the e-mail from Louisa asking me to be involved with the intensive. I love Christine Marnane, who organized it. I enjoy the smart, loving, no-nonsense way she thinks about and consistently supports people. I also love being part of a team, part of our Community, supporting people in strategic ways to make their lives big.

I was surprised by how much fun I had counseling. It was better than having my own session. I attributed this in good measure to the client's willingness to be client and her having a project that really mattered to her. I also had lots of contact with Christine, and with other people involved, both before and during the intensive. I felt well connected and well discharged.

continued . . .



ALISA LEMIRE BROOKS

COUNSELING PRACTICE

... continued

This project was a tribute to our Co-Counselling Community. We have the Community we do, with people who are willing and ready to be generous in the way that we are, partly because we are good, wonderful people. It's our human nature to want to be generous and think well about each other. Also, our leaders have modelled generosity and thought well about us, over many years, and this has helped us to do the same for each other and for others.

Karen Rosauer
St. Kilda East, Victoria, Australia

I found the opportunity to give one-way time to Lazuli inspiring. I benefitted because I got an extended opportunity to keep my attention out. I was able to notice how well the client was doing. I could embrace the benign reality of the world. The opportunity to be a counsellor for an extended period of time, with a committed client, helped me to see the power we all possess to make our lives wonderful. I was aware of the commitment and support provided by all the counsellors and that I was part of something bigger than just me and Lazuli.

The experience has contributed to my development as both a client and a counsellor. I have a deeper sense of the purity and simplicity of the discharge process. I am less distracted by the details of a client's restimulation. As client I am able to discharge deeply on early fears, with a sense of my own complete goodness and safety in the present.

Victoria Kemp
Melbourne, Victoria, Australia

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



TIM JACKINS



NANCY LEMON

New Audio on the RC Web Site

Our first audio recording to be available for listening on the RC web site is of Harvey Jackins giving an introductory lecture about RC, in 1986 (86 minutes). You can find it under "About RC" on the RC home page: <www.rc.org>.

“ When peoples care for you and cry for you—and love you ... they can straighten out your soul. ”

Langston Hughes

Assisting a Child with Repetitive, “Driven” Play

*A letter from Patty Wipfler,
the International Liberation Reference Person for Parents*

Dear Parents:

A question about repetitive, “driven” play during special time¹ has come up on the RC e-mail discussion list for leaders of parents. In brief, here are my thoughts:

1) “Driven,” repetitive, highly scripted play, both inside and outside of special time, is a sign of fear that needs to be discharged. The tighter the child becomes during play, and the more dedicated he or she is to that one kind of play, the bigger you can assume the fear is that he or she is signaling you about.

2) Children can’t discharge their deep fears until they’ve been greatly reassured. They need to be able to trust in the parent’s closeness and attention. It can take weeks or months to build the sense of safety a child needs to discharge the fears indicated in scripted play. The tighter the parent’s feelings, and the shorter the parent’s patience around this kind of play, the more vital it is that the parent use his or her own session time to work on whatever gets restimulated for him or her. Often the scripted play is just one way the child’s fears show up in behavior. Aggressive, impulsive, or extremely directive behaviors are other common signs that there’s a big set of fear that needs to be tackled.

3) When you know your child has suffered a big early hurt, you need to set a goal of working out a partnership with your child that will allow him or her to do steady, deep work on the fear seated there. Goals of “getting her not to bite” or “getting him to cooperate in play” are smaller than the goal of setting up a partnership for the liberation of your child from that fear, coupled with the liberation of you from the feelings that make it difficult to move toward your child, relaxed and attentive, during hard times. When the hurt is big and early, it’s both of you who are going to need support, both of you who will, step by step, set up a way to work together so that the hurt can be healed.

4) A child can discharge greatly but not gain the needed perspective to move forward in his or her behavior if the parent is tight, has an agenda, or is “looking for discharge” while the child tries to offload early hurt. There’s a way that, in RC, we parents tend to focus on the discharge we’re “getting” from our children, which is different from focusing on being the emotional anchor, the safe harbor, the warm and caring connector, for our children while they work through moments when they felt danger. While your child discharges fear in a big session, you need to focus on connecting, on communicating acceptance and safety, and on supporting your child with whatever process lets him or her show how awful it was (while providing enough resistance to keep you both safe from harm). You need to move your mind away from “How can I get this child to discharge?” to “He’s lost. How can I let him know I’m here for him? How can I let him know that whatever frightened him is over, that it’s never going to happen that way again?”

5) Setting up this kind of work takes work in itself. Often children need us to work on our aversion to the play that’s scripted. To loosen up. To find ways to connect during that play. To keep hunting for little breaks in the envelope of isolation they live in. So, in this first stage of a project to recover a child, special time works

continued . . .

¹ Special time is an activity, developed in RC family work, during which an adult puts a young person in full charge of their mutual relationship. 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.



KATIE KAUFFMAN

... continued

kind of like a non-permissive session for the parent. Our child does this thing we're really, really tired of, and we do our best to connect and then go and discharge hard about all our feelings. It's permissive for the child, at least at first, but non-permissive for us! It doesn't work to carry your same tensions into every special time with your child, who is signaling you that there's a big issue here. Use the special time to push yourself against acting on those urgent tensions, and then use your Co-Counseling sessions to rage, to despair, to laugh, to "attack" your Co-Counselor with the same behavior your child engages in that irritates you. Go for it.

6) Set up other ways to make it safer for your child to discharge fear—especially the lighter side of fear. Wrestling, roughhousing, pillow "fights," affectionate tussling that is attentive to what's fun for the child, what lets laughter roll, are vital in the unzipping of a tight package of fear. In physical play, every laugh is brought on by surviving some restimulation of a feeling of threat. Your chasing and not quite catching your child is a survival experience. Your bouncing your child hard on a bed or sofa so that he or she laughs hard is a survival experience.

Children need hundreds of these "survival experiences" each day to build the trust with you, and the trust in themselves, to tackle the deeper terror that drives their nutty² behavior. I don't see children climbing out of fear without this kind of physical play. The closeness, the solid but friendly banging around with one another, is just what a frightened child needs. And setting up a good half hour a day of regular (perhaps timed, so you can stand to do it) vigorous play that's *not* special time (though special time can turn into this kind of play) gives your child a chance to be disappointed, to feel insulted, to have little issues that help him or her wade into the deeper work that he or she needs to do. You're paying attention; the play makes life as good as it gets; it's a good arena for deeper work; so don't worry when your child suddenly takes offense at some little thing. That's the process deepening, an opportunity emerging, right there in your living room.

7) Sometimes major restimulations need to be removed from your child's life for him or her to gather the safety he or she needs. Mornings without real connection, having to go to a school that's not a good fit, not enough time separate from a sibling, being expected to do things he or she just can't do right now, sleeping alone—sometimes a lowering of the daily restimulation load by changing these kinds of things is vital in order to create enough safety for a child with a deep fear to begin to discharge and recover. We may need to free ourselves up from restimulating expectations as parents—organize our minds, time, and goals so that we can set as a high priority the emotional project of recovering our child. It's hard to figure out how to arrange our lives as parents, and no one can make the decisions for us. I will say with certainty that deep-seated fears that show up in early childhood don't go away without a parent investing energy in this kind of an organized project.

8) When you are more relaxed around the play that's scripted and driven, and you've paved the way to safety with more roughhousing, that's the time to set a limit. Move in and say, "We're not going to do XYZ in special time for this month. We can do other things," and starve the pattern. Don't allow any of it, in or out of special time. You can starve the pattern playfully. You can also move in and just be with your child while he or she reaches for the deeper feelings. Both are necessary over time.

The feelings held in place by engaging in the scripted play or driven activity will emerge. They will emerge even if you don't lay the above groundwork and just set the limit, but in that case your child won't be able to discharge at all, or the discharge will be done from the perspective of you as enemy rather than you as partner. The same awful things will be said during discharge, whether you've laid good emotional groundwork or not, but your child can tell³ on the inside whether you're just fed up with⁴ that kind of play, or you're trying to log some hours of discharge, or you're reaching in to help him or her with an awful experience he or she has had. The behavior will change for good⁵ after sessions in which you've set

² Nutty means irrational.

³ In this context, tell means perceive.

⁴ Fed up with means tired of and disgusted with.

⁵ For good means permanently.

up the best support for yourself, you're freshly discharged, and you've got your mind on partnering with your child and connecting. Discharge with a tense parent can be of limited help, but it doesn't let your child feel truly met. When you have organized yourself to be there for him or her, to reach for him or her, things will move.

Your restriction of special time has, in this case, been done with important preparation and thought. There are a million other things to do that your child can choose from. If your child can't choose one of those million things, he or she is working on an important block in his or her thinking. Special time will still be a way to connect, a way to give your child lots of permission, a way for your child to express himself or herself to you. You built lots of trust using that tool, you worked on what your child showed you that you need to work on, and now you are responding to the message, "I can't think outside of this little box," that's been waving at you for months or years. It's okay.

9) You don't have to be the picture of perfection every day! But you do have to keep working on your end of things. Children who have early terror to discharge do best when their parents are also working well, with good close support, on their own early fears and aloneness. That's just the way it works. Our work fuels their work. Their work shows us where we must do our work.

I hope this helps. The healing of deep fear is such a big issue right now for us as a species and as a civilization. Thanks to all of you parents who are working so hard and with such heart to learn how to do this for each other and for your children. It's worthy work!

Palo Alto, California, USA
Reprinted from the RC e-mail
discussion list for leaders of parents



● Two Publications ●

Rational Island Publishers has recently printed two publications that we would like you to consider reading.

One is **El Varón**, the Spanish translation of *The Human Male*, which contains important information about RC's understanding and perspective on being a man.

The second is the reformatted and reprinted edition of **The Human Situation** (in English). This book contains twenty-five articles, by Harvey Jackins, that form a significant portion of the foundation of the theory and practices of Re-evaluation Counseling. For many years it has been an important source of information for everyone learning RC.

Tim Jackins

● Dos Publicaciones ●

Recientemente Rational Island Publishers ha impreso dos publicaciones que nos gustaría considerar leer.

*Una es **El Varón**, la traducción en español de The Human Male la cual contiene información importante acerca del entendimiento y la perspectiva de RC sobre ser un hombre.*

*La segunda, es la edición reformateada y reimpressa de **La Situación Humana** (en inglés). Este libro contiene veinticinco artículos por Harvey Jackins, que forman una porción significativa de la fundación de la teoría y la práctica del Proceso de Reevaluación y Co-escucha. Por muchos años esta ha sido una fuente importante de información para todos/as en el aprendizaje de RC.*

Tim Jackins

Negotiating This Wonderful Literature

I love the quotes in *Present Time*. They help me sort through my day and my RC work.

I store ones that are particularly useful in a file in my computer. Most recently, when getting ready for my teachers' and leaders' workshop I went through them. I then read the pieces of literature that certain ones came from and used some of those as assigned reading before the workshop.

How cool* is it for a person who was a poor student to have help negotiating all of this wonderful literature? Unbelievably helpful!

Sharon Peters
New York, New York, USA

* Cool means wonderful, great.



The No-Socializing Policy¹

*From discussions on the e-mail discussion lists
for RC teachers and for RC Community members*

Dear RC teachers,

A student of mine has a solo dance performance and has invited people in our RC class to come and support her. I'm wondering what you have figured out about these types of situations.

More specifically, here are a couple of questions from students that I wasn't sure how to answer: Should they be expected to pay? Can they come accompanied by other people who are not Co-Counselors, like their spouses or friends?

Thanks for your input.

Odelia Shargian
Tenafly, New Jersey, USA

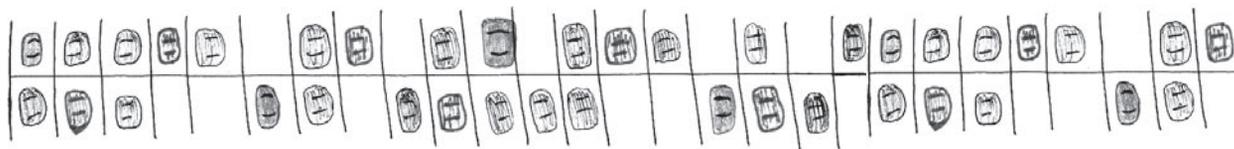
I think we want to be thoughtful about requests for "support" in RC. In general, our role as Co-Counselors is to assist our clients to discharge, not necessarily to reassure them in places where they feel nervous or insecure. Often when Co-Counselors ask us to support them, they are asking for reassurance, not assistance with discharge. And the case you describe, inviting class members to come to a dance performance, sounds rather suspect to me—understandable, but not necessarily oriented toward using the counseling process to remove distress recordings.

That said, sometimes it can make sense to go as counselor(s) to support a client who is performing in a non-RC event. In these situations, I think each and every counselor

involved has to have a reasonably clear picture of the client's distress, what kind of contradiction the counselor is offering by attending the event, and how the supplied contradiction will likely be used by the client in sessions. The counselor *must* have this picture, and it's best if the client can also articulate what contradiction he or she is seeking and how he or she plans to use it. When everyone is clear about what is happening and why, it can be a powerful and useful contradiction.

I used to have a regular (weekly) Co-Counseling relationship with a professional singer whose career for many years was affected by recordings of profound humiliation that attached to her work. I attended many of her concerts as her counselor, and I think it was an important part of our relationship. (I went to at

¹ 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.



PARKING LOT • AM

least thirty concerts over the course of our twelve-year Co-Counseling relationship.)

Because we had a close Co-Counseling relationship, I considered it my job to help her move her heaviest chronic distresses. I needed to understand how the distresses functioned in her life and work and to keep track of² how they were shifting over time. Many of her difficulties showed up especially in auditions and performances, so it was useful to both of us for me to be with her in those situations. I would mostly try to notice everything I could about her performance, both the technical and emotional parts of what she showed on stage, and develop an accurate perspective about her that could be used later in sessions.

Sometimes I would go afterward to social gatherings with her friends or family. (Performers can be very excited after performing and may need a place for “rapid, animated talking” discharge, preferably with group attention.) When I accompanied her to these gatherings, I would try to think about them as naturalized sessions in which I was a counselor. For example, I would gently try to organize conversations so that everyone could tell her what they loved about her performance. Otherwise people would not think to put much attention on her.

Regarding money, I think if we ask RCers to come to an event on our behalf, we should not expect them to pay for it. We need to keep it clear that our motivations for asking them are not financial or social, which would violate the no-socializing policy.

Barbara Boring
Boise, Idaho, USA

² Keep track of means follow.



PIKE PLACE MARKET, SEATTLE, WASHINGTON, USA • EDWARD ELBERS

“No socializing” questions are always good ones. I think it’s important to realize that the no-socializing guideline does not in most cases specify “rules” for particular situations. It is to prevent non-thinking and distressed motivations from influencing our relationships. Always on these issues, we have to discharge to figure out what our motivations are and to remove any motivations based on distresses. So in my opinion there is no “yes” or “no” in many of these situations.

As an RC teacher I am often asked, “If I do this, is it a violation of the no-socializing policy?” The person often wants a yes or no because he or she doesn’t want to “break the rules” (which I respect). Most often I ask a few questions and say, “Well, let’s give you a session or two and find out if it is or not.” Are the actions based on the counselor’s distress or on clear thinking about what will be a contradiction to the client’s distress?

The situation you describe is complicated, and giving an answer depends on a lot of factors I could not know—the main one being how much thinking is going to be going on.³ Sometimes these actions are the “easy” response to a client’s distress, rather than the “harder” response of giving him or her a good session.

I had a client ask me to help her with her calculus homework. I knew what she was studying, and I could have helped her. I told her that I would not, and that I knew she could do it. She pleaded with me and cried, and then got angry with me and cried, and when she realized I would not change my mind, she started on her homework and cried and raged through it all. It was painful for me to watch her struggle and not help, but she got through all of her calculus problems and then gave me a session. She achieved her goal and was part of the first wave of women in the 1970s to go to medical school.

Always I think the question is, “Am I being the counselor or am I sympathizing (or acting on some other distress)?” If it were me, I would limit the number of other people I pulled into the situation. Having too many would make it more complicated to keep track of my thinking and that of the others—unless we were a team that already had done a lot of thinking about the client and had a clear plan.

On the other hand, I have gone to funerals on Native American reservations, which seemed to be a powerful contradiction⁴ for my Co-Counselor. In the process I necessarily had interactions with my Co-Counselor’s family and the community. Because of the way my

continued . . .

³ Going on means happening.

⁴ Contradiction to distress

COUNSELING PRACTICE

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Co-Counselor and I thought about it, these efforts were often good introductions to RC. They gave people a good demonstration of what RC is about. In a community in which the effects of genocide are so heavy and damaging, the intelligent commitment of a trained, dependable ally can be an enormous contradiction for everyone present. I would not conclude that going to a funeral with your Native Co-Counselor is never a violation of the no-socializing policy. For another pair of people, with not as clear an understanding, it could be.

Co-Counseling does not work so well at arm's length.⁵ We sometimes have to wade in, get dirty, help the person get his or her dishes washed and children to bed, and then sit down and have a session. As a rule I would not do this, but if it was a question of getting the person out of the distress, if I thought it would be the most powerful way of moving his or her re-emergence forward, I would not hesitate. On a place like a reservation, people are not going to be attracted to Co-Counseling unless they see that the commitment to a person's re-emergence is real. That being said, I do

⁵ At arm's length means from a distance.

not deal in this way with every death in a Co-Counselor's life—only when the counseling relationship seems to require it.

I always refer back to Harvey's⁶ "step three" of how to counsel: *Contradict the distress sufficiently. The client will always discharge.*⁷ We can't shy away when a contradiction is needed.

It is always forward moving for a Co-Counseling relationship, and a Community, to figure out these kinds of situations.

Dan Nickerson
Freeport, Maine, USA

⁶ Harvey Jackins'

⁷ "In Step 0, the counselor reviews his or her own goal of seeing to it that the client re-emerges decisively. In the process he or she reminds himself or herself that the client is inherently a person of great intelligence, value, decisiveness, and power, as well as a person needing assistance with emergence from distress. In particular, the counselor notices and remembers where this particular client is capable, treasurable, and already functioning, or close to functioning, elegantly and well. In Step 1, the counselor pays enough attention to the client to see clearly what the distress consists of. In Step 2, the counselor thinks of all possible ways to contradict the client's distress. In Step 3, the counselor contradicts the client's distress sufficiently. The client will always discharge." From p. 42 of *The List*, by Harvey Jackins

The following is a response to a Co-Counselor who invited an RC Community to a wedding:

It is good news to hear of T—'s wedding, and I appreciate your intent to bring the Community together at this happy event. It's great to inform the Community that it is happening.

However, in RC we have a "no-socializing" policy. We have agreed that our relationships will be Co-Counseling relationships, not socializing relationships. Guideline M. of the 2009 *Guidelines*⁸ is helpful in understanding this policy. Part of it says, "Get-togethers of Co-Counselors must be organized primarily for discharge, re-evaluation, and group counseling activity." A wedding does not meet that criterion. The reason for this is also stated:

"We do not want undischarged patterns to interfere with the safety, trust, and effectiveness of the Co-Counseling relationship. . . . If we socialize with people who are Co-Counselors, there is a tendency, whether noticed or not, to 'lean' on those people (and for them to lean on us) instead of being mutually responsible."

I realize that a wedding is a one-time event and that Co-Counselors attending the wedding would not necessarily be intending to establish ongoing social relationships with T—. However, our experience is that people's past hurts can cause them to have unaware expectations of one another (expectations that could show at the wedding) that are inconsistent with the Co-Counseling relationship and that can cause difficulties in that relationship. The Co-Counseling relationship provides some of the

⁸ *Guidelines for the Re-evaluation Counseling Communities*



JO PERRY

most important support any two people can give each other, and we do not want to compromise it with even occasional socializing.

It may be that T— would like to have access to Co-Counseling thinking and support, and maybe even a short session, sometime during the wedding day. If she wants that, then she can think of one or two Co-Counselors (with whom she already has a Co-Counseling relationship) and ask them if they would consider coming to her wedding and providing her

that special support. T— and the Co-Counselors should each talk openly about any difficulties in their relationship that might arise from having the Co-Counselors at the wedding. If after this discussion, and some discharge, the Co-Counselors agree to come and T— still wants them to come, then it is fine for them to come. But the Co-Counselors would be coming in the role of Co-Counselor, not guest—they would be coming expecting to pay excellent attention to T—, and her family and spouse-to-be.

Please let me know if this does not make sense to you. The no-socializing policy can be difficult to understand until one has had lots of experience in RC and lots of sessions on it. I'm happy to answer any questions. Can I leave it to you to go back to all the people you announced the wedding to and make a correction?

Diane Shisk
Alternate International
Reference Person
Seattle, Washington, USA

Counseling on a Life-Threatening Disease

For all of my sixty-two years I've considered myself to be a healthy person. I have never had so much as a tonsillectomy and have always eaten well and respected my body. So I was quite surprised to be diagnosed, in January 2010, with a rare disease (only three thousand reported cases per year in the United States) called amyloidosis. I was told that without treatment my life expectancy would be short.

Amyloidosis is a malfunctioning of protein production in the bone marrow. The protein becomes misshapen and attaches itself to any organ in the body, eventually causing organ failure. Fortunately, there was a protocol for treating it that had a relatively high rate of success: administering chemotherapy (to put the bone marrow production to sleep) and then doing an "autologous stem cell transplant" in which the patient's own previously harvested stem cells are infused back in to reawaken the bone marrow, which then starts producing normal proteins. It sounded like a radical and dangerous procedure, but realizing the alternative was much worse, I proceeded.

Once I made the decision to go forward, I was terrified and needed help to get myself ready for the upcoming experience. I shared with my RC Community what was happening, and they immediately gathered 'round¹ me and set up a schedule of one-way sessions for me for the several weeks before I went into the

hospital. The weekend before going in, I had five forty-five-minute sessions, end-to-end, and worked mainly on my terror of the unknown. I worked on my very young self (I call her Malkie; my Hebrew name is Malka) and on my earliest childhood experiences of feeling terrified about illness. I also worked on specific unknowns of the treatment, such as the side effects of the chemotherapy. One of my directions: "One can never rule out death as a possible side effect" (said lightly). Or my counselor would say, "Let's assume you will get all of the side effects you can think of. What's the worst thing that can happen?" My reply: "My biggest fear is being buried alive (having pneumonia and not being able to breathe)." Contradiction²: "You'll probably ring for the nurse and no one will come" (said lightly). Contradictions like that scorned the fear and brought copious laughter.

continued . . .

² Contradiction to the distress

¹ Round means around.



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Then the direction was, "I am about to embark on the fight of my life, and I will don my armor and become Joan of Arc.³ Bring on the chemotherapy. General Farina⁴ will rally to the cry and, with the help of my stem cells and chemo sword, vanquish the amyloid. This is a grand adventure upon which I am about to embark" (reclaiming my power).

I also scanned when I was sick as a child and remembered how my dad always said, "Everything is going to be okay." I thought about how my now-ninety-five-year-old dad held me, as I wept on his shoulder while telling him of my diagnosis, and said, "You're going to be okay, because you are a strong woman."

I have always been a nurturer and giver and have had a hard time asking for help (internalized sexism). I discharged about how many people truly care about me and want to help and, in fact, gain something themselves from being a part of my support system. Another direction: "I'm a professional organizer. I can organize all of my friends, family, and counselors to be my foundation. I am not alone." (I did organize everyone to be on a group e-mail list, which I updated every day so that everyone knew exactly what was happening and could figure out ways to support me.)

By the end of the intensive I felt much more in present time and ready to embark on the treatment. I went into it saying that I would see each experience as unique and handle it in the moment with my best thinking.

I was told that my stay in the hospital would be two to three weeks. As it turned out,⁵ I was in the hospital a total of two months. The low point was when I spent five days in the Intensive Care Unit, after my blood pressure dropped to 70/30. During that time my muscles atrophied.

While I was in the hospital, several Co-Counselors would call me and offer me time. If I called them, they would always pick up the phone. Having that assurance that someone was always right there helped me to hold on to my flexible thinking. Upon my leaving, my

³ Joan of Arc is a national heroine of France and a Catholic saint who led the French army to several important victories during the Hundred Years' War (1337 to 1453).

⁴ General Farina refers to the author of this article, Marion Farina.

⁵ Turned out means happened.

doctors said they were impressed with my ability to stay in the moment through what turned out to be a grueling experience. I thanked them for noticing, and someday when they read the book I'm writing about my experience, they'll see how I did it.

Since leaving the hospital, I've had a bone marrow biopsy that showed that the amyloid is no longer in my bone marrow or blood. In other words, I am in remission for now. While there is no cure at this time for amyloidosis, one may be discovered while I am still alive, as I now have a life expectancy of at least twenty years. My RC Community is gathering 'round me to help me process the hospital experience and move forward with my new life, to which I am so looking forward.

Marion Farina
West Orange, New Jersey, USA

Marion would like to know of any other Co-Counselors who have amyloidosis and/or have had stem cell transplants, as she would like to start a phone support group. You can contact her at <farina39@verizon.net> or +1-973-243-9269.



Long-Range Goals Necessary

Lao Tze* said that a journey of a thousand miles must begin with a single step. Having set a lofty, long-range goal, one needs to calculate back from that goal to the steps it will take to accomplish it, including what needs to be done this very day. Similarly, to set immediate goals only, without long-range ones, is to misuse one's human capacity to really think and master the environment. Lack of long-range goals is quite likely to frustrate the achieving of even the immediate ones.

Harvey Jackins
From "The Necessity of Long-Range Goals,"
on page 109 of *The Human Situation*

* Lao Tze was a Chinese philosopher in the sixth century B.C.

Confidentiality and the No-Socializing Policy

*A talk by Tim Jackins at the Teachers' and Leaders' Workshop
in The Netherlands in September 2010*

Confidentiality is important. People don't want to Co-Counsel with anyone they don't trust to keep session material confidential. Confidentiality is useful in part because of how we've had to hide the way we've been hurt.

It's important that we not get sloppy about it, not talk about someone's session when we're client in another session. We don't get to talk about that person's material, no matter how restimulating it is, unless they give us permission. There are times to ask for that permission. Just simply say, "I want to be your counselor, but this is hard for me. Can I counsel openly with another person on what you're working on and where it gets to me¹? The person can decide to let you go and work on it, and you're not violating their confidentiality.

There is one case in which I think it can make sense to threaten to violate confidentiality. It has to do with² the no-socializing policy.³ It comes up occasionally in every Community and is often related to distresses about sex. (We'll try to talk later in the workshop about sex—just in case you were going to leave early.) Almost all of us have been tempted to socialize with a Co-Counselor, especially if we are young. Actually, that's not accurate. It usually just shows more with young people. We older people have learned to hide it well and to look like we don't think those thoughts. We do.

Some of us have gotten fascinated and lost and gone against the no-socializing policy. Shall we have a show of hands? (*Laughter*) We'll make it a little easier: How many people know someone else who has violated the no-socializing policy? (Clearly we all know the same two people.) If you were lucky, you had good enough relationships to work through it. If you weren't lucky, you're not here. When people get confused in this way and do not have good enough Co-Counseling relationships to work on it, they leave RC. They don't know what else to do. Then the relationship doesn't work and they also don't have Co-Counseling.

Sometimes people try to work on the feelings in their sessions. They want to tell someone, and you are it. They want you to understand and agree that "This is special. This has never happened ever before. Not to me, not to anyone. This is wonderful." It is wonderful; it just isn't what they feel it is. It's the restimulation of old frozen longings and the stopping, for a little while, of their feeling hopeless.

You remember when you've been infatuated with someone, in or out of RC. Your other distresses no longer matter. You don't know why they bothered you before because the world is wonderful. You sit and you smile, and you don't care. It's so wonderful not to feel the way you did before. You would do anything to keep this feeling. You would stop thinking in a minute, and you wouldn't even notice it.

continued . . .

¹ Gets to me means affects me.

² Has to do with means relates to.

³ The no-socializing policy of the RC Communities states that Co-Counselors should not set up any relationships, other than Co-Counseling, with other Co-Counselors or with people whom they first meet in a Co-Counseling context.

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So this happens to one of your Co-Counselors, and you're their main counselor. They are sure you will understand and agree with everything they feel like doing. So what do you do? Well, you probably get scared. You need to go get sessions on it, without identifying the person. And then you need to become their counselor, without sounding like their parent. You might want to tell them it's stupid: "It'll never work. You should listen to me." You can let them show their feelings fully and tell them they can't act on them—that part of being in RC is keeping an agreement not to act on those kinds of feelings. It's your job as their Co-Counselor to hold them to that agreement, even though they hate it. And you keep having sessions with them so they can hate it.

You ask them who this person reminds them of, and you get them working on all the earlier relationships that left them with frozen longings. If you're lucky, they can counsel their way through it. If you're not quite so lucky, they still want to act on the feelings, and you get scared and can't figure out how to keep them discharging. That is the point at which you get to threaten to break confidentiality. The threat is specific. You say something like, "I can't help you enough on this, so you need to talk to the Area Reference Person, or some other strong counselor, about it. I will go with you as you try to tell them. You need to keep counseling on this, and I don't think I can help you enough to do that. If you don't tell them about it, I will. But I want you to do it. This is yours. This is your struggle and your agreement. And only if you cannot do it will I step in and do it."

You try to get them to be responsible for taking care of the situation. If they're too infatuated to do so, your commitment to the RC Community requires you to move for them. You want them to know that they don't get to break their agreements with impunity, that the RC Community is important and they have to stick to our agreements. Otherwise there's no chance they can get the resource they need to get through a situation like this.

It doesn't often get to such a point, but you need to be strong enough to do this if it does. It's important that we be this committed to each other, to the Community, and to people in trouble. It is in the person's interest that you don't just leave them in that material.⁴

⁴ Material means distress.



SOREN HOLM

Dear Co-Counselors,

Good news! The full text of the 2009 *Guidelines for the Re-evaluation Counseling Communities* can now be found and searched electronically on the RC web site at http://www.rc.org/publications/guidelines_2009/index.html.



The *Guidelines* can be searched by table of contents, by section, and by topic.

Diane Shisk



Listening to Veterans



The Veterans and Allies Workshop, in May 2010, in Washington, USA, was led by Jim Driscoll, the Information Coordinator for Veterans, and Julian Weissglass, the International Commonality Reference Person for Wide World Change. It was the first veterans and allies workshop in RC. I attended as an ally.

Jim Driscoll led a panel of six veterans, including two women, one person targeted by racism, and one non-User. The panelists' ages ranged from young adult to their sixties. They had served in the Vietnam War; more recent conflicts, including in Iraq and Afghanistan; and with United Nations peacekeeping forces in Croatia and Cyprus. Veterans do not often tell their stories to non-veterans. It was important for us allies to get to hear from these veterans about their experiences as soldiers. I am grateful they were willing to share them with us.

Jim posed three questions to the panel. Below are the veterans' answers, grouped together by question.

Rachel Winters
Chapel Hill, North Carolina, USA



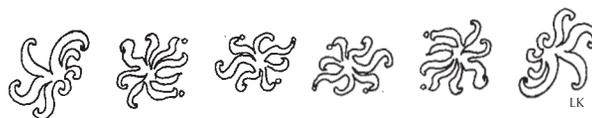
KK

What was good about serving in the military?

- It gave me direction as a wayward teen.
- I learned to keep my composure under duress. I was physically ready for anything and cultivated mental toughness.
- I had three hundred and fifty brothers who were fully committed to each other and to me. We could do anything. We went into combat together.
- I had grown up isolated, and the army brought me a family I hadn't had. It showed me things that were good that I didn't know about.
- I got to play with a three-million-dollar helicopter and other cool¹ things.
- I got to leave my home in government-subsidized low-cost housing. I had a place to live, food, and clothing. I got to meet people. I learned that I was smart.

¹ Cool means fun and interesting.

- I enjoyed being able to fly.
- I was in a U.S. military academy. I wanted to make my dad proud of me.
- It enabled me to leave home. My dad was anti-war, and I was reacting to him.
- I got to be in good physical condition.
- I learned that I could be good at doing things.



LK

What was difficult about your time in the military?

- Jumping out of planes is not natural.
- I had to cut off part of myself. I was living in a sado-masochistic environment.
- Getting shot at.
- Knowing that my time in the military was not my own and that time was ticking² on the rest of my life.
- I had bad choices. There were no jobs in the small lumber town where I'm from.
- Tolerating stupidity.
- Feeling bad about people not liking me (for being a soldier).
- Telling friends who were politically liberal or left³ that I was a soldier.
- The military punishes women for being sexual, for being women. This is because it refuses to enforce laws against people who sexually harass or abuse women.
- I experienced betrayal from military people I believed I could trust the most.
- The realization in combat that what I was doing was wrong and that even though I was on the wrong side I had no choice but to keep fighting.

continued . . .

² Time was ticking means time was passing.

³ Left means progressive.

LIBERATION

... continued

What can allies do to support veterans? What do you never want to hear or see again? What would you like allies to know?

- When I'm building a relationship with you, there is always a trust factor. If I don't feel like there's trust in the relationship, I won't talk about this with you.
- We have had traumatic experiences. Be there and truly listen. You are privy to something we don't usually show.
- I internalize things. Listen and care about what I have to say. See past my imperfections and be a friend.
- Not all of us joined the military out of political aspirations.
- Don't besmirch or scorn the duty I had to perform.
- I don't ever want to see the inside of a morgue again.
- As my ally, give me space to tell my story as many times as I need to. Be constant, vigilant. If I'm silent too long, come after me, because I don't know the way back.
- I am not from your country (the United States), and I don't have all the same values that you do. The military in my country is used primarily as a peace-keeping force to keep people from killing each other.
- Be prepared for occasional silence while I figure out what to say.

- It is hard to separate guy things from military things from human things. It's hard for me to trust people.
- Encourage me to think about my experiences.
- I don't want to talk about my experiences. I don't want to be doing this work. I don't want to think about it or feel it.
- Don't ask, "Why?" It's devastating and hard to articulate.
- Don't assume anything. Don't assume that I'd rather Co-Counsel with a veteran.
- I was always wrong in the military. Be gentle when correcting me.
- Don't ask questions about killing.
- If I'm working on anger, don't give me the direction to [pretend to] kill someone.
- I'd like to be able to get mad at you in a session.
- Work on how you have been hurt by war so that you can be a good ally.
- Call me on⁴ my oppressor material.⁵

⁴ Call me on means interrupt.

⁵ Material means distress.



Veterans' Oppression, and Counseling Veterans



As described in the current draft Policy on Veterans' Liberation, war and military service provide many positive experiences, such as camaraderie and the opportunity to develop and use new skills. Obviously there are many sources of stress as well.

One U.S. Army research group has compiled a list of attitudes and behaviors that are required to face fear and adversity in war and that it has observed in combat veterans. It calls them "Battlemind." They can be useful in combat, as a source of self-confidence and mental

toughness, but can be detrimental in civilian life. We could say that they are distress patterns that have helped us veterans get through difficult situations in the past but that should not be rigidly applied in present time.

I find it helpful to consider the connections between this list (which closely matches my own observations from working with veterans, both in and out of RC) and our list in RC of types of distresses: anger, fear, sadness, boredom. Those who would like to become better counselors to

veterans can consider the Army's list, which follows. Some of us vets will have all of these attitudes and behaviors; some of us will have none of them. Most of us will have some.

- Isolated
- Controlling
- Aggressive/angry (fighting, dangerous driving)
- Hypervigilant/fearful
- Emotionally numb
- Distrustful/secretive

- Guilty, especially that someone else died (“survivor’s guilt”)
- Abusing addictive substances, especially alcohol

Julian Weissglass¹ has noticed that we also carry a lot of discouragement.

I would add the following:

- Most of us feel that we didn’t do enough—if we served but were not deployed, if we were deployed but never went “outside the wire,”² if we were in combat but weren’t wounded, if we were wounded but didn’t get killed. None of

¹ Julian Weissglass is the International Commonality Reference Person for Wide World Change.

² “Outside the wire” means outside the protective barbed-wire fencing.

us feel that we did enough, except possibly those who were killed. (However, if I ever get to Co-Counsel with a dead vet, I expect that that person will probably feel that he or she didn’t do enough either.)

- Self-loathing. Suicide kills many veterans after combat.

Long ago we discovered in RC that the only thing standing in the way of giving someone a good session is our own distress. If we are not afraid of what a veteran might talk about, and do not have our own “issues” concerning a particular war (for example, strong opposition or support), a veteran will be just like anyone else—eager to take advantage of someone who will listen. Therefore, to be a good counselor or ally to a veteran it is a good idea to do some sessions

on the things you do not want to hear a veteran talk about.

Thanks for your interest in veterans.

Jim Driscoll
Information Coordinator for Veterans
Tucson, Arizona, USA



PRESENT TIME MAILOUT • AMANDA MARTINEZ



Being an Effective Ally



War is the most extreme failure of human intelligence. It can and must be eliminated. This will require enough people healing from the hurts of war that human intelligence will be able to function effectively. A part of healing from the hurts of war is building alliances between veterans and those who have not been in the military.

THE HURTS OF WAR

Soldiers, especially combat soldiers, endure conditions that no human being should have to endure. Those fortunate enough to return from war, particularly those who have been in active combat, have deep distresses. A society that sends people to war has the moral obligation to help them discharge the hurts of war. Unfortunately, people who have not gone to war rarely have good enough attention for veterans that they can discharge on these distresses. Many combat veterans have told me that they have never told their full stories.

BEING AN ALLY TO VETERANS

Wanting to be an ally to veterans is the first step, but it is not enough. To be effective as an ally, you have to discharge extensively on your feelings about wars and the people who fight them. Promises that are not backed up by discharge on your distress are based in pretense and likely to create difficulties. It is important to have sessions on all of your early memories connected to war and soldiers—including memories of movies, TV shows, songs, books, and school history lessons. Even hearing about war is confusing to a young person. (“How can people organize in order to kill other human beings?”)

You don’t have to tell veterans that you have discharged about this subject. They will know. And remember, being an ally to vets is one of the best things you can do for your own re-emergence.

In sessions, listen, listen, and listen until a solid relationship is established. If you offer a direction too soon, it may be interpreted as “you don’t want to hear my story.” Remember that for many vets, being able

continued . . .

LIBERATION

... continued

to tell their full story may be as important as (or more important than) heavy discharge. Breaking the silence is significant.

A veteran may have different political beliefs than you. Don't decide to be an ally in order to "fix," change, or convert him or her.

Be patient with yourself. Making alliances requires struggle. Appreciate yourself for engaging in the struggle.

BEING CLIENT

It is important to not be a client with vets about war or soldiers without asking their permission. If they give permission, work on your early memories about war, rather than on current wars or the wars that the veteran fought in.

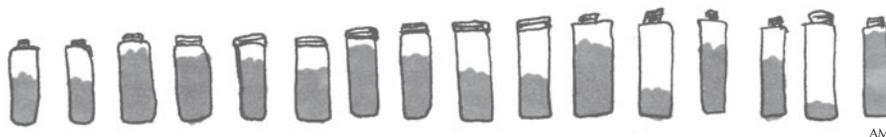
The goal is an equal relationship. One-way counseling will not work over the long term. After you have established a solid relationship, consider having

two-way sessions on the question, "How might our different experiences in regard to war affect our relationship?"

RACISM, CLASSISM, AND SEXISM

Ongoing discharge on racism, classism, and sexism is important for maintaining an alliance with a veteran. Governments usually send their countries' racial minorities, working-class people, and people in poverty to fight in war. And it is mostly men who are engaged in combat. The distress of war combined with sexism can lead male veterans to act oppressively and sometimes violently toward women. Women's internalized sexism may interfere with women being effective allies. It is important to counsel on how racism, sexism, and classism affect you in relation to war and your making alliances.

Julian Weissglass
International Commonality
Reference Person for
Wide World Change
Santa Barbara, California, USA



AM



De Una Veterana Salvadoreña



Soy una mujer, una salvadoreña, una latinoamericana, y una sobreviviente de la guerra civil en El Salvador. Hace una semana asistí al primer taller de co-escucha para veteranas/os de guerra y aliadas/os, liderado por Jim Driscoll¹ y Julián Weissglass.² En semanas previas al taller utilicé mis sesiones para desahogar, pensar, y decidir sobre lo que quería para mí misma en el taller. Me propuse como metas las siguientes:

- Acercarme de una manera más profunda a mi grupo de veteranos hombres y usar su cercanía para seguir desahogando sobre mis memorias de la guerra civil en El Salvador y sobre la intervención del imperialismo estadounidense en mi país,
- Desahogar el sexismo que experimenté en esa guerra, mi sexismo internalizado, y todos los sentimientos que me impiden estar total y completamente a cargo de mí misma y cercana a los hombres al mismo tiempo.

Este fue mi tercer año consecutivo participando en un taller de veteranos/as co-escuchas. Cada año he venido construyendo alianzas, conexiones, y cercanía con un grupo pequeño de veteranos: cuatro hombres estadounidenses, un hombre de Israel, y un hombre de Canadá. Durante la guerra civil en El Salvador tenía que enfrentar a cada minuto la posibilidad de morir, y poco a poco he ido desahogando los pesados sentimientos de terror, rabia, coraje, impotencia, dolor, frustración, y tristeza que heredé de esa guerra.

A diferencia de los dos talleres anteriores, que eran pequeños y solamente para veteranos/as, este grupo fue más grande, y mi terror también fue más grande. Cada sesión fue una victoria contra el

¹ Jim Driscoll es Coordinador de Información para Veteranos/as.

² Julián Weissglass es Persona de Referencia Internacional Para Cambio del Mundo.

imperialismo, el racismo, y el sexismo. Fue una lucha frontal contra mis patrones de angustia que buscaban aislarme, confundirme, y hacerme olvidar mis metas para el taller y mi real naturaleza humana como mujer latinoamericana, salvadoreña, indígena, judía, y veterana de la guerra civil en El Salvador.

Mi especial aprecio a Jim Driscoll por su liderazgo con los veteranos/as y su apoyo para crear un espacio de seguridad en donde trabajar, como mujer salvadoreña, mis angustias relacionadas con la guerra y el imperialismo estadounidense. Mi más profundo respeto a Julián Weissglass por su visión clara sobre la importancia de desahogar sobre la guerra y construir alianzas para hacer ese trabajo más efectivo. Mi agradecimiento a cada una de mis co-escuchas por su apoyo amoroso y su cercanía física para contradecir mi terror.

Lorena Cuéllar Barandiarán
San Salvador, El Salvador

English translation of the preceding article:

✧ *From a Female Salvadoran Veteran* ✧

I am a woman, a Salvadoran, a Latin American, and a survivor of the civil war in El Salvador. One week ago I attended the first RC Veterans and Allies Workshop, led by Jim Driscoll¹ and Julian Weissglass.² In the weeks before the workshop I used my Co-Counseling sessions to discharge, think, and decide about what I wanted for myself at the workshop. I set the following goals:

- Getting close to my men vets gang in a deeper way, and using their closeness to keep discharging on my memories of the civil war in El Salvador and about the U.S. imperialist intervention in my country,*
- Discharging on the sexism I experienced in the civil war, my internalized sexism, and all the feelings that don't let me be fully and completely in charge of myself and close to men at the same time.*

This was my third consecutive year attending an RC veterans' workshop. Each year I have continued to build alliances, connections, and closeness with a small group of veterans: four U.S. men, one man from Israel, and one man from Canada. During the civil war in El Salvador I had to face every minute the possibility of dying, and little by little I have discharged the heavy feelings of terror, rage, anger, helplessness, pain, frustration, and sadness I inherited from that war.

In contrast to the previous two workshops, which were small and just for veterans, this was a bigger workshop, and my terror was also bigger. Each of my sessions was a victory over imperialism, racism, and sexism. It was a head-on battle against my distress patterns that were trying to keep me in isolation, confuse me, and make me forget my goals for the workshop and my real human nature as a Latin American Salvadoran Indigenous Jewish female veteran of the civil war in El Salvador.

My special appreciation to Jim Driscoll, for his leadership with the veterans and his supporting me and creating a safe place where I can work, as a Salvadoran woman, on my distresses related to the war and U.S. imperialism. My deepest respect to Julian Weissglass, for his clear vision of the importance of working on war and building alliances to make that work more effective. My gratitude to all of my Co-Counselors for their loving support and their physical closeness in contradicting my terror.

Lorena Cuéllar Barandiarán
San Salvador, El Salvador
Translated by Lorena Cuéllar Barandiarán

¹ Jim Driscoll is the Information Coordinator for Veterans.

² Julian Weissglass is the International Commonality Reference Person for Wide World Change.

✧ — Twenty-Seven Years in RC as a Combat Veteran — ✧

When I first started doing RC, twenty-seven years ago, I came in with a clear awareness that I had to find a way to work on my military experiences and I hoped that Co-Counseling would provide the space and resource.

The first workshop I attended was a men's liberation workshop. The four vets who were at the workshop were able to form a veterans' support group. Sad to say, of the original four, only two of us still do RC. The other two are both dead. One committed suicide a few years later, and the other died as a result of the psychiatric drugs he was given by the Veterans' Administration doctors.

It's unfortunate that neither of these men was able to connect enough to use the discharge process. I think that partly the Communities hadn't done the work to be able to counsel veterans, and partly it was the nature of the material.¹ In my war (Vietnam) over fifty thousand U.S. military personnel were killed in combat. In

the first ten years after the war, just as many committed suicide. Veterans of the current U.S. wars in Iraq and Afghanistan are killing themselves at a much higher rate. I mention this just to give folks a sense of how tough this material is for some of us.

For a long time it was hard to get good counseling on war distresses. It's fairly grim stuff, and most folks don't have the attention for it. After a couple of years of watching counselors' attention take a nosedive through the floor, I pretty much gave up² trying to work on it with non-veterans.

Some of us vets got together at various times to form support groups—mostly just with each other, and sometimes with allies. These efforts fell apart over time and were restarted again. Some of us persisted despite our isolation patterns and made some headway on our war material. I also met veterans at workshops that I was privileged to attend outside of my Region.

² Pretty much gave up means mostly abandoned.

About eight years ago I started noticing (at least in my Region) that there was more free attention for veterans' distress. I was able to lead a couple of Regional events on the effect of war that I am pleased to say went very well. I found myself filled with more hope than I'd ever had about getting a hand³ with war distress. I found myself taking more risks to work on it with non-veterans.

Another big shift took place when Jim Driscoll became the Information Coordinator for Veterans. He started leading yearly veterans' workshops on the west coast of the United States. They were small, but those of us who attended started building good connections and giving each other a hand. It has been helpful going back every year—reconnecting and deepening the relationships.

The work that Julian Weissglass⁴ has been doing on healing the wounds of war has also been re-emergent for me. I have attended two of his workshops. What I have learned at these workshops could be a whole separate article. Basically it comes down to this: Most of us have been impacted by war. Many of us have or had fathers, uncles, or grandfathers who served in the military during time of war. They never had the opportunity to discharge on any of this and probably dramatized⁵ the distress in our direction. Also, some of our ancestors were refugees fleeing war zones. Realizing this has put the concept of veteran and war survivor in a whole new context for me. Again, most of this material is undischarged.

³ A hand means help.

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

⁵ Dramatized means acted out.



DIANE SHISK

Then we had our first Veterans and Allies Workshop. It was a big step forward for vets' work. The first thing that amazed me about it was the roster. The allies actually outnumbered the vets. I couldn't believe it. I did a head count about five times. I must have stared at it for a good hour or so. I kept coming back to it: Do the dishes, look at the roster. Put in a load of laundry, look at roster. This went on for days.

Some allies came because of their relationships with specific veterans, others because of the vets in their constituencies, and others because of their relationships with Julian and his work. The allies were in good shape⁶ and able to listen well and be there

for us. In all my time in RC, it was my first opportunity at a workshop to have allies. I now have a much better understanding of how useful allies can be and how precious they are.

There were four Iraq and Afghanistan veterans who attended the workshop. They had learned a naturalized version of RC from Jim Driscoll. Three of them were "mission positive," meaning they supported the U.S. efforts in Iraq and Afghanistan. The rest of us veterans and the allies did a magnificent job of listening to them and treating them with complete respect. This created enough safety for these young men to make the workshop theirs.

The Veterans and Allies Workshop was the largest-ever gathering of

veterans in RC. There were twenty-two of us. Five of us were women. It was my first workshop with women veterans—at least women who identified themselves as veterans. Part of how veterans' oppression sits,⁷ at least in the United States, is on one end as a kind of super patriotism and on the other as hiding and not letting anybody know you're a veteran. I have known some people for over twenty years before I found out they were veterans. I think it would be good if all the veterans in RC sent Jim Driscoll an e-mail letting him know who they are. It would be great if this entire constituency were identified.

Vince Dijanich
Sacramento, California, USA

⁶ Shape means condition.

⁷ In this context, sits means operates.

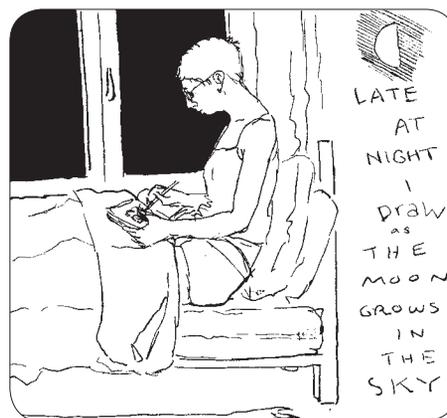


© BILL HORNE

A Real Relationship

Confused people have sometimes complained that a Co-Counseling relationship is not "real" because they are not encouraged to mess it up by adding patterned activities and strong feelings to it. The truth is that the Co-Counseling relationship is very "real." It is useful and rich because it is strongly and clearly defined. Someone has said it has the beauty of a poem or a song that uses a strict poetic form to achieve great complexity and communication.

Harvey Jackins
From *The List*, page 75



LATE AT NIGHT I DRAW • JULIE ANNE FORGIONE

✧ — An Exceptional Workshop for Veterans and Allies — ✧

I am a veteran of six years of military service in a Canadian Infantry Battalion. I live in the United States.

I went to the recent Veterans and Allies Workshop not knowing exactly what to expect, and a little nervous. I had no idea what to say to the allies who were coming. I am used to functioning on top of a crushing load of isolation and loneliness. My wife is my strongest ally, and even she has a hard time getting past my defenses. It is not easy talking with non-veterans about my experiences in the military.

I have worked hard to specifically *not* work on military stuff with non-veterans, for two reasons: (1) part of the military culture is, “You don’t talk about it. Ever;” and (2) many allies, however well meaning, are *not* prepared to hear about what we know.

I always love getting together with other veterans. We share a bond forged by some common personal history (regardless of national affiliation) and some shared experiences (even if they happened in different countries, different decades, different wars). Some of those experiences should never have been, but were.

I think we veterans all agree that whatever reasons we had for joining the military, what we found while

we were “in” changed us in ways non-veterans cannot easily grasp. I need to help my allies better understand my experiences as a soldier and how being in the military changed me. Then I need to counsel with them on some of the experiences that changed me the most (which were not necessarily the “big, scary things”).

I had heard that some veterans were doing wide-world work using RC teachings, and it was heartening to see some non-RC veterans from a wide-world organization at the workshop, working as hard as anybody.

The workshop was exceptional, not only for the material we were working on but for the presence of so many good, strong, smart allies. I expected a few of you—not more allies than veterans! You brought an atmosphere of safety. Your presence allowed me to let down my guard a little and notice just how alone I feel as a non-U.S. veteran. I find it difficult to open up to strangers about anything. And talking about military experiences? I’d rather have a root canal.¹ You went far toward making it safe for me to talk to you. Keep at it.²

Bill Robertson
Olympia, Washington, USA

¹ A root canal is a painful dental procedure involving the root of a tooth.

² At it means doing it.



WASHINGTON, USA • ALISA LEMIRE BROOKS

List Corrections Requested

The lists in the back of *Present T*.

Need attention from both you and me.

We may feel their impact is too slight

To merit making them completely right.

But no! Consider being new and lost and scared

And a step toward RC you have dared—

Your e-mail is returned, “rejected;”

Not the welcome you had hoped, expected!

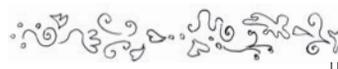
Send corrections soon to RIP.*

They will be processed immediately.

* Rational Island Publishers, P.O. Box 2081, Main Office Station, Seattle, Washington 98111, USA, <publications@rc.org>



Racism and Family Work



LK

I do a lot of talks on racism, but up to this point most of them have been shared with people who, like myself, have been the targets of racism. This talk is for me, and this is one of the more rare occasions when I find myself addressing the topic with a group that is primarily white. I doubt you can imagine my personal struggle with internalized oppression as I try to fully express to you my thinking on this topic. However, recordings¹ or not, internalized oppression or not, I'm determined to offer you some of my thinking on racism as it relates to family work,² because I'm sure it makes sense to do so.

One of the reasons I stayed in Co-Counseling was that not too long after I completed fundamentals the RC Community adopted the goal on racism.³ It was a huge relief for me that the entire Community of white Co-Counselors had agreed and admitted that they were racist. For most of my life I had always struggled to believe it when I thought that something or someone was racist, because I'd always been told that it wasn't true, that there

was no racism, that racism was over and it was only my imagination. In addition to the goal on racism, RC's well-thought-out theory on and practice for discharging internalized racism helped me decide that I was going to become a Community member and make Co-Counseling an important part of my life. Getting access to discharge was an awakening for me, but the perspective on racism that went with the discharge was where my intelligence could really work.

So it's true that you are all racist white people, and it's good that you know it—and I am not hurting you by telling you. That piece of honesty or truth makes a difference. Please don't ever underestimate the value of your admission. It is a huge thing for me, and probably for all of the people targeted by racism.

For us people targeted by racism, it's a big challenge to do family work—not just in this Community but in all the RC Communities. As most of you have observed, it's a challenge for us to participate in the Co-Counseling Communities at all. We struggle to trust RC, given

how hard it is for us to believe in any majority-white organization in which we're expected to bring our full self and not the assimilated mask, which many, if not most, of us are accustomed to showing whenever white people are around.

A regular Co-Counseling class or session, when adults are sitting around listening and talking, is a challenge, but for the most part there's some ability or option to control how much is shown or shared. Adult Co-Counselors, not always but often, can be quite careful with each other so that the hard stuff can show up⁴ in measured and somewhat manageable doses. At a family workshop, most young people don't play in careful, measured, and manageable ways; instead everything is full-out,⁵ and therein exists the struggle. At family workshops especially, all the heavy early feelings having to do with racism and internalized racism are right out on the table⁶ and available for all of us people targeted by racism to feel, ready or not. In addition, we are dealing with racism in the present, constantly and on many levels. Both the early feelings from and present-time reality of racism (and classism) are there at the same time, while things are moving fast—physically, mentally, and emotionally. We have to stay present and trust our thinking, while at the same time we must stand up to⁷ the messages from our childhoods, which can often include legacies of slavery

continued . . .

¹ Distress recordings

² 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. This model of family work is the result of experiences gathered over the past thirty years.

³ Goal 1, as adopted by the 2001 World Conference of the Re-evaluation Counseling 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.



HANDMADE CHEESE • AMANDA MARTINEZ

⁴ Show up means appear.

⁵ Full-out means without restraint.

⁶ Right out on the table means very much on the surface.

⁷ Stand up to means confront and resist.

LIBERATION

... continued

or colonization. The sudden crush of feelings can sometimes cause us to feel as if we don't like or don't want to do family work. All of it can feel like present-time racism, and because of that we can completely miss what an incredible gift family work can be for the re-emergence of everyone, especially those of us who are targeted by racism.

People targeted by racism who are struggling to come in and do family work need to first do a great deal of work on internalized racism. If there are two people targeted by racism in a Community, they should meet in a people-targeted-by-racism support group. If they are inexperienced, it's okay for the *best* white leader to work with them until a leader who is targeted by racism can be identified and prepared to lead. In my Community we started slowly with a series of people-targeted-by-racism special-time⁸ classes (that met for three

⁸ 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.

hours on a Saturday or Sunday morning), leading up to our semi-annual people-targeted-by-racism all-day playday.⁹ The allies who came had to identify as people targeted by racism, and the young people could come only if they had at least one parent who was targeted by racism and that parent came to the playday with them. This methodology helped us to trust our thinking and not have to negotiate the internalized racism that could make us question our thinking or automatically defer to the thinking of the non-target group. It helped us to better see that family work could be for us.

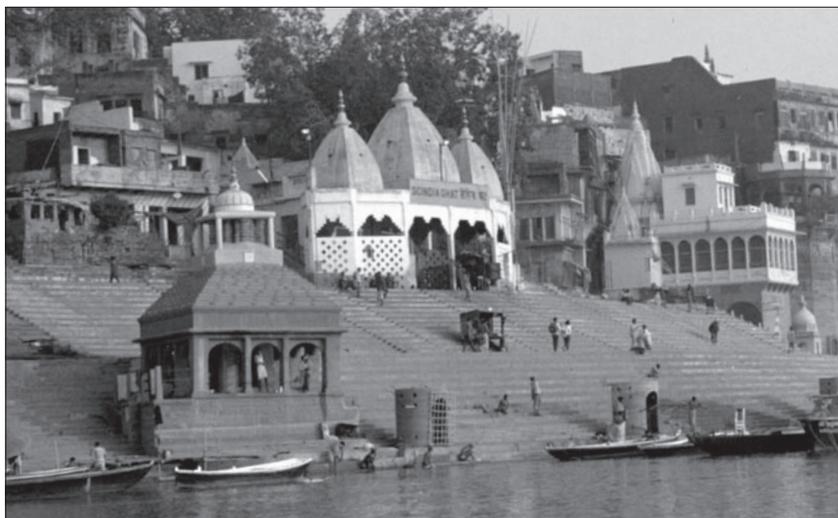
In order for people targeted by racism to do family work, the work on eliminating white racism must be prioritized and done in tandem with the work on internalized racism that the people targeted by racism are doing. At a recent workshop led by Tim Jackins, I told Tim that the leader of my Community's eliminating-white-racism support group had told me that the people in the group felt

⁹ A playday is a several-hour workshop that includes time for children to do whatever safe activities they want to do, with the encouragement and appreciation of the adults present, and to discharge if they wish. It also includes discharge time for the adults.

stymied. They kept doing the work but felt like they were just going in a circle. They knew they were racist, and they were discharging on how they were good even though they had racist patterns, but they wondered if there was more that they should be doing. Tim suggested that I get together a few leaders targeted by racism and go to the eliminating-white-racism support group and talk to the people in the group about our experience of racism—not counsel them, but talk to them—about some of the challenges we face and what that's like for us. He suggested that we could also answer specific questions, as long as we remembered that we were not there to be their counselors on their racism. The people targeted by racism could then leave and discharge together while the white group got to discharge off of what had been shared.

In this Community, and in many Communities, there are lots of children targeted by racism who have been adopted by white families. One of the things I've understood from many, many conversations with people targeted by racism is that this can be very restimulating for them. Not that it shouldn't happen—of course every child deserves a loving family—but it's the apparent lack of understanding of racism and internalized racism. For people targeted by racism who are observing or being allies to such a family, the lack of understanding can translate into a turning away from the honest admission and ensuing talk and work that are needed in any relationship between a person targeted by racism and a white person in order for anything to make sense.

The worldview of people targeted by racism and the worldview of white people are very different



VARANASI, INDIA • LYNNE SHIVERS

from each other. I hope that one day this won't be true, but right now it is. If a white family decides to take on¹⁰ the challenge of bringing a person targeted by racism into their family, then it is critical that they give the child a complete picture of who she or he is—everything that is possible to offer that relates to her or his history, ancestry, culture, language, people. At the same time, the child's being a part of the family is really important. All the love that I see offered here is important, amazing, and wonderful and will help immensely in your children's developing a strong sense of confidence and self. But love can't be in a vacuum. It has to include all the thinking and every bit of good perspective that can be offered.

If your child is from a different racial background, please don't underestimate the value of three things: (1) your getting a clear

¹⁰ Take on means undertake.

understanding and in-depth knowledge of the culture and people your child has come from; (2) your offering your child a clear and comprehensive picture of her or his history, cultures, ways, and peoples, using as many well-thought-out methods as you can; (3) your admitting to your child that you are racist but telling him or her that you will struggle to offer a clear and honest picture of his or her group, that you are working as hard as you can to heal from what being racist has done to you, and that you will always do your honest best for him or her, in spite of it all. This will help your child to be able to really talk to you and believe in you, because you are being honest. Your child sees your racism. She or he can't miss it. Racism, like all the other isms, comes to people almost through osmosis, so it's not like you can protect your child from it. But by your admission you can relieve your child of having to take care of you, and everyone will get to have

the honest discussions that make the real difference in a life.

Some of you, and your families for generations, have fought hard against racism in all kinds of ways. I am clear about that—that some of the most amazing allies to people targeted by racism have been some wonderful white people. But even with all of the ways you have fought, you still got racism, you couldn't avoid it, so thank you for admitting that—it will help all the people targeted by racism. And your child knows, too, so you need to fess up,¹¹ and work together, and help your child with her or his awareness. And this is not just for the children targeted by racism who are adopted by white families; all children need this. Help them to understand what racism is when they see it, and then work on it together as a family.

Fela Barclift
Brooklyn, New York, USA

¹¹ Fess up means confess to it.

I refuse to accept the view that mankind is so tragically bound to the starless midnight of racism and war that the bright daybreak of peace and brotherhood can never become reality . . . I believe that unarmed truth and unconditional love will have the final word in reality.

Martin Luther King, Jr.



JO PERRY

Taking Leadership in Young People's Liberation (or RC in General) Is Great!

It was wonderful getting to organize the International Young Leaders' Workshop, led by Tim Jackins and Emily Bloch,¹ in March 2010 in Massachusetts, USA. Sixteen young people, from six different countries, and five allies came.

I had a connection with all of them beforehand, because I had communicated with them by e-mail. (With those who had more complicated international travel plans, I'd had a lot of back-and-forth e-mail communication.) That made me feel close to people before they arrived.

I also liked interacting and connecting with Emily and Tim before and during the workshop. Emily and I got to put our minds together about what made sense for support groups, jobs, and rooming assignments. Even though I see Emily every week in the class we teach together, I enjoy any chance for more contact. I also got to communicate with Tim a little bit beforehand by e-mail and got to talk with him about my life and his life when I picked him up and brought him to the workshop.

I liked using my mind for all the organizing details. I liked thinking about the budget and the flyer, with the help of some trusty adult allies, and about all the other details involved in making the workshop go well.

During the farewell circle people cheered and clapped for me, and I got to take in their appreciation while laughing about how embarrassing it was. Many young people, when I was giving them hugs at the end of the workshop, told me they appreciated the stellar job I had done. Organizing allowed me to be at the center of the workshop in a good way and to see the connections I'd built with many of the young people there.

I would also like to report on a few of the amazing and important things that went on² at the workshop.

There was lots of time for Co-Counseling sessions, and people were able to use their

sessions to go after³ heavy material⁴ and discharge hard with other young people—an important contradiction to internalized young people's oppression.

Emily talked about all of us making a decision to take on⁵ the work of young people's liberation. She also talked about eliminating all the oppressions and restimulations that divide us and get in the way of our staying close with each other. She emphasized how it was important to take on leadership together, not alone, and to take on small bits of leadership for which there was resource.

Tim and Emily talked about concrete steps for young people's liberation for the next year. Tim suggested that young people all around the world lead gather-ins, lasting for an evening and a morning, for other young people in their local RC Communities.

We ended the workshop by setting up groups of three or four people who committed themselves to talking to each other every week. Tim told us to close our eyes and think of someone whom we would like in our group and then open our eyes and begin to slowly move toward that person. It was extremely embarrassing to move toward someone and show that I liked him or her, in such an obvious way. I had to discharge the whole time. It was a great way to form groups. These groups are to keep us remembering our connections and to be a support for ongoing young people's work.

I am hopeful about the future and the direction of young people's liberation work in RC. Thank you to the amazing group of young people, the strong group of committed allies, and Emily and Tim for putting their minds and hearts into this incredible project. I am pleased that I could be a part of making it happen.

Alana Eichner
Somerville, Massachusetts, USA

¹ Emily Bloch is the International Liberation Reference Person for Young People.

² Went on means happened.

³ Go after means pursue.

⁴ Material means distress.

⁵ In this context, take on means undertake.

Lots of Highlights at the Young Leaders' Workshop

Attending the International Young Leaders' Workshop was a big thing for me. Because I'm Japanese, English is not my first language, and at first I was scared of going to Boston (Massachusetts, USA) alone. But at the same time I knew that some young people I had met at the World Conference would be attending the workshop and I was excited about meeting them again. I was looking forward to meeting new young leaders, too.

At the workshop I was relaxed and enjoyed spending time with all the young people. I could get a close relationship with each of them in a different way because there were only twenty-one people. It was an intimate group that had close access to each other.

From the beginning we were all cuddling, which I loved, yet I felt like we were doing it because it was what we were supposed to be doing at the workshop and we should be wanting people near.

On the morning of the second day Tim¹ started to do

¹ Tim Jackins

demonstrations with each one of us. He told us that he wanted us all to have a new kind of special relationship with each other. Then people started to get close for real. The process of how I got close to everyone was amazing.

Oh, I have lots of highlights! When Emily² was leading, I translated to Japanese for the first time, even though there were no Japanese people besides me. That was a big challenge.

I loved my support group. We had big sessions. I enjoyed "hands play" and singing a Japanese song and a Swedish song.

We also had time to counsel Emily as our leader. We thought about how we could help her with her struggles, and we thought about being young leaders ourselves and how it's difficult to lead other young people. It was a good chance to show how much we wanted to support Emily, and it was useful for thinking about our own leadership because we are all struggling with leadership positions similar to Emily's.

² Emily Block, the International Liberation Reference Person for Young People

Even after the workshop, we are still in contact—by e-mailing each other and doing Skype³ sessions. This helps me to keep noticing that I'm not alone. When we are struggling, we can listen to each other and support each other in our challenges. I can feel that we are a team.

There will be a young people's one-day workshop in Kyushu and Hokkaido, Japan. Diane Shisk⁴ will be leading, and I will be assisting.

It took me a long time to write this article. Thanks to my sister who helped me to correct my English!

Lillian Ono
Tokyo, Japan

³ Skype is a software application that allows users to make voice calls over the Internet.

⁴ Diane Shisk is the Alternate International Reference Person for the RC Communities.



Hopeful About Young People's Liberation

At the Young Leaders' Workshop we got to hear how being a young leader in RC was going for everyone and what young people's RC looks like around the world. It made me hopeful and excited about young people's liberation and inspired me to think about new things to do with the young people's work in my Region. I enjoyed being close with everyone at the workshop.



Liam Geary Baulch
London, England

KK

A Wonderful Time as an Ally

At the International Young Leaders' Workshop I had a wonderful time being an ally to young people. I loved spending the weekend getting close to young people and other allies while working together with them to eliminate young people's oppression.

For the past three years I'd had the great pleasure of attending young leaders' workshops with many of the people at this workshop. One big difference for me this year was attending no longer as a young person but as an ally to young people. I had a lovely time figuring out this changing role. Working on age-related oppression helps me see the oppression from both sides. Transitioning from young person to young adult gives me a window into figuring out what it means to be an ally. In the allies' support group I got to have big sessions about transitioning, and about my role as an ally.

One thing I confirmed for myself was that being an ally doesn't mean holding myself back to "make space" for younger people. I can be really big and fully myself while thinking well about the young people around me and about their relationships both with me and with other young people. Part of being really big means openly loving all of them so, so much—just as I did when we were all officially young people together. Being an ally doesn't mean that I have to sit in a chair in the back while the young people pile together on the floor. I got to be in the pile close to all my beloved RC friends, while being aware of any young people who might get pushed to the outside and figuring out how to bring them into the group.

I am hopeful about the direction of this work. Eliminating young people's oppression is a big task, but a brilliant, powerful, capable group of young RC leaders and

allies is taking it on.* I encourage all of you who are no longer young people to figure out how to be allies. It is great to counsel on your years as a young person and to discharge about the heartbreak of transitioning from being a young person to being in the oppressor role. It is pivotal to all our liberation.

Plus, being buddies with young people is *so much fun!* I got to spend last Wednesday giggling for about an hour with two people from the workshop I had committed to staying in touch with. We were trying to figure out how to use Skype, a program that lets you conference call with people over the Internet, and we were having a delightful time problem solving.

Shelley Friedmann
Bar Harbor, Maine, USA

* Taking it on means taking responsibility for doing it.

Everyone needs people to reach for them thoughtfully and consistently, far more than we are encouraged to do in our societies. Making these efforts toward people targeted by racism helps those of us who haven't been targeted realize the efforts we'd like to make toward each other. It's for our benefit.

Tim Jackins

The price of the *Fundamentals of Co-Counseling Manual* is being raised to \$8.00 (U.S.) after many, many years at \$6.00. The \$6.00 price was set long ago, when the *Manual* was sold by itself. The \$8.00 price is necessary, because, in addition to the rising cost of production, a copy of the *Guidelines for the Re-evaluation Counseling Communities* is now included with each *Fundamentals Manual*.



COSTA RICA • THERESA D'AMATO

The Contemporary Jewish Issues Workshop

The Contemporary Jewish Issues Workshop, in September 2010, in Baltimore, Maryland, USA, was a landmark workshop for me. Every class, Co-Counseling session, and topic group was outstanding. I'd like to share three personal highlights:

1) It was significant to me to watch Cherie¹ so generously back² Diane³ to function as primary leader of the workshop. Cherie played an excellent and consistent role—leading the Saturday morning class, early morning classes on Saturday and Sunday, and a topic group, and supporting Diane such that Diane had the space to plan and execute the workshop according to her hopes and vision.

2) My workshop experience was enriched by the twelve allies. They provided a safety that enabled me to work more directly and deeply than I might have been able to only in the company of my beloved Jewish sisters and brothers. Jewish internalized oppression couldn't run⁴ in quite the same way in the face of twelve allies who so clearly knew us, loved us, respected us, and were willing to be actively involved in the workshop without taking over in any way. The allies' participation allowed me to more easily appreciate and care about the Jews and to use my relationships with the allies to discharge in places that can sometimes be tricky to access with other Jews. It was a great balance! Maybe it was a glimpse of how things could be for Jews in a world where anti-Jewish oppression and internalized Jewish oppression weren't operating.

3) Diane led brilliantly and built the workshop to a fitting crescendo on Sunday morning when she shared with us a film about Palestinian villagers who had battled the Israeli army to try to stop their village from being impacted by the fence that the Israeli government was erecting. The Sunday morning class, coming on the heels of⁵ Diane's powerful demonstration on Saturday evening on rage and victimization, created a space for me to face head-on⁶ where I'm in denial about certain horrors in the world, past and present. I realized, for the first time, that choosing denial over facing things had allowed me not to go "crazy."

¹ Cherie Brown, the International Liberation Reference Person for Jews

² Back means support.

³ Diane Balsler, the International Liberation Reference Person for Women and a leader of Jews

⁴ Run means operate.

⁵ On the heels of means right after.

⁶ Head-on means directly.

I think I decided when I was quite young that if I let myself feel my full outrage at injustice (whether it be genocide; children dying from famine, malaria, or AIDS; or the sexism, anti-Jewish oppression, or classism that messed up my life) I would go "crazy." In other words, the rage would take me over,⁷ rule my life, and probably ruin my life (or at least that was what I was afraid of). Since there was no resource around to handle that level of rage and defiance, I went numb and learned to live in a state of denial—facing those injustices that I thought I could impact in some way (for example, improving early childhood education or raising my children to the best of my ability) and ignoring or going numb to those that seemed too big to tackle. The connection to "mental health" oppression is obvious.

Since the workshop I've been continuing to have sessions on this. I'm finding ways to discharge the rage and open my eyes fully to everything. Harvey's⁸ direction against powerlessness comes to mind⁹: "From this moment on, I will see to it¹⁰ that everything I'm in contact with works well, and I will not limit or pull back on my contacts."

Thank you, Diane, for creating a safe and challenging space in which we could dare to face our most scary and vulnerable feelings. In your leadership I recognized a tone of insistence, expectation, and deep caring that kept Harvey in my mind throughout the weekend, and I don't think that was coincidental. He would have been proud of you, and of what we accomplished together.

Randi Wolfe

Pasadena, California, USA

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

⁷ Take me over means dominate me.

⁸ Harvey Jackins'

⁹ Comes to mind means comes into my mind.

¹⁰ See to it means make sure.



ALAN SPRUNG



Jews as Oppressed and Oppressors

Excerpts of talks given by Diane Balser¹ at the Contemporary Jewish Issues Workshop, in Baltimore, Maryland, USA, in September 2010



Dividing oppressed groups and pitting them against each other is key in maintaining the oppressive society. It keeps us from ending all oppression and transforming the planet. Oppressed peoples, having been hurt, are maneuvered into oppressing other groups, acting like oppressors. In the current period racism is playing a key role in the divide-and-rule mechanism.

During feudal times, Jews, a persecuted people, were maneuvered into a situation in which a few Jews (often called court Jews) were made by the ruling class to appear as if they were the oppressor group. They were financiers, money lenders, and so on. (In Italy, for example, every day a few Jewish merchants would be let out of the ghetto. The rest of the Jews would stay. Thus the only Jews the Gentiles got to know were the merchants, which supported the propaganda that all Jews were oppressors.) During times of economic crisis, the czar or king would deflect the unrest and anger of the oppressed working people onto the Jews. The working people were vulnerable to targeting Jews because they were oppressed and had already been hurt by anti-Jewish propaganda—for example, misinformation describing Jews as a biological type. The idea was, “Get² the Jews,” as opposed to, “Get the oppressive society.”

We Jews were forced to be separate, to stay within our own religion and culture. Thus we developed

patterns of being separate, which contributed to our being used as agents of oppression by the ruling class.

After the Holocaust and the destruction of most of European Jewry, most Ashkenazi Jews³ were “forced” to assimilate into the dominant white oppressor nations of the world in order to have homes, to survive, and to escape the effects of having been targeted for destruction. European Jews were not people of color, but they were often targeted by a quasi racism. After World War II they became thoroughly westernized and conditioned into white identities.

Divide-and-rule continues to operate worldwide. It is how we, as Jews, got set up to act as the visible oppressors of people targeted by racism. The ruling class uses us in this way to divert attention from its oppressive policies, to keep people targeted by racism from fighting their real enemy.

Recently in the United States, Jewish neoconservatives have participated in and facilitated the implementation of some of the most right wing⁴ U.S. foreign policies.

RACISM WITHIN OUR OWN GROUP

We, as Jews, need to first discharge the racism within our own group—how white Ashkenazi Jews have been set up to oppress Jews who are targeted by racism—particularly,

though not exclusively, Mizrahi Jews.⁵ If you look around the room, you can see that we have a distance to go in bringing Jews who are targeted by racism into our Community. Not having them is a tremendous loss for us.

Fifty percent of Israelis are Mizrahi Jews. Other Jews targeted by racism have also come to Israel. Among the most prominent are black Ethiopians who had a Judaism that was completely theirs, and completely Jewish, and were forced to take on⁶ the Ashkenazi way of being Jewish.

Let’s do a mini-session answering the question, “Do you have Mizrahi friends? Are you friends with other Jews targeted by racism? Have you ever said ‘hello’ to a Jew targeted by racism?” For the Gentiles, “Have you reached out to any Jews targeted by racism? When did you find out that Jews were not all white?”

WE ARE A PEOPLE, A “NATION”

I think we must discharge on seeing ourselves as part of a Jewish nation, a nation of the Jewish people. I think we can make an active decision, with discharge, to claim being part of this people.

Being Jewish is central to our identity, to our peoplehood, to our humanness. A lot could be said about that. I suggest we have sessions—

¹ Diane Balser is the International Liberation Reference Person for Women, and a leader of Jews.

² In this context, get means target.

³ Ashkenazi Jews are Jews of Central and Eastern European descent, who generally identify as white.

⁴ Right wing means reactionary.

⁵ Mizrahi 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.

⁶ In this context, take on means adopt.

here and in the next few weeks—on “I am part of the Jewish people. I am part of the Jewish nation.” I think it’s important to understand that we have a national liberation struggle.

ISRAEL AND PALESTINE

The so-called Jewish problem—the oppression of Jews—(we renamed it the Gentile problem) was key for Harvey.⁷ He opened up his thinking to solve what he knew was a crucial problem for the revolutionary forces of the world. It’s clear to me that Co-Counseling is necessary to solve the Middle East conflict. It may be possible for something to happen without RC, but I don’t see it. At least among Jews in the United States, the oppressor material⁸ has become too installed to reach people simply with an intellectual argument. Our use of RC, and our getting it out there, are fundamental.

The divide-and-rule policy was imposed on Israelis and Palestinians, Jews and Arabs, before the state of Israel was created. It was set up by the British. Israel has never had the objective conditions to feel secure, but we can’t wait. The occupation imposed on Palestinians must end.

Palestinians’ most active allies have been Israelis. They have played the most active role because they understand how important it is. The left,⁹ in the United States and in other places as well, can get into a variety of discussions about who is the “bad guy” and often struggles with backing¹⁰ both Palestinians and Israelis. Our policy is two peoples, two homelands. We need to get behind the peace forces on both sides and stand up in our own countries for peace.

JEWES HAVE BEEN BETRAYED

During the Second World War, there was little support for Jews. During the presidency of Franklin Delano Roosevelt,¹¹ rabbis were picketing the White House¹² because Roosevelt refused to change U.S. immigration policies. If the United States had had different immigration policies, millions of Jews could have been saved. For example, a boat full of German Jews was trying to dock in St. Louis, Missouri (USA), and the United States refused to let it. It was sent back to Germany, and all the Jews aboard died in concentration camps. That kind of refusal was widespread.

One of the hardest things to look at is how many Jews in the United States betrayed their own families in Europe. It is understandable, given the level of terror. Some stood up, but many turned their backs. How many of you asked your parents, “When did you find out about the camps?” and were told that it was in 1948, 1949, or 1950? It is likely that most people knew what was happening during the war, including what was happening to the Jews.

You can see the scars of the betrayals on us today. Many of us find it difficult to stay caring about each other. We feel like our personal survival comes first. We need to stay with each other and fight to care about each other. A job we have is to fight to keep caring about each other even when we can’t stand¹³ each other.

Two thirds of European Jewry died. I don’t think there’s an Ashkenazi Jew in this room who didn’t have family that died in the Holocaust. In



SWEDEN • WYTSKE VISSER

many cases our parents didn’t want to talk about it. They could barely remember those people’s names. But they all had names. And they all were our families.

CHRISTIANIZATION

We were subjected to something that I call Christianization. Our languages were taken from us. Our names were taken from us. We were made into Christians.

During the early days of Zionism in Israel, a lot of the propaganda was, “Become a *new* Jew. Don’t look like those wimpy Ashkenazi European Jews who died in the Holocaust.” I went to Israel for the first time in the 1970s and met a cousin. She had gone to Brooklyn (New York, USA) to see her relatives, and she told me, “When I saw Brooklyn Jews, I understood why Hitler did what he did.” She had the ideology of the new Jew.

The Ashkenazi Jews who were squashed became the squashers of other people, including each other. We have a lot of hidden destructive distress material. How many of you have somebody in your extended or immediate family who committed suicide? We have a disproportionate number of people who commit suicide. If we’re going to be honest, we have to admit that we have some destructive patterns. We’re not the only group that has them, but we

continued . . .

⁷ Harvey Jackins

⁸ Material means distress.

⁹ The left means the progressive forces.

¹⁰ Backing means supporting.

¹¹ Franklin Delano Roosevelt was President of the United States from 1933 to 1945.

¹² The White House is the residence of the acting U.S. President and his or her family.

¹³ Can’t stand means strongly dislike.

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have to cop¹⁴ to ours. We have to acknowledge them.

Because we've been so viciously attacked from the outside, most of us are defended and protective. We rightly feel that it's unfair we've been set up in the way we have. It reminds me of Jo's¹⁵ policy toward the owning class about giving up their money. As a middle-class person, I sort of feel for those owning-class people. It's like they're saying, "Help me enough that I can give up¹⁶ my

¹⁴ Cop means admit.

¹⁵ Jo Saunders, the International Liberation Reference Person for Owning-Class People

¹⁶ Give up means yield possession of.

money." (*Laughter*) So we're not the only defending group. But our defensiveness gets us into trouble, though somewhat differently than wealthy owning-class people.

I think the first question is how to work on our victim material, because I think many of us still defend it. And then our oppressor material is on top of that. How do we create the conditions so that we work on all this?

In my head, I go back to the little girl inside of me and say, "I'm fighting to get you out." We can take a "working-class attitude"—that we just have some work to do, and we'll do it.

WE MUST FREE OURSELVES FROM THE OPPRESSOR ROLE

As a group, as a people, we were maneuvered into playing an oppressive role. We, as a people, have to free ourselves from that role. And we have to do it visibly as Jews. Harvey said that we had to become the champions of all oppressed people. I would add that we have to do that visibly as Jews. We have to be noisy loud Jews, acting on our own behalf and on behalf of everyone else. The world needs to know that we will not compromise. We have to become an uncompromised people again.

Jamaica Plain, Massachusetts, USA



Israel at the Forefront of Jewish Liberation



*A talk by Cherie Brown¹ at the Contemporary Jewish Issues Workshop,
in Baltimore, Maryland, USA, in September 2010*

I want us to work this morning on what it means to have a commitment to full liberation for Israel and to Jewish liberation in each of our countries.

Where are we in terms of having Israel at the forefront of Jewish liberation? Do we completely ignore Israel? Do we treat it like some romantic place? Do we treat it like a place that we're glad is there and that someone else gets to fight for, for us? Do we treat it as our back door, which also keeps us from actually building Jewish liberation in each of our countries?

When people were working earlier this morning on Israel and Zionism, it was like each person, as a Diaspora Jew, was sitting on some fence—not having a full commitment to Israel, not going to live there and put his or her full life there, and not having a full commitment to Jewish liberation in his or her own country. In building Jewish Diaspora relationships, we are going to have to discharge and think about a refreshed partnership that is different than any other.

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

According to one recent poll (I'm sorry; I only have statistics for the United States and Israel), only thirty-three percent of U.S. Jews feel they have any connection to Israel. Ten years ago seventy-five percent felt they had a connection. Among Israelis, only forty percent feel any connection to a world Jewish people. To have Israel at the center and forefront of Jewish liberation is to really break through something.

Each time I go to Israel, I come home and start doing Co-Counseling sessions on whether I want to do a sabbatical there, or even move there. I do a couple of sessions, and then it stops. I didn't have the thought until this morning that not fully facing that possibility also holds me back from building Jewish liberation.

Where, for you, is Israel? Is it at the forefront of Jewish liberation and the forefront of your life? Where is Israel in your life—day-to-day, moment-to-moment?

The word "Zionism" was coined in 1893. The Zionist movement was part of a history of national liberation movements. In addition to putting forth the policy that

Jews were to have a homeland, it declared, for the first time, that Jews were a people. That we are a people is a profound idea that was totally connected to our having a homeland.

Herzl, one of the founders of Zionism, was struck by what happened to a Jewish French officer who was falsely convicted of treason. He concluded that Jews would not achieve acceptance in the liberal European democracies and therefore needed a homeland. As I read about this, I kept thinking of the one battle Harvey² and I had over Jewish liberation. It was about Soviet Jewry. There was a movement during the Cold War to get Jews to align with U.S. imperialism—"Let's get all the Jews out of Russia." Harvey said, "No, we have to have every country be a safe place for Jews." A Jewish homeland as a place for Jews doesn't mean that every country shouldn't be a place for Jews.

A strange bargain was struck. Diaspora Jews would live in predominantly Christian countries where there would be anti-Jewish oppression, and they would have this back door—Israel. For many Jews, the support of Israel became their Jewish life. It is interesting that now so many Diaspora Jews are not interested in Israel. It's just going to the other end of the pattern.

² Harvey Jackins

Important in the history of Zionism is the issue of racism. On the one hand, the goal of the Socialist Zionist movement was to build a classless society; on the other hand, it was to get rid of all the Arab workers in order to do it. There was an assumption that socialism and colonialism could exist together, side by side. (*Laughter*) That is racism, which is absolutely at the core of what we're up against.

I'll say a last thing about a Jewish state. On the one hand, there are many ways it could have gone. On the other hand—no. In Britain, the White Paper³ stopped all immigration of Jews to Palestine in 1939, right at the beginning of the Holocaust. It wasn't until 1942, in the middle of the Holocaust, that the ideas of bi-nationalism were put aside and the Zionist movement said that a Jewish state was the primary thing it was going to fight for. This occurred in the context of there being no place for Jews to go. We can clearly see how imperialism has intersected with the evolution of Israel.

Silver Spring, Maryland, USA

³ The White Paper refers to a policy paper issued by the British government that mandated the creation, by 1949, of an independent Palestine governed by Palestinian Arabs and Jews in proportion to their numbers in the population. A limit of seventy-five thousand Jewish immigrants was set for the five-year period of 1940 to 1944. After that, further immigration would depend on the permission of the Arab majority. Restrictions were also placed on the rights of Jews to buy land from Arabs.



KK

Important Advances in Women's Liberation

Women's liberation has gained new momentum.
Read about it in *Sisters* No. 12.

Four major documents reflect the work done since 2005:

- The Fourth Draft Women's Policy Statement
- The Draft Program to Eliminate Sexism
- Two talks: "Sexism—Forgotten, Hidden, Trivialized, Denied" and "Male Domination."

Women and men: Move ahead decisively on this liberation front that is of enormous importance to us all. Don't miss the information and inspiration in *Sisters* No. 12.

To order, see page 109 of this *Present Time*.

Being an Ally to Gay Men

At the beginning of the calendar year I made a commitment to spend some time in every Co-Counseling session working on becoming an increasingly effective ally to Gay men. My motivations were personal. It had gotten clearer that a key piece of my liberation as a man was locked up in hurts related to the many ways we males get separated from one another from early on. Homophobia, Gay oppression, and sexism are interrelated mechanisms involved in these hurts. My direction was part of a decision to fight directly against anything that gets in the way of my connection to any other man.

It was clear that I would have to build real relationships with Gay men if I were to sustain vigorous discharge on these hurts, and that's what I've been doing. I've had to repeatedly refuse to let any discomfort stop me from moving toward a growing circle of Gay men.

I approached the leaders of a local program, based in our AIDS prevention organization, for men who have sex with men and asked them, "How can I create opportunities for heterosexual men who want to be allies to Gay men to be visible to each other and to the Gay community?" That got me invited to come and talk with a group of seven Gay men, and we made some attempts at organizing Gay/straight dialogs. Although we haven't held them yet, the effort was a starting place for me to reach for these guys individually. At first some of the men were suspicious of me and my intentions, but we seem to be past that.

A lot of us have met for tea or dinner and are e-mailing one another regularly and recognizing each other in public places. (I live in a small community.) I attended an annual weekend film festival as the only known heterosexual man among over a hundred and fifty men. We've been inviting each other to parties and slowly building the kinds of relationships in which I can tell* that we make a difference to one another.

My Co-Counseling sessions have been pretty intense. I don't always know what I'm discharging about, but I don't let the not knowing stop me. I'm learning to trust that my mind is using effectively all of this decisiveness and contradiction. I feel a lot of grief, which is sometimes obviously about the early separation, sometimes seemingly about current events. (There is no lack of evidence that Gay oppression is currently active and damaging.) I discharge fear, sometimes about losing my sense of who I am. A lot of humiliation is rolling off.

Outside of sessions I find myself being a little less protected, a little less worried about showing myself, and more relaxed about connecting with other men. I'm excited about where this is going.

Next steps include bringing other men, inside and outside of RC, into this project. It makes sense to be looking at it as a team effort. I'm starting to figure out how to approach other heterosexual men about it. It holds some significant promise for making our lives go better.



Johnny Lee Lenhart
Brattleboro, Vermont, USA

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

* In this context, tell means notice.

Already a Complex Past

Any newborn baby has already experienced a very complex past; is possessed of a great deal more knowledge than people usually assume; has a personal, complex history and a collection of at least some distress patterns that were installed before, during, and following birth.

Harvey Jackins
From *The List*, page 13

The following five articles are from a discussion, on the e-mail discussion list for RC Community members, about oppressor patterns.

We Need to Speak Up

I recently gave two male RCers a lift¹ in my car to a workshop. I drove the car, while they chatted away to each other. When we arrived at the workshop, they got out of the car without a word of thanks and went off to greet other RCers. I was left feeling very annoyed.

Several days later I was able to summon up the courage to tell one of them that I expected a thank you, and he replied that I was quite right. I think we need to speak up and help our precious male Co-Counsellors be aware.

Babette Kaplan
Ramat Ha Sharon, Israel

¹ A lift means a ride.



Oops! More Discharge Required

Dear Babette,

Thank you for your posting. I support your courage and integrity.

I, too, had an occasion when it took me a while to thank a female RCer for a lift she gave me to the airport after a workshop.

The lift giver, who also had a plane to catch, dropped the rest of us off at the terminal before going to park her car. Once inside, I realised that I hadn't arranged a meeting spot with her and that none of us had her mobile phone number. I tried to get her contact details

from the workshop organiser, with no luck, and looked through both terminals before my flight left, to no avail.

Fortunately, about a month later, this person posted a workshop report on a local list and I remembered her kindness, and my lack of generosity. I replied to her and thanked her for her posting, as it reminded me of the powerful weekend we'd spent together. I also expressed my regret at our not getting to swap time² and hang

² Swap time means take turns listening to each other.

out³ together before our flights. Plus I finally thanked her for the lift and offered her some petrol⁴ money.

I initially thought this mix-up was due to unfortunate circumstances, but I now accept that I'd obviously acted on an oppressor pattern. Oops! More discharge required on this.

Ian Paterson
Kambah, Australian
Capital Territory, Australia

³ Hang out means spend relaxed, unstructured time.

⁴ Petrol is gasoline.



PAT GREGORY

Decide Not to Act on Oppressor Patterns

One line from your post, Ian, reminded me of something we discussed at a recent evening for allies to people targeted by racism.

You wrote, "I initially thought this mix-up was due to unfortunate circumstances, but I now accept that I'd obviously decided to act on an oppressor pattern."

At our meeting we discussed what allies need to discharge to make it safe for people targeted by racism to be able to stay in our local RC Community. I suggested that people in the oppressor role must assume that they need to discharge about everything, whether it appears that their early memories are attached to the oppressor role or not. We often do not know which early experiences have led to our acting out oppressor patterns.

Who could know that not thanking someone was attached to oppressor patterns? And how would someone find the early distress to discharge it? Thus, people need to assume that every experience is something to be discharged about.

Here is a thought about "deciding to act on an oppressor pattern": Sometimes what I see is less someone "deciding to act on an oppressor pattern" and more someone *not* deciding to deliberately and consciously *not* act on an oppressor pattern. To act on oppressor patterns is often to do what is "normal and ordinary" and requires no decision at all—no reflection, no deliberation. On the other hand, to continually *decide to not* act on oppressor patterns requires living with awareness, reflecting, thinking, choosing, and deciding all the time, and less running on automatic. That brings a lot of discharge.

Most people I know who occupy oppressor roles do not "decide" to act on oppressor patterns. They just do not decide to *not* act on them. Therein lies the challenge.



Barbara Love
Amherst, Massachusetts, USA

Tackling Both Oppressed and Oppressor Patterns

Almost all of us, if not all of us, occupy both oppressed and oppressor roles. Society's manipulation of how an oppressed person "escapes" the hurts from oppression by taking on⁵ the role of an oppressor is key to what keeps all oppression in place—the ultimate divide-and-rule strategy.

Most of us feel more comfortable looking at our victim material⁶ than our oppressor material. Perhaps this is related to the idea that one group is the "good guys" and the other the "bad guys." I've always liked Harvey's⁷ statement, "I am a *good* guy, I am *one* of the good guys, and the *bad* guys are good guys, too."

In my own experience, much of the underpinning of our oppressor

material is the struggle resulting from our own oppression. That's why we have to fight for ourselves. Young boys who are mistreated and dominated and cannot fight for themselves take on the dominating patterns and sexist patterns. To fight for the young girl, to fight for the young boy, is basic.

We need to work on oppressor material because it is in our own interest to do so—not because of moral obligation.

Working on any chronic pattern is hard work, and tackling both our oppressed and oppressor patterns takes a lot. Many of us have thought we needed to clean up our oppressed patterns first and then move on to our oppressor material. I have found that things move much faster and are more possible if one works

on both at the same time. I just led a Jewish workshop in which we white Ashkenazi Jews took on⁸ our own oppression (the destruction of our people and our culture via the Holocaust and assimilation) and also how we were forced into the visible role of oppressor (particularly toward people targeted by racism) because of our tremendous vulnerability around survival.

When I counsel men and first work with them on male oppression, it is amazing to see how many of them were thoroughly mistreated, humiliated, dominated, and put down by other boys and men. To be a man has often meant covering up that material. That oppression, which is severe, turns young boys into oppressors.

⁵ In this context, taking on means adopting.

⁶ Material means distress.

⁷ Harvey Jackins'

⁸ In this context, took on means faced and worked on.

All men carry sexist distresses, all white people carry racist distresses, and so on. All women carry distresses of internalized sexism. To free oneself from these patterns takes a lot of work, and a commitment to cleaning them up.

In every male-female Co-Counseling relationship (all women should have male Co-Counselors as well as female Co-Counselors, and vice versa for men), we need to make a commitment to work on eliminating sexism.

We women need to make ourselves and our struggles the center of our work as clients—not men and what is right or wrong with them. We have a lot of work to do on the sexist oppression that happened to us, and we need to find a way in sessions to have big fights on our own behalf.

What do we do about the sexist distresses of male RCers? First we need to tell men, in sessions, about the effects on us of their behavior or their perceived behavior. Men need to hear our voices, over and over and over again. We need to speak out for ourselves, which is different from attacking someone's behavior. We need to say what is acceptable and what is not.

We need to be able to stay close and love men as we require them to do the work they need to do, and we need to learn to counsel them well and powerfully. We also need to admit where we do not have the slack to counsel men. For several years some women took on trying to counsel men on pornography without having done the hard discharge work themselves. That did not work well.

Men need to learn more and more about what the world looks like from our vantage point. Men need to really, really listen, and to ask questions—even the hard ones (for example, “Were you ever the victim of unwanted sex?”).

Men need to work on their history with women—when they were able to love, respect, and think about women; when they mistreated women; and when they saw other men mistreat women.

As an RC Community we are committed to freeing ourselves from oppression. That means many things, one of which is working on all our oppressor distresses. This is quite amazing, when you think about it.

Diane Balseer
Jamaica Plain, Massachusetts, USA

Notice the Generosity of Oppressed Groups

Oppressor patterns make us unaware of the value of what humans in oppressed roles offer us. Removing oppressor patterns requires that we notice people fully, use what they are offering us as contradictions to our hurts, and fight our way toward complete humanity.

I've noticed that when we occupy the oppressor role with respect to someone else, we often don't notice the generosity that person is extending to us. Or, when we are in the oppressed group, we get frustrated when the things we do aren't noticed or valued.

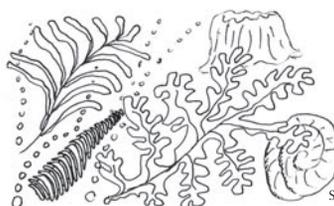
As oppressors, there are some dynamics it is helpful to notice and discharge about. We have to recognize the reality of the situations we are in and, even if we still carry the oppressor patterns, begin to notice what the oppressed people around us are actually doing.

As oppressors, for example,

- We are often trained to take the generosity of people in the oppressed group for granted;

- We are preoccupied with ourselves and our own interests and don't take the oppressed person into account;
- We don't recognize the value of the intelligence and generosity the oppressed person is showing, perhaps because he or she is doing something outside our experience that we dismiss.

I have found it helpful to slow down and try (1) to pay attention to exactly what the person is doing or showing in my direction and (2) to act on the assumption that what he or she is doing has value to me and my re-emergence. It is important, but not enough, to feel and show appreciation. To reclaim our full humanity, we need to decide to make full use of the contradictions oppressed people are offering us.



Barbara Boring
Boise, Idaho, USA

An Invitation to Stand Against Oppressor Distresses

*A letter from Joanne Bray,
the International Liberation Reference Person for Catholics*

Dear Catholics:

I would like to encourage us all to do more work on oppressor material.¹ I would like to make it sound inviting, exciting, human. It is. But I don't know if I can fully express that yet. I think I will get there as I do more work on it. But I want to say it now anyway.

I will use myself as an example.

I have decided to try and clear out as much fear and contempt as I can. I can see where I struggle with this material more than I would like to notice. It is chronic, even though I would like to not think of it that way. It is important to face it as chronic, and to face my job of cleaning it out. I don't like being saddled with this material, but the only way I can get out of it is to stand against it.

I've tried to be systematic about this. I have discharged on the first time I turned oppressor on someone. I've gone back to my childhood, to a particular incident. I was feeling overwhelmed with oppression. I asked for help. I asked again and again. When I didn't get help, I lashed out—turning on² someone else. It was a decision to escape feeling bad, and it did stop the

feeling for a while. A short while. But I hurt someone I loved. I don't want to hurt anyone I love, or don't yet love. I don't think any of us want to hurt other people. I think that is the important thing. None of us want to hurt other people.

I've noticed that I carry a recording of "I cannot take it³ anymore." When this recording is kicked,⁴ it feels unbearable. I am pulled to be mean (or some variation of that—petty, critical, and so on). I've learned that I have to stand *against* this recording. I cannot use it to justify acting mean in any way—whether it is visible or invisible to others—*no matter what*. And so I have taken the direction, "I won't turn mean, petty, critical, vindictive, on you, no matter what I have to feel." I've found this direction useful, because it is *not* about other people. It is about my decision. My power. My being human.

I think my clienting could be a useful model for other Catholics who are pulled to be mean, petty, critical toward others—strangers, family, RC leaders. I think we have to stand against our distresses and show others that they want to do it, too. I think we want to

be fully human and not pretend that we have cleaned up the distresses we wish we didn't have. We have them, and we each get to use RC to stand against the ways we are pulled to hurt and oppress other people.

I hope this sounds inviting to you. It is.

I think it is especially important in a culture and religion that expect us to be, or appear to be, loving, when we carry hurt that needs to be challenged and discharged. We want the real thing—our real love, our real connections, our real selves.

Please write to me with your thinking.

LATER

I am starting to get e-mail responses to my posting on standing against oppressor recordings. People are telling me that they are doing similar work, cleaning things up in relationships and Communities. People in Catholic support groups are discharging on early memories of oppressing someone. This makes me happy. More important, I think it sets us on a solid path toward how re-emergence is about being *human*. Always.

I want to add a note about recorded indifference.

I think indifference is the bedrock of oppressor material. It is where we do not notice that we are damaging another human being. I was recently thinking and discharging about drone missiles. These are missiles not occupied by human beings. They are weapons of death that are directed by human beings who distance themselves from noticing the impact on the humans they harm. A client once told me of using the

¹ Material means distress.

² Turning on means attacking.

³ Take it means tolerate it.

⁴ In this context, kicked means restimulated.



KATIE KAUFFMAN

direction, “Close and mean.” I think we need to face things intimately, with someone who sees us as we show it all.

I am reminded of Tim’s⁵ repeated encouragement to work on going back and fighting for ourselves and our connections during our first moments—on how we needed to be welcomed into this world by caring, connected human beings but how (given the damage, lack of discharge, and lack of information) that initial connection was tampered with (though not permanently destroyed). I think we have to fight fully

⁵ Tim Jackins’

for how much we love(d) and want(ed) each other. Now. Back then. We want human connection.

I think as we work full-out⁶ on these early efforts to reach other human beings, we will be able to make sense of the material we carry that is loaded with callous indifference. We never, ever, want to hurt other human beings. This is a fact that we can take back and stand with as we go to our earliest memories of oppressing someone else.

I think this is what we who are “catholic” (meaning universal) are aiming for. We want everyone.

⁶ Full-out means fully.

I wish I could go to the Vatican and work with all the hierarchy. I’d like to counsel them, reminding them of their humanity and deep goodness. I’d ask about their first memory of being inhuman (oppressive) in any way and how they’d acted it out recently. I would, of course, observe the RC policy of confidentiality, so you probably wouldn’t hear about it. Please assume that I’ll be there someday—with a few of you, perhaps—working on removing the distress recordings from theology and policy.

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

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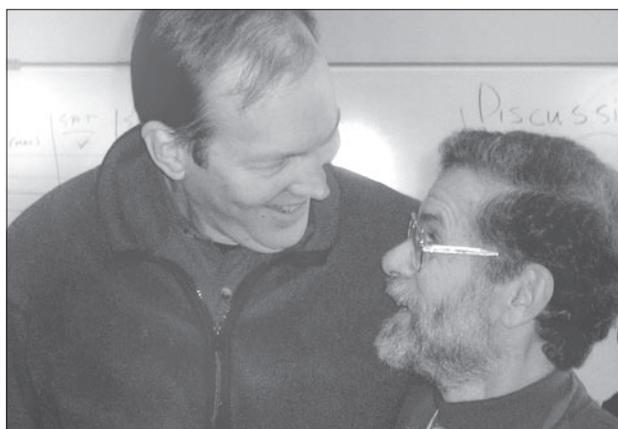
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DEBBIE SCHMEDING



A Recent Introduction to RC

(CD 13)



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

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

(This is one of the RC Teacher Updates, listed on page 104.)

Working on Being USers

I was born and raised in the United States. Then in 1965 when I married a Greek man, I emigrated to Greece.

Here in Greece we have had a USers' support group for many years. We have had a chance to discharge in a safe setting much of what comes up for us daily and figure out some of the ways to work on USer patterns.

I understand why most of the USers I have met in RC tend to detour around this work, to devalue it, or to place it in a less threatening or humiliating context. Oppressor work is never fun. No one wants to do it. And oppressor distress makes it hard to even see that the U.S. identity is important. Yet, in my mind, there is nothing more important today than pushing us USers to start cleaning up our patterns. Jo Saunders¹ recently said to a group of us, "Can you imagine how fast the world would be put right if we, the oppressors, did our work?"

Some of us USers who consider ourselves "liberal" have identified ourselves with the "good guys" against all those "who are the cause of those awful U.S. patterns." The "I am different" argument is a classic oppressor stance. Another obstacle to tackling this work with integrity is what Jo calls "hand wringing"—a pattern of U.S. bashing; a kind of self-flagellation, of saying how horrible we, and our systems, are.

During the recent U.S. presidential election, in discussions on the RC Community members' e-mail

list, the "take-over" patterns of USers were running in high gear. Finally a few brave non-USers challenged the USers' monopolizing of the list. When I wrote in to suggest that we USers take some time to work on our arrogance patterns, I was criticized by some U.S. leaders but received ten letters from non-USers thanking me for writing.

After discharging on this a lot, I had the idea that it would be a powerful contradiction² for us USers to have a USer discussion list on which we could discuss U.S. issues without thoughtlessly restimulating non-USer readers.

I will finish with a direction from Jo for the owning class, which applies to USers, too: "*I promise always to remember that I and my people are completely good, and always have been, and I need never pretend again.*" She also said, "If we discharge from this position, we can build that safe place where we can look at the unspeakable things that have been done, the world that has been set up, by our people and the deep place of denial that we don't want to visit. My experience is that the more we work on our own goodness, the more useful we are. In some funny³ way, we can offer a contradiction that is liberating for other people because we are able to take the blame without being confused about our own goodness."

Becky Sakellariou
Athens, Greece

¹ Jo Saunders is the International Liberation Reference Person for Owning-Class People.

² Contradiction to distress

³ In this context, funny means strange.

A Confused Picture of Men's Lives

The fact that men are assigned an oppressive role toward women by the oppressive society has confused the picture that most women have of what men's lives are really like. . . . Most women have assumed that since, in general, they themselves tend to talk to each other and be clients to each other about their difficulties, men do this with each other, too, the women not realizing that men have been conditioned to feel that it is a "shameful" weakness to do anything but endure hardship and distress stoically.

Harvey Jackins
From *The List*, page 123

Being Ready to Help Guide the Collapsing Society

A talk by Tim Jackins at the Connecticut, USA, Teachers' and Leaders' Workshop, in May 2010

Someone: I'd like to hear you talk about the goals of the Community and how you see things going.

Tim Jackins: My version of the goals of the RC Community is to get this set of tools in everybody's hands. That's ultimately what we want—that all people understand discharge well enough that their progress is up to them¹ in a new sense. That they have the tools and understanding and can figure out how to have the sessions they need.

That won't be the end of struggle, but it will be a crucial point—when people have a picture that they can get rid of the confusions; that there aren't real conflicts between us (there are lots of challenges, but they're not between us—they are challenges for us collectively); and that we can assist each other in ending our confusions so that we can move forward.

Before that, I want all of us in RC to get in shape² and think things through enough that we can help guide the apparently rapidly approaching collapse of our society. I think many people think well enough now to provide leadership, but not enough of them have gotten through their timidities. All of us in this room think very good thoughts,

¹ Up to them means under their control.

² In this context, get in shape means recover our real selves.

and we don't tell them to anybody most of the time. We are secretive, not just quiet. We're secretive about a lot of things we know that nobody else knows. That doesn't work well, though we may be able to get away with it³ up to the point of a crisis.

I think many people actually think well enough now to provide leadership, but not enough of these people have gotten through their timidities.

But at a point of crisis, somebody has to step forward and lay out his or her best thinking. It doesn't even have to be exactly right. He or she just has to show others that people can think about things so that other people dare to try to think. Of course, because we have the

³ Get away with it means escape repercussions from it.

chance to discharge and can listen to other people, the odds are that we will have fairly good policies. It is useful for somebody to say out loud good policies, wherever they come from. The policies don't have to be ours, but we have to recognize them and say them out loud. That's the essence of leadership—to collect good thoughts about things and present them in a way that everybody can hear.

Leadership is vital, and, as near as I can tell,⁴ it works because of one crucial factor—that people recognize good ideas even before they have them themselves. Before they're in shape to have their own, they can recognize a good idea and latch on to it. People can recognize someone who thinks. Even if they don't agree with the person, they can recognize a mind that

is trying to work and is not just parroting old restimulating non-functional solutions. There are a lot of minds here that think well, but a lot of them are awfully timid, and, as I said, we can get away with it. But there will be points, as this society collapses, when it will be far better if our best thoughts are out in the open.

The collapse appears to be nearby. It's clear that the forces of money have the power to drive governments, like those of Greece

continued . . .

⁴ Tell means perceive.



MARTI HAYMAKER

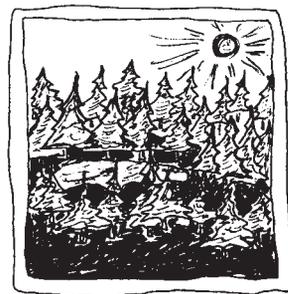
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and others, into bankruptcy. They are more powerful than governments. Attempts are being made to hold things together. There are struggles between industrial capital and financial capital. Things may get patched together for another two, five, ten years. Maybe. It's so unstable it's unpredictable, but it can't be sustained. It's getting wilder and wilder. But that's a minor aside.

It can feel like doom and despair, but there is something to say about that. This system is going to fall down. It's all going to fall down. And that's a good thing. We wish there were some easy, gentle way (or maybe even that it didn't have to happen), but large systems don't change like that. If there

were enough people who could think well enough, it might be possible, but we're a little short at the moment. We're a little behind. I figure if we had five million people who thought as well as you do, who knew RC as well as you do, and who were only half as timid as you are, that would be enough to actually cushion and guide things. That would mean that each of those five million would have to lead about fourteen hundred people. Could you lead fourteen hundred people? Yes, you probably could. Would you be scared the whole time? Yes, you probably would be. But somebody has to think, and then that person has to put his or her thinking out there.

As I said, we don't have to be right. Our great strength is not in being right about everything. We're not. Our strength is in knowing how to get our minds thinking better and better and knowing how to help other people do the same. That alone is enough to propel things forward.



LK

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AMANDA MARTINEZ

I've been trying to figure out what a rational vacation is. What I figured out instead is what a vacation is *not*. I think a vacation is not an opportunity to let my patterns run wild.

Frank
Kihei, Maui, Hawaii

The RC Disability Initiative in Africa

Warm Ethiopian greetings from Addis Ababa! Please find below a report on the RC Disability Initiative in Africa.



Dagnachew B. Wakene
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

It has been nearly three years since Re-evaluation Counseling was introduced to a few members of the disability community in Ethiopia, who have now recognized and adopted RC as a vital, priceless tool for bringing about a visible paradigm shift in the lives of persons with disabilities in Africa.

It took a while for those of us who founded this movement, backed¹ by the RC Area Reference Person in Ethiopia, Mesfin Taye, to first internalize and apply this tool in our own lives and then enable others to understand it. Eventually though, we developed a clear vision that has kept us moving—an aspiration of *advancing RC to a level where it becomes a routine exercise within the disability community in Ethiopia, and Africa as a whole.*

We are beginning to realize this goal. Over the past three years we have continuously grown into an expanding family of RCers with disabilities who have a firm belief in the effectiveness of this extraordinary counseling approach, which we all have tested firsthand.

We keep identifying and working on the major issues we confront in life, both individually and as a community that has experienced in common various societal prejudices, discriminations, and stereotypes. We have Co-Counseling sessions and conduct topic groups and support groups. The key issues we have pinpointed so far include some deeply-rooted quests:

- understanding and loving ourselves and others;
- self-esteem and a sense of self-worth;
- the ability to actually *live* life and see beyond the numerous hurdles that tend to hinder our daily

lives—most significantly, the attitudinal barriers posed by the “non-disabled” majority;

- understanding the “human side of human beings”—forgiving and teaching those who have hurt us profoundly over the years, mainly due to the entrenched ignorance in our society about disability and persons with disabilities;
- assertiveness and advocacy for our cause—demanding our rights and not begging for them; carrying the motto “Nothing About Us Without Us”;
- recognizing that our strengths and abilities outshine our apparent “disabilities.”

continued . . .



ISRAEL • LYNDALL KATZ

¹ Backed means supported.

TEACHING, LEADING, COMMUNITY BUILDING

... continued

A PAN-AFRICAN RC DISABILITY NETWORK— THE WAY FORWARD

We believe that most, if not all, fellow people with disabilities throughout Africa confront the very issues we raise here in our RC disability sessions. Accordingly, we invite our compatriots with disabilities in all African countries to participate in this initiative and share their ideas about it.

We envision creating a Pan-African RC Disability Network that builds a better society, a better country, and a better continent, all of which value persons with disabilities, appreciate the beauties of disability and difference, and embrace all citizens, without distinction or discrimination.



SHALL WE DANCE • © BRIAN TOWNSEND

CHALLENGES IMPACTING OUR GROWTH

Certain challenges have negatively impacted our growth as a strong RC Disability Community. Many of these stem from the *disability-unfriendly* environment we have to deal with on a daily basis. Some of them are

- Finding an accessible venue in which to meet and an accessible means of transport, which almost does not exist
- Inadequate (though improving) communication among the group members, because of distance
- Monetary issues
- A need for more literature in different formats (braille, audio, sign language, and so on) for our members with visual and hearing impairments.

THE RECENT RC WORKSHOP IN NAIROBI, KENYA

An RC workshop in Nairobi, Kenya, in August 2010, was the first Regional workshop attended by our group. Despite the fact that some of us had never even been on a plane before, let alone to another country, we were determined to make it to³ this workshop and convey our message of “Yes, we can!” We wanted to use the opportunity to challenge all the workshop participants on whether they had even thought of incorporating persons with disabilities into their RC programs.

The responses we received were moving and greatly exceeded our expectations. We felt a “wind of change” blowing in the workshop hall. Two representatives of the disability group in Ethiopia and one Kenyan brother with a disability had a direct eye-to-eye session with all the rest of the workshop participants, which manifested in an intense and rare moment of discharge. It was, in my opinion, the highlight of those three extraordinary days.

We hope that all the East African groups represented at the workshop will soon be introducing RC to people with disabilities and special needs in their respective areas. We hope that this “wind of change” will keep blowing—touching and healing the many damages suffered by persons with disabilities and their families. We hope that in the near future many RCers with disabilities will be popping up in various countries of Africa.

² Let alone means not to mention.

³ Make it to means successfully arrive at.

Appreciating and Strengthening RC in Africa

From the 26th to the 29th of August, 2010, RCers from Rwanda, Ethiopia, Tanzania, Uganda, and Kenya gathered in Nairobi, Kenya, for a three-day workshop.

Under the leadership of Melphy¹ and Wanjiku,² we each shared our renewed commitment toward the growth of our RC Communities. We had Co-Counseling sessions and discussions on strengthening RC in Africa and in our lives, and on the challenges we are facing as Communities. We discharged on what has kept us from being where we've wanted to be in terms of Community growth and appreciated how far we have come. Listening to people from each Community as they shared their challenges was both restimulating and encouraging. We are in it together and are moving forward.

The presentation on the oppression of men was an eye opener. Wife inheritance has always been seen as the man's fault, without considering that in some cases, or most, the man would rather not inherit his late brother's wife but has to do so because of cultural demands.

It was a joy to have the participants from Ethiopia there

¹ Melphy Sakupwanya, the Regional Reference Person for Sub-Saharan Africa

² Wanjiku Kironyo, the Area Reference Person for Nairobi, Kenya, and the Apprentice Regional Reference Person for Kenya and Surrounds



JAYNE SCHAUER

and to listen as they shared what they have been able to achieve in their Communities. Their group of people with special needs has grown, and the presentation on disability, especially on inclusion in workshop activities, was powerful.

Rarely do you have a chance to sit in a group and question society's expectations of you, especially those that are oppressive. Re-evaluation Counseling makes that possible. We looked at society's view of marriage, what people consider when choosing a partner, and the challenges

that are facing marriages in our communities. I re-examined and discharged on the guilt that comes from going against society's expectations.

We talked of how society is oppressing young people, and what leads to discouragement. We young people continually discharge on the material that is heaped on us daily—for example, the constant reminders of what we cannot do, the mistakes we have made, and why we have to wait until we are older before our opinions can be respected. It was empowering to have the support of everyone in the workshop as we talked and they listened. Everyone formed a circle around us, and it felt safe to share and discharge toward reclaiming the reality that we are capable.

We appreciate our leaders—Tim,³ Diane,⁴

Melphy, Bafana,⁵ and Wanjiku—for supporting our Communities without holding back. We feel loved, appreciated, and thought of, and the only way to move after this is forward. This workshop reignited the fire for RC in Africa. Thank you.

Janet Wambui
Nairobi, Kenya

³ Tim Jackins, the International Reference Person for the RC Communities

⁴ Diane Shisk, the Alternate International Reference Person for the RC Communities

⁵ Bafana Matsebula, the Area Reference Person for Swaziland and the Apprentice Regional Reference Person for Southernmost Africa

Appreciations of the Nairobi Workshop

Here are some appreciations of the August 2010 RC workshop in Nairobi, Kenya, led by Melphy Sakupwanya¹ and Wanjiku Kironyo²:

I thank all the RCers for the time we spent together. Every minute was and is still treasured. I came to realise that we human beings have within us the solutions to our problems and that we are not to be told to do this or that to solve our problems.

Maureen Akinyi
Nairobi, Kenya

I learned a lot that I will share with those I left behind—to have RC in its right place in the society. Glad to have made international friends. You are great. Keep on moving on.

Christine Owinyi
Mumias, Kenya

I miss you all. I have freedom and confidence when I am with you. We have departed from the workshop, but a great task awaits us: the people need to know this great tool. So let's join hands to work for our people everywhere in this world.

Ochen Peter Emmanuel
Gulu, Uganda

The workshop was one of a kind for me—from the weather to the new people I met from Rwanda and Ethiopia. I discharged a lot. The topic groups were empowering, especially the young-adult group and the differently-abled-people's group. I intend to use RC and give it to young adults and people with disabilities in my community. I say, "Africa, let's use the RC tool and help our people and the world."

Samuel Karanja
Nairobi, Kenya

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

² Wanjiku Kironyo is the Area Reference Person for Nairobi, Kenya, and the Apprentice Regional Reference Person for Kenya and Surrounds.

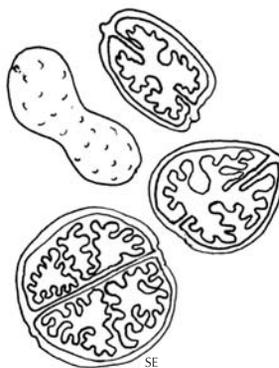
RC in Nigeria on the March

At a well attended two-day leadership workshop in November 2010, I was chosen to be Area Reference Person for the Surulere RC Community, in Lagos State, Nigeria. (Chioma Okonkwo was chosen as Area Reference Person for another part of Lagos in 2009.)

With forty-three RCers in attendance, the occasion also witnessed the appointment of the Alternate Area Reference Person, Ifeoma Akudo. Bodunrin Emechebe, Ehis A. Ehiguese, Sam Akhigbe, and Ngozi D. Akuche emerged as support group leaders.

Now, with a deep sense of humility, I pledge my unwavering commitment to the further growth of RC in Nigeria, with the able support of every member of the Community.

Onii Nwangwu-Stevenson
Lagos, Nigeria



HAWAII, USA • STEVE THOMPSON

No Leaders Means No Leadership

. . . intelligent thinking, which is an essential ingredient of successful human activity, takes place only in an individual human mind. Collective judgments can be and are entered into, individual conclusions can be communicated to others and discussed and checked (a very salutary process), yet thinking itself must take place on an individual basis. If people are going to act as a group or as a community, at least one person has to think about the group or community as a whole rather than think of the activity only from the standpoint of a participant. The more people there are who think of the group activity as a whole, the more people there are who assume the responsibility of thinking in a leaderlike fashion, the better the results; but at least one person has to play this role. To decry or deny this role of leadership is to let it go by default and insure difficulty and, if uncorrected, defeat. No leaders means no leadership, no leadership means no policies, no policies means confusion and defeat of the group effort.

Harvey Jackins

From "The Importance of Leadership," on page 172 of *The Human Situation*



LK

To Care-of-the-Environment Leaders

*A letter from Wytse Visser,
the International Commonality Reference Person for the Care of the Environment*

Dear care-of-the-environment leaders,

Recently, again, an e-mail was sent to me by a care-of-the-environment leader asking if I could lead the Care-of-the-Environment Leaders' Conference, in February 2011, in the Netherlands, with groups on other parts of the planet joining in via a live connection.

I think that by coming in person to the conference we give our personal liberation and our work a bigger chance to move on in the best way. I understand the doubts about flying, connected to time, money, and energy. It is good that we think about this, and think as big as we can. Each person deserves our full respect for his or her choice to live from integrity, and discharging on this will help each individual notice how much she or he cares.

Two months ago I spoke with Tim Jackins about filming the conference and having a live connection to care-of-the-environment leaders on other continents or making a tape for these leaders to watch later. He said he approved of the taping and that after the conference a small group could watch the tape and decide which parts were good enough. Then he could approve of the edited tape, and it could be distributed.

He said no to having a group watch the conference via a live connection. I had already come to the same conclusion. I think that as a Community we are not there yet, although it is something to work toward and think and discharge about, and try on a small scale so that we can figure out if it might work in our RC future. It would save us lots of time and waste less energy. On the other hand, it is my best guess that no technical equipment can replace people being close enough to each other to smell and feel each other. It is the whole package of another human, with that other mind and different set of patterns, that can elegantly break through our chronic pain. This most often results in fresh thinking and stronger leadership. People from our own Community often cannot contradict our most chronic pain because they struggle with the same distresses. Also, if I as a leader am not present, I cannot tell* what theory would make the most sense for the group to get at any particular moment.

To improve growth, we as care-of-the-environment leaders need to build close, physical worldwide connections. We want our leadership to be solid enough that we don't believe

continued . . .

* Tell means perceive.

... continued

the early hurts that isolate us more than we allow ourselves to be honest about. I notice that most of us keep stumbling in our small, old perspectives, limited by oppressions of all kinds. (We are not to blame, it was never our choice.) We need to watch the struggles of leaders from other continents so that we can be more relaxed about our own battles. We need to be together to experience each other's commitment and hold on to hope and feeling connected. This will help us to think and act more confidently at home in our own Communities, to have a broader and wider perspective, and to work more effectively toward achieving our goals in RC and out in the world.

It is my wish that we will move all minds toward putting caring before capitalism. However, my urgency (and maybe yours, too) wants this now and faster, and of course that is for Co-Counseling sessions. In the past we learned that if a liberation group grew too fast, it collapsed, and when growth was too slow, not much was happening at all. Care-of-the-environment work in RC is becoming more and more visible. We have a great speed right now. We keep growing in numbers of leaders, and of people who are discharging on caring for the environment.

The upcoming conference is meant to form the goals for care-of-the-environment leaders for the next period. My questions to all of you that I would like your thinking on are

- Can you see your leadership and this project making a significant difference for at least seven generations? Why yes or why no?
- What do you need to face to be able to stand tall when someone from a future generation asks you what you have done in your lifetime to care for the environment?
- What do you need as a leader to improve your leadership?

I very much look forward to the first Care-of-the-Environment Leaders' Conference—to setting new goals, learning from each other, and enjoying working together as a strongly caring team.

Ljouwert, Fryslân, The Netherlands



AEB

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, 2009, and 2010 4-CD sets are also available to anyone, for \$25 per set, while supplies last.

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

*For ordering information,
see page 109.*

E-mail Discussion List for RC Community Members Involved in Eliminating Racism

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. It 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*

Scram!

(For children to sing to monsters under the bed,
and grown-ups to monsters in their head)

Get outta¹ my way
I'm a comin'² through
Gonna³ make a lot of noise
When I do.

Ya Hoo. Ya Hoo. Ya Hoo.

You see me comin',
You better run
'Cause⁴ if you don't
I'll stick out my tongue
At You. At You. At You.



You all had better
Get outta my way
Gonna scare you all to smithereens⁵
Anyway.
Ya Hey. Ya Hey. Ya Hey.

When I start a yellin',⁶
I know you'll flee
You know you can't
Stand up to me.
Ya Hee. Ya Hee. Ya Hee.

© Russell Hayes
Lexington, Kentucky, USA

¹ Outta means out of.

² A comin' means coming.

³ Gonna means going to.

⁴ 'Cause means because.

⁵ Scare you all to smithereens means scare you all a great deal.

⁶ A yellin' means yelling.



DEBBY GLICKMAN

Always Teaching RC

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

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

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

To order, see page 109.

Keeping in Contact with Young People

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

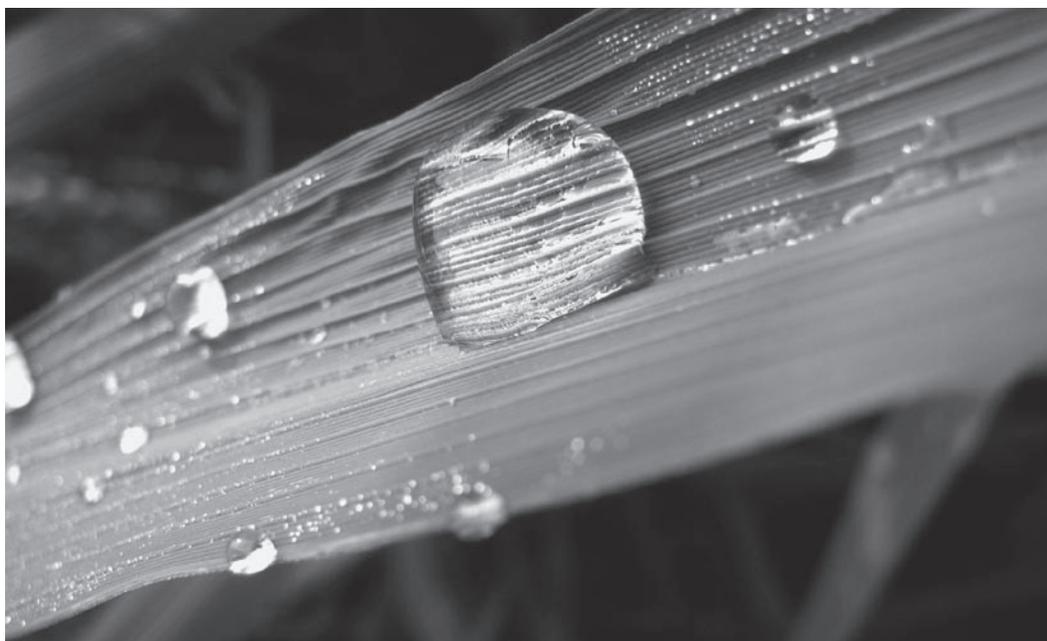
We collect the names of young people who would like an RC ally to be a resource for them as they head off on their own. The ally is to stay in touch with them by phone—taking all the initiative, if necessary, for several months; listening to them; Co-Counseling with them (by phone or in person); helping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

Young people and allies are put in contact with each other. Sometimes they already have a relationship, and sometimes they build one afresh. More than thirty pairs have been set up. Some pairs are quickly and wonderfully useful, and some take time—but all are useful.

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

Send information to Megan Lynes, at <meganlynes@gmail.com> or Zero Brattle Drive, Apt. 4, Arlington, Massachusetts 02474, USA. If you e-mail, please put “Allies to Shifting Young People” in the subject line.

Thank you,
Tim Jackins



YONI KALLAI



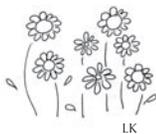
LAURIE RHODES

RC Teachers, Communicate Anew

We have recently begun an RC e-mail discussion list for RC teachers. It 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.

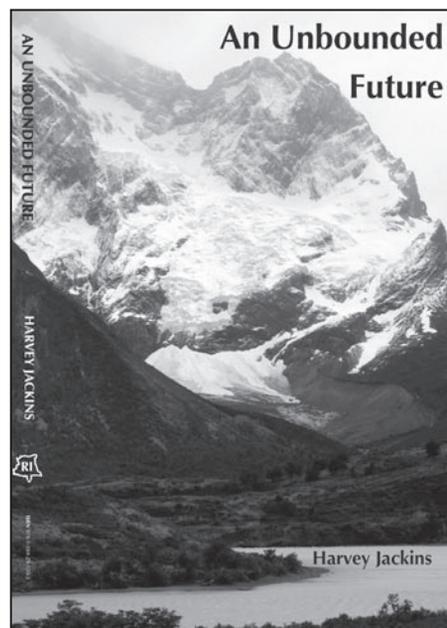


LK

Tim Jackins
and Diane Shisk

"I was a revolutionary long before RC came along. Then something happened. I accidentally discovered RC. . . . I remember a time when I had to decide if I should try to get back into revolutionary activity and fight the bad ideas I could see creeping into all the revolutionary parties, or if I should stick to this new development that I was beginning to call RC and see how important it would turn out to be. I decided, well, there are a lot of people who are supposed to be pursuing revolutionary policies, but nobody's bothering with RC except me. So I decided to stick with RC. I had no idea at that time that RC and the people who would gather around me doing RC would turn out to be the most important revolutionary movement that has ever come along. . . . So, rounding a circle, I am now back leading a revolution, a revolution of ideas."

From "*Live Up to and Practice Our Theory*,"
on page 15 of *An Unbounded Future*



*The ideas and developments of RC
as written about by Harvey Jackins
from 1995 until his death in 1999*

\$13 (U.S.)

See page 109 for ordering information.

Deciding to Stop Global Warming

Dear Tim¹ and Diane,²

I am writing to tell you about a decision I made last January about organizing to stop global warming, and how it has changed my life.

As the RC Communities work on Goal 3,³ I believe we will progress faster if we work from a place of decision. I've found that I can bear to face the threat to our environment because my decision and actions offer enough connection and hope to contradict the fear and grief.

Several years ago I began to educate myself more about the environment, and climate change in particular, by reading a few books and attending the annual Midwest (USA) Renewable Energy Fair. I had a lot of Co-Counseling sessions about whether to put solar panels on my house and ultimately decided against it. Instead my husband and I moved into a smaller place, in a cohousing community, and lowered our carbon footprint that way.

Then I came across⁴ a book, *Storms of My Grandchildren*, by a well-known climate scientist James Hansen. It confirmed my feeling that the warming caused by burning fossil fuels is an immense threat to human lives, and the entire planetary ecosystem, and that time is running out for solving this problem.

¹ Tim Jackins

² Diane Shisk

³ 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.

⁴ Came across means found, discovered.



JO PERRY

I made a decision to organize people to take action against global warming. I also decided that no distress of mine was more important to me than preserving our beautiful planet. Most of my daily feelings of distress and disappointment seem unimportant when set against that.

I began looking for information about who was organizing effectively already and where best to focus my efforts and just started with whatever I could find. I went to a Sierra Club meeting, because the Sierra Club has taken the lead on eliminating the use of coal (which emits more carbon than other fossil fuels and is incredibly destructive to health and the environment). Nowadays one can sign up through web-based organizations to host a meeting or plan an event. I hosted several meetings, primarily for the experience. In one case I signed up on-line at 7:00 in the morning and seventeen people attended that evening. Most of them were my neighbors.

All spring I listened to the news about the BP oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico and cried and raged. I also pulled together about a dozen people to work with me locally on a national day of action called Hands Across the Sand. On June

26 just over a hundred people lined the lakeshore in my town, in conjunction with about a hundred thousand other people around the country, in a symbolic protest against offshore oil drilling. Throughout the four weeks of organizing for that event, I sweated, shook, and cried in my sessions about my fears for the environment, my feelings of inadequacy and hopelessness, and my determination to not be stopped. Everything I'd ever learned from Harvey⁵ about leadership I used in my organizing—such as welcoming each new person, making sure that he or she had a job to do, holding out confidence that we could make a difference, and making proposals and eliciting people's thinking about them. I saved my despair for my sessions.

After Hands Across the Sand I thought hard about why, when the BP oil spill was so awful, we didn't get even more people to come. When an organization called 350.org called for a Global Work Party on October 10, I was ready to propose a new idea. Drawing on ideas from the U.S. women's suffrage movement of the early 1900s and the more recent Gay Pride movement, I put on-line that I was organizing a "Parade for the Planet" in Madison (Wisconsin, USA). Over and over my mantra to myself was, "I'll see what I can get away with."⁶ I figured that people would more easily come to an event if it had a hopeful perspective: the parade would be a celebration of all the activities people had already figured out to do in Madison. And I figured that more people would come if they came as a group, rather than as individuals, so we asked

⁵ Harvey Jackins

⁶ Get away with means succeed in doing, without bad repercussions.

people to sign up in delegations. The parade took three intensive months to organize, but it was a huge success. Over three hundred people came, and more than a dozen worked with me as a team to create both a parade and an informational fair.

All along as I've planned my actions, I've used my sessions to think through the things I need to figure out and to discharge the grief and fear brought up by facing an enormous threat head-on.⁷ I get a lot of discharge from talking about the pictures I've seen on-line of people across the globe who are organizing with 350.org. (350 refers to the need to get the level of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere back down to 350 parts per million in order to preserve life as it has evolved on earth. The level is currently 390, and rising at two to three ppm per year.) One woman in Iraq stands alone in a town square holding a sign for 350. Ten thousand young people have gathered in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, with the same message, and U.S. soldiers in Afghanistan can be seen parking their tank with a 350 sign on it. I also can discharge by talking about my love for beautiful places and creatures, and I have worked on feelings of humiliation and insignificance that came from early sexual abuse and being a little sister. Usually I start from the present and then switch to the early stuff as soon as the recordings come into my head.

Although the urgency I feel about the threat to life on earth undoubtedly has connections to life-and-death struggles in my young life, I have no doubt that there is a real and present danger that we humans need to face and take charge of. If an army were invading my home and killing people, I would want to fight against it. The threat posed by

carbon emissions is actually greater than an invading army, because, if unchecked, they will set in motion forces that could warm the planet beyond what we could stop or survive. The flooding in Pakistan, where a fifth of the country has been flood ravaged, shows what we are up against even at the current level of warming. Climate scientists are repeatedly finding that warming is proceeding faster than their models had predicted. Some now say that our carbon emissions must peak and start to decline by 2015 if we are to avoid catastrophic global warming.

The RC Community has much to offer humanity as we face this problem. I know that I could not be functioning in the way that I am had I not had years of opportunity to both discharge and lead within RC. My

personal goal at my Region's⁸ recent teachers' and leaders' workshop was to highlight global warming for as many people as I could. I called discharge groups on two mornings at 7:00 a.m. and held a topic table at lunch called Global Warming 101. Throughout the workshop many people initiated conversations with me. Also helpful is a monthly conference call amongst Midwestern USA RCers who are focusing in their lives on care of the environment.

I look forward to hearing from other RCers who are making the environment a priority in their lives.

Madeleine Para
Madison, Wisconsin, USA

⁸ A Region is a subdivision of the International Re-evaluation Counseling Community, usually consisting of several Areas (local RC Communities).

Rational Cooperation

Cooperation naturally becomes us

Until our hurt suspends our power of thought.

If then enforced, a hurt resistance freezes,

So new enforcement pressures then are brought.

Society's a harness, not a tyrant.

Humans made it, blindly crowned it, wield its whips.

As we regain ourselves we'll change these strictures

To happy voluntary partnerships.

Loving intelligences, re-emerging,

Appreciate, communicate, feel free,

And then cooperate the way musicians

Cooperate to play a symphony.



Harvey Jackins
From *Zest Is Best*

⁷ Head-on means with direct opposition.

UER at the Gandhi-King Conference

United to End Racism (UER) sent a small delegation, led by Dorothy Marcy,¹ to the Gandhi-King Conference,² in Memphis, Tennessee, USA, in October 2010. Here are excerpts from two reports:

Dorothy Marcy

We got to the conference site about 8:00 AM on Friday, registered, and heard the "PeaceJam Slam Youth Conference" opening speaker, Spirit Trickey-Rowan. Spirit is the daughter of Minnie Jean Brown, one of the Little Rock Nine, who made history by integrating Central High School in Little Rock, Arkansas (USA), in 1957. (Orville Faubus³ called out the National Guard to keep the black students out of the school.) Minnie Jean Brown was a good friend of mine. We were both in the Y-teens (a YWCA⁴ group).

¹ Dorothy Marcy is the Area Reference Person for Fayetteville, Arkansas, USA.

² The Gandhi-King Conference on Peacemaking is an annual three-day conference on non-violence and social change.

³ Orville Faubus was the governor of Arkansas (USA) from 1955 to 1967.

⁴ Young Women's Christian Association



© BRIAN TOWNSEND

Spirit attended one of our UER workshops. (She and her brother also attended BLCD⁵ once.) She currently speaks and writes plays about the elimination of racism. She lives in Little Rock, and she, along with several other young adults, are eager for us to come there and assist them in learning RC!

The speaker at 1:00 PM was Reverend Samuel "Billy" Kyles, who had worked with Martin Luther King⁶ and was present when he was assassinated. He helped direct a movie about the event, *The Witness*, which was nominated for an Emmy.⁷ He was an inspiring speaker, but because his talk was about a lot of painful emotion, we decided to start our workshop that followed his talk playing with balloons. That was a hit,⁸ and each person who entered the room immediately joined in the play.

Our workshop went from 2:15 to 3:30 PM—not a lot of time for an introductory presentation, but we were great. There were twenty people in attendance. Marilyn McEnergy⁹ assisted me. Several young adults attended, many of them from Little Rock, and many people filled out our contact cards. We gave out lots of business cards as well. The participants were eager to talk more with us, and we couldn't get them out of the room after the workshop. We were finally run out¹⁰ so that the next group could use the room.

From 6:30 to 8:30 PM we attended a reception and used the time to continue to make good contact with folk and invite people to our next workshop and our gather-in.

On Saturday morning our delegation went to breakfast at a pancake house. We hadn't given much thought to the fact that we were all wearing our UER t-shirts. We got quite a bit of attention, and great service from the mostly black staff. (When we returned to the same restaurant the next day, our waitress seated us in the same place and remembered all our orders from the previous day.) We did mini-sessions

⁵ The Black Liberation and Community Development Workshop, an annual RC black liberation workshop

⁶ Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., a major leader of the U.S. Civil Rights Movement

⁷ An Emmy is a major television production award.

⁸ A hit means a success.

⁹ Marilyn McEnergy is an RC leader in Danville, Vermont, USA.

¹⁰ Run out means required to leave.

in that restaurant, and people noticed our crying but quickly seemed to get it¹¹ that we were fine and our tears were okay.

Our next workshop was scheduled for 10:30 to 11:45 AM. We had fifteen participants. Alma Burt¹² assisted me. The tone of the workshop was good. We taught the *Rosa Sat* song:

“Rosa¹³ sat so Martin¹⁴ could walk.

Martin walked so Obama¹⁵ could run.

Obama ran, he ran and he won,

So all our children could fly.”

Again the participants hung around¹⁶ and did not want to leave. We talked to an older black man about the RC Black Men and Allies Workshop coming up in November and gave him a flier.

After lunch we got signs and broke into two groups of two each for our listening project.¹⁷ Our two questions were, “How has racism affected your life?” and “What makes you hopeful about the work of ending racism?” We made good contact with four or five people, some of whom came to our gather-in and brought friends.

From 3:00 to 5:00 PM we led a gather-in for people attending the conference who had been in contact with RC previously. (For the past three years we have been using the Gandhi-King Conference to begin building an RC Community in Memphis.) Eight people attended. The intimacy of such a small group made it possible to give a bigger and clearer picture of RC and UER. We showed the parts of the UER video with Rudy and Marion¹⁸ and had lots of mini-sessions. Folks seemed excited.

Throughout the conference we were approached by people who had not made it to¹⁹ our workshops but were attracted by our t-shirts and/or had heard about our workshops. A young woman sat with us at lunch and invited us back to Memphis to assist her organization with conflicts between the black and Latino communities. The Saturday morning speaker gave us her card and asked us to contact her. She is a lawyer in Mississippi (USA)—I think a civil rights lawyer.

HIGHLIGHTS

Spirit Trickey (the keynote speaker for the teenagers’ day of the conference) remembered me from BLCD in Canada many years ago and was delighted to see me again. She wrote on her yellow card, “Please, please contact me!”

At the reception I sat with an African-heritage woman who was a retired tax attorney. She was disheartened about ending racism and angry about white privilege. I listened to her and gave her information, whenever I could, about listening and the discharge process. I encouraged her to come to our workshop the next day, and she did. She initially appeared disinterested, but with some encouragement she began to connect with the other participants and at the end signed a yellow card expressing interest in learning more. I enjoyed the challenge of connecting with her and bringing her on board.²⁰

A young white VISTA²¹ worker in charge of a group of teenagers attended our Saturday workshop and

continued . . .

¹¹ Get it means understand.

¹² Alma Burt is an RC leader in Dumas, Arkansas, USA.

¹³ Rosa Parks, a black civil rights activist who, in Montgomery, Alabama, USA, in 1955, refused to give up her seat on the bus to a white man, setting in motion the Montgomery Bus Boycott

¹⁴ Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

¹⁵ Barack Obama, the current president of the United States and the first African-American U.S. president

¹⁶ Hung around means lingered.

¹⁷ 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.

¹⁸ *The Ending of Racism*, a UER video (DVD No. 230) that includes interviews with Rudy Nickens, the Regional Reference Person for Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, and Nebraska, USA; and Marion Ouphouet, an RC leader in Seattle, Washington, USA—both African-heritage RCers



IPSWICH, MASSACHUSETTS, USA • TIM JACKINS

WIDE WORLD CHANGING

... continued

sat with us at the reception. I loved hearing about his work and getting his perspective on the ending of racism and white privilege. He expressed a strong interest in attending our upcoming Black Men and Allies Workshop.

Several students from the Clinton School of Public Service attended our Friday workshop and then our Saturday workshop, too. They said our program was the most interesting and promising.

With the help of wonderful fabrics that Alma had brought, and beautiful enlarged photographs of people of all ethnicities, we were able to transform our meeting room into a warm and welcoming place. It seemed that people immediately felt at home there, and encouraged to connect with each other.

Another highlight was seeing our little group work through difficulties, think together, and form a solid connection. We don't want to disband and are dreaming of all the future UER projects we can do together. Images of *The Mod Squad*²² kept surfacing for us.

Dorothy Marcy
Springdale, Arkansas, USA

²² *The Mod Squad* was a U.S. television police drama that featured three young crime fighters.

Marilyn McEnery

Here are some of my highlights from the Gandhi-King Conference:

A young-adult white male in one of our groups said it was good to hear that "we didn't ask for this" (meaning that white people didn't really want racism).

Some young adults from the Clinton School in Little Rock were excited after our first workshop. "It was the best workshop today! We are coming again tomorrow, and we have a teacher who will want to know more about this." In the second workshop they were furiously taking notes, and one of them asked what a re-evaluation was. Dorothy answered, and then the young adult gave a perfect example.

A black woman who sat next to me at dinner couldn't make it to our workshop but wanted to know what we could offer at a two-day annual workshop that her group in Jackson, Mississippi (USA), sets up for legislators. I answered, "Listening," and we exchanged contact information.

A young-adult white VISTA volunteer was with us on a couple of occasions. He told me it was just the experience he had wanted. He will try to bring the black leader of the youth program to the upcoming Black Men and Allies Workshop.

Students and a teacher from a small college in Missouri (USA) want more information and contact.

Marilyn McEnery
Danville, Vermont, USA

Goals in All Spheres at Once

In times of social crisis and collapse, such as the present, it is important for the welfare of the individual, family, and group that the great social situation be taken into account. One's individual survival requires that one throw one's weight on behalf of the emerging, healthy forces of society and against the familiar and imposing but destructive and dead forces of a collapsing society. One needs to have clear goals in all spheres at once.

Harvey Jackins
From "The Necessity of Long-Range Goals,"
on page 103 of *The Human Situation*



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



The Oppression of Muslims

Last September, K Webster, the Regional Reference Person for Region 3 in New York City (New York, USA), led an evening for allies to Muslims. About fifty of us attended.

As you may have heard on the news recently, there has been some uproar about a proposed Islamic center that would be located a few blocks from the World Trade Center site in lower Manhattan. Muslims in the United States have been targeted for a long time, but the targeting has been particularly acute lately, fueled by some public figures and news media personalities. A pastor has called for the burning of Korans, Internet bloggers have called for mass deportations, a former Speaker of the House¹ compared the Islamic center organizers to Nazis, and some have promoted the idea that Muslims are out to² destroy civilization.

Much of the veiled and overt racist rhetoric about the Islamic center has come from outside of New York City. For the most part, people of multiple backgrounds do a pretty³ good job of living here, side by side, in peace. Nonetheless, our RC Community thought it would be a good time to look at this issue, as a way to regain and maintain our clearest thinking.

K opened up her talk by saying that she refuses to be manipulated by the targeting of Muslims. Our goal is to have our full minds, free of the confusions being forced upon

us. To do that, we need a safe place to ask questions and express the thoughts that clog up our minds. We need to know that we have support to look openly and honestly at what runs in our heads.

K talked about taking a look at where we don't stand up to oppression when we see it. The recent overt targeting of Muslims is designed to threaten everyone, to keep everyone silent about oppression. The targeting of any group is not just an attack on that group but also for the "benefit" of those who witness it. It is to silence and frighten all of us into compliance and cowardice and away from our inherent sense of justice and the desire to stand up for it.

One response to the targeting of Muslims has been the suggestion to "just compromise"—for instance, by moving the proposed Islamic center

further away from the World Trade Center site so that "everyone can be happy." This type of suggestion still supports the irrational belief that an Islamic center is somehow not sacred enough to exist near hallowed ground. Such compromises do not represent a stand against oppression.

Regarding confronting racism in the wide world, every situation will be different and therefore require a fresh response. The main goal for us is to fight for our own minds in the places where our full intelligence is not yet available. This requires discharging on times in our early childhood when we had to go small and not speak up. It would also be good to have places where we could speak openly about our successes, and the mistakes we've made. One suggestion from the group was to make eye contact with and

continued . . .



SNAKE RIVER BIRDS OF PREY NATIONAL CONSERVATION AREA, KUNA, IDAHO, USA • BARBARA BORING

¹ The Speaker of the House is the presiding officer of the U.S. House of Representatives and is second in the U.S. presidential line of succession.

² Are out to means intend to.

³ Pretty means quite.

WIDE WORLD CHANGING

... continued

provide attention to people who are expressing confusion about race. Given time and attention, they will often work themselves out of it.

There aren't many Muslims in the RC Communities. To increase the number we need to build relationships one to one. To be able to build honest relationships and remember that it's our inherent nature to want closeness with every human being, we have to work on our oppressor material,⁴ get accurate information about Islam, and look closely at our own religious

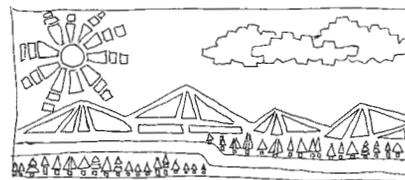
heritages or ethical models. K also reminded us that unless we have the expressed permission from a Muslim Co-Counselor to work with him or her on this issue, it's best to assume that we don't.

The three-hour evening closed with a tribute to our beloved Azi,⁵ who grew up in a Muslim tradition. She was one of many New York City RCers who went around the city listening to people after the 9/11 tragedy. Azi, being the open hearted and brave person that she

is, approached a big man who was searching for his brother and fuming with fury while being avoided by everyone else who had come to help. Azi walked over to him alone and tried to connect with him with awkward questions but received no answers, only more fuming. After many attempts on her part, he finally embraced her and began to sob.

Dave Ratzlow

New York City, New York, USA



LK

⁴ Material means distress.

⁵ Azi Khalili, the Area Reference Person for Brooklyn Gardens, New York, USA, and an Iranian American

Appreciating *El Varón* (The Human Male)

The Human Male has been translated into Spanish. I got a copy of *El Varón* and read it side by side with the English version, to improve my Spanish.

It is an awesome draft policy. I had read it when it came out ten years ago and found it dry and ordinary. This time, with all the new work we are doing between women and men, I thought it was brilliant, fascinating, up to the minute (timely), juicy (full of flavor). I got a much deeper understanding of the forces that ruin men's lives.

I highly recommend *El Varón*, whether in Spanish or in English.

Appreciando *El Varón*

The Human Male ha sido traducido al español. Obtuve una copia de *El Varón* y la he leído lado a lado con la versión en inglés, para mejorar mi español.

Es un borrador de política maravilloso. La había leído cuando fue publicada hace diez años y la encontré árida y ordinaria. Esta vez, con todo el nuevo trabajo que estamos haciendo entre las mujeres y los hombres, me parece brillante, fascinante, oportuna, rica (llena de sabor). Logré un entendimiento más profundo de las fuerzas que destruyen las vidas de los hombres.

Yo recomiendo mucho *El Varón*, ya sea, en español o inglés.

Marjorie Smith

Shoemakersville, Pennsylvania, USA/Estados Unidos

Reprinted from the e-mail discussion

list for RC Community members

Reimpreso de la lista de discusión de correo electrónico

para miembros/as de la comunidad de RC

KK

Freeing Children from Oppressive Attitudes

I want to share a couple of experiences from my time teaching preschool. I had in preschool a four-year old boy J— and his best friend, L—, a girl he'd known since babyhood. It was their second year, so I knew them well.

J— came to preschool one morning and announced to me in a stern voice, "I don't like girls." I looked at him and said without urgency, "Oh, people say things like that, don't they? But they just get a little confused sometimes. *(pause)* You get to like anyone you want to."

A look of relief and joy spread over his face, and off he went to play with L— and the others around her. J— and L— remained best friends that year, and when I went to their high school graduation, the whole group of them were still friends and watching out for each other.

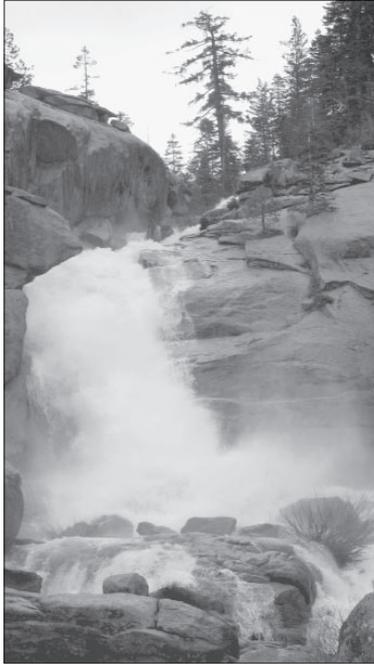
I heard Tim¹ say once that when young people say oppressive things, they are looking for a hand² with confusing things they've heard and seen. I think they are repeating, literally, what they have heard in hopes that a grown-up they trust can offer a contradiction.³ I have found that young people can readily use a piece of the benign reality if I can figure out how to phrase it in a relaxed way that includes belief in their goodness and flexible intelligence.

Another incident comes to mind⁴: The preschool was all-white and with no apparent connections to the two tribal communities nearby. I wanted the children to have some positive contact, especially because there had been huge animosity fifteen to twenty years earlier, surrounding tribal fishing rights, and it still affected the parents.

I contacted the Head Start⁵ at the Lummi reservation to see if there was a teacher who wanted to do

something with me so our children could have some positive connection.

A long-time teacher, Ernestine, told her director that she would be willing to discuss it with me, so I went to visit her at the Head Start. We talked about what would work and decided that I would bring my class to visit hers, and the children could play together on the beach, and that at a later date her class would come to visit mine.



YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK, CALIFORNIA, USA • LISA VOSS

The day came to go to Lummi, and four-year-old D— said, "I'm scared of Indians." His face looked kind of mean. I paused and said basically the same thing I had said to J—: "Oh, people say things like that when they are feeling grumpy,⁷ but you get to play with anyone you want to," and left it at that.

Ernestine had with her all her children and her two assistants. She was blowing bubbles for the children to chase and pop. There was general running around, turning over stones to find tiny crabs, and so on. My class climbed out of cars, with the moms who were helping that day, and joined in the fun. D— hung near me as we walked to the beach, watching all that was happening.

The children started to play a playground game that one of the teacher assistants was organizing. D— looked up at me with a kind of a longing look in his eyes, and I simply said, "Go ahead, D—. You can play," and he was off!⁸ He was all smiles the rest of that day and was helpful and happy when the Lummi class came to play on our playground in the spring.

Shelley Macy
Bellingham, Washington, USA
Reprinted from the RC e-mail
discussion list for leaders of women

¹ Tim Jackins

² A hand means some help.

³ A contradiction to the distress

⁴ Comes to mind means comes into my mind.

⁵ Head Start is a federally funded comprehensive early learning program for low-income families in the United States.

⁶ Kind of means somewhat.

⁷ Grumpy means moody, irritable, sullen.

⁸ Off means on his way.

Healing from War

I had the privilege of being at a Healing from War Workshop, near Warsaw, Poland, for people who are leading in the area of wide world change. It was brilliantly led by Julian Weissglass.¹

I was reminded that we can end war and that being in RC means wanting to transform society, which makes us all revolutionaries. Being a revolutionary is about making a society in which no one is mistreated anymore. Julian encouraged us to discharge our feelings, both positive and negative, about revolutionaries and on how these feelings impact our relationship to RC.

After war, people want to “get on with life” and not remember the bad things that happened. However, we know that hurts need to be discharged. One of the problems is that when people who have experienced war try to talk about it, few people can listen well. It is important to get better at listening by discharging on our own restimulations after we hear war stories.

¹ Julian Weissglass is the International Commonality Reference Person for Wide World Change.

Working on classism is related to ending war. Classism includes feelings of being “better than” or “not as good as” others. It divides us. Each of us got a load of misinformation from our class culture.

Julian stressed that working on class background goes hand in hand with working on oppressor patterns. He asked us to take to sessions questions like these: “When did you first encounter the class society? When did you notice that some people have a lot more than you and some have a lot less?” “What lies about class were propagated in your family and society?” “What lies about class were you told in your country or region?” “How were you made to feel that you deserve privileges, that you deserve to have more resources than other people, and what would you have to discharge to give up these privileges?”

Most of us have lost the languages of our parents, grandparents, and great grandparents. This is an oppression. Of the thirty-five or so people at the workshop, only six of us were native English speakers.

Julian spoke about how we have been made to feel superior or more intelligent and how others have been oppressed by English and U.S. imperialism. He suggested that we each spend part of our sessions speaking in a language that we are not fluent or comfortable in. I discharge lots of embarrassment and sadness when I have a session in Italian, the language of my parents and grandparents.

Molnár Gabriella² led a class on the Cold War³ and how it has affected all of us. The term “cold war” is not accurate, because in this case cold means inactive, and many people died in the Cold War. I was able to discharge about how frightened I was made to feel as a child. Many of us remembered being terrorized by the idea that the “other side” (in my case, Russia) wanted to destroy us. Being close to the Russians who attended the

² Molnár Gabriella is the Regional Reference Person for Hungary, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, and the former Yugoslavia.

³ The Cold War was the continuing state of political conflict, military tension, proxy wars, and economic competition primarily between the Soviet Union, and its satellite states, and the powers of the Western world, particularly the United States, after World War II.



LYNDALL KATZ

workshop offered me a wonderful contradiction to the lies I was told as a child.

Julian led a class on the difference between disagreements and attacks. I am beginning to understand how little most of us learned as children about how to handle disagreements. We were not allowed to disagree with the many things we saw that were not right. Since the workshop I have used, with good results, Julian's idea of having sessions in which I get to say openly and boldly what I disagreed with as a child. I

had a session in which I was able to see more clearly how the lies I was told about other people hurt me. In the session I kept saying, "I disagree with anyone talking bad about anyone. No more! No more talking bad about friends, relatives, or other nationalities or races. It is not good for a little girl to hear those lies. It makes my life harder. It twists my perception. *No more.*" As an RC leader, my fear can come up quickly when someone disagrees with me, and that is related to how I did not get to disagree about things as a child. I am uncovering and discharging on more details of

the irrational ideas and treatment I faced as a child. As a result I find myself speaking more confidently and listening more relaxedly.

Each time I attend a Healing from War Workshop, I reaffirm that we can end war. Being with people from many countries, and hearing many languages, broaden my understanding of how important and powerful this work is in changing the world to one where all can flourish.

Emmy Rainwalker
Greenville, New Hampshire, USA



WASHINGTON, USA • ALISA LEMIRE BROOKS

Change always follows the same pattern. If you come up with¹ something new, they try and put you off.² If that doesn't work, they call you stark raving bonkers.³ If that doesn't work, they lock you up like the suffragettes.⁴ Then, after a pause, the change happens and you can't find anyone that doesn't claim to have been fighting for it with you.

Tony Benn

¹ Come up with means think of.

² Put you off means dismiss you.

³ Stark raving bonkers means totally insane.

⁴ The suffragettes were women in the United Kingdom who advocated for women's right to vote.

Five-Year Sub*

Rub-a-dub-dub
A five-year sub
"To what?" you say
"What will I pay?"



Find out now, on page 110
The what and how and why and when

Of this life-changing wondrous sub
And of your world you'll be the hub.

The cost is U.S. \$84
Outside U.S., a little more.

* Sub means subscription.

“Mental Health” Liberation for Everyone

A few things stick with me from the recent “Mental Health” Liberation for Everyone Workshop, led by Janet Foner,¹ near Seattle, Washington, USA, in August 2010.

RC IS NOT THERAPY

Janet talked about how RC is not therapy. “Mental health” workers are good people, but therapy is set up so that one person is above another person. The therapist is the “expert,” with the degree and the “answers,” and is the person who is supposedly “mentally healthy.” The “mental health” worker has no room for his or her own badly needed sessions; nor is he or she supposed to have any problems or need help with them. And the client has little or no room to use her or his own thinking. I had a recent experience that confirmed this.

I was going to therapy for legal reasons, but since I had to be there I decided to use it to my advantage, as if I were in a Co-Counseling session. (I had been doing RC for four years at the time.) I asked for a therapist who could do emotional release techniques. When I first met with the therapist, I told her that I wanted to be in charge of the sessions and work on what I needed to for me. She

seemed startled and threatened, and the next several sessions were a power struggle, initiated by her.

She seemed to be thinking I was difficult or somehow mentally unstable because I was resisting letting her lead the way. I asked her how she felt, in an empathetic way—something like, “This is a little disorienting for you, isn’t it?” She denied that her feelings had anything to do with it and turned the attention back to me. (She could have used a five-minute session at that point, if she had felt the rules allowed her to do that.) She was also not comfortable with my discharge, especially shaking.

I finally told her that I got more benefit out of the peer counseling model and would not be coming back for therapy. (Luckily the legal reason for my being there had expired.) It was clear to me that she was a good person, trying to do her job well, but that she was confused by the roles set up by the system.

ATTENTION ON BENIGN REALITY

Janet also said that keeping our attention on benign reality is a key to being able to relate well to others. She said that if people’s patterns are bothering us, it’s only because our own patterns have gotten hooked with theirs and our attention is on our patterns. If our attention was not on our patterns, we wouldn’t be bothered by theirs; we would just be having fun with the people.

I have especially noticed this with my husband. I used to get spun out² when he would say that our relationship was too hard and he wanted to leave. After many hours of discharge, I decided to believe his actions (he was staying) and not his patterns. The next time he told me he wanted to leave, I gave him an affectionate look and said, “Oh, honey, everybody needs a break sometimes. Go camping for the weekend, or visit some friends. I’ll be here when you get back.” Not only did he not go away for the weekend, but since then (two years) he has only said two or three more times that he wants to leave. (It used to be several times per week.) After the most recent time, he was able to cry hard



BARBARA HARWOOD

² Spun out means very upset.

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

about how much he actually wanted to stay. I firmly believe in the power of “getting my patterns unhooked” or keeping attention off distress.

**SEXISM AND THE
“MENTAL HEALTH” SYSTEM**

After listening at the workshop to other women’s “mental health” histories and reviewing my own, I noticed a pattern. Women are targeted by sexism (for example, they are raped or beaten), and then when they have difficult feelings and go for help, they become victims of the “mental health” system. (I have seen this outside of RC in my work with domestic violence victims but had never made the connection with “mental health” oppression.) Women are beaten by their partners, and their children are taken away. Then the women have to prove that they are “mentally sound”—in other words, that they will stay away from their batterers. The process is lengthy and involves therapy and accountability to government agencies for six months to two years or more. The women’s access to their children is restricted during this time. The children are placed in foster care.

When abused women seek help, they are frequently given psychiatric drugs. This often happens because the doctor or therapist doesn’t know to ask if they are being abused at home and thus assumes that the women’s “symptoms” are internally generated. Psychiatric drugs have the effect of making it harder for the women to leave their abusers.

FIND A WAY TO GIVE REAL RESOURCE

I do see a lot of hopefulness in noticing the pattern of violence, followed by difficult feelings, followed by “mental health” victimization. It is obvious that when people suffer this series of events they are still completely intelligent and that their difficult feelings have a cause. We can interrupt the tendencies to seek help from the “mental health” system, particularly when it’s obvious that people won’t get actual help, and instead find a way to give real resource to those who need it, including ourselves.

*Kara Huntermoon
Eugene, Oregon, USA*



YAQUINA BAY LIGHTHOUSE, NEWPORT, OREGON, USA • AMANDA MARTINEZ



RC Electronic Mailing Lists

Here’s an appeal
To those who feel
There’s too much e-mail
For them to deal (with).

RC lists, they really rock*
And of your life you’ll take new stock.

So take a look, give them a chance
Your mind and power to enhance.

Details on page eighty-six.
Many troubles this will fix.

* They really rock means they are really great.



LK

..... Special-Time Class Was Special

I took my first special-time¹ class this year. The young person I chose to give special time to during the eight-week class was a young cousin, age ten. I spend time with him over school holidays, but my primary contact with him is by phone, as he lives in another part of Victoria (Australia).

One week in class I asked, "What's helpful to do or not do when giving special time over the phone?" This is what I learned:

- We can't expect young people to fit our schedule;
- Don't take it personally if they don't want to talk;
- Let them decide what they want to talk about; let them lead the contact;
- It can be good to have a photo of them with us when we call, as a way of remembering the connection;
- Discharge before and after the call with another special-time class member.

On one call with my young cousin, I asked if he wanted to end the call, and he got cross with me and then said that he shouldn't have shown he was cross. I stayed relaxed, and he proposed a way of ending the call on his terms. Then he asked for my e-mail address and taught me a new way of sending hugs through

cartoon figures. More recently he started sending me coded messages. I have to call him to ask for help with them!

During the class a young adult (in another country) whom I am close with let me know that she was struggling. She had found it hard to get a summer job while at university and felt discouraged and low. The GP² had offered her anti-depressants, which she had decided to take. I asked Louisa³ for help, and she e-mailed, "Here's a direction to discharge on: Maybe you can offer to ring⁴ her every day for as long as it takes. Sometimes a big contradiction⁵ really gets things moving." It felt daunting but seemed to give me permission to not hold back, or try and figure out what was the right way to provide support.

I sent her texts and e-mails. I called her at different times, some of which we had set up by e-mail and others when I remembered to be in touch. The result was that I could remember how significant our relationship is. I became bolder. After two calls in a week I asked her if she thought her feeling tired was due to the medication. She said yes and then appeared to be pleased to talk about why she was taking the anti-depressant and how she knew that it wouldn't really solve the situation or get rid of the feelings. I offered to give her some information about the drug, and she was interested to receive it. I reminded her how wonderfully she discharged as a young person and how fantastic her mind is, and we

laughed together about her early tantrums. I kept saying at every opportunity how wonderful she is. The following week she decided not to take the medication anymore. I was surprised, and delighted with us both. Since then she e-mails, "I think you need to call me again." We are openly more loving, and now she asks me questions about my life and tells me what she thinks I should do.

After most of my calls to her I rang to discharge with another class member. I yelled and said that I couldn't do it—that I wanted to do something else more fun, feel less awkward, and so on. It was a lot of fun!

Recently I rang my young cousin, and he was "feeling bad." I just stayed with him on the phone while he told me about his headache and sore throat. I had feelings of wanting to do more, or say more. Then I remembered that caring is enough. Love is enough. My love is enough.

The support of the special-time class has taken my relationships with these two young people to a new level of closeness, and I am enjoying myself.

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

¹ Special time is an activity, developed in RC family work, during which an adult puts a young person in full charge of their mutual relationship, as far as the young person can think. For a specific period of time, the adult lets the young person know that he or she is willing to do anything the young person wants to do. The adult focuses his or her entire attention on the young person and follows his or her lead, whether the young person tells, or simply shows, the adult what she or he wants to do.

² GP means general practitioner, a kind of physician.

³ Louisa Flander, the Area Reference Person for the Melbourne, Victoria, Australia, RC Community and the teacher of the special-time class

⁴ Ring means telephone.

⁵ Contradiction to distress



MARY KLAUSEN

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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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P.O. Box 2081
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Seattle, Washington 98111
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Printed on recycled paper using soy-based ink