

Present Time No. 173 (Vol. 45, No. 4) **October 2013**



Our future lies in our connection with all of life, and with ourselves.

Wytske Visser

This *Present Time* includes talks from and reports on the August 2013 World Conference of the RC Communities, some of the significant changes made to the *Guidelines*, and a new goal adopted by the conference on care of the environment. And of course you'll also find many other inspiring thoughts and stories from around the world.

We hope you'll share your ideas and experiences too! For the January *Present Time*, poems and articles need to reach us by Monday, November 18, and changes to the back-pages lists by Monday, November 25.

Lisa Kauffman, editor

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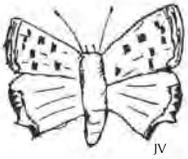


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A New Goal on Care of the Environment

Tim Jackins

International Reference Person for the
Re-evaluation Counseling Communities

Here is the new goal on care of the environment adopted by the 2013 World Conference of the Re-evaluation Counseling Communities:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

WHY THIS GOAL

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

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

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

A STARTING POINT

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

continued . . .

¹ "Cutting corners" means doing the expedient thing without regard for its effects.

COUNSELING PRACTICE

... continued

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

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

RC COMMUNITY GOALS

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

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

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

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

WHEN A GOAL CAN BE EFFECTIVE

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

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

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

Simply stating something without that preparation has little effect.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

*Peter Gruenbaum
Seattle, Washington, USA*

“Exposure Counselling”—A Way to Access Big Feelings

My grandfather passed away recently, and it has been wonderful to have the resources of Co-Counseling to help me look at, and work through, the grief that has been coming up. His death sits on top of a number of other deaths of people close to me, many of which happened in my late teens and early twenties and which have not yet been fully discharged (or even close to that). However, it feels like the biggest loss I've experienced to date, not just because my grandfather was an incredible man who touched the lives of many but because he was the sole person in my life who never let me down¹ and always showered me with love.

Suffice it to say, I miss him dearly and not a day goes by when he doesn't come into my thoughts. That said, discharging the big feelings of loss and grief has become more difficult in the past few weeks. At first the feelings were so raw and the support from my Co-Counseling network so great that I was having lots of big sessions. But after a few weeks, when society seemed to be sending me the message “You should be all right now. It's time to move on with your life,” I noticed it being harder to access the feelings. Also, that little bit of time had taken me further from the rawness of the loss.

I was determined to keep looking at the grief head-on, so I decided to try something that I am now calling “exposure counselling.” I took one of my Co-Counselors with me to have a session at my grandfather's apartment—the place where he had lived my whole life and which was full of wonderful memories. This worked a treat.² Being in the apartment without him in it (and seeing things in boxes and some furniture missing) conjured up many feelings, and I was able to have a big session. I went back again last week, to the then completely empty apartment, and had an even bigger session—finally discharging an early hurt that I had never managed to work on so clearly. I am going to continue to take advantage of this setup until the apartment is no longer accessible to me.

It's scary going for³ this “exposure counselling,” as I know it's going to bring up big feelings, but I would highly recommend it. I'm sure there are plenty of places to which we can take our Co-Counselors—places where we experienced hurts as little ones—such as our preschools and primary schools and the houses we grew up in. I am adding this to my list of Co-Counseling tools and invite you to do the same.

Nicola Ossher
Sydney, New South Wales, Australia

¹ “Let me down” means failed to support me.

² “Worked a treat” means worked very well.

³ “Going for” means pursuing.



STEVE BANBURY

Healing, and the “Urgency Bully”

I have found that the direction for counseling on physical injuries, as Harvey* said, must always be toward complete recovery. I am also finding that there can be a sense of urgency about recovery, as in “Why won't this heal faster? I have things that I want to do!” With this distress recording, I have taken the position “We will commit to paying gentle, loving, patient attention to your _____ until it is completely healed.” That has seemed to bring a nice amount of discharge, as I stand up to the bully that urgency can be.

Benjamin Altman
Brooklyn, New York, USA

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

*The following three articles are from a conversation
on the e-mail discussion list for RC teachers.*

Resistance to Discharge

Jeg har forsøkt å lære parsamtale til en av mine kollegaer i 6 mnd. Hun har stor motstand mot alle former for utladning, og vil helst lukke alle følelsene ned. Hun har for tiden problemer i sin relasjon med en mann. Vi hadde et treff i går der jeg forsøkte å klargjøre at grunnen til at hun er så sårbar for det som skjer er noe som skjedde når hun var liten. Hun fikk tid av meg på dette, og utladet med tårer. I dag sier hun at hun ikke hadde sovet hele natten, og at hun følte at jeg presset henne til å åpne opp noe som hun har lukket ned og ikke er klar til å se på. Hun skaffer seg nå sovetabletter

Hun vil likevel fortsette å komme til meg for å lære parsamtale, og hun kommer neste gang om 1 uke. Jeg ønsker å gjøre det som er nyttig, og tar veldig gjerne imot ideer.



Brita Helleborg
Porsgrunn, Norge

I have tried to teach RC to a colleague for six months. She has great resistance to all forms of discharge and tries all the time to close all feelings down. She currently has problems with a relationship with a man. She and I met yesterday, and I tried to clarify that the reason she was so vulnerable was that something happened when she was little. I gave her time on this,* and she cried. Today she told me that she did not sleep all night and that I had pressed her to open up something she was not ready to open up. She has decided to get sleeping pills.

Nevertheless, she wants to continue to learn RC with me, and in a week we will meet again. I want to do what is useful and will be glad for any ideas.

Brita Helleborg
Porsgrunn, Norway
Translated by Brita Helleborg

* "Gave her time on this" means spent time listening to her about this.

Frightened of Feelings

Hi Brita,

Thank you for this question. Your friend is lucky to have you on her side.

Early on in RC, I needed to work through heavy distresses that surfaced quickly when there was attention. I've also counseled people who've been in a similar situation. I'd like to share some of my thoughts.

It seems to me that your friend has an occluded memory or memories and has understandably suppressed the associated feelings. It may have been a useful survival strategy in the absence of anyone who could help her with the feelings. But apparently her mind is no longer settling for that. She may have outgrown the survival pattern's usefulness.

Sometimes our minds don't cooperate with our control patterns¹ and insist on bringing up the feelings instead—a healing crisis, in other words. This can be scary and confusing to clients who are feeling things they may not even remember.

¹ A control pattern is a rigid behavior a person develops to keep from discharging.

When people are working on feelings from an occluded incident and are frightened of facing them, I have tried several things:

1. I have counseled them very lightly.

Laughter will release pressure and get the discharge process rolling. It is also in itself a discharge of fear and terror.

If you can't be light with your friend and laugh together with her, you might need to work on discharging terror yourself and have sessions on working lightly.

Once in an Intensive² in Seattle, the staff had me take the direction "I'm never, never, ever, ever going to look at this again! Ever!" I would say it in as exaggerated a tone as I could, and the counselor would say it with me, delightedly and lightly. Then we would laugh and laugh. I used that direction for hours. Whenever I wanted to stop, the counselor would gently and firmly require me to say it again, and I would keep discharging.

A client may come up against some early defeat that is part of the distress recording and want to surrender and sink back into despair. That is why the counselor must hold a light tone and be delightedly outside of the client's restimulation.

Harvey³ used to have the client repeat after him, while copying his facial expression and wonderfully cheerful tone, "I'm terrified!" and the client would melt into giggles and laughter and sweat. He always said that the pattern could not stand⁴ any deviation from it, including in facial expression or tone of voice.

Discharging this way for many hours can also help clients build the mental "muscle" they need to keep from sinking into the pseudo-reality of the pattern.

2. I have offered perspective.

I have tried, in short conversations that aren't too overwhelming, to offer perspective. (New Co-Counselors may need a foundation for it, so I make sure that they are reading the RC fundamentals books and that I'm teaching them how to both client and counsel.) A perspective can give clients a framework to work within and point them toward reality so they don't get lost in restimulation. It can also help them to not just rely on others to counsel them but to have the discharge process fully for themselves.

3. I've provided lots of warmth, kindness, and physical closeness.

Most of us have a terrible sense of having been badly hurt and then left alone to handle the damage. Physical contact can allow a person to finally let go and discharge. I sometimes have clients lean against my shoulder or put their head against mine.

continued . . .



BERLIN, GERMANY • NEIL (SHASHI) SHASHOUA

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

³ Harvey Jackins

⁴ "Stand" means tolerate.

COUNSELING PRACTICE

... continued

4. I've encouraged lots of discharge.

When a memory is unoccluding, clients need lots of discharge along with the reassurance of human closeness. And after a long or heavy session, it's important to spend time helping them get their attention out onto present-time benign reality.

5. I've helped people set up their lives as a contradiction to the recording⁵ they are working on.

People need to be active, connected, and self-affirming. I've encouraged eating well, meals with friends, reading upward-trend poetry,⁶ singing, looking at art, and so on.

6. I've gotten resource for myself.

It's wonderful to be a resource for people, but it can't be one-way forever. And teaching people to pay attention back will actually help them a lot, too. I've also gotten other Co-Counselors to offer mini-sessions, phone sessions, in-person sessions.

I hope this helps.

Good luck!



Mike Ishii
Sunnyside, New York, USA

⁵ Distress recording

⁶ "Upward-trend poetry" means poetry that reflects the upward trend in the universe—the trend toward order, meaning, integration.

Discharge Will Come in Time

I find that one of the most important things with heavy control patterns is to reassure people that discharge will come in time¹ and that I am happy to be with them and hear their story, even if they can't quite get to the discharge in the way they think they should.

One member of my Community did not discharge very hard for three years. She felt terrible about it, but we all kept telling her that we were sure she would discharge eventually. While we did this, we kept trying to understand better how to counsel her and what contradictions² would work best.

¹ "In time" means eventually.

² Contradictions to the distress

I suggested that the most important thing was to stay close to her and notice our feelings as counselor. I had to discharge feelings of "I must not be so good a counselor after all" and commit to "Step 0"³: remembering her goodness and intelligence. After three years or so of this, she finally had a big release and has been discharging nicely since.

³ "Step 0" is the first of four steps that Harvey Jackins said a counselor should take in preparation for a counseling session. In Step 0, the counselor reminds himself or herself that "the client is inherently a person of great intelligence, value, decisiveness, and power . . . [and] notices and remembers where this particular client is capable, treasurable, and already functioning, or close to functioning, elegantly and well."

My own experience is that a client eventually recovers the discharge process if I as counselor can stay relaxed and light when it does not happen, let the person know that I trust the process even if it takes a while, and stay warm and close enough that the person does not leave.

That being said, I don't know if any of us have fully recovered our natural discharge process. All the Co-Counselors I know discharge in sessions sometimes, not every single time.

Emmy Rainwalker
Dorchester Center,
Massachusetts, USA

Μια υπέροχη ομάδα γυναικών από την Ελλάδα

Πρωτοήρθα σε επαφή με τη ΣΑ ("συμπαράσταση για αναθεώρηση") μέσω της Μίλενας Ρούζκοβα¹ πριν κάποια χρόνια. Η Μίλενα είχε το συνήθειο να δωρίζει τα βιβλιαράκια της συμπαράστασης σε όσους πίστευε ότι θα τους άγγιζαν... και αρκετά έπιασαν τόπο!! Μέσα από τη Μίλενα γνώρισα τη Margie Doyle Παπαδοπούλου², από την οποία έπαιρνα για χρόνια βιβλιαράκια και τα έδινα σε φίλους και γνωστούς, κυρίως γονείς.

Την άνοιξη του 2012 καλέσαμε μέσω του Συλλόγου Βοηθών Μητρότητας τη Μίλενα να κάνει ένα σεμινάριο περιγεννητικής αγωγής για βοηθούς μητρότητας³ στην Αθήνα. Σε προηγούμενο σεμινάριο είχα ήδη προτείνει ανεπιφύλακτα στις βοηθούς μητρότητας να διαβάσουν τα βιβλιαράκια με τη βασική θεωρία της ΣΑ. Η Μίλενα μας προέτρεψε να δημιουργήσουμε μια ομάδα βοηθών μητρότητας όπου θα δουλεύουμε και θα εκτονώνουμε τις δικές μας τραυματικές εμπειρίες και οδύνες, βελτιώνοντας έτσι τις υπηρεσίες μας στις μητέρες, τα μωρά τους και όλη την οικογένεια.

Αμέσως μετά το καλοκαίρι ζήτησα από τη Margie να ηγηθεί μιας τέτοιας ομάδας. Στο κάλεσμά μου ανταποκρίθηκαν κάπου 25 γενναίες γυναίκες! Περίπου 20 δεσμεύθηκαν να παρακολουθήσουν τον πρώτο κύκλο μαθημάτων - και όχι όλες βοηθοί μητρότητας. Όλες μας μητέρες, πολλές με επαγγέλματα σχετικά με τη στήριξη της οικογένειας (βοηθοί μητρότητας, σύμβουλοι γαλουχίας, παιδαγωγοί, θεραπεύτριες). Πολυάσχολες όπως ήμασταν, καταλήξαμε να συμφωνήσουμε για ομαδικές συναντήσεις 2-3 φορές τον μήνα, και να ορίσουμε και προσωπικές συναντήσεις ΣΑ σε ζευγάρια ή τριάδες. Στον πρώτο κύκλο των 10 μαθημάτων που διήρκεσε 9 μήνες (Σεπτέμβριος 2012- Ιούνιος 2013) καλύψαμε τη βασική θεωρία της "συμπαράστασης για αναθεώρηση" και αναμένεται να ξεκινήσει δεύτερος κύκλος τον Σεπτέμβριο του 2013.

Αρχίσαμε σιγά σιγά να δενόμαστε και να αγαπιόμαστε σαν ομάδα όσο περνούσε ο καιρός. Στην πορεία των συναντήσεων είδαμε πολλές απτές αλλαγές στη ζωή των συμπαραστατριών, μας συνέβησαν πολλά που συνεχίζουμε να τα αντιμετωπίζουμε γενναία και (ελπίζω!) αποτελεσματικά με συμπαράσταση. Κάποιοι είδαν με χαρά τη δική τους αλλαγή να αντανakλάται και στα υπόλοιπα μέλη της οικογένειας, χωρίς επιπλέον προσπάθεια! Πολλές από εμάς έχουν εντάξει πλήρως και με εξαιρετική συνέπεια τη συμπαράσταση στην καθημερινότητά μας και απολαμβάνουμε τα αποτελέσματα!

Στη διάρκεια των μαθημάτων προστέθηκε και ένα τρυφερό νέο μέλος - μια μητέρα έμεινε έγκυος! Είχαμε έτσι την ευκαιρία να μάθουμε και πώς συμπεριλαμβανόμαστε ένα έμβρυο στην ομάδα και στις συναντήσεις!

Προερχόμενες από μεσογειακή κουλτούρα, ο κανόνας της μη κοινωνικοποίησης μας δυσκόλεψε αρκετά, και να τον κατανοήσουμε και να τον τηρήσουμε, αλλά πιστεύω ότι τώρα πια τον κατέχουμε. Στο τελευταίο μάθημα φάνηκε να υπάρχει σοβαρό ενδιαφέρον για ένθερμη συμμετοχή στην κοινότητα της ΣΑ και για διδασκαλία των αρχών της.

Είχαμε την τύχη να έχουμε μια ομάδα πολυεθνική, με μέλη από Ελλάδα, Αυστρία, Κύπρο, Ιταλία και τις ΗΠΑ. Έτσι είχαμε πολλές ευκαιρίες να αγγίξουμε τα θέματα της γλώσσας, του ρατσισμού, του διαφορετικού, της θέσης της γυναίκας σε διαφορετικές κουλτούρες. Το τελευταίο φθινόπωρο της ζωής της Μίλενας της είπα με χαρά ότι η ομάδα είχε ξεκινήσει (χάρη σ'αυτήν!) και προχωρούσε με θαυμαστά αποτελέσματα σε όλα τα επίπεδα.

Κάπου στα μέσα της 'κύησης' της ομάδας μας, παρευρέθηκα στο συνέδριο για τον θηλασμό που έγινε στην Ξάνθη προς τιμήν της Μίλενας. Είχα ετοιμάσει μια παρουσίαση για τη Μίλενα, δυο μήνες μετά τον θάνατό της. Περίπου δέκα λεπτά πριν την έναρξη του συνεδρίου (η δική μου ήταν η εναρκτήρια ομιλία) με έπιασε μια απέραντη θλίψη και ήμουν σίγουρη ότι δεν θα τα κατάφερα να μιλήσω πάνω από 2 λεπτά πριν με πιάσουν τα κλάματα μπροστά σε ένα κοινό 300 ατόμων. Με πλησίασε μια κυρία που δεν την ήξερα - ήταν η συμπαραστάτρια της Μίλενας στην Ξάνθη για 10 χρόνια - και με ρώτησε αν θέλω να κάνουμε συνάντηση. Δεν είχα ξανακάνει συνάντηση με άγνωστο άτομο. Καθίσαμε στα πίσω καθίσματα και για 10 λεπτά έκλαιγα με λυγμούς (εγώ, που από τα 8 μου μέχρι τα 35 μου είχα υπογράψει συμβόλαιο με τον εαυτό μου ότι δεν θα ξανακλάψω, ποτέ, ούτε μπροστά σε άλλους, ούτε μόνη μου...). Όταν ήρθε η ώρα για την έναρξη, σηκώθηκα, σκουπίστηκα και μπόρεσα να ανέβω και να μιλήσω με ηρεμία και αγάπη για τη Μίλενα.

συνεχίζεται...

¹ Η Μίλενα Ρούζκοβα είχε ιδρύσει και ηγήτο ομάδων ΣΑ στην Ξάνθη. Πέθανε τον Δεκέμβριο του 2012.

² Η Margie Doyle Παπαδοπούλου είναι το υπεύθυνη περιοχής για την Κοινότητα ΣΑ στην Αθήνα.

³ Η βοηθός μητρότητας είναι μια γυναίκα που παρέχει συναισθηματική και πρακτική υποστήριξη, φροντίδα και ενθάρρυνση στη μητέρα και το ζευγάρι που περιμένει μωρό - πριν, κατά τη διάρκεια και μετά τον τοκετό. Για περισσότερες πληροφορίες επισκεφθείτε την ιστοσελίδα: www.mitrotita.org.

Ευχαριστώ μέσα από την καρδιά μου όλες τις συμπαραστάτριες της ομάδας μας και της ευρύτερης κοινότητας! Ανυπομονώ για τη συνέχεια του ταξιδιού μας, όπου θα δούμε το 'μωρό' μας να μεγαλώνει!

Φωτογραφία: μέλη της ομάδας μας (δυστυχώς λείπουν κάποια σημαντικά μέλη).

Την φωτογραφία τράβηξε ο γιος μου, Charlie Μάριο Ανδρεουλάκης

Μαρία Ανδρεουλάκη,
Αθήνα



THE GREEK WOMEN'S GROUP • CHARLIE MARIO ANDREOULAKIS

English translation of the preceding article:



A Wonderful Women's Group in Greece



I was first introduced to RC, some years ago, by Milena Ruzkova.¹ Milena had the habit of giving RC booklets as gifts to people she thought would be touched by them, and a good number of them ended up in the right hands! Through her I met Margie Doyle Papadopoulou,² from whom I bought more booklets for years. I would give them to friends, mostly parents.

In spring 2012 we invited Milena to teach a perinatal education course for doulas³ in Athens (Greece). I had strongly urged the trainee doulas in a previous workshop to read the basic RC theory booklets. Milena encouraged us to create a group in which to enhance our services to mothers, their babies, and their entire families by working on our own distresses.

After the summer, I asked Margie to lead such a group. About twenty-five brave women showed up⁴

at the first meeting! About twenty women committed to joining the group, not all of them doulas. We were all mothers, many of us with professions relevant to family support (doulas, lactation consultants, educators, healers). All of us were very busy, so we arranged to have group meetings two or three times a month, as well as Co-Counseling sessions in duos or trios. In the first cycle of meetings, which lasted nine months, we covered the fundamentals of RC. In ten more meetings we worked together on our counseling skills.

The group got closer and more loving with time. We saw tangible changes in each other's lives. Over the course of the class, many things happened in our lives and we kept dealing with them bravely, and (hopefully!) effectively, with the help of RC. Some of us saw our personal changes reflected in family members without having made any extra effort. Some of us have entirely and with great commitment integrated RC into our everyday lives and are enjoying the results!

During the meetings, a precious new member was added—one of the mothers got pregnant. So we had a

¹ Milena Ruzkova was an RC leader in Xanthi, Thrace, Greece. She died in December 2012.

² Margie Doyle Papadopoulou is the Area Reference Person for the RC Community in Athens, Greece.

³ A doula is a woman who provides advice, information, emotional support, and physical comfort to a mother before, during, and just after childbirth.

⁴ "Showed up" means appeared.

chance to learn how to include a baby-in-the-womb in the group and the meetings.

Being from a Mediterranean culture, we found the no-socializing rule to be a challenge, but now we are more or less on top of it.⁵ During our last meeting, people expressed serious interest in actively participating in the RC Community, and teaching.

We were lucky to have a multi-cultural group, with members from Greece, Cyprus, Italy, and the United States. We touched on issues of language, racism, being different, and the position of women in different cultures. During the last autumn of Milena's life, I was overjoyed to tell her that the group was well on its way (thanks to her) and having marvelous effects on all levels.

Somewhere in the middle of our group's "gestation," I participated in a breastfeeding conference in Xanthi (in northern Greece) in honor of Milena. I had prepared a presentation about Milena some months after her passing. About ten minutes before the beginning of the conference (my presentation was at the beginning), I felt immense grief and was certain I would not be able to deliver even two minutes of my talk before bursting into tears in front of three hundred people. A woman I didn't know approached me—she had been Milena's Co-Counselor for ten years—and asked if I wanted to have a session. I hadn't had one with a stranger before. We sat in the back seats, and I cried big tears for about ten minutes. When the time came for my presentation, I wiped my face and got up and spoke with calmness and with love for Milena.

I thank our Co-Counseling group from the bottom of my heart. I can't wait to continue our journey and to see "our baby" grow!

Included is a photo of our group. (Unfortunately some members are missing.) [See page 10 for photo —Ed.]



Maria Andreoulaki
Athens, Greece

Translated by Maria Andreoulaki

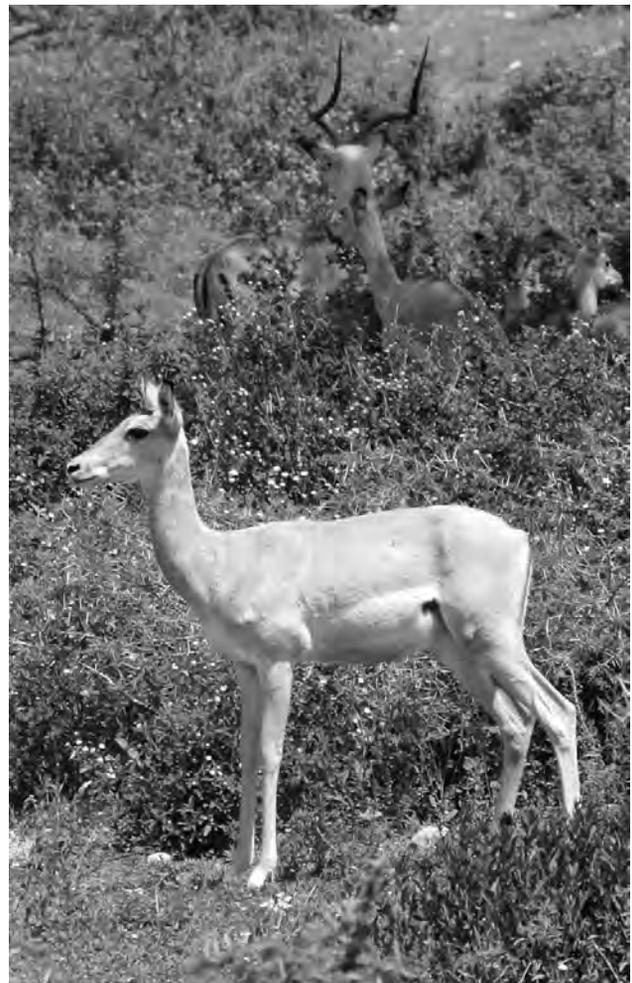
⁵ In this context, "on top of it" means able to adhere to it.

Okay to Require Growth

You do have a right to require, with appropriate flexibility, that somebody who wants to be in a relationship with you keep growing themselves. Otherwise, the failure to grow on their part can't help but put a distance between you.

Harvey Jackins

From a letter written in 1992



MAURA FALLON

Family Work: The Best Way to Understand RC

The following are excerpts from some reports on an RC family workshop led by Louisa Flander,¹ in Melbourne, Victoria, Australia, in January 2013.

At this workshop I got a picture of how my feelings and frozen needs² have “guided” me in my decisions and ideas about RC. Louisa said that “everyone is doing family work³ all the time.” Understanding this, I can correct some of how I’ve thought about my role as counsellor. When I first learnt RC, I took what I learnt about being a counsellor and fashioned it into a job like so much in my white Western life, instead of realising that it is all about playing with humans of all ages.

Playing is so intrinsically human; it seems to me the right way to imagine attention off distress. It makes it simple to remember that patterns are separate from the person and that restimulation is never about the present but always about old hurts. Thank you, Louisa, for this reminder that this world is completely benign (no matter how I feel) and that, like the young people I got to play with at the workshop, I and all my people are all about play all the time.

Anne Barton
Melbourne, Victoria, Australia

¹ Louisa Flander is the Area Reference Person for the RC Community in Melbourne, Victoria, Australia.

² “Frozen need” is a term used in RC for the hurt that results when a rational need is not met in childhood. The hurt compels a person to keep trying to fill the need in the present, but the frozen need cannot be filled; it can only be discharged.

³ “Family work” is the application of Re-evaluation Counseling to the particular situations of young people, and families with young children. It entails young people and adults (both parents and allies) interacting in ways that allow the young people to show and be themselves, and not be dominated by the adults.

In the past, I lived with the everyday competition with my younger sister. Now I am reveling in the direction of “I lost.” The competition pattern is a rigid, holding position in which no collaboration or joy can be had. Family life is an opportunity to practice losing, discharge what comes up, and then see what happens.

For years my dear Co-Counsellors have tried to get me to take the direction that nothing is wrong with me. It’s been a bit abstract. But when I play with babies and they stick their fingers up my nose, take a handful of my face, and otherwise love me up,⁴ it is hard to argue against. My resistance topples. I am loveable and loved.

Rachel Steinmann
Brunswick, Victoria, Australia

Playing with and counselling the young people was an opportunity to get clearer about my own early loss of connection with other human beings. I now have a clearer picture of how to go back for “my little one”⁵ and what that session might look like.

Cynthia Lawson
Adelaide, South Australia, Australia

I noticed while playing with the children how much I automatically sat and watched and held back. It seemed like new territory to really notice a child and play in such a way that my whole self was right there with them. Before, I was contributing only fifty percent.

The oppression in societies like Australia seems to make many of us white folk hugely passive on the one hand or “all-knowing” on the other. Family work is a good way to see this

⁴ “Love me up” means express affection to me.

⁵ “My little one” means my young self.

in its purest form and notice how the underlying hurts were laid in when we were little ones. I can see that if I keep showing up⁶ and deciding to be in the moment, I will get to discharge these early hurts. I think family work is the best way to understand the wonderful ideas of RC.

Lisa Rasmussen
Northcote, Victoria, Australia

A family workshop in which we are cooperative and in close with other people as we play shows me this: Re-evaluation Counselling theory and practice are accessible to me in relation to how much I can step out of my defensive patterns.

Vicky Grosser
Geelong, Victoria, Australia

This workshop helped me to see more clearly how families are systematically hurt by “whiteness,” capitalism, and male domination. What happened in my family wasn’t personal.

I am in charge of my re-emergence, and I can repeatedly decide to keep my attention in the present. Anything else is a waste of time. Spending the day with a young person is a great way to keep my attention in the present. All of what happened to me in the past has no place in this situation. I can then decide to take charge in my sessions and discharge hard on early distress, knowing that I was and am deeply loved and connected to those around me and to all humanity.

Victoria Kemp
Thornbury, Victoria, Australia

continued . . .

⁶ “Showing up” means being present.

Recently I have been thinking about other ways of connecting with human beings besides sitting at a table talking. At a couple of workshops previous to our recent family workshop, I decided to organise and lead a game of RC volleyball. I also decided to say yes to all invitations to play, regardless of any feelings I might have about the type of play or the people involved. And I decided to have a good time.

My ability to connect with humans in this way was given a significant boost at this family workshop, where I was more able to notice the power of play, with people of all ages.

While I understand the theory of play, in the past I haven't put my whole mind to the activity of play. I have come to it with an attitude that I can best describe as babysitting, as a way of entertaining and to pass time, rather than using it to connect wholly with another human being.

At the family workshop I was more able to connect with everyone's minds, to connect with other humans. As I did so, I noticed the brilliance of a human mind and the subtle nuances in the play that a young person was leading. I noticed the power in the quality of my touch; in using the volume and range of my voice; in space, proximity, gesture, and speed.

I had much more stamina and enthusiasm for play and was more effective in listening and communicating with my whole self. I do know the importance of these things as a counselor—I teach them in my fundamentals classes. For me, they are made all the more effective with the decision and desire to connect with another human being, another mind—not just in play but in all contexts.

Tony Smith

Melbourne, Victoria, Australia

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



TIM JACKINS

Our Own Good Judgment

Our own good judgment, working always,
Can be consulted still in any upset.
Remembering theory and resisting feelings,
We can consult ourselves and ask the best way
A genius such as we could choose to function
This very moment.

Harvey Jackins
"Year's End—1965"
in *The Meaningful Holiday*

If you move . . .

and don't tell us in advance of your address change, it causes a surprising waste of resources. The post office does not forward bulk mail; instead it destroys the undelivered journals. Then we usually receive a notice from the post office saying that you have moved, and we are charged postage due for the notice. This need not happen if you will kindly let us know of your address change with as much advance notice as possible.

Thank you,
Rational Island Publishers

Honest Work on Oppressor Material

For a while I have been working on what I call my “justified material.”¹ I took a big whack at it last weekend at an eliminating-white-racism workshop with a small group of white leaders I’d been working with for several years.

I find it reassuring to do this work straight out—not mix it with working on ways I’ve been oppressed (though in my head I remind myself to not be hard on or blame myself). Starting with my earliest memory of mistreating someone else (my younger sister) has been useful. I can discharge hard about how justified I felt in abusing her, and how confusing that was, since I also knew that what I was doing was wrong.

I took a big look at this a couple of years ago when another person and I got into a snag and for several weeks I was so restimulated I wanted nothing to do with her.² I had huge sessions on how furious I was with her. The sessions were good, but they also kept me disconnected. Finally one of my Co-Counselors said, in a kind but firm way, “Yes, but you feel justified to act this way toward her.” I said several times, “Yes, I do!” until it finally sunk in that I felt justified in treating her badly. That opened my eyes.

This past weekend I worked on racism with the same theme. Focusing on my earliest memory let me discharge hard again and put in sharp focus my feeling victimized while I’m victimizing someone else. Intertwined is how I was set up³ to lie, and lie to myself. I also got a picture of how being Jewish and feeling “justified” intersect. I was

¹ “Material” means distress.

² “Nothing to do with her” means no contact with her.

³ “Set up” means hurt into being predisposed.



TOGO • MARION OUPHOUET

able to do such straightforward, honest work because for years this group and I had worked with each other to have each other, and to clean up anything in our way of showing each other everything.

I think about the justifications surrounding the murder of Trayvon Martin (a young African-heritage man) and the innocent verdict handed down on the man, George Zimmerman, who shot him. People are beginning to organize against not only the verdict but also the racist justifications that have been used to target African-heritage men with disrespect, profiling, abuse, prison, and murder.

Dvora Slavin

Seattle, Washington, USA

Reprinted from the RC e-mail discussion list for leaders of wide world change



The Purpose of Reassurance

The purpose of providing reassurance to people in a Co-Counseling situation is not to quiet their fears but rather to let them not believe their fears, so that they can act against them and discharge them.



Tim Jackins

From a European men’s workshop in the Netherlands, May 2006



Sixty Years of Co-Counseling



This is my anniversary. Sixty years ago, June 1953, I met Harvey.¹ I was desperately looking for help for my mother, Ida, who'd been victimized by the "mental health" system with insulin shock and sundry other psychiatric "treatments" since before my birth.

Shortly after returning from my freshman year of chiropractic college, Ida had one of her "spells" in which she would lose touch with the present and relive some dreadful events of her past. She would make discharge sounds that progressed from light laughter to heavier "hysterical" laughter to sobbing, but in no contact with the present and with no actual discharge. These "spells" were why she had been institutionalized for short periods on a number of occasions. Observing her difficulties again, it struck me that for all that she'd suffered with life-threatening "treatment," and for all my father, a lowly paid, highly skilled gardener, and I had paid (I began work at seven, always lying about my age and handing over my earnings to the family), Ida was no better. Indeed, she had undoubtedly been quite damaged by her "mental health" abuse.

Chiropractic college had opened my eyes to modalities other than traditional medicine. I looked in the yellow pages² and found Personal Counselors.³

In my interview with Harvey, I related Ida's situation. In a matter-

¹ Harvey Jackins

² The part of the telephone directory that lists businesses

³ Personal Counselors is the former name of Re-evaluation Counseling Community Resources, located in Seattle, Washington, USA.

of-fact response, he said, "I think I can help your mother, but I suggest that you first have counseling yourself before you approach her." Life was getting harder and harder, so I jumped at his recommendation. I had two months of one-way counseling. (I don't think there were any classes then, but there may have been.) It was lifesaving.

In my interview, Harvey asked if I felt tears welling when he talked about crying. "Yes," I responded. That was the closest I got to crying for about six weeks. Laughing and storming raised a huge need to cry, tears were just sitting at the top of my throat, but I couldn't. I tried and tried—making crying sounds, or doing whatever Harvey or Margaret or Beverly or Martha⁴ could think of, but nothing worked. After one of Harvey's Saturday morning groups, feeling all that more needful of tears, I asked Shukri, the Lebanese woman at the front desk, if she would listen to me. She listened to some of my story then said, "Sidney, you're a good boy." I sobbed hard for two hours. I'll never know if I would have persisted without that session. It was an immense relief. And following the two months of one-way counseling, life was never as bad. I've always thought that without it I would have died by about age twenty-five.

Ida insisted that she "didn't need counseling." She said, "I've been over it all with the psychiatrists, and they've explained it to me," and so on. But I persisted, and thirty

⁴ Margaret, Beverly, and Martha were Personal Counselors staff counselors at the time.

hours of counseling later (which I'd committed to pay for, though I had no money) she never had a "spell" again.

When I returned to Seattle, after two years in the military and three years of college, Ida joined me in resuming counseling, took a fundamentals class, and, among other things, went from being a woman incapable of holding a job to being the manager of a health food store for the last several years of her life.

Again and again in recent years in my sessions, I remember Harvey's calm, confident statement, "I think I can help your mother." He did what he thought he could do. Her life was always better afterward.

Since 1958 I've continued to Co-Counsel. My fears that RC wouldn't work for me were just fears, and I am continually amazed by and grateful for Harvey's brilliance in thinking through the many things he did. I regularly use that awareness, that amazement, in my sessions.

I'm proud that I was sufficiently intelligent to persist. As the only young person and the only Jew I encountered in Co-Counseling, it was often difficult but always worth it. Cherie Brown, the International Liberation Reference Person for Jews, related to me that Harvey first learned about anti-Jewish oppression from counseling me, making me the patriarch of RC Jewish liberation, a mantle I'm proud to carry.

Sidney Stock
Bellevue, Washington, USA

Freedom from a Food Addiction

The use of attention and repetition may have allowed me to finally dissolve the neural pathways that had caused me to *never* want to stop eating once I started.

One night I was worried that, once my roommate went to bed and I was alone, I'd lose control of my eating compulsion, again. So I used her attention and began planning aloud my evening snack. When I asked myself what I *most* wanted, I realized that I wanted to make graham-cracker and confectioner's-sugar-frosting "sandwiches" and eat them until I could eat no more without throwing up.¹ "Oh no," I thought. "Why would I want to do that?" Then the thought came, "Your mother made them for you and Bruce (my brother)."

¹ "Throwing" up means vomiting.



BILL HORNE

"I guess that's it," I said aloud. "My mother used to make them for us." The moment I said that, the perfect statement came to me: "Well, you really do miss them." I hadn't been consciously missing anyone. In fact, I'd *never* missed anyone. I listed people I'd never missed, then I asked my roommate to say, "Well, you really do miss them." She'd say it, I'd repeat it, and the discharge would begin.

What happened after that session? Later that night I noticed that I didn't feel any desire for either a graham-cracker-sandwich binge *or* three bowls of cereal, my usual choice after a challenging day. The next day, when I passed Dunkin' Donuts, I didn't think, "I could buy a couple of donuts right now." When I entered Stop & Shop, I didn't feel compelled to buy the most expensive Frappuccino.² And now, nearly four weeks later, my relationship with food seems to have changed. Food was one of my lifetime companions. It was always on my mind. No longer. And I revel in the freed-up space.

Probably like many food addicts, once I began to eat, I would want to eat more and was planning what to eat next even before I finished eating. If I ate at a restaurant, I invariably planned a potential home munching-menu long before the restaurant meal was over. That pattern seems to have vanished. Now, a stressful day or evening doesn't trigger obsessive thoughts of food.

I had forgotten that patterns could gain multiple triggers. I had discharged the child-abuse trigger, I had discharged the incubator-stress trigger, but I had no idea there was at least a third powerful trigger for my longing to eat.

Pam Maccabee
Glastonbury, Connecticut, USA

² A Frappuccino is a sweet, creamy, frozen coffee drink.

Make a career of humanity. Commit yourself to the noble struggle for equal rights. You will make a greater person of yourself, a greater nation of your country, and a finer world to live in.

Martin Luther King, Jr.



SEATTLE, WASHINGTON, USA • TRAVIS QUEZON

Getting Back to RC

I would like to tell about getting back to RC.

I knew RC since 1995. When I met Harvey,¹ we became very close. He treated me in a special way. I could call him whenever I needed to, and he would call me to counsel me. He sent me books to enrich my knowledge of RC. I met many RC leaders, learned from them more about the theory, and experienced it myself. I believed that RC would change the world. I laughed with Harvey all the time about how we would change the world.

After Harvey died I felt that I had to keep going, because I had given him a promise. But the circumstances in my country made it not safe for me to make contact with people by phone. And because of hard circumstances in my life, I couldn't keep going. I was poor, I had to work, I had children—so I stopped practicing RC. Sometimes in my hard moments, I tried to be my own counselor. I reminded myself that it was

¹ Harvey Jackins

a feeling or a pattern, but I couldn't discharge because I had to keep going. I might be able to control the behavior, but I still had the distress because I couldn't discharge.

Two years ago I became a manager in a company. I got restimulated during the meetings ("I'm less, I'm bad, I'm stupid"). I had to deal with many men. Their sexism made my co-workers, who were all women, and me feel weak and like easy targets.

Then I got a phone call from Jo Saunders²—just like an angel who came. When she said, "How are you?" I started crying and insulting all the men in the world. She listened to me for an hour and a half, leaving me with full energy and power, which I was able to pass on to my co-workers and the other women around me. She gave me the contradiction,³ "We are indestructible

² Jo Saunders is the International Liberation Reference Person for Owing-Class People and the Regional Reference Person for the South Coast and Channel Islands, in England.

³ Contradiction to distress

women." I was able then to listen to the women. After that session they noticed the change. The men around us also noticed it, and they got terrified.

Two days later, Diane Balsler⁴ gave me a call and we had a long session. She continued with how Jo had counseled me. They both succeeded in making me discharge and notice how good the reality is that we live in, separate from all the oppression and patterns.

Since I learned RC, I have believed that RC theory is the solution to all the messes in the world, such as racism and sexism, and all the patterns that limit our goodness. Now I'm seeing that I have become a model for the women around me. What a difference the phone sessions made. I want to say thank you to Harvey for discovering RC theory, and thank you to the people who have believed in it and have kept trying to change the world.

Anonymous

⁴ Diane Balsler is the International Liberation Reference Person for Women.

The "Shovel Technique"

I am glad that your phrase about it "being safe enough to realize how afraid you have been" worked. I would suggest you continue with it, saying the phrase and then saying to your counselor the first thought that occurs to you after saying it, then saying the phrase again.

I call this the "shovel technique," in which the phrase is used as a shovel, and you speak out your first thoughts in between to show what the shovel has turned up.

Harvey Jackins

From a letter written in 1976

Important RC Resources!

Part II, Fundamentals Teaching Guide—Liberation

Part I, *Fundamentals Teaching Guide* (published in 2007), is an outline of how a fundamentals class might be taught. It includes thoughts about organizing a class and doing an introductory talk about RC. There are also outlines for classes on twenty-seven topics (newly updated to include a class on care of the environment).

Part II, *Fundamentals Teaching Guide—Liberation*, consists of outlines for teaching basic liberation theory. The outlines were written by our liberation leaders and will be excellent resources for teaching liberation theory to members of both oppressed and oppressor groups. Included in the *Liberation Guide* are the following chapters:

- Liberation Overview
- African-Heritage Liberation
- Artists' Liberation
- Catholic Liberation
- Chinese-Heritage Liberation
- Chicano/a Liberation
- College and University Faculty Liberation
- Liberation of People with Disabilities
- Educational Change
- Elders' Liberation
- Care of the Environment
- Family Work
- Frisian Liberation
- Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Queer, Transgender Liberation
- Japanese-Heritage Liberation
- Jewish Liberation
- Korean Liberation
- Language Liberation
- Lawyers' Liberation
- Men's Liberation
- "Mental Health" Liberation
- "Mental Health" Workers' Liberation
- Middle-Class Liberation
- Musicians' Liberation
- National and Regional Liberation
- Native/Indigenous Liberation
- Owning-Class Liberation
- Pacific Islander and Pilipino/a-Heritage Liberation
- Parents' Liberation
- Protestant Liberation
- Puerto Rican Liberation
- Raised-Poor Liberation
- Southern Liberation
- Trade Union Activists' Liberation
- Eliminating White Racism
- Wide World Change
- Women's Liberation
- Working-Class Liberation
- Young Adult Liberation
- Allies to Young People
- Young People's Liberation

Both publications are for RC teachers and those preparing to teach, but they are available to everyone.

Part I: \$25.00 (U.S.), plus postage and handling

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

(no quantity discount)



JANET WAMBUI

Working Together to End Racism

A pamphlet introducing RC
from the perspective
of ending racism

\$2.00 (U.S.), plus postage and handling

For ordering information, see page 110.

The following twenty-three pages are about the World Conference of the Re-evaluation Counseling Communities, which took place August 7 to 11, 2013, in Storrs, Connecticut, USA.



Re-emergence at the World Conference



The World Conference was attended by two hundred and thirty Co-Counselors from all over the world. I was fortunate enough to be invited, along with several fellow African leaders. (Unfortunately, most of us could not make it¹ due to problems getting visas.)

The World Conference is an opportunity, every four years, for the leadership of our organisation to review the *Guidelines*,² reflect on the past four years, set goals for the next four years, connect, get good sessions, and confirm the positions of the International Reference Person and the Alternate International Reference Person for the next four years.

I am always amazed at the level of leadership and coordination it takes to get so many minds to think together and collaborate on every issue. How do you get two hundred and thirty people *from all over the world* to agree on anything? In Re-evaluation Counseling, this is possible.

What makes it work? Allow people to think, and to say what they think. Respect what people have to say. Discharge!

We all had a chance to think in small groups about changes to the *Guidelines* and about a new goal. After meeting in small groups, we got together under the able leadership of Tim Jackins. It helps to have a leader with tons of

patience (which we all have but some of us are still working on recovering). Thanks to Tim for being such a wonderful role model. He makes me want to become a better leader.

Prior to the World Conference, Barbara Love³ led a workshop for the people of the global majority. Nineteen people attended. This group became my support and my base throughout the conference.

Barbara taught me to be visible—to be at the centre, be loud, and speak, or let my mouth move even if I felt like I had nothing to say. Clearly I failed to do this, but I loved every minute of trying. It was hard. I had a chance to have sessions about why I couldn't do it. It felt like I was pushing mountains.

At one point I had to interpret into my language in front of the conference. I was able to notice how interpreting was a wonderful thing to do, not for the conference but for my growth. It challenged me to face all the feelings about my language not being “good enough” or important enough to warrant time in such a busy conference.

It occurred to me as I discharged about this that I was rehearsing messages I had gotten about my language not being good enough and my needing to learn the language of the oppressor “just to be able to get an education” and get a job. This made me angry and want to discharge some more.

I teach Co-Counselling. I have talked about the benign reality in every class I have ever taught. Being an engineer, I tell people that the benign reality is the *foundation* or the basis for everything we hold dear. But I do not think I have ever really enjoyed myself or allowed myself to truly feel “good” about myself. I mean really good—so good that it makes me cry because it contradicts every distress I have been told is true about me.

I tried to connect with as many people as I could. Half the time I looked at people and wanted nothing to do with them. It was sad. So I discharged on this. *It helped*. And the more I discharged, the more it became clear that I had much more work to do. I learned that in order to be a great leader, I need to like and to love people enough. I have to play a proactive role in liking everyone, in particular the people I “love to hate” because their patterns and distress “appear” to be directed at me.

What blows my mind⁴ is that it all starts with me. I have to love me enough. And you get to remind me how much I love you, and how much it means to me that you are a part of this project with me. And we get to discharge. And discharge again. Discharge clears the thinking, even when it doesn't feel like it at the time.

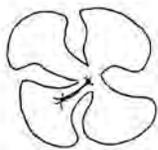
*Bafana Matsebula
Regional Reference Person
for Southern Africa
Mbabane, Swaziland*

¹ “Make it” means attend.

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

³ Barbara Love is the International Liberation Reference Person for African Heritage People.

⁴ “Blows my mind” means amazes me.



Confidentiality, the Internet, and Our Pseudonym Policy



*From a talk by Tim Jackins at the
World Conference of the Re-evaluation Counseling Communities, August 2013*

Here at the 2013 World Conference, in addition to the work we do on our *Guidelines*¹ and goals, we have the chance to talk about other issues. We need such chances. Last night we talked about the growth of our Community.

CONFIDENTIALITY

The issue of confidentiality has also come up. Every fundamentals teacher tells his or her students that confidentiality is important. We all tell our students that they don't get to repeat what their clients say. That's often all we say, and we hope it's enough. We need to say it because everyone has habits of gossiping, of talking about things other people say.

Why do we need confidentiality? Why do we need our counselors not to talk about what we work on? We don't mind their knowing. Why do we draw a line, and where is it drawn?

I think we need confidentiality because people couldn't think about us when we were young. People talked about us in thoughtless and sometimes destructive ways. We were belittled, shamed, and attacked as children, and we vowed never to show anything to anyone again. So in order for us to take the step to use Co-Counseling, something has to be different. There has to be a chance to talk about ourselves without thoughtless things happening.

If we're lucky, it doesn't take too long before we trust one person and can begin to tell that person things that we have hidden. However, it often takes a long time before we trust one person, and it's only because the person says that he or she won't repeat the things we say. We need that confidentiality to enable us to begin Co-Counseling. It's a practical matter. But past that, why don't we want everyone to know everything?

Well, because not everyone can think about us. If someone can think about us in a particular place, in a particular part of our life, it's not dangerous for that person to know something about us in that area.

Anywhere people can think about us, we can invite them in closer. But where they can't think about us, we're not going to tell them anything, and there is some wisdom in that.

Our societies can't think about us. They are not set up to even try. They think about other things—profit, market share, how to get more. We are essentially irrelevant, unless we are consuming, and then information about us is manipulated to those ends, not for our benefit. Keeping certain information confidential does make sense until people can think about us.

NEEDING TO KNOW ABOUT EACH OTHER

On the other hand, if I'm going to be your counselor, the more I know about you, the better chance I have of playing a good role in your liberation. And if you have three counselors, the more we know collectively about you, the more we can play a good role.

In an Intensive² in Seattle, clients have a team of experienced counselors and get twenty hours of one-way counseling in a week. One of the great things about it is that in order to do it, each person is required to agree that his or her team gets to talk and think together about the struggles the person has come to work on.

In our Communities, it's helpful when the leaders know about the members of their Community. And the more experienced the leaders become, the more they can thoughtfully use that information. It can be useful for each of us to have a couple of leaders who can think and talk about us and our struggles. How do they get that information, with the confidentiality policy in place? How do they not get confused and mess things up? How do they not get restimulated and end up being a little gossipy about us? Are we so afraid of that happening that we can't let them try to think about us? Is it in our interests to allow certain leaders to talk together about our struggles? There are a lot of issues here. It's possible that leaders can play a larger role in supporting each of our liberations.

¹ The *Guidelines for the Re-evaluation Counseling Communities*—the policies for the RC Communities

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

LIST POSTINGS AND ARTICLES IN RC PUBLICATIONS

An issue related to the above has to do with articles in RC publications, and postings on the RC e-mail discussion lists. Much of this writing is about our individual struggles—but few of our struggles involve just us. For example, you are describing a (outside-of-RC) struggle in an article. Who else was there? Who played that lousy role? Do you name names? At the time, you felt hopeless about the person who played the lousy role and about your relationship with him or her. Then after two more years of RC you figure out how to improve that relationship, and three years later the person joins RC. And there's an index to *Present Time* where he or she runs into the article. And look whose name or other identifying information is there! Now what?

Or you write about how you are using counseling with your children, or your parents, or anybody. How does confidentiality apply here?

How do we share useful information gained through our experiences without doing something against the interests of someone else? How much restimulation can we handle? (It's not that we're trying to avoid restimulating everybody. That's not the issue.) This is something to think about so we can be thoughtful about each other. We want everyone to get RC tools, and this means we have to think about everyone.

So I'd like us to do a mini-session and then a four-way think-and-listen about this issue. But first I'll talk about some related things.

[The World Conference decided on a Guideline to address these issues. See new Guideline K.5 on page 37 of this Present Time. —Ed.]

THE INTERNET

One thing is our use of the Internet. We need to be thinking about the ease of communication the Internet offers versus the easy misuse of information it makes possible. It is obvious there is increasing misuse.

Look at how much resource is being put into gathering information about everybody—and how that information is being used by governments and

corporations. Any time large, powerful organizations that do not have our interests in mind have access to information about us, it is likely they will misuse it. I don't imagine anyone has missed the recent stories about how thoroughly our phone calls are being monitored and recorded. Apparently every single phone call those of us in the United States have made in the last five years has been noted. That's what has been admitted to. And the general rule is that far more is happening than is ever admitted to.

Most of us have not lived under drastically repressive governments. However, every government has been repressive, and every oppressive society has those tendencies. The fact that overt repression is not present at any one moment means very little about the next moment. The fact that you personally have not been the target means even less.

So we have to think carefully about how we in RC use the information we have about each other. What is useful, for whom, to know about us? It's an issue for us to think about, individually and collectively.

[The World Conference decided on a Guideline to address Internet issues. See new Guideline L.1 on page 37 of this Present Time. —Ed.]



OUR PSEUDONYM POLICY

Something that attaches here is our pseudonym policy. Many people around the world are in danger because they belong to a particular group, have certain goals, or have done certain things in their past. Our policy has been to require such people to use pseudonyms in our publications if, in our judgment, what they write reveals that they are in a group that could be targeted and they would not be identifiable but for the writing.

This policy relies on the judgment of the International Reference Person. It is a restimulating policy to some, but restimulation is not a convincing argument against it. In our oppressive societies, the policy itself can seem like repression, but it's not. It is a position we take so that our Community's resources cannot be misused as a tool of repression or oppression. The fact that few of us, or few people near to us, have experienced such repression may be a rare luxury of this moment. That's part of what we have to think

The Best World Conference Yet

The recent World Conference was the best one yet! I have been to all but one World Conference since 1981, and they have been getting better and better each time. The diversity of participants, including a large group of young people and young adults and a large group of African-heritage people, Latinos/as, East Asians, South Asians, and Indigenous people, as well as people from many countries, made the conference rich.

Tim's¹ talks, particularly about building our Communities, were inspiring. He said we had done well on ending racism and increasing access to RC for young people, and suggested we look around the room to see the evidence of that.

¹ Tim Jackins'

He led us through the *Guidelines*² and goals discussions with his usual good humor and with seemingly infinite patience for long discussion, some of it late at night. He made sure everyone who wanted to had a chance to talk, yet he kept us on track, mostly with humor. Diane Shisk worked long hours, very efficiently, with the *Guidelines* committee to revise the proposed changes after getting our input.

I got to cry a lot during both Tim's and Diane's self-estimations. It was moving to see how close they had become and how well they were thinking about each other. Hearing some of the conference participants' directions for Tim and Diane, seeing

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

how well loved and thought about they were, was also moving.

I attended two meal tables with Xabi Odriozola, the International Commonality Reference Person for Languages and Interpreting. He said, "They tried to take away our land, and then our language. Without our connection to our land and to our people, we could be much more easily manipulated into what the oppressive society would have us do." I had always known this about the Jews but had never thought about how it applies to people of so many heritages.

Sessions and groups with people from so many different places gave me a picture of the power of RC worldwide.

Janet Foner
International Liberation
Reference Person for
"Mental Health" Liberation
New Cumberland, Pennsylvania, USA



An Empowering Experience

Attending the World Conference was an empowering experience. I want to share three gifts (out of the many) this experience brought to me:

- **Approving the *Guidelines*¹:** The process of approving the *Guidelines* was no less than amazing. It clearly reflected the worldwide individual and group effort in reading the *Guidelines* and preparing and sharing thinking about them. It was visible evidence of many people's deep caring for RC and their taking it seriously. For a good number of hours we went through the many proposed changes. There were over two hundred people in the room, and throughout there was nothing but good thinking. People offered their minds, uninterrupted by their feelings that were sometimes clearly there. It was a demonstration of what is possible when we are well discharged

¹ The *Guidelines for the Re-evaluation Counseling Communities*—the policies for the RC Communities

and our thinking is accessible to us. So impressive. So *hopeful!* It was also as if we each had thousands of years of exploring, trying, counseling, discharging, and thinking available to us.

- **The self-estimation of Tim and Diane²:** Hearing Tim and Diane review their work, and hearing what it meant to other people, created a clearer picture for me of what *my* work is as an RC leader. It showed me the resource I can (and actually do) offer to others. People appreciated not only Tim's and Diane's leadership, attention, and support but also the hours of labor they put into making our Community exist and function. Although on a smaller scale, I have the chance to do the same, and I decided to never again underestimate or dismiss my RC work as "not real" or "not enough."

² Tim Jackins and Diane Shisk



MARION OUPHOUET

• **Being:** Before the conference I had to discharge feelings of insignificance. At the conference, it was clear that among ourselves, like in the biosphere, the oaks (large trees) and hyssops (small herbs) are interrelated and are each a unique, beautiful, and important part of life. I was not leading (in the way we usually interpret this term), but I was nevertheless my whole, significant self, and happy with my contribution. This was a great contradiction³! I came back feeling more connected to myself, more proud and powerful, and with hope. I reclaimed RC, and I reclaimed power. I want to keep this. And the best way to keep it is to teach it!



Tami Shamir
Shefayim, Israel
Reprinted from the e-mail discussion
list for RC Community members



ALAN EPSTEIN

³ Contradiction to distress

Short Talks by Tim Jackins, on CD

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

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

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

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

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

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

Speak with Confidence

Everywhere there's a thirst for workable policies and for the expression of these policies by a person who can speak with some confidence, some assurance. There is a great shortage of people who can say confidently, "Things can be handled," "Go ahead, try it," "It will work," "You're a good thinker; you can figure it out," "That's possible," "Call a little meeting, have a think-and-listen; you'll come up with* something," "It's a good idea; try it and you'll get better ones," "You can do it; you're a good person."

It seems to me that I write several letters a day saying mostly this.

Harvey Jackins
From *The Benign Reality*, page 381

* "Come up with" means think of.

Young People and Young Adults at the World Conference

The 2013 World Conference was a super-intense and amazing experience for me. It was so cool to be there with that many experienced RCers from all over the world. I loved having us all, with our very different experiences, put our minds on the goals, the *Guidelines*,¹ and how to move the RC Communities forward. I loved being led by Tim,² with Diane³ backing⁴ him and doing so much behind-the-scenes work. I feel pleased that we have a new goal on the environment and am looking forward to seeing what it can push us to do together.

My highlight of the conference was definitely the young people and young adults who were there. We were connected, visible, and powerful. Even though it was hard to be at a conference with that many adults, we stayed close as a group and fought against the internalized oppression that makes us go silent and invisible, and makes it hard to be connected with each other and for young people and young adults to have each other.

We were able to show a full picture of the intelligence and strengths of young people and young adults. We were fun and creative about connecting with others and made things go better for everyone by modeling playing. This is something that young people are often able to model in RC and that is often appreciated.

What doesn't always happen, because the oppression makes it too hard, is young people getting to show our full intelligence in many other areas. The young people and young adults

at the conference decided to take on⁵ and take part in the thinking about the *Guidelines* and the goals. Many of us spoke up about them.

The fact that we spoke up was a huge accomplishment and a contradiction to young people's and young adults' oppression. It was also clear that our thoughts were useful and important. I think the conference was able to see the truth about young people and young adults, which is that right now (not when we are older, wiser, more knowledgeable, and so on) we are a hugely valuable part of moving RC forward.

Mari Piggott
International Liberation
Reference Person for Young People
Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada



Young adults played key leadership roles throughout the World Conference.

Emily Bloch⁶ led a dinner table for people under forty in which we thought about the RC Guidelines regarding Co-Counselors' use of social media. Many of us said that we found social media both useful and confusing in our Co-Counseling relationships. The entire group shared thinking very collaboratively, and several of our suggestions were incorporated into the final version of the *Guidelines*. It was powerful to see this group of young adults think so well together.

On Saturday everyone, as a large group, went through the proposed

changes to the *Guidelines*. Numerous young people and young adults stood up and shared their thinking.

I spoke about what I and three other younger people had thought about regarding the electronic communications section of the no-socializing policy.⁷ An adult Co-Counselor had said we should not use social-media web sites in Co-Counseling relationships because it would violate the no-socializing policy. (The *Guidelines* currently say that social-media sites can be used thoughtfully within RC relationships.) I said that banning social-media sites entirely would make RC less accessible to young people, and that it was important not to over-regulate their use because they had helped many younger people sustain contact in their Co-Counseling relationships. I also said that our *Guidelines* were a starting point for thinking and discharge, not a document that regulated every specific aspect of Co-Counseling, and that they should function in this way in regard to social media.

Young people and young adults played a good role in bringing play to the conference. Before class one morning, Emily Bloch gathered the young adults and had us play a game that involved a lot of contact and laughing. We encouraged the adults to come play, and soon a large group of Co-Counselors was playing and getting physically close on the mats. It was clear that the leadership of younger people, and our ability to remember the importance of playfulness, made this conference go better.

Alana Eichner
Somerville, Massachusetts, USA

¹ The *Guidelines for the Re-evaluation Counseling Communities*—the policies for the RC Communities

² Tim Jackins

³ Diane Shisk

⁴ "Backing" means supporting.

⁵ "Take on" means undertake.

⁶ Emily Bloch is the International Liberation Reference Person for Young Adults.

⁷ 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.

Self-Estimation

*Tim Jackins' introduction to his and Diane Shisk's self-estimations
at the 2013 World Conference of the RC Communities*

The purpose of self-estimation is to unite a group with its leadership. At the World Conference, it's about the job that Diane Shisk¹ and I each do.

Leadership has many obstacles. Most of them consist of distress. We all have distresses about leadership, and this can prevent a clear understanding between the people being led and the people leading. So we need to make efforts to keep building this understanding. One of the ways we do this is with self-estimation (which, like many other RC ideas and practices that our lives have come to rely on, came from my father²).

In self-estimation, the leader gets to talk about his or her functioning in the leadership role. Other things are often referred to tangentially, but the emphasis is on his or her functioning in that role. I get to try to describe to you my picture of my functioning—the places where I think my work has gone well and the places where I think it hasn't. Concisely. Then some of you get to talk about where you think I function well and where things could be improved. This is a useful process.

¹ Diane Shisk is the Alternate International Reference Person for the Re-evaluation Counseling Communities.

² Harvey Jackins

It's not about whether you like me or don't like me. That's only tangentially relevant. It's about how I function in my role. We try to keep our respective distresses from creeping in as if they were part of reality, and the people who speak to me, or to Diane, need to have that in mind. We will try to select people who have substantial ongoing contact with us and therefore a chance to have real information.

We need all of you thinking about us in order for us to function better and better. However, we will only be able to select a small number of you. It would be useful to have the thoughts of everyone here, but we don't have a good way to make that possible. This is our best approximation of a full process.

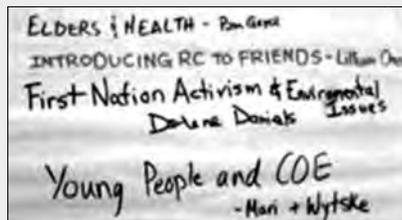
Diane will select the people who will speak to me, and I will select the people who will speak to Diane. People will raise their hands to indicate they would like to speak. More may request to speak than we will have time for, so some of you will not be selected. That doesn't signify much of anything except the limitations of our process.

So let's do two minutes each way,³ and then you get to listen to me.

³ "Do two minutes each way" means take turns listening to each other for two minutes each.



PHYLLIS ROSE



ALISON EHARA-BROWN



ALISON EHARA-BROWN

Because of it all, and in spite of it all . . . life continues to be the best idea I have ever come across.

Amir Femi

Proud to Be Part of This Project



Thank you for inviting me to the 2013 World Conference, the first one that I could attend. I am proud to be part of this project and organization and of making it the most decisive influence in the world. Re-evaluation Counseling, in my view, is the most advanced and smartest way of getting and staying organised.

The conference provided me the opportunity for discharge, thinking together with people, and getting my mind back fully. Everywhere I looked, there was somebody for me. It gave me a glimpse of how our world can and will look with so much free attention around us.

One highlight was an exchange student (not part of the conference) I met during lunchtime who was so interested in and open to RC that he wrote down the address of the RC web site on his hand.

Another was how Tim¹ led the discussions about the *Guidelines*² and the new goal. Above all, it was a demonstration of what smart and relaxed leadership can look like. He sometimes had to make decisions for the group, and yet he had us all involved and participating from the start and took what we came up with³ seriously.

Goof Buijs
Broek in Waterland, the Netherlands

¹ Tim Jackins

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

³ “Came up with” means thought of.



BRIAN LAVENDEL

U.S. POSTAL SERVICE STATEMENT OF OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT, AND CIRCULATION (REQUIRED BY 39 U.S.C. 3685)

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A New Step for the RC Communities

The 2013 World Conference agreed to an additional requirement for being certified as an RC teacher: RC teachers are now expected to take a stand against pornography and make a commitment to discharge the related distresses. This is an important step forward for the RC Community. It can also have an impact on the larger society.

Intelligent, deep connections and partnerships between women and men are basic to any rational human society. Pornography is a significant obstacle to rational human relationships. In pornography, sex is connected to violence and cruelty and becomes an inhuman act.

Pornography is increasingly widespread and normalized. Greed and the opportunity for huge profits underlie and fuel this. Pornography is one of the largest money-making businesses in the world today. It is now widespread on the Internet, in the media, and in pop culture, advertising, magazines, movies, hotels, the beauty industry, and the military. It is oppressive to everyone—both oppressed and oppressor groups. We have yet to fully grasp how damaging it has been to human beings.

Sexual exploitation and male domination are basic to pornography. Pornographic images most often target women and girls. Racism and classism are also involved. The images often sexualize people of color, particularly women. And working-class and poor women are recruited by the industry to play pornographic roles. It also targets men (Gay men, young men, men of color). It reinforces many oppressions, including the oppression of men.

Pornography restimulates and manipulates pre-existing sexual distresses and violent recordings. It can also install new distress recordings, particularly on young people.

SEXISM AND MALE DOMINATION

An oppressive relationship between women and men has been integral to class societies since their beginnings (as part of the more general exploitation of all people). Men subjugated women. They exploited women's bodies and work. Women were the "property" of men. Women's role in reproduction was the pretext for women's oppression and for male domination.

Female oppression and male domination have taken many forms throughout the history of class societies. Sexual exploitation was part of female oppression from early on. It took the form of rape and other sexual violence; prostitution; and male control of sex, in and out of marriage. It continues in some of these forms along with newer ones. Today women are pressured to have sex for men's pleasure and to conform to objectifying sexual images (look like Barbie dolls,¹ undergo plastic surgery, wear sexualized clothing, and so forth). They are sexually abused, harassed, and assaulted, including in their homes and workplaces.

The sexual exploitation of women has been a part of every oppression, and the sexualizing of women has led to the sexualization of all oppressed people. There has been a long history of sexual violence during slavery, in times of war, and

in connection with colonization and genocide.

Although female sexual practices have been more varied than is generally recognized, female subservience in sex has been considered the norm. It is common in pornographic images of both opposite and same-gender sex. Female sexuality outside the norms of sexism and male domination has not been widely accepted or supported.

The women's movement of the late 1960s and early 1970s challenged the most basic forms of women's sexual exploitation, at least in the Western world. Freedom to use birth control, legally terminate pregnancies, and experience sexual pleasure challenged past norms and practices.

However, the beautification and sex industries have turned earlier advances into contemporary forms of sexism. Women's "sexual freedom" is now often substituted for actual human liberation. Images of violence toward women and of their subjugation and objectification are now often considered "liberated" and desirable.

"Sexual freedom" is often defined, particularly in the media, as having sex "like a man." This means sex based on male patterns and male frozen fantasies. Women, particularly young women, are encouraged to enjoy sex without any feelings of love or connection and, in some cases, to act out the oppressor role in sex. "Sexual freedom" and "free choice" now mean that sexual practices based on pornography are seen as "normal" for everyone. People feel that if they want to use pornography, they should be "free" do so. Many feel

continued . . .

¹ Barbie dolls are a brand of dolls that resemble extremely slender young women, with large breasts.

... continued

that no limitations should be placed on the industry.

New markets for pornography are being developed daily, targeting increasingly younger people. More and more spectacular and restimulating depictions of violence and exploitation are being devised. Images of violence and rape are increasing and are often viewed as "not a big deal." At the same time, there is more and more evidence that the use and prevalence of pornography deeply affect people's sexual, as well as non-sexual, lives.

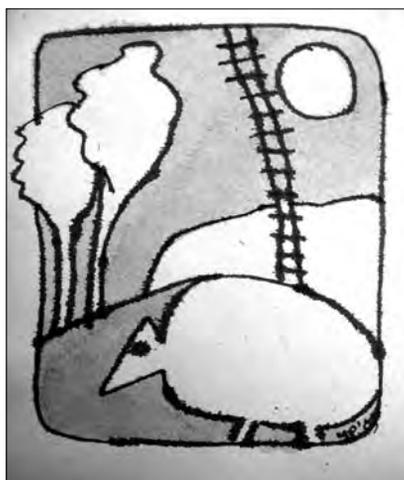
MEN'S OPPRESSION AND MALE DOMINATION

Although an increasing number of women are using pornography, men are still its biggest consumers. Men are especially vulnerable because of how they themselves have been oppressed. The underlying basis of men's oppression is the early and brutal denial of access to the discharge process and to close, thoughtful, warm physical human contact. There is also evidence that a majority of young boys are sexually abused.

Men are taught that they can only be close in the context of sex and, at the same time, that they do not need closeness to have sex. (Unfortunately, many women have also adopted this perspective in an effort to gain male "privileges.") Men are oppressed in such a way that their preoccupation with sex, and their frozen feelings of desperation and loneliness, seem only to be "answered" by sex. Men are also subjected to violence, including in military service, and harsh competition. They often act out the resulting hurts in the form of domination, particularly of women but also of

other men. Pornography serves as a training ground for turning them into sexual exploiters. And with the glamorization of pornography, and its rapidly increasing appearance on the Internet, it's almost impossible for any man not to use it.

At some level men feel deep shame, guilt, and humiliation for having distresses that pull them to harshly mistreat the people they care most about, and this adds to their difficulty in contradicting and discharging on pornography.



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COUNSELING RESOURCE

With access to the theory and practice of Re-evaluation Counseling, people can free themselves from distress recordings, including those connected to pornography. Some good work on pornography has already been done at early-sexual-memories, Gay liberation, and women's and men's workshops. Still, the RC Communities lack sufficient resources to fully and effectively counsel people on pornography. All of us, and particularly RC leaders, need to develop our counseling "muscle" in order to build the necessary safety and skill.

MEN'S WORK ON PORNOGRAPHY

In working on pornography, the starting place for men is to realize that *no man (or woman) deserves condemnation for using pornography.* It would be hard for any man born after 1970 to not have had some experience with it. *No one is to blame* for using it. However, we can all take responsibility for freeing ourselves from the related distresses.

If you are a man, here are some ideas you might try for working on pornography:

- Discharge on male goodness and your own goodness.
- Notice and discharge any shame, embarrassment, or guilt about using pornography.
- Discharge on early sexual memories.
- Remember the first time you saw pornography. What were the circumstances? How did you feel?
- Work on your pornography history.
- Ask yourself how pornography has affected your sexual life. Discharge on and face the fact that if you are using it, you are acting out sexism. (Pornography largely consists of sexist images of women.)
- Discharge on rationally appreciating women's bodies.
- Appreciate yourself for every step you take, no matter how small it feels. The goal is full awareness of and respect for women, and a commitment to end any use of pornography, and this can be a long-term project.
- If you use pornography, talk about it to people who care about

you. Users of pornography typically hide their activity and how they have been hurt by it. They are also often unaware of how damaging it is to others. It can be helpful to tell your RC teacher, Area Reference Person, and Co-Counselor that you use pornography. And you may need more than one Co-Counselor in order to work on it effectively and efficiently. It can also be important to tell your sexual partner(s) of your use and that you are committed to freeing yourself from it and from the related distresses.

WOMEN'S WORK ON PORNOGRAPHY

We RC women have the opportunity to work on pornography in such a way that safety is established both for ourselves and for men. At the same time, we need not “jump over” our distresses to counsel men—we first need to work on our own distresses. We all benefit from discharging on our histories connected to sex and sexism.

It is not useful to “take care of” men. Instead we can be proud of ourselves and take charge. We can expect men to join us as full partners in ending sexism, male domination, and pornography.

If you are a woman who has not used pornography, here are some questions that might help you work on it:

- How has pornography affected you? What is your relationship to it? Your history with it?
- How do you feel about pornography? Horrified? Numb? Relieved that you're not young anymore (common for older women)? Like you want to avoid the whole topic? Such feelings are likely connected to your history of sex and sexism.
- How do you feel toward men who use pornography?

- What would it be like to ask a man if he uses pornography? What would you need to face and discharge in order to do this? What would you need to work on to be a resource for a man who uses pornography? Think about offering assistance to a man in your life, or a male Co-Counselor, for giving up his addiction.

- Are you “hiding”? Many of us hide our sexual fantasies, particularly those in which we are a victim or have exchanged roles and are the oppressor. We can discharge about hiding and being secretive, including any embarrassment or shame.

- What is the content of your sexual fantasies? What “attracts” you to pornography? You can discharge on any feelings you have that being attracted to it is inappropriate for you as a liberated woman.

- What are your victimized feelings? Women understandably feel victimized by pornography.

If you are a woman who has used pornography, here are some suggestions:

- Use many of the ideas above for women who have not used pornography, and for men.

- Work on your goodness. Work on being fully female. Discharge on early sexual memories and sexual fantasies. Discharge on your history with pornography, including the first time you were aware of it and what that restimulated.

- Women are usually portrayed as victims in pornographic images. Discharge on any experiences these images might restimulate. Notice your feelings about the images in which women are in the dominating role.

- Talk about how pornography has affected your life.

FOR BOTH WOMEN AND MEN

We can create the conditions in our Communities for effective work on pornography. To this end, we need to avoid gossiping about anyone who uses pornography. We cannot use anyone's name or any other identifiers, whether the person was in our past or is someone we know in the present.

When writing articles for RC publications about our work on pornography, we must use pseudonyms or write anonymously.

Several RC leaders have pioneered in working on pornography. I want to express my appreciation to Joan Karp, “David Nijinsky,” “Jeanne D’Arc,” and Teresa Enrico.² We now have the opportunity to extend their work throughout the RC Communities.

The challenge to end pornography and its effects gives us yet another opportunity to fully regain our integrity. We can use it to reclaim our rightful partnership as men and women, and our full humanness.

*Diane Balsler
International Liberation
Reference Person for Women
Jamaica Plain, Massachusetts, USA
With thanks to Anna van Heeswijk,
K Webster, “Jeanne D’Arc,”
“David Nijinsky,” and Barbara Harwood
for their support and good thinking*

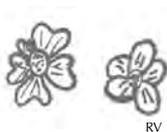
² Joan Karp is the Regional Reference Person for Rhode Island and parts of Massachusetts, USA. “David Nijinsky” is the Assistant International Liberation Reference Person for Gay Men. “Jeanne D’Arc” is the International Liberation Reference Person for Lesbians and Gay Men. Teresa Enrico is the International Liberation Reference Person for Pacific Islander and Pilipino/a-Heritage People.

A Splendid World Conference

Yes! It was a splendid World Conference. I could cry every day at the thought that two hundred and thirty of the most discharged minds on the planet were together, making an effort in the same direction at the same time. I could see that everybody was doing as much as they could.

I was on the committee working on *Guidelines*¹ changes and proposals. I worked many hours before the conference, reading and studying the *Guidelines* (up to six hours per day). I worked an average of eighteen hours per day at the conference (some days even more)—interpreting, leading support groups, leading *Guidelines* and goals groups, and so on. However, I felt much less tired than usual and much happier and prouder. I realized that this project is like my “skin suit”—it exactly fits what I need. All the people I saw were as committed as I was.

After twenty-six hours of travelling back home, I can still feel the immense influence of those discharged minds on mine. And I know that they were there in that shape² because all of you in your Communities are every day working together, individually and collectively. Thank you to all of you. Your best hopes were accomplished.



Maitasunez (with love),

Xabi Odriozola
Donostia-Gipuzkoa, Basque Country
Reprinted from the e-mail discussion
list for RC Community members



RANDI FREUNDLICH

¹ The *Guidelines for the Re-evaluation Counseling Communities*—the policies for the RC Communities

² “Shape” means condition.

An Arab at the World Conference Shabbat

I shared the following as part of the Shabbat* service at the World Conference:

My name is Victor Nicassio. My Arab name is Amin Khoury. I am from Los Angeles, California, in the United States. Since the last World Conference, good work has been done on building an Arab-Jewish alliance in RC. I would like to say a little about the Arab RC constituency in the United States, about the alliances we are building with Jewish Co-Counselors, and about Shabbat.

The families of some of us Arab Co-Counselors came from Lebanon and Syria to the United States before the First World War. The State of Israel did not exist then. Almost none of us remember hearing comments about Israel in our families.

* Shabbat is the Jewish Sabbath. At RC workshops it has become a tradition for the whole workshop to observe Shabbat on Friday evening, as a way to contradict anti-Jewish oppression.

Other Arab Co-Counselors are from families who were living in the Middle East in 1948 or who arrived in the United States during the 1940s. In these families there were strong feelings about Israel and the conflict with the Palestinians.

Many Jewish families around the world celebrate Shabbat each week. Many of us at this conference, maybe all of us, have participated in Shabbat as allies of Jews. Shabbat brings people together. We have celebrated Shabbat at Arab workshops and at mixed workshops. These have been rich and joyful experiences.

Arabs and Jews continue to have Co-Counseling sessions together and separately. The unity we are building is a powerful contradiction to scapegoating, blame, and division, which only serve to keep our peoples oppressed and exploited. In gatherings like this World Conference, we get to be family and strengthen the liberation movements of all our peoples.

Victor Nicassio
Los Angeles, California, USA



Growth of the RC Community, and Care of the Environment



At the World Conference, Tim¹ talked about growth of the RC Community. He said that each year we know more about RC, and are smarter and have better relationships, so “Why aren’t we growing faster?” and “What will let us solve this problem better than we have?” He said that it tends to be the newest members of the Community who introduce people to RC, “as if they don’t know any better” (humor). I left the conference determined to keep discharging and thinking about growth of the RC Community and our new goal for the environment.

BUILDING THE RC COMMUNITY

I enjoy teaching RC and currently teach a group of people targeted by racism. This has been a great experience, and people in the class are joining my Area.²

I also led two support groups the week after the World Conference. I talked about the growth of our Community and asked the people in the groups, who had from one to thirty years’ experience in RC, what came up for them in telling people about this process we love. Many of them expressed worry that the people they knew would not “fit” in RC and needed to do more to “look better” and “get ready.” Others felt they did not know people they could invite, or felt they did not know what to say to interest people, or had felt discouraged if someone they referred did not stay. Two of the newest Co-Counselors had already told their families about RC and had invited them to an introductory RC talk I was to give the following week. They each

brought their immediate families, a total of seven people, to the talk, and several of their family members were interested in learning more about RC.

When talking to people about RC, I find it useful not to tell them that it will be “helpful” to them or that they could “use” it or that they “need” it. I let people know how useful it is for me personally while being careful not to tell them “everything I know” or to try to “sell them” on the idea. I just say one or two things, unless they show an interest in more. I may invite them to hear me or someone else give an introductory talk. And if possible I come to the talk with them. It is useful for the people we care about to know that RC ideas are important to us, and for us to give them space to think about them, without any hint of how they would be better if they used them.

When people ask me what job I do, and I say I’m a staff counselor at Re-evaluation Counseling Community Resources, they always ask, “What is that?” Those of us attending the United Nations conference in Durban in 2001³ practiced short responses to that type of question, and I find it helps to keep a short response in my mind. I have been asked by medical staff, a physical therapist, people at the gym or on the plane or bus, schoolmates I haven’t seen for a while, relatives, and a shoe salesman, among others. One of my most interesting short talks on RC was with the doctor and nurse while I was having a colonoscopy without anesthesia.

³ A group of Co-Counselors went as a United to End Racism delegation to the 2001 United Nations World Conference Against Racism, in Durban, South Africa.

¹ Tim Jackins

² An Area is a local RC Community.

THE ENVIRONMENT

As I discharge about our new goal on the environment, I feel that it would be especially useful to have more and more people thinking well about all people, more and more people aware of oppression and the importance of treating people well, and more and more people using their intelligence to think about the environment. To that end, it would be important to teach RC to more and more people (to grow our Communities), so that we have more and more people thinking rationally and thus fewer irrational policies that affect our environment being enacted.

I love the discharge and re-evaluation process. I want everyone in the world to know about it and have the chance to use it. I can vividly recall my thought twenty years ago, a few hours after experiencing my first session: “This process will save the lives of me and my people.” I just knew that, and I still know that. What an incredible, joyful, wonderful opportunity we have to teach people a process that benefits humankind.

Marion Ouphouet
Seattle, Washington, USA

Visibly Client and Co-Counselor

To remain a client and Co-Counselor in plain sight of people while you are teaching them is the best way to model the reality of the process.

Harvey Jackins
From a letter written in 1995

Changes to the *Guidelines*, 2013

Leaders of our RC Communities meet every four years at a World Conference to continue the development of the Guidelines for the Re-evaluation Counseling Communities.¹ These Guidelines have existed for more than forty years, contain the work of thousands of people's minds, and provide us with important guidance as our Communities develop. We continue to work on them as we understand more and as the conditions in which we exist continue to evolve.

The entire 2013 Guidelines will be available as a pamphlet in early 2014. I encourage everyone to obtain a copy of these Guidelines and read them so as to further our common understanding of our Communities. We also intend to have them on the RC website when they are finished, and hope to have a draft of them (pending the final edition) on the website before then.

Below are some of the significant changes and additions to the Guidelines made at the 2013 World Conference. (They have not yet gone through the editing committee.) Additions are underlined, and deletions crossed out.

Tim Jackins

A.4. THE MEMBERSHIP OF THE COMMUNITY

It is helpful to distinguish between a "Co-Counselor," a "member of the RC Community," and an "RC leader."

1. A Co-Counselor seeks recovery of his or her occluded intelligence and assists others to do the same.

2. An RC Community member is a Co-Counselor who assumes responsibility for helping the Community to function—by participating in and contributing to RC activities, supporting leadership, and assisting in the work of the Community.

3. An RC leader is a Co-Counselor who assumes responsibility for everything going well in the RC Community by teaching and leading RC classes, support groups, and/or workshops, and/or serving as a Reference Person.

The RC Communities organize and sponsor introductory talks, fundamentals classes, special classes, ongoing classes, support groups, topic (discussion) groups,

¹ The policies for the RC Communities

leaders' groups (Wygelian² or other), publications, and other means for sharing RC insights. Participation in such classes and activities does not in itself entitle a Co-Counselor to membership in the RC Community.

Co-Counselors are considered members of the Community and given broader access to its resources when they take responsibility for assisting in the functioning and operation of the Community. Strong RC Communities are the result of the combined efforts of many people. Co-Counselors function as organizers, editors, translators, interpreters, treasurers, librarians, website designers and administrators, teachers, Reference Persons, and more. Community members also make a commitment to follow the *Guidelines* and support their use.

Each RC Community can define Community membership ~~in~~ as it applies to their particular situation, in accordance with this Guideline and in consultation with their Regional Reference Person. Membership requirements should not be applied in a way that excludes or negatively affects people who could be excellent Community members, for example, people who are poor, people with disabilities, Native and Indigenous people, people targeted by racism, young people, and others in groups targeted by oppression who currently and historically have been denied access to material resources and full participation in society because of their social-group membership.

REASON

To preserve the essential peer nature of our work, RC Community members need to take similar levels of responsibility for the Community's functioning and flourishing. Participating in a weekly RC class is a common requirement for RC Community membership. Weekly contact with other Community members is desirable when possible. Regular contact creates more opportunities for individual re-emergence and building the Community. Simply making the effort to participate regularly (a very large effort for some) can remind us of our own importance and the importance of the RC Community.

² A Wygelian leaders' group is a group of leaders and potential leaders of a particular constituency in which each person takes a turn doing the following: (1) reporting on what he or she has been doing in the last period with regard to the constituency, (2) saying what he or she thinks is the current situation facing the constituency, from his or her viewpoint, (3) sharing what he or she proposes to do as a leader in the next period, and (4) discharging on what is getting in the way of his or her leadership.

The structural and material conditions of people's lives vary greatly due to oppression and should be taken into account.

D.4. STRUCTURE OF THE COMMUNITY— ORGANIZING LOCALLY

Cooperation and Contact

Co-Counselors in any one geographical location are to cooperate with each other and stay in contact with the International RC Community.

Leaders' Groups

As soon as there are two or more Co-Counselors in a given geographical location or of a given constituency, these people should be encouraged to meet occasionally as a leaders' group. ~~The aim of These meetings should be~~ are to discuss and plan for the growth, improvement, and organization of Co-Counseling in the locality or constituency. People who are functioning as leaders, or are willing to become leaders, are to be invited to these meetings. If such a leaders' group becomes larger than ten people, ~~the groups of those~~ leaders carrying out particular functions can be divided from it and meet separately. However, one leaders' group is expected to continue to take responsibility for the overall growth, improvement, and organization of Co-Counseling in the locality or constituency.

Formation of an Area

When there are thirty (30) to fifty (50) Co-Counselors actively participating in Co-Counseling activities in a locality or constituency, ~~the leaders' groups are to call for a meeting to form an "Area" and propose an ARP and an Alternative Area Reference Person.~~

Leaders' Groups in Unorganized Areas Developing Communities

A leaders' group in an unorganized area a "Developing Community" ~~(area will be capitalized throughout this document when it refers to an RC entity with this name.)~~ is expected to stay in regular communication with the Regional Reference Person (RRP) (or the International Reference Person [IRP] if no RRP has been designated). To assist with this, leaders' group members, in consultation with the RRP, could choose an individual to play this role. ~~This leader They should consults with him or her the RRP about classes and support groups and recommends workshops for the developing community to the RRP. and The leader (in consultation with the local leaders' group) recommends people to be certified as new RC teachers. The leader recommends people to attend workshops to the RRP. The leader approves the use of the Developing~~



Community's Outreach Funds, and so on. Other responsibilities, for example those carried out by the Area Reference Person (ARP) in an organized Area (and listed in Guideline D.6.), are the responsibility of the RRP.

REASON

Developing Communities usually need support from experienced leadership until they have grown large and experienced enough to form an Area and choose an Area Reference Person. (Area will be capitalized throughout this document when it refers to an RC entity with this name.)

Organizing into an RC Area in a geographical location has proven to be important for the ongoing development of RC. Building an Area leads to many people taking responsibility for the good functioning of the Community. The Area has proven to be an effective structure for communication, organization, good counseling, the growth of Wygelian groups, and leadership development.

D.8. STRUGGLING AREAS

If the growth and development of an Area has stalled, action is to be taken. The ARP and the AARP, after consultation with their RRP, are to hold an Area membership meeting. Those attending the meeting can discharge about the struggles of the Area and discuss and choose steps to be taken to revitalize it.

The ARP, RRP, and IRP should consult with each other about the possibility of dissolving the Area structure, especially if that would release more initiative³ for building the local RC Community, only after significant efforts have been made and have been unsuccessful.

REASON

When we encounter difficulties in building an RC Community, we need to have the local Community members and the Reference Persons connected with the Community think freshly about what steps can be taken to overcome any existing difficulties, including starting over.

continued . . .

³ "Release more initiative" means create the conditions under which more RCers initiate activities and move forward with their leadership.

TEACHING, LEADING, COMMUNITY BUILDING

... continued

F.1. WORKSHOPS—OVERVIEW

Re-evaluation Counseling (RC) workshops are organized on class, Area, Regional, and International levels. Teachers should encourage students to attend workshops at the level for which they are ready.

Goal of Diversity

Our goal is to bring together people of varied backgrounds (unless the topic is itself self-limiting) as a practical step toward the unity of all humankind, rather than bringing together only people who are easily comfortable and familiar with each other.

Young People

There is to be one free place for a young person (age twenty-one [21] and under) for every twenty (20) fee-paying adults (except for young people coming to a young people's workshop or with their family to a family workshop). At the same time, young people are encouraged to pay what they can. This partial payment may allow two or more young people to use the one free place.

Approval to Attend

~~Students~~ People need an RC teacher's approval to attend a class or Area workshop. They need the approval of an Area Reference Person (ARP) (or Regional Reference Person [RRP] if there is no ARP) to attend a Regional or International workshop, or other workshop outside of their Area. If the ARP does not approve attendance, the student may ask the RRP to review that decision. The RRP should make his or her decision in consultation with the ARP and any appropriate ILRP.

One Leader, One Organizer

Workshops are to be led by one leader (who is an RC teacher) and organized by one organizer, except by special permission of the International Reference Person (IRP). A leadership fee is to be paid to only one leader, and an organizer's fee is to be paid to only one organizer.

If the leader or the organizer uses assistants, ~~they~~ these assistants are ~~either to be volunteers and either unpaid; or paid by the individual leader or organizer out of his or her fee at his or her choice.~~ (Family workshops are an exception and are to be led by no more than two leaders who may each be paid a leadership fee.) (See Guideline H.9.)

Accessibility

~~Meeting places for w~~Workshops need to be accessible (for example, being wheelchair accessible for people with mobility disabilities, having microphone loop

systems or sign language interpreters for people with hearing difficulties, assigning support persons for people with vision difficulties, and so on).

We seek accessibility for our workshops. Where accessible locations are not available, Communities can help make locations accessible. They can by conferring with the people in charge of the locations and assist by contributing money and/or necessary physical labor to achieve such results accessibility.

This is our goal and our standard rather than settling for any limited accessibility.

Interpreting

Interpreting at RC workshops will occur whenever the workshop leader does not speak the language of the people who live where the workshop is taking place. When possible, there will be interpreting for all native and/or first languages spoken by participants of the workshop. (See Guideline J.2. and Language Liberation Section of the RC website.)

Care of the Environment

Workshops should be organized and run with attention paid to care of the environment. Special consideration should be given to environmentally sustainable practices, including sustainable transportation, both while organizing the workshop and during the workshop itself. (See Workshop Organizer's Manual, on the RC website, for specifics: rc.org/workshops/index.html.)

REASON

The workshop format has proven effective. It promotes both individual and Community growth.

Our workshops benefit from having all varieties of people. They need to offer a broad vision for human living.

This Guideline requires workshops to provide this level of financial support for young people. (Workshops do not otherwise provide financial support to participants, apart from Outreach Funds.) (See Guideline H.8.) It doesn't dictate how this financial support is to be divided among the young participants.

Our fundamental principle is that leadership is individual. That makes accountability clear. Every activity or organizational structure must have one person designated as the leader. Having one leader and one organizer is consistent with this principle.

~~Having assistants trains new leadership and promotes a~~ rational sharing of responsibilities. The designated leader

and organizer are each responsible for the overall good functioning of the workshop. However, having assistants trains new leadership and promotes a rational sharing of responsibilities.

Interpreting is an important part of language liberation and is necessary for full inclusion and complete understanding.

Putting attention to care of the environment at workshops is rational and supports the implementation of our related RC Community Goals.

G.2. REQUIREMENTS OF RC TEACHERS

Experience and Knowledge

Persons applying to teach RC shall, whenever possible,

1. have participated in many RC classes,
2. have Co-Counseled effectively with a number of Co-Counselors,
3. have discharged consistently and well in their sessions,
4. have been having regular Co-Counseling sessions,
5. have shown a commitment to staying up-to-date with RC theory, which includes reading the literature, and
6. ~~4.~~ have had continuing good relations with the Co-Counseling Community in their own locality.

Teachers should understand the purpose of the Community policy on not socializing and should follow it.

Moving Against Distress

When approving teachers, Reference Persons shall take into account the applicants' competence, responsibility, relationships with others, and capacity to handle their surroundings and their own well-being mastery of the



KATIE KAUFFMAN

environment. The goal is to have each teacher be free of any pattern that interferes with being an excellent model. Classist, racist, anti-Jewish, sexist, age-related, and other oppressive patterns, including greed, are woven into our cultures. Teachers are to challenge these patterns in RC activities, and in their own lives, and discharge on them.

Compulsive Addictive behavior⁴ and "thinking" will and must yield to discharge. Meanwhile, teachers are expected not to engage in or defend the use of tobacco, alcohol, marijuana, or other mind-altering drugs, including psychiatric drugs. Teachers are also expected to oppose both the existence and the use of pornography.⁵ They are expected to work to free themselves from any distresses connected with pornography, along with other rigid and repetitive sexual behaviors. They are also to counsel on and challenge all distresses related to sex, money, food, and the unthinking use or avoidance of medications. ~~shall not use, or defend the use of, tobacco, marijuana, alcohol, or mind-altering drugs, including psychiatric drugs.~~ Teachers are also expected to discharge distresses related to sex, money, food, and the unthinking use or avoidance of medications. Teachers are furthermore expected not to intentionally do anything that endangers themselves or others.

Teachers are expected to discharge and take action against oppressive patterns:

1. for their own successful re-emergence,
2. to be models for other people,
3. to teach successful classes and build successful Communities, and
4. in order to be leaders wherever they are.

Attitude Toward Teaching

Eagerness to teach is not a necessary condition for being certified as an RC teacher. Reference Persons need not feel obligated to certify individuals whose patterns seek approval through being a teacher. Co-Counselors

continued . . .

⁴ Addictive behavior is the continued yielding to the restimulated feelings of a distress recording and acting out of its content.

⁵ Use of pornography is defined as the seeking out of written, audio, or visual materials that are intended to restimulate sexual feelings. Pornography is a form of sexual exploitation, mainly of women and young people, and exists within a context of sexism and male domination. Racism and classism play key roles in the ways that everyone is exploited and oppressed by pornography. Although pornography is primarily geared toward men, the highly profitable pornography industry is increasingly targeting women as consumers of pornography.

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who are reluctant to teach and must be counseled and persuaded encouraged to do so are often more can be successful as teachers. In our experience neither eagerness to teach nor reluctance to teach has any bearing on how successful a teacher will be.

REASON

Teachers who work to meet these requirements will be increasingly effective teachers. Each teacher can be an outstanding example of the basic theory of RC and model how the human mind functions at its best when free of distress and free from the effects of harmful substances and activities.

Our leaders, classes, and Communities function as models. We can eliminate oppressive patterns, and a good place to start is with the leadership. Moving against these oppressive patterns is essential to our progress.

People should not be blamed for engaging in harmful behaviors. Many are the direct result of oppression. However, a certain level of rational behavior is expected of Co-Counseling teachers, no matter how or to what extent they were hurt. If a Co-Counselor has some harmful behaviors, a Reference Person may certify him or her to teach so long as he or she has made a commitment to discharge on and end the behavior (smoking tobacco is an example). However some behaviors are so harmful that a commitment to end them is not enough. For example, violence toward oneself or others is inconsistent with representing the RC Community as a teacher.

Use of pornography has become widespread and acceptable in many societies. Pornography targets and is harmful to all humans and undermines all liberation efforts. We choose to challenge it as RC teachers and leaders. Pornography reinforces the oppression of women and young people (often women and children who are targeted by racism). It promotes and sexualizes violence toward women and children. It promotes the objectification and inequality aimed at these groups. Some pornography exploits Gay men. All pornography reinforces sexual distresses and confusions and pulls people to collude with and economically support the pornography industry, its perspectives, and its actions.

Men, oppressed by society but also an oppressor group, are required to compromise their integrity when they use pornography. The pornography industry, in its pursuit of billion-dollar profits, systematically

reinforces male dominance. Pornography becomes part of men's oppression by confusing men into settling for sexual restimulation instead of real human contact. Pornography supports all oppressions by requiring users to compromise their integrity and further their isolation in the guise of providing relief from that isolation.⁶

With some harmful behaviors, a commitment to end them has been found to be insufficient and unworkable; the behavior needs to end before someone begins teaching RC. For example, use of alcohol and other mind-altering drugs (such as marijuana and psychiatric drugs) and violence toward oneself or others are inconsistent with representing the RC Community as a teacher. With other addictive behaviors, it may be workable for a Reference Person to certify a teacher so long as he or she has made a commitment to discharge on and end the behavior.

H.1. CLASS FEES AND SUPPORT FUNDS

Re-evaluation Counseling (RC) teachers are encouraged to charge tuition for their classes. They can set their own fees, appropriate for their Community. Teachers in any one Area are permitted, but not required, to agree among themselves on fee limits (minimum and maximum). Teachers are encouraged to set a fee that all members of a specific Community can afford to pay.

Teachers may (but are not required to) use a sliding fee scale, to allow for the variation in income of the people who wish to take the class. If a sliding scale is used, teachers should also indicate a "suggested fee" for those who are not low income, or tie the

fees to income, so that sufficient funds for Outreach are generated by those who can afford to pay a higher fee.

Teachers are encouraged to offer financial support free or reduced class tuition, without compensation from Outreach Funds, to as many as three young people and as many as two people oppressed by racism or the oppression of disabled people, who would otherwise find it difficult to pay for the class.

When economic disparities exist within an Area or Region, Communities are encouraged to develop policies that would make payment of teachers more equitable.

⁶ The use of pornography installs distress recordings, starting with its initial use. Internet pornography tracks and repeatedly targets the specific distresses of users, strongly reinforcing existing recordings, thus making it particularly difficult to resist.



REASON

People who put time, labor, and skill into teaching Co-Counseling should be paid adequately for their work. Needs, motivations, and economics vary widely among the RC Communities. A portion of the class fees is also an important source of the Community Service Funds (Outreach Funds) of the International Community.

Fees can be best determined by the person who is responsible for the class. We want the widest variety of people to have easy access to RC. The fees we set for our classes should reflect this goal and our desire to reach all of humanity. Financial support from the teacher will Reduced class fees for those who would otherwise find it difficult to pay for the class will increase the participation of ~~these oppressed groups targeted by oppression~~ and thereby greatly improve the quality of our classes and our Communities.

H.13. ~~12~~: OUTREACH TO ALL ~~OPPRESSED~~ GROUPS TARGETED BY OPPRESSION

Each Area is expected to spread RC to all groups that are ~~oppressed~~ under-represented in its locality and all groups targeted by oppression groups. The ARP (or authorized account signer in an ~~unorganized Area~~ a Developing Community) can make use of the Area Outreach Funds to help pay for workshop fees, transportation expenses, or both, in this effort. (See Guideline H.7.) Outreach Funds are to be used to develop leaders, to assist new people to begin RC, and to sustain the ongoing participation of Community members from oppressed and under-represented liberation groups who would be unable to participate without such assistance and whose participation helps build a diverse Community and offer a range of perspectives.

Outreach Funds for workshop fees or transportation expenses are to be furnished only from the official Outreach Funds (Area, Community Service Fund, or International) of the Community and not from the workshop income itself or from any Area Maintenance Funds. (See Guideline H.8.)

In situations in which Outreach Funds are inadequate to meet the needs of the Community, efforts are to be made to spread the available funds among those needing and eligible for outreach. Building a broadly diverse Community should be given priority.

REASON

We have a commitment to reach all humankind. (See Guideline H.2.)

Outreach Funds have been an effective mechanism for paying for workshops. Using them has prevented

workshop proceeds and Area Maintenance Funds from being misused or depleted.

Outreach Funds are not to be given in exchange for work at a workshop. Instead we operate on the basic principle that helping to make things go well is a natural, enjoyable human trait. It is not rational to harness it to any greed or gain motive.

Outreach is intended for the development of the Community as well as an individual's benefit. Because the need for Outreach Funds exceeds available funds, we must be thoughtful and deliberate about their use.

K.5. PRESERVING CONFIDENTIALITY WHEN WRITING ABOUT OTHERS

When writing in RC publications, or on RC e-mail lists, about another individual's distress patterns or struggles, RCers should not use identifiers (for example, my child, partner, parent, and so on, or identifying descriptions of the person) without that person's consent. RCers should write anonymously (or use a pseudonym) if another person's confidentiality cannot otherwise be adequately protected.

REASON

Even when a person being written about is not identified by name, other written information can reveal that individual's identity. Individuals, including children, should be able to decide for themselves whether or not they wish to have their distresses and struggles written about in a public forum. When an RC author has decided to reveal the identity of another person, the author should check his or her judgment with an experienced RCer.²

L.1. INTERNET SECURITY

If RCers send documents (including workshop rosters, databases, and spreadsheets) containing information about Co-Counselors' addresses, telephone numbers, identities, or confidential information over the Internet, the documents must be encrypted and the password sent by a separate e-mail or by other means. When discussion among the recipients is not necessary, e-mails to large groups of Co-Counselors should have the recipients' e-mail addresses in the Blind Carbon Copy (BCC) field.

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² Anonymity on RC e-mail lists can be achieved by obtaining an e-mail account that does not reveal who you are, or by forwarding your posting either to the Reference Person in charge of the list or to Allan Hansen, at <chansen@rc.org>, for him or her to post without your name.

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RCers should not use Internet service sites other than the RC website to compile and organize such information.

REASON

The Internet makes efficient communication and organization possible. However, its users are increasingly vulnerable to privacy infringement. Internet services collect and abuse personal data. Internet security not only depends on technology but also on where data is kept and who has access to it. The RC website is being made as secure as possible. It will be a good tool for organizing. No website is completely secure. However, the RC website will be much more secure than are free or commercial Internet services. (See M.3.)

L.5 K-7: ELECTRONIC MAILING LISTS

Membership

The RC Community maintains a number of electronic mailing lists for active members of the RC Community. Most of these lists are only for active leaders of particular constituencies. Permission of the Reference Person for the constituency is required to join such a list particular constituencies. Messages to such lists should be limited to the topics for which the list was established.

Purpose

RC electronic mailing lists are for the purpose of exchanging original and clear thinking about:

1. the work we are doing in RC,
2. the application of RC theory and practice to the work we are doing outside of RC, and
3. current situations in the world.

Reproducing postings

Postings on a given list are intended only for members of that list. List postings can be communicated to individuals not on the list only under the following conditions:

1. Permission of the original author must be obtained.
2. If the message identifies individuals, permission must be gained from those individuals, or the possibility of identification must be removed.
3. The posting must be presented as an individual's thinking, not as Re-evaluation Counseling theory.
4. If a posting is to be duplicated and circulated in an RC class, the following statement must appear on each

page: "This is a posting from an RC discussion list and as such has not yet been edited, checked for theoretical correctness, or approved for publication."

Unlike RC publications, list postings are unedited and not checked for theoretical correctness. They should not be used in place of RC literature.

REASON

Such lists facilitate our work. (Information on and guidelines for the use of the electronic mailing lists can be found on the RC website: <<http://www.rc.org>>.)

Leaders' lists allow our liberation leaders to exchange thinking and experiences about our liberation work. These leaders are writing for specific audiences. Any reposting of their writing to another list or publication needs to be carefully considered and only done with their approval. Postings to a list are meant to encourage thinking. They are not for communication to individuals not on that list.

N.1. M: CO-COUNSELING RELATIONSHIPS

We recognize that the Co-Counseling relationship is a unique opportunity to move towards total re-emergence from distress recordings.

As a general rule, Co-Counselors are not to socialize with other Co-Counselors. This is unless they had an established relationship before they began Re-evaluation Counseling (RC). Get-togethers of Co-Counselors must be organized primarily for discharge, re-evaluation, and group counseling activity. Any food, or entertainment, or other activity is only to be supportive of this main purpose.

People who want to learn to Co-Counsel should be informed of the purpose of the no-socializing policy and assisted to discharge and think about it. This policy is to be discussed in fundamentals classes. In order to be members of a Co-Counseling class, individuals are required to follow the no-socializing policy while working to develop their own thinking. People who have learned Co-Counseling and want to become members of the RC Community should be told that following the no-socializing policy is a requirement of membership.

Co-Counselors are not to be recommended for RC leadership or certified as RC teachers unless they have explicitly accepted the no-socializing policy. Co-Counselors who are not yet able to follow the no-socializing policy are thereby disqualifying themselves from teaching or leading RC. The Regional Reference Person (RRP), in consultation with local leadership, is to decide whether or not a Co-Counselor who persists

in violating this policy may continue to participate in Co-Counseling events.

REASON

This Guideline supports and protects the one-point program of RC. It is not intended to limit our thinking about each other or limit the love, caring, and commitment we have for one another. It is fine for Co-Counselors to love, care for, and assist each other. All people inherently love all other people—and almost everyone naturally comes to love his or her Co-Counselor.

We want to create and maintain a safe environment for all people (particularly young people, women, and members of other oppressed groups targeted by oppression). Further, we do not want undischarged patterns to interfere with the safety, trust, and effectiveness of the Co-Counseling relationship or the RC Community. Clearly communicating this policy from the very beginning gives prospective Co-Counselors the best chance at using RC tools and information on a long-term basis.

Because of the mistreatment we have endured in our lives, most of us enter Co-Counseling with strong “frozen needs” for companionship, love, cooperation, help, and commitment from others. (A “frozen need” is the feeling of need that results from the hurt of a real need not having been met in the past. When this hurt is restimulated, we often feel it as a present need.) These “needs” cannot be filled; they can only be discharged. Supportive Co-Counselors can seem to be the “answer” to all present and past needs, because of the thoughtfulness we learn to extend to each other. This attraction will often take the form of romantic feelings, sexual feelings, or the desire to “spend time with each other.” A Co-Counselor can also seem to be the perfect business partner, “the mother or father I never had,” and so on.

In other circumstances, our undischarged feelings of urgency and obligation can make us feel like we need to “solve” our Co-Counselors’ difficulties in a patterned way instead of counseling them through their difficulties to solve their own problems. However, we are committed only to counseling each other out of the distresses that interfere with our lives. That is all that is required in the Co-Counseling relationship.

A Co-Counselor may thoughtfully choose to play an additional role only if that role is supportive of the counseling role. (For example, if one’s Co-Counselor is living in chaos because of heavy patterns of disorganization, in addition to counseling that person on the distresses involved, one might choose to spend a day helping begin his or her reorganization.) The support is aimed at temporarily creating better conditions for the Co-Counselor to work themselves free of the distresses, not taking over handling of difficulties in their lives.

It takes a long time to discharge feelings of loneliness, helplessness, obligation, and fear of other people. Therefore, the more “comfortable” socializing with (including “helping”) Co-Counselors can continue to be attractive in a patterned way until significant discharge resisting these urges has occurred.

If we socialize with people who are already Co-Counseling, there is a tendency, whether noticed or not, to “lean” on those people (and for them to lean on us) instead of both people being mutually responsible. However, if an additional “socializing relationship” is entered into, including when the patterns of both parties are equally enthusiastic, it will eventually spoil the Co-Counseling relationship. This is a significant loss because the Co-Counseling relationship provides some of the most important support

any two people can give each other. The attempted relationship will be built on a patterned basis and in this way be limited and likely to fail.

When two people have multiple both a Co-Counseling and a non-Co-Counseling relationships (for example, as parents, lovers, or business partners), each of these relationships must be responsibly maintained by each of the parties, separate from the other relationships. This is a basic RC principle.

Co-Counselors experiencing a patterned urge to socialize should seek referencing by the most experienced leaders available. If they feel an urge to be secretive, the need for referencing is even greater.

Establishing other relationships other than that of Co-Counseling with Co-Counselors is damaging to the Co-Counseling relationship and a drain on the resources of the RC Community. This has been the long-term experience in the RC Communities. We can fulfill our human need for aware, supportive, social relationships

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by adding Co-Counseling to the relationships we already have with our friends and acquaintances. ~~If~~ When we do our socializing with “non-Co-Counseling” people, we ~~will~~ tend to take responsibility for ~~those~~ the relationships. In addition, as we discharge, we ~~will become increasingly able to get better at setting up and enjoying~~ good relationships. We can use ~~these~~ this skills to share RC with people who are not already in RC.

If one person associates another person with RC at the beginning of their relationship, there is a strong tendency to expect, awarely or unawarely, that the person associated with RC will operate as a counselor in the relationship. This same confusion consistently arises between people who were, but no longer are, involved in RC.

Sometimes, at an RC event, there is an incidental meal or songfest or creative “show-and-tell.” In this context, ~~these~~ such an activities ~~is~~ are used awarely for discharge and to enhance the effectiveness of the get-together.

If a Co-Counselor persists in pursuing a non-Co-Counseling relationship with another Co-Counselor, even after every reasonable effort has been made to assist him or her to reach a rational position, the Community is not obligated to provide its resources to that individual.

In particular, Co-Counselors cannot become or remain leaders or teachers in the Community unless they can follow and support the no-socializing policy and thus model for others this amount of responsibility.

NO.1. PSYCHIATRIC DRUGS AND RC

All Co-Counselors are strongly urged to oppose, in words and actions, the use of psychiatric drugs. The use of these drugs is inconsistent with Re-evaluation Counseling (RC) theory and practice. Psychiatric drugs interfere with discharge, re-evaluation, and the ability to counsel others. All Co-Counselors are asked to discharge any distress that interferes with their taking a firm stand against the use of these drugs, the concept of “mental illness,” and any distress that interferes with their thinking well about people who may have used or are using psychiatric drugs.

People using psychiatric drugs are not to be blamed. The oppressive society is the actual source of the difficulty.

A decision to stop using psychiatric drugs should only be made by the person using them. Young people, vulnerable adults, and some others are not, by law, allowed to make that decision. In these cases, parents, caregivers, and allies should firmly oppose the imposition of psychiatric drugs on them. People may need active support and resource to decide to stop using psychiatric drugs. They may need continued support to (1) hold to that decision and (2) keep their attention on building their life in the present while feeling distresses previously numbed by the drugs. This support needs to come from their friends and family. It may also include Co-Counselors who have agreed to be part of these efforts, but the RC Community itself is not to be expected to provide resource. Racism, poverty, classism, young people's oppression, genocide, and war have resulted in psychiatric drugs being put forward by society as the only option for controlling the results of the heavy recordings that oppressions have installed. Co-Counselors need to discharge to think well about people who are oppressed in these ways.

REASON

Relying on psychiatric drugs fundamentally denies the intactness of our minds and our ability to discharge, re-evaluate, and think of an elegant solution for each new situation. Psychiatric drugs are dangerous. Some can cause permanent physical damage to the central nervous system, or death. Many of them affect the ability to learn. Though they sometimes allow a person to “fit in” better and to stop “anti-social” behavior, they are not a real solution and they add another layer of hurt. Psychiatric drugs are being used more and more to silence ~~the~~ people's struggle against their oppression, ~~of~~ a growing number of people, including young people's oppression.

Workers in the “mental health” system are increasingly required to administer drugs to control people's “symptoms” of “mental illness.” These workers work in under-staffed institutions. They are typically discouraged, and overworked, ~~and~~ They can be threatened with losing their jobs or being sued if they do not administer the drugs. They ~~do not~~ rarely have access to effective counseling techniques. Teachers and school administrators are in a similar situation. Though ~~the situation~~ it may vary from country to country, forced drugging of “mental patients” is a common practice in much of the world.

“Mental illness” does not exist. The term is used to describe a wide range of behaviors, including heavy,

prolonged discharge. These behaviors are the result of experiences of hurt, including oppression and the other massive hurts inflicted on people by society.⁸ People are conditioned to find these behaviors restimulating. As a result, they push others, as well as themselves, to use drugs in an attempt to hide both the behaviors and the distresses that have caused them.

An increasing number of young people, poor people, people targeted by racism, elders, and disabled people are being put on these drugs, without their consent, in order to mask the hurts ~~that are~~ being inflicted on humans them by society.

⁸ The brain can be damaged by infections, toxins, trauma, and degenerative processes acting on the central nervous system. These are physical injuries and may affect behaviors, feelings, and other human functions. As with similar damage to other parts of the body, this kind of damage to the brain may benefit from medical intervention. This Guideline doesn't address such physical injuries. However, our experience has been that psychiatric drugs are detrimental to healing. This is because they suppress the discharge process and hide the symptoms rather than promote recovery.

Psychiatric drugs are often used as a “solution” to perceived emotional, learning, and behavioral problems. Young people are particularly vulnerable to lifelong dependence, and addiction, or even death, when adults compel them to take drugs at an early age. Many parents are threatened with ~~total exclusion~~ of their children being excluded from school and other programs if they do not give their children drugs.

There are real solutions to these problems. They require us to organize for fundamental societal change and to pay thoughtful human attention to the people who have been harmed.

The pharmaceutical industry is expanding rapidly and is making huge profits by exploiting the people hurt by oppression. It widely promotes the misinformation that there is “biological/genetic mental illness” and that drugs are the best and only solution.



NANCY LEMON

Today we are faced with the preeminent fact that, if civilization is to survive, we must cultivate the science of human relationships—the ability of all peoples, of all kinds, to live together and work together, in the same world, at peace.

Franklin Delano Roosevelt

Challenges and Progress in Africa

An RC workshop took place in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, June 14 to 16, 2013. It was composed of participants with special needs, and others. Mesfin Taye Woldegiorgis, the Area Reference Person for Addis Ababa, had chosen a facility that was accessible to people with wheelchairs. Many of the participants had taught RC classes.

Among other introductory activities, people shared what they understood about RC theory and practice. When I lead RC in various parts of Africa, I find that sometimes a particular Community will define the theory and practice in a way that makes sense to their particular group without necessarily diluting the theory and practice.

Mesfin's group has used RC theory and practice to address the oppression of people with special needs—for example, the lack of accessibility, the discrimination in employment, and the oppressive language used to describe people with special needs. They have challenged the system to be inclusive and have held forums

to raise awareness. I was touched by their determination to connect with RC and the rest of the world. They have done a lot of work. I am trying to put people who lead this work in touch with each other so that they can share information.

I will be in Rwanda in August and intend to conduct a workshop that includes people from Rwanda, Burundi, and Congo. I encourage leaders from developed RC Communities to reach out to African leaders, check on how they are doing, and give them a hand.*

On this continent, multiple issues consume our minds and divert our attention. This is why I personally embrace RC theory and practice. It can play a significant role in addressing such challenges. We are grateful for the support that has made our progress as a Community possible.

Wanjiku Kironyo
Regional Reference Person
for Northern Africa
Nairobi, Kenya

* "A hand" means some help.



MAURA FALLON



CATHERINE CARTER

After the Africa Pre-World Conference

I appreciated hosting the Africa Pre-World Conference this May. I was happy to listen to Tim¹ teaching, and to know that many others were also appreciating the teaching and the practice.

I had the opportunity to lead the women's group in the presence of Diane² and Rachel.³ I would recommend that at future workshops and conferences we have such skilled people sit in on various groups and encourage the African leaders and give them feedback, so they can develop more self-confidence and gain skills.

I also propose that in addition to eliminating racism, we revisit the issue of ethnical centrism. The structure of colonialism continues to become more deeply entrenched due to tribalism, which tends to be highly politicized and used as a tool for mass killing and genocide.

I have a lot of hope for the future of the RC project and the liberation of all people.

Wanjiku Kironyo
Regional Reference Person
for Northern Africa
Nairobi, Kenya

¹ Tim Jackins

² Diane Shisk, the Alternate International Reference Person

³ Rachel Noble, the Regional Reference Person for Oregon, USA

A Class on Care of the Environment, for People Targeted by Racism

A few weeks ago I was invited to do a class on care of the environment for an Area¹ class of people targeted by racism. I was pleased to have the opportunity, because I knew that I, at least, would learn a lot.

After introductions and “news and goods,” I laid out the four things I wanted to cover:

- Remembering a connection to nature
- That “it’s your world”—all of it
- Feelings about environmentalists
- That it might be a good idea to give some thought to climate change

I started with the first item by sharing some stories from my own growing up in the city of Chicago, Illinois, USA. I picked stories that I thought would be accessible to people who had varying histories of time spent in wild places. I talked about my backyard, which was my world as a young child. I lived in an apartment building that formed two sides of a rectangle, and the remaining space was the backyard. Every spring the neighbors would prepare the ground so we could plant grass seed. Then they would rope off the yard to keep us children out until the grass grew. As soon as we could start playing on it, of course our running feet tended to destroy the grass, but I loved the ritual of doing this every spring. My backyard also had a tree that I spent hours in as an escape from the tensions in my family. The brick walls of the surrounding buildings were home to caterpillars, and in July we could catch fireflies in a jar. All this took place in the heart of the city. After I talked about this, we all had mini-sessions on our own stories and then shared them with the group. The stories helped create a backdrop for the other things we shared during the evening.

I was a bit nervous about my second item, because I had never heard anyone else talk about it. A few months earlier I had watched a short video about an organization in California (USA) that encourages African Americans to go to the national parks. Some African Americans went on a field trip to Yellowstone National Park, and



LYNDALL KATZ

the looks of wonder and excitement on their faces were lovely to see. The founder of this organization talked about how, in his opinion, slavery in the United States would not be fully over until African Americans visited the national parks as much as white people did. That led me to thinking about a direction I’ve used sometimes with a few of my Jewish Co-Counselors: “It’s your world. You have as much right to be here as anyone else, for no special reason beyond that you’re alive and human.” It has seemed useful for me, as an ally to Jews, to insist that it’s their world. As I thought about people targeted by colonialism, slavery, racism, and genocide, it seemed that one of the big messages to targeted people is that the world belongs to the dominators, to the white people, and not to them. So in the class I briefly laid out these thoughts and then firmly insisted that the world was theirs—all of it. Then we did minis again and a good amount of discharge was going on.² Afterward there was a thoughtful discussion about how the direction itself is built on the idea of possession and ownership and that it might be more accurate to say that we belong to the world rather than that the world is ours. I’d love for people to try it both ways and see what comes of it.³

continued . . .

¹ An Area is a local RC Community.

² “Going on” means happening.

³ “Comes of it” means results from it.

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Time was getting short, so I briefly mentioned the third item, saying that I guessed there might be some feelings about environmentalists and welcoming the group to aim them at me. I mentioned a couple of prominent African American environmental leaders but said that they didn't fit the usual image of an environmentalist. This invited a little commentary about what stereotypical environmentalists looked like.

I said nothing further about climate change, figuring that we had more than enough going on already. Like a pebble dropped into a lake, the little ripples could spread out from my earlier tiny mention of it.

I counseled a couple of people in front of the group, and their sessions drew from all four areas I had touched on. Feelings about environmentalists did get opened up, and I think it was fruitful to have space to work on them. One person said that if she showed concern for the environment, she got accused in a negative way of being an environmentalist. For another, racism needed to be acknowledged and discharged on to make some space for her to consider the environment.

I am curious to know if these ideas work for other people as a way to open up discharge on racism and the environment. I look forward to hearing from others, and to more opportunities to listen, learn, and try things to see what moves us forward.



Madeleine Para
Madison, Wisconsin, USA
Reprinted from the RC e-mail
discussion list for RC Community
members involved in eliminating racism

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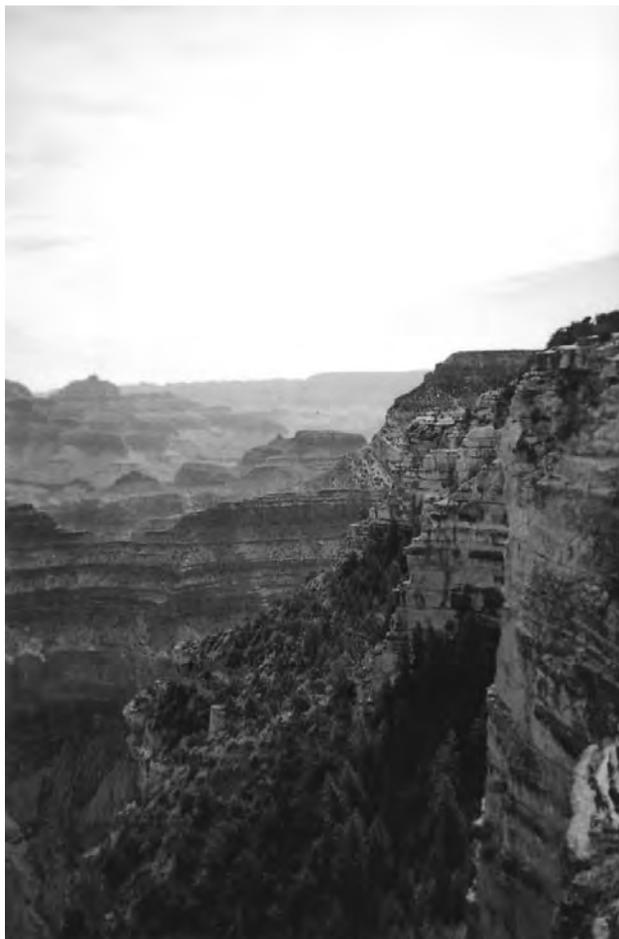
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Don't Complain about the RC Communities

It sounds like you have got yourself in a snit* again. The plain fact of the matter, L—, is that you don't have any business complaining about the RC Communities. They are not there to take care of you or take care of your distresses; they're there to provide knowledge of Co-Counseling. If you want Co-Counseling to go right, go and train yourself a couple of Co-Counselors and get the benefits from your own work. It's just that simple.

Harvey Jackins
From a letter written in 1974

* A "snit" means a state of agitation or irritation.



STEVE BANBURY

מזרחיים והשואה

אני אישה יהודייה שנולדה בישראל להורים שנולדו במרוקו. כיהודייה מזרחיה תמיד השואה נתפשה בעיני (ובעיני מזרחיים רבים שאני מכירה) כמשהו ששייך לאשכנזים בלבד. לא התעניינתי במה שקרה לעם היהודי בתקופת מלחמת העולם השנייה. חשתי לא מחוברת לסיפור שמהווה נדבך חשוב בהיסטוריה של העם שלי והן בהיסטוריה הפרטית שלי.

השנה ביום השואה חשתי צורך לבדוק מה קרה ליהודים מזרחיים בזמן השואה. גיליתי שבמדינות מרוקו אלג'יריה לבנון וסוריה נחקקו חוקי גזע תחת משטר וישי (המשטר הצרפתי ששיתף פעולה עם הנאצים) שהגבילו את מקורות הפרנסה של היהודים שם ופגעו בזכותם של היהודים ללמוד במוסדות חינוך. קיימות עדויות כי הנאצים תכננו לפלוש למרוקו ולחסל את היהודים שגרו שם. למרבה המזל הם לא הספיקו כי בעלות הברית התערבו. קהילות שנפגעו פגיעה ממשית יותר היו קהילות תוניס ולוב בהם הנאצים הקימו מחנות עבודה וריכוז ויהודים חויבו לעבוד טלאי צהוב. לפחות 32 מחנות עבודה הוקמו בתוניס בהם נרצחו מאות יהודים וחלק אף נשלחו למחנות ריכוז ולמחנות המוות באירופה.

המידע הזה היה חדש לי והעלה אצלי הרבה מחשבות, איך זה שהייתי לחלוטין לא מודעת לדברים האלה שקשורים למורשת ולהיסטוריה שלי? איך זה שאף אחד בישראל לא מדבר על הפרק הזה בהיסטוריה של העם היהודי? איך זה שלא מצוין בצורה ברורה כי גם יהודים שהם לא ממוצא אירופאי נפגעו או הושפעו מהמלחמה היא?

פרקתי על זה. והנה כמה מהמחשבות והערכות מחדש שבאו בעקבות זה.

היהודים המזרחיים שעלו לישראל היו צריכים להתמודד עם תנאים קשים ועם דיכוי שאילץ אותם להתנתק מעבר שלהם כדי להתקיים ולשרוד בארץ החדשה. לא היה מקום לסיפורים שלהם מהעבר. האשכנזים בארץ ניכסו לעצמם את השואה. הם ראו את עצמם כקורבנות היחידים שלה. שמעתי סיפור על מורה ששאלה למי מהתלמידים יש במשפחה מישהו שהוא ניצול שואה, ילדה מזרחיה הרימה את ידה. המורה השתיקה אותה מיד וכינתה אותה שקרנית. היא אמרה שזה בלתי אפשרי כיוון שהילדה היא ממוצא מזרחי ולא הייתה שואה במדינות האלה.

נכון שמספר גדול יותר של יהודים אשכנזים סבלו ונספו בשואה לעומת מספרם של יהודים מארצות מוסלמיות שנפגעו מהשואה. מספר גדול בהרבה של יהודים חי באותה תקופה באירופה בהשוואה למספר הנמוך יחסית של היהודים שחיו בארצות מוסלמיות. זה היה רק עניין של זמן. אם המלחמה לא הייתה מסתיימת כפי שהיא נסתיימה מספר הקורבנות היהודים בארצות המוסלמיות היה גדול בהרבה.

בבתי הספר בישראל ההיסטוריה היחידה שנלמדת היא ההיסטוריה של יהודי אירופה. ההיסטוריה של יהודי הארצות המוסלמיות נתפשת כחלק קטן, שולי ולא חשוב. אני אינני זוכרת שלמדתי בבית ספר משהו שהיה קשור להיסטוריה שלי.

השואה שימשה ומשמשת עד עצם היום הזה פלטפורמה לדיכוי מזרחיים בישראל. השואה הפרידה ומפרידה בין יהודים. השואה שימשה כצידוק לקיום של האשכנזים בארץ ולזכויות היתר שלהם בה. מצד שני השואה הופקה מהמזרחיים בארץ והמשמעות היא שהזכויות שלהם בארץ הן פחותות.

אני רוצה להשיב לעצמי את ההיסטוריה של העם שלי. אני רוצה שילדים מזרחיים בארץ ילמדו את ההיסטוריה שלהם, בדיוק כפי שהם נדרשים היום ללמוד את ההיסטוריה של היהודים האשכנזים. אני רוצה להשיב לעצמי את הזהות היהודית שלי, אני לגמרי יהודייה ולגמרי ישראלית. השואה כוונה כנגד העם היהודי ככלל. רק עכשיו, עם ההבנה הזאת שהשואה שימשה כלי של הפרדה בין יהודים אשכנזים ליהודים מזרחיים, אני יכולה, לראשונה, לפתוח את הלב שלי לכאב ולסבל שחוו האשכנזים כתוצאה מהשואה.

אסור לנו להמשיך לתת יד לדיכוי יהודים, הדיכוי החיצוני האכזרי שהופעל כלפי העם היהודי גם לדיכוי מופנם בין היהודים האשכנזים ליהודים המזרחיים. אנטישמיות הכשירה את היהודים האשכנזים לתפקיד המדכא של אחיהם היהודים המזרחיים. אני מזמינה אותנו להסתכל על זה ולא לתת להפרדה הזאת להיות חלק מהמציאות שלנו היום.

מרצ'ו שוקרון ליאור
תובל, ישראל



English translation of the preceding article:

Mizrahi Jews and the Holocaust

I am an Israeli Jewish woman, born in Israel to parents who were born in Morocco. As a Mizrahi Jew,¹ I always considered the Holocaust to be something that belonged only to the Ashkenazim.² (I know that many Mizrahi feel this way.) I was not interested in what happened to the Jewish people during the Second World War. I felt disconnected from this significant piece of my and my people's history.

This year, on Holocaust Memorial Day, I had an urge to check out what happened to Mizrahi Jews during the Holocaust. I discovered that in Morocco, Algeria, Syria, and Lebanon, the authorities legislated race laws as part of the policy of the Vichy Regime (the French regime that cooperated with the Nazis). These laws limited livelihood opportunities for Jews and prevented them from studying in educational institutions. There is evidence that the Nazis planned to invade Morocco and exterminate all the Jews who lived there. Fortunately they didn't get there, because the Allies³ interfered. The Jewish communities of Tunisia and Libya were severely damaged: The Nazis built work camps and concentration camps, and Jews were made to wear a yellow patch. At least thirty-two camps were built in Tunis. Hundreds of Jews were murdered. A few were sent to concentration camps and death camps in Europe.

This information was new to me and brought up a lot of thoughts: How come I was⁴ totally unaware of these things about my history and legacy? How come⁵ nobody in Israel ever talks about this part of Jewish history? Why is there no clear statement that Jews not of European origin also got hurt or were influenced by the Holocaust?



MATT WEATHERFORD

I have discharged about it. Here are some of my thoughts and a re-evaluation:

The Mizrahi Jews that immigrated to Israel were struggling with hard conditions and an oppression that forced them to disconnect from their past in order to make a living and survive in the new country. There was no room for their stories from the past.

The Ashkenazim in Israel appropriated the Holocaust. They thought of themselves as the only victims of it. I heard a story about a teacher who asked which of the pupils had family that survived the Holocaust. A Mizrahi girl raised her hand. The teacher immediately shut her down⁶ and called her a liar, saying it was impossible, that she was of Mizrahi origin and there was no Holocaust in the Muslim countries.

It's true that a huge number of European Jews suffered and died in the Holocaust compared to the number of Jews targeted in Muslim countries.

However, a huge number of Jews lived in Europe at that time compared to the relatively small number who lived in the Muslim countries. And it was only a matter of time. If the war had not ended as it did, the number of victims in the Muslim countries would have been greater.

The only history taught in Israeli Jewish schools has been the history of European Jews. The history of the Jews from Muslim countries has been treated as a small, unimportant part. Personally, I do not remember learning anything at school related to my history.

The Holocaust has been used as a platform to oppress Mizrahi people in Israel. It divides and separates Jews. It is used as a justification for the Ashkenazim's existence in this country and their privileged position here. On the other hand, the Holocaust has been expropriated from the Mizrahi, and that means that Mizrahi people have fewer privileges in this country.

¹ Mizrahi Jews are descendants of Jews from the Middle East, North Africa, Central Asia, and the Caucasus. They often identify as people targeted by racism.

² Ashkenazim are Ashkenazi Jews—Jews of Central and Eastern European descent, who generally identify as white.

³ The Allies were the countries that opposed the Axis powers (Germany, Italy, and Japan) during World War II.

⁴ In this context, "how come I was" means why was I.

⁵ In this context, "how come" means why is it.

⁶ "Shut her down" means stopped her from speaking.

I want to reclaim the history of my people. I want Mizrahi children in Israel to learn about their history, just as today they are required to study Ashkenazi history. I want to reclaim my Jewish identity. I am completely Jewish and completely Israeli. The Holocaust was directed against the Jewish people in general. Only now, with this understanding that the Holocaust has been used as a tool of oppression to separate Ashkenazi Jews and Mizrahi Jews, can I, for the first time, open my heart to the suffering of the Ashkenazim caused by the Holocaust.



We must not give a hand to⁷ anti-Jewish oppression. The cruel external oppression inflicted on the Jewish people has caused internalized oppression between Ashkenazi Jews and Mizrahi Jews. Anti-Jewish oppression has trained Ashkenazi Jews in the oppressor role, and they have targeted their brothers and sisters, the Mizrahi Jews. I invite us to look at this and not let the segregation be part of our reality today.

Merchi Shookroun Lior
Tooval, Israel

Translated from Hebrew by
Ofer Lior and Guy Cohen Mohr

⁷ "Give a hand to" means assist, facilitate.

Native People from Europe

Native people from Europe need to be seen and noticed. And we need to meet alone together to discharge on our hurts.

There have long been imperialist movements in Europe seeking to colonize and subjugate Indigenous people, their organizations, and their lands, and take their wealth. Some Indigenous countries, groups, and tribes are still under this domination. One of them is my country, the Basque Country.

I was recently at an International women and men leaders' workshop in the United States. Every morning people from the global majority met before breakfast to discharge. This was a good space for me, in the middle of a workshop with a lot of white people.

However, at some point I needed a different space than the one for people targeted by racism, to be able to discharge on my specific oppression: Native people's oppression (genocide). I claimed that space at the Western European Pre-World Conference. Every morning we met as European Native people. This made a huge difference for us.

Xabi Odriozola Ezeiza-Arreta

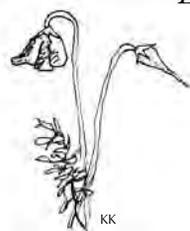
Clan: the Bear Tribe—father's, Autrigoiak;
mother's, Karistiarak and Baskoiak

Lineage: father's, the fern and strawberry tree;
mother's, the fir from the rocky ground

Totem: the eagle

Donostia-Gipuzkoa, Basque Country

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



SUE EDWARDS

Be kind, for everyone you
meet is fighting a hard battle.

Ian Maclaren

the oppression. However, we are living in a period in which part of the oppression is to not name it or to act as if it were behind us. With the election of Barack Obama as U.S. President, the term “post-racial” is often used and is a good example of the pretense and unwillingness to face that racism still exists.

Several groups of U.S. people targeted by racism have to deny the existence of racism in order to “make it” (to survive or thrive) in a capitalist economic system. Within my own constituency, a lot of other identities matter when it comes to being able to notice racism. Age, national origin, and class come to mind. In this period, it is powerful and important to notice that racism exists.

Enforced segregation in the United States in the last century was a clear example of “in-your-face,” blatant racism. The segregation continues, but it’s harder to notice or remember that it’s about racism. This is one example of how confusing the

current period can be. Integration, being represented in the media, being elected to political office have made it harder to notice that racism still exists. For many of us, it is not automatic to notice racism.

When I have worked deeply on racism and counseled others on it, I’ve noticed how terrifying it is and how angry we are about it. To notice and say that we have been targeted by racism is good, if only for discharge purposes. I don’t think it’s something to permanently identify with or be preoccupied with, but noticing it is important.

PEOPLE OF COLOR

At least in the United States, “People of Color” (POC) is the more common term. I think it is still all right to use—for the sake of solidarity and to refer to the group without saying “racism” all the time. It’s the most benign sounding of the three terms, almost like attention off distress, and it seems like an important tool for building community

with others. Under capitalism, our groups are pitted against one another, undermining us and confusing us about the real problem.

At the same time, this term concerns me. It can soften something that PTR and PGM do not. PTR and PGM can have an effect similar to that of “male domination” in how it has allowed us to work freshly on sexism and other oppressions.

BEING FLEXIBLE

Currently I use all three terms. It’s good to be flexible and to notice what’s useful about each. We can keep revisiting terms. In forty years, perhaps PGM won’t make sense, but because I’m a User who grew up hearing that I was a “minority,” PGM is still a powerful term for me.

One last thing: Getting overly preoccupied with the terminology can be a way to keep the feelings associated with the oppression—terror, rage, fear, confusion, isolation, defeat, and so on—at bay.

As we keep building the RC Community and working to eliminate all oppressions, it makes sense to connect with people “where they are” while still holding the widest possible perspective in our minds. We can decide what term to use on a case-by-case basis, especially when explaining RC liberation theory.

Tokumbo Bodunde

Brooklyn, New York, USA

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



SAN JUAN ISLANDS, WASHINGTON, USA • ALISA LEMIRE BROOKS



TRAVIS QUEZON

Eastern Europeans Meet

Nine women—from Russia, Romania, Slovakia, Hungary, Poland, and East Germany—met in a topic group at the Pre-world Conference in Poland in May 2013.

We shared our thinking about this part of the world and what we like about our countries and the role we play in RC. We hope that our declaration will inspire people to discharge and think about us.

Some of what we like about our countries:

- our hospitality
- how Romanian is connected with the other Latin languages
- our connection with nature, but also how much beauty is made by people
- our ability to stay flexible in difficult situations
- that we work hard and move forward
- the sense of community among us; our safe relationships in which nobody is criticized or hurt.

Declaration

We represent the survivors of an ex-political and ex-economic system. There have been difficult experiences among our countries. We feel the pain. We apologize to each other. Most of us are not seen and our oppressions are not referenced. We have experienced and still experience a lot of oppression. We have fewer opportunities to meet and build together, compared to the countries of the “developed West.”

However, size and growth are not everything. Ours is a special part of the world. We have excellent examples of people taking power and changing the world. We are worth being known. We would like our leaders to play a greater role in the RC Community and be used as allies and resources.

There is so much to learn from each other. There is so much hope. We will continue and do our work when we return home.



Juliane Cieslak
Potsdam, Brandenburg, East Germany, Germany
Reprinted from the RC e-mail discussion
list for leaders of wide world change

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What Would It Mean to Show Myself Fully?

A couple of weeks ago I attended the South, Central, and West Asian Workshop in Boston (Massachusetts, USA), led by Azi Khalili.¹ Betsy Najjar² was the organizer and did an amazing job of getting thirty-seven people together. Most people flew in from different parts of the United States, and a few, like me, came from other countries.

Coming together like this reminded me of our beauty and smartness and how we go after³ real connections. We got to work on where we have been separated and take pride in our languages, religions, and cultures.

Azi stressed how important it is that we show ourselves fully. Showing everything—as an Indian Punjabi Hindu Kshatriya (warrior cast) middle-class female—is scary as hell! I tend to hide a lot and hope no one notices. I show different parts of me to different people. No one, not even my two lovely teenage children, has seen every part of me.

What would it mean to show myself fully? I do not know. It's like losing control completely. The hiding distress, and that no one expected my mind and intelligence, has led to feelings of being defeated. I have felt completely discouraged.

¹ Azi Khalili is the International Liberation Reference Person for South, Central, and West Asian-Heritage People, and the Area Reference Person for the Brooklyn Gardens, New York, USA, RC Community.

² Betsy Najjar is the Area Reference Person for the Albuquerque II, New Mexico, USA, RC Community.

³ "Go after" means pursue.



TONY CARR

Azi always has high expectations and stresses that discharge, combined with perspectives (on reality), is what we need. She knows how well we function and that we are smart. She encouraged us to take action and dare to be intrusive. It can feel like a messy mine field, but it's a straight way to liberation.

She also talked about our men and how they are hated and seen as evil. I experienced this when I recently attended a big democracy festival. A fascist political party had a stand. My black friend and I asked them about their politics. After a while they said that our men "rape their white women" and that we "want to eliminate the white race." I continued to ask what they meant.

Getting this right in my face restimulated feelings of powerlessness. It was not easy to keep in mind that these extremists were good people with some racist distresses.

The workshop challenged a lot of my chronics⁴ and how deeply scared I am to show more of me. I feel so grateful and proud that RC has figured out that we can heal from our hurts and that we get to go for⁵ the real connections.

Sujata Maini
Stockholm, Sweden
Reprinted from the RC e-mail
discussion list for leaders of women

⁴ Chronic distresses

⁵ "Go for" means pursue.

The First

Without a sound, it drifts down,
The very first leaf of fall.
Oh, summer, don't leave.

Sojourner Truth
Seattle, Washington, USA

An Australian Young People’s and Young Adults’ Workshop

In April I led a workshop near Sydney, New South Wales, Australia, for eight young adults, two young people, and four allies. The youngest young person was sixteen, and the eldest young adult was thirty.

For the past four years in Australia, we young adults have been working to support each other and take charge in our Communities. One of the ways young people and young adults are hurt is that our peer relationships are trivialised. At the workshop we prioritised our relationships by having plenty of play and rest time. We got to just be ourselves with each other in a relaxed way, which meant that we discharged well and were present for the classes. The rounds we did in the classes were full of great thinking!

People used the close connections to work on their relationships with each other and with their peers outside of Co-Counselling. It became clear how persistently society asks us to give up on our relationships as we get older and how we all want support to resist that.

After some work on relationships, it was easier to look at what we wanted our lives to be like. We had a panel on “How do you want your life set up?” The participants got group attention while they discharged and thought about going for¹ their goals and being supported by other young people and young adults.

During our young years, people often tell us we should strive for much less than what we want. Having other people on our team while we figure out and go for our goals is essential. We do hold big aspirations for the world and ourselves—they just may be buried!

We decided to have allies at the workshop, because having allies challenges the young people’s and young adult oppression that says that our movement isn’t as important as other liberation movements. That the allies had discharged about, prepared for, and gotten to the workshop made it easier to notice that our work is central in the RC Community.

Laurel Waddell
Bega, New South Wales, Australia



CHICAGO, ILLINOIS, USA • NIKHIL TRIVEDI

As the leader of the allies, I felt that our main job was to be connected to ourselves and to each other, and to show that we liked each other. That would make us more attractive as fellow humans who happened to have a few extra years on the earth, and less needy for the young adults’ and young people’s attention.

We discharged together on what life was like for us as young people and young adults and looked at our role as oppressors. One of the best things we did was to have a pre-breakfast Sunday walk and talk together and then a support group in which we discharged and thought about everyone at the workshop. I think it paid off.² We

not only got to discharge but also bring our intelligent thinking to the fore.

Pamela Mears
Sydney, New South Wales, Australia

I particularly loved how much fun we had and how much we laughed. The games and laughter helped build closeness. Our thinking about the importance of friendships—particularly at the young adult age when everyone is busy with partners, jobs, study, and dealing with other young adult expectations—was a good reminder to really go after³ the good friendships in my life.

Nicola Ossher
Sydney, New South Wales, Australia

It was a safe place to explore leadership. It was peaceful and fun, which gave us a lot of attention to listen to the struggles of others.

Bernhard Mitchell
Sydney, New South Wales, Australia

I took away from the workshop the importance of friendships and how isolated we can feel as young adults trying to “make it”⁴ in the world. I really got⁵ how powerful and wonderful my connections with the young adults in the RC Community are. And I realised that my relationships in the outside world can look just the same—and that it is up to me⁶ to make it so!

Melanie Blazevic
Sydney, New South Wales, Australia

³ “Go after” means pursue.

⁴ “Make it” means succeed.

⁵ “Got” means understood.

⁶ “Up to me” means my job.

² “Paid off” means had a good result.

¹ “Going for” means pursuing.

Young adult oppression makes us give up on our dreams, but we can use RC to reach for what we want in life and want for the world. It was a huge contradiction⁷ to hear how other young adults are constructing big, powerful (and relaxed, connected, fun) lives in the midst of all the distress surrounding growing up and “settling” for a limited version of what we really want. Knowing that other young adults are taking brave steps in this direction makes it much easier for me to be powerful, hopeful, and courageous in my own life.

Allies following our lead, and rethinking their lives by discharging on where things got hard for them as young adults, is a huge contradiction to how “shut down”⁸

⁷ Contradiction to distress

⁸ “Shut down” means lacking in free attention.

the adult world can look to young adults. When allies are right “in there” with us, eager to hear our thinking, and working toward changing their lives because of what they hear, it paints a much more hopeful picture of the future. It feels like we are working together for all of our re-emergence, and it’s easier to not accept the limits society places on our lives.

Brooke Greenwood
Canberra, Australian Capital Territory, Australia

I loved the chance to support the re-emergence of all of the amazing people. There was energy and passion in the air, and so much generosity and closeness among everyone.

We allies worked together on our own young adult years. For me this was transformational. We encouraged

each other to take our full power—to be present for the workshop participants and abandon any feelings that would get in our way. How wonderful to have the opportunity to be our full, magnificent selves, in support of all of us.

Ann Porcino (ally)
Sydney, New South Wales, Australia

I loved the workshop and how relaxed and friendly it was. I had fun and felt connected, present, and relaxed while dealing with real issues. This was a big change from the “crazy” world and a reminder of what is really important: having good relationships, going for “the next big thing,” and thinking about each other well in whatever stage of our lives we are in.

Sandy Wilder (ally)
Moruya, New South Wales, Australia



INDIA • MAURA FALLON

Not Less Human

It is perfectly all right to love and be committed to someone who has a racist pattern. It is perfectly all right to recognize that person’s existence as dear and valuable and important. Having that pattern does not negate that. It makes it tougher for those of us with undischarged patterns to see it and remember it, but we have that struggle everywhere. No one is less human for having the struggle against racism undone, uncompleted at this point.

Tim Jackins
From DVD #226,
Eliminating White Racism Now



NEWPORT, OREGON, USA • AMANDA MARTINEZ

A Miracle—Not a Mistake

My life turned around when I learned that I was intersex, when I learned about the “correction” surgery that was done when I was small and about chromosomes and the hormonal system. The scattered dots started to form a picture, one that I didn’t want to look at.

It was also a huge relief to finally have the feelings and difficulties in context. I understood why I’ve felt like a mistake, always felt that I needed to change to be liked, always felt ashamed, blamed myself for having feelings that didn’t seem to have anything to do with my life, and felt a need to tell someone about something important but never knew what to talk about.

I was born with different chromosomes and a different hormonal system than most people. My body parts didn’t correspond to male or female. I was operated on to fit in—I was assigned female. My parents were told to raise me as female, and I have been treated with hormones since my adolescence. I’ve learned that it is something I shouldn’t talk about—that life will go better if no one knows, and if I forget about it, too.

I was told that what was done was best for me: I would be able to fit in and not suffer from being different. It didn’t work. Would it have worked if I’d had a chance to discharge on the painful treatments, the anaesthesia, and a body that was shaped by someone? I don’t know, but if I could choose, I would rather just be different instead of being different and having to deal with the treatments. The treatments and the attitude of adults confused me a lot. I was unclear as to my gender when young. Later, under pressure, I accepted the female identity.

I’ve felt that I was a mistake. I have always struggled, and still do, with feelings of being just a product of science and having lost the real me. I am still an intersex person—no matter how much some people wanted to “help me” fit in, or how much they “knew” what was best for me.

The more that I had sessions and got information, the clearer it was that my early experiences affected every aspect of my life. The shame, secrecy, and fear were so

big that it took more than thirty years to unocclude the memories and start talking about them. It has been hard to feel the feelings, and even to believe that my experiences happened. It has been hard to both find and deal with the information.

The problem is not that my chromosomes and hormonal system are different. The problem is the assumption that everybody is either male or female and that everybody’s body parts (and behavior and identity) should meet that standard. This confusion leads thousands of people into painful and confusing medical treatments and the use of artificial hormones.

When I learned about being intersex and decided to take seriously the hurts caused by it, I thought the most important thing for my re-emergence would be to break the silence and secrecy. After being more open for a while, I started to see the oppression. My silence had protected me from some of it. The oppression is real. It is harsh, silencing, and isolating. It says that people are either male or female—so you are wrong, your feelings are wrong, your experiences are not real, and there is something wrong with you if you cannot fit in.

The oppression of intersex people is completely invisible to most people. Most people don’t know about us. It resembles Gay oppression and the oppression of people with disabilities in some ways. Being intersex is often considered to be only a medical problem instead of an ethical issue. Mainly, the oppression says that you are a “freak”—that being intersex is unnatural, a mistake, and needs to be corrected or eliminated.

For me the oppression started with strange looks, lack of closeness, and the emergency-like atmosphere followed by the treatments. Later I was told to “use the other bathroom” (no matter which one I went to). I was told that I was standing in the wrong line when boys and girls were in separate lines in school. I was teased, beaten up, and raped. I got used to comments like “I will show you what it means to be female,” “I will make you a female; you are not a real boy,” “Why can’t you be like others; why do you want to be

special?” The fear of being exposed, of having my “shameful” secret revealed, was terrible and controlled my life. It was a dead-end panicky feeling¹—no place to go and no way to show anything, because showing would mean telling. So I learned to hide it all and pretend.

When I was small, I heard that people like me should not exist, that they were a mistake and unnatural. I decided to not be a burden for my parents. I would do my best and be good and useful to others. The oppression tells me that there is no place for me as me, that only if I pretend and play my role well enough will I fit in. It sometimes appears as advice: people are eager to tell me what my problems or distresses are and what I should do about them. I am told to do something about my “gender dysphoria,”² “Gay distress,” or “unwillingness to identify as a woman.” This leaves me alone with my challenges: recordings³ from the anaesthesia, the operations, the current oppression, and the current health issues.

When I was younger, I often got comments about my appearance and the clothes I wore. People asked if I wanted to be male, or if I used to be male/female. There were years when I was treated as male, and years when people couldn’t figure out my gender. Now I look more female than male. I have tried to identify according to how other people treat me, or see me, or what makes them less uncomfortable.

Life in the Present

My life changed tremendously after I started to talk about these experiences. I am much less scared of people and of being visible. I have been able to form a loving, committed relationship. I am learning to be in charge of my health. I have been able to talk about my special needs. I am learning to lead in a new way—not by forcing myself or out of duty, but as me, noticing that I am there in connection with other people. The big challenge is to figure out how to do things my way instead of the “how to fit in” way.

It is challenging to distinguish between present and early incidents. It is hard to know what is oppression and what is restimulation, especially when both are present. It is hard to not be restimulated when the looks or words are the same as what I have seen or heard all my life. It is hard to answer calmly or informatively a comment that is based on assumption or misinformation. It is hard to stand up for myself.

I have found ways to discharge and remember without getting overwhelmed with the memories. I’ve been able to think in new ways about my health and make decisions about it. It is reassuring and hopeful that some people are starting to discharge on their gender identity and the assumptions we

¹ “Dead-end panicky feeling” means panicky feeling that didn’t go anywhere.

² “Dysphoria” means unhappiness.

³ Distress recordings

all grew up with about everyone being male or female and everyone knowing what that means and never questioning it.

Here are some questions that have been useful for my Co-Counselors and me in discharging about gender:

- When did you “know” that you were male or female (or . . .)?
- How did you know it then, and how do you know it now?
- Do you have a body part or characteristic that makes you (feel) male or female?
- If that were taken away (or something added), would that change the way you identify yourself?
- Do you feel uncomfortable if you see someone and cannot be sure of that person’s sex? Why?
- Why do you want to know if a newborn is a girl or a boy?

I have a sweet memory of an RC workshop in which I was seen for the first time simultaneously as an intersex person and as a leader, and it was safe enough to notice it. I felt I was seen as myself—with the experiences I carry, the characteristics I have, and the potential I have because of my unique point of view. I felt respected. That experience was a huge contradiction.⁴ It started the process of leading as myself, and because of being me. I am grateful to people who can see, who dare to get close to someone they don’t fully understand or have much information about.

Getting the information about my past, being able to remember many things, and having a chance to discharge about it has made my life a lot better. I am starting to see myself as a miracle; as a unique, complete person; as a beautiful example, like everyone is, of the variation that nature is able to form.

“Prisank”

⁴ Contradiction to distress

Racism, and Love

If you’re busy loving a person, it’s impossible for you to act racist. That doesn’t mean that you won’t have to think about everything you do.



Harvey Jackins
From a letter written in 1976



MAURA FALLON



LILLIAN ONO



BENJAMIN ALTMAN

Share Your Glimpses of Reality

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Tim Jackins



YONI KALLAI



MARION OUPHOUET



LYNDALL KATZ

English Liberation

Below are some thoughts about the liberation of English people that I first wrote down about four years ago, in response to where I thought previous efforts at English liberation in RC had become stuck, and then updated with further thoughts and more detailed research.

I am sure there will be many more things to say about the subject. This is just an attempt to move things forward the next step.



DIANE SHISK

OUR GOODNESS

Every English person is inherently good in every aspect of his or her humanness and Englishness.

OUR DIVERSITY

There are many different kinds of English people, including but not limited to the following:

- Northerners, Southerners, and people of other regional identities
- Working-, middle-, and owning-class people
- People targeted by racism
- Women and men
- Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender people; heterosexual people
- Jews, Muslims, Catholics, and Protestants, with each group encompassing several denominations
- Young people, adults, and elders

People of different identities have distinct ways of being English; they have distinct, whole, and rich cultures. Many English people have several identities and so have several cultures.

Any attempt to find a single, definitive English culture is disconnected from the reality of the many distinct English cultures.

A MYTHICAL SELF-IMAGE

The English became one of the most oppressive peoples in the world. In RC we understand that this wasn't something any of us would have chosen. It was a product of the evolution of class societies and the associated distress recordings, worldwide and over time. However, to move our liberation forward we now have to face and discharge all the distresses that we as a nation acquired as we played our part in that evolution.

To reach for an accurate picture of our current position, we need to look at our full and accurate history, including the oppressive role the English have played over the last several hundred years and how we came to play it.

People in the oppressor role generally feel bad about themselves. This is because they are playing an

oppressive role and also because they themselves were hurt and oppressed, at least as young people (which prepared them to become oppressors). However, oppressors generally have the societal power to change the appearance of reality so that they can avoid facing the horrible feeling.

We English have attempted to change reality by writing a false account of our history. We have portrayed ourselves as good and beneficial to the world. We have built up a mythical self-image that obscures the reality. It is a false image of "fair play" and integrity that hides our country's exploitation, cruelty, and murder. We hold that we are the best in the world and at the same time modest, too.

Of course, as humans we are completely good. But the false image of our "goodness" isn't the same as our inherent goodness. It's been built on top of undischarged hurt and oppressive attitudes. We need to face that our false image of goodness is a myth. We need to face the oppressive attitudes we hold and the hurts they are based on. And we need to

continued . . .

LIBERATION

... continued

discharge the hurts so that our true nature, our inherent goodness, can come to dominate our behaviour.

Another myth is that England has always been here. In fact, England has not existed for very long. It was formed from a group of neighbouring kingdoms just over a thousand years ago. The name *England* comes from the name of a Germanic tribe, the Angles. This island¹ has been invaded many times—by the Romans, the Angles, the Saxons (from Saxony, in present-day Germany), the Vikings, and the Normans (from Normandy). It is probably not possible today to find a group of people that is indigenous to England.

THE ENGLISH EMPIRE

Of great significance is the history of the British Empire. It might more accurately be called the English Empire, because England was the actual colonial master. Scotland, Wales, Cornwall, and Ireland were colonised and subjugated by the English.

The English Empire was perhaps the biggest empire in history. Few parts of

¹This island, called Great Britain, comprises Cornwall, Wales, Scotland, and England. It is called Great Britain because it is the largest of the British Isles. The next largest is called Ireland.

the world were unaffected by it. The current major imperial power, the United States of America, was once a colony of England.

In order to control the empire, the English owning class had to turn the English working class into a colonising army. This entailed forming a strong middle class to lead (and mislead and oppress) the working class. It also involved creating a British identity, to help enlist the Welsh, Scottish, Cornish, and other “British” people into the army.

Not only did the English working class become a colonising army, it was given the task of safeguarding England’s colonial possessions and fighting for and acquiring the possessions of other weaker colonial powers. Because England was in continual competition with these other powers, oppressive attitudes about them had to be installed on the English people.

To turn the English working class into the most effective (oppressive) colonising force the world had known, the English working class may have been more oppressed, and then more loaded with notions of superiority, than the working classes of other nations at the time. We can see

the depth of this oppression in the difficulties we have with classism in our society today.

RACISM

The English came to dominate a particularly harsh and profitable system: the Atlantic slave trade. And although the English owning class instigated it and was its primary economic beneficiary, every person living in England has reaped enormous economic benefits from it. Racism had to be invented to give the British people a common identity of “white” that could be used to unite them in oppressing the peoples of Africa, India, China, the Americas, and Australia.

CONTINUING EXPLOITATION

The English Empire has collapsed and largely been lost. However, England still exploits the peoples of Ireland, Scotland, Wales, and Cornwall. The South of England still exploits the North.

Along with other Western powers, England also exploits “developing” nations. We prevent them from ever becoming developed nations. We install and maintain puppet governments that oppress their people on our behalf. These governments sell us their country’s natural resources at artificially low prices and then keep the payments instead of all the people benefiting. We make sure the oppressed nation can never develop its own industry and thereby become a powerful force that might challenge us economically or militarily. We turn its resources into products and make money on the added value. Preventing “developing” nations from ever actually developing keeps them acting as a market for the things we produce.



ALAN EPSTEIN

England is the world's second-largest arms exporter (the largest is the United States). We export arms for profit. We also use them to control former colonies without actually colonising them in the old way. We do this by giving arms to the puppet governments of these former colonies so that they can repress their own populations on our behalf when the need arises. Then we can publicly demonise these governments whilst at the same time privately profiting from the repression.

WORLD WAR II

One of our biggest myths is about World War II, which we still refer to as “the war,” even though we have been involved in many wars since.

Almost everything we think we know about World War II is false.

Firstly, the war was not about fighting fascism, which is how it is usually portrayed. It was about capitalism and imperialism. The capitalist economies of Germany, Japan, and Italy were expanding, but they lacked access to raw materials and had no large markets for their manufactured goods. By contrast, the United States had the huge internal market of its own population, and Britain had the huge market of its colonies. And both countries got raw materials from these same places. World War II was an attempt by Germany, Italy, and Japan to acquire parts of the British Empire and create empires for themselves—Germany in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe; Japan in China and Southeast Asia.

Secondly, we English didn't win the war; we lost it. The United States won the war. As a result, it gained control of much of the British Empire. The United States entered the war “late,”

because letting Britain² and Germany exhaust each other militarily made it easier for the United States to then defeat Germany and dominate Britain. (The Soviet Union was armed by the United States for the same purpose.)

Thirdly, the war was not about protecting Jews from persecution. Adult Jewish refugees were refused entry into Britain (though many Jewish children were allowed in). The pre-war writings of Winston Churchill³ show anti-Jewish sentiment similar to that in the pre-war writings of Adolph Hitler.⁴ It was a common attitude at the time.

Also, the Nazis and the Japanese were not alone in committing war crimes. English bombing raids targeted large civilian populations, resulting in hundreds of thousands of deaths. Churchill deliberately redirected food from Bengal, causing over three million deaths.

The English are portrayed as the “good guys” who went to war to defeat the “bad guys”—the fascists, particularly the Nazis. This deflects attention away from the truth: we were simply defending “our” empire—the source of almost all of our wealth and our military and economic power.

The myth of the “good war” is still used to justify each new war we fight. Each new enemy leader is likened to Hitler, and the option of not going to war is likened to allowing Hitler to rise.

² It's hard to know whether to say *England* or *Britain* or the *United Kingdom* here. None of them seems correct, because of the complexity of who we are talking about and their relationships.

³ Winston Churchill was the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom from 1940 to 1945 and from 1951 to 1955.

⁴ Adolf Hitler was the military and political leader of Nazi Germany from 1933 to 1945.

GOOD THINGS

Throughout our history of dominating the world, many English people have acted with love, kindness, courage, and integrity. Some of these acts, for example, troops refusing to carry out massacres, have been hidden from our popular histories because to examine them would expose the oppressive systems they were in response to. Others have been highly publicized, because they distract attention away from our history as an oppressive nation. For example, we pay attention to England's abolition of slavery but not much attention to the slave trade itself—why it arose, how we benefited from it, and how abolition became the easiest option in the face of increasingly effective slave rebellions.

We need to learn about English acts of love, kindness, and courage. That's an important part of English liberation. At the same time, we can't use them to avoid facing the more difficult parts of our history and identity.

CONCLUSION

We need to face and discharge on the myth of our “goodness,” and the oppressive attitudes we hold and the hurts they are based on, so that our true, inherent goodness can become clear and English liberation can move forward.

It is possible to take real pride in being English, distinct from the patriotic pride we have been encouraged to adopt. Real pride comes from seeing reality and doing the right thing.

MB
England



KK



BRIAN LAVENDEL

Divorces

I'm sorry that the rash of divorces appalls you. I have resigned myself to the realization that when people really start thinking, they can't put up with* the old relationship, and that unless the two of them tackle building a new one together, there are likely to be some separations. I just throw all my weight toward seeing that the children don't get frightened and made insecure.

Harvey Jackins
From a letter written in 1973

* "Put up with" means tolerate.

Discharging Patterns of Domination

We who are members of oppressor groups (white people, males, people of dominant nations or languages, people with high status, heterosexuals) are pulled to take control, take charge, think we are always correct. We take up space without noticing it and assume privileges (access to resources). We feel upset when things don't work to our advantage. This all seems normal to us.

I think that pulls to control come from when we were dominated as young people. We were told what was "right" and "wrong" (as defined by non-discharging adults, which was all adults). Most often the domination began in our families and then continued in schools and religious institutions, and when various authorities defined moral, social, and emotional "normalcy." Sometimes we experienced physical or sexual domination and abuse.

The early recordings¹ of being controlled are deeply embedded in our minds. They pull us to control others like we were controlled or to rigidly *not do* what was done to us.

I encourage us all to contradict and discharge on domination. We could try answering these questions:

- How were you encouraged, respected, and supported as a young person?
- How were you controlled or dominated?
- What responses did you adopt to survive?
- What elements of your background (education, employment, money, language, race, nation, gender, religion) place you in a position to dominate?
- What is your first memory of dominating? Can you go back in your mind as an ally to the young person that was you and discharge?
- Whom would it be useful for you to listen to? To follow?
- Whose oppression do you need to learn about?
- Can you thoughtfully back² someone else to lead? What would you have to feel to do this genuinely and respectfully?

Joanne Bray
International Liberation
Reference Person for Catholics
Greenwich, Connecticut, USA
Reprinted from the RC e-mail discussion list for leaders of Catholics

¹ Distress recordings

² "Back" means support.

Giving Up Invisibility as a Gentile

I have recently been able to discharge to some clarity about the privilege of being able to choose whether or not to take on* a Gentile identity. My lack of clarity has been connected to my white Protestant owning-class heritage.

I understand now that privilege gains power from invisibility. For example, when people talk about racism, our attention is pointed by the oppressive society to people experiencing racism; for sexism, to women's experience; for anti-Jewish oppression, to Jews. This leaves the source of the oppression (the patterns of racism, sexism, anti-Jewish oppression installed on the agents of oppression) conveniently out of the picture. We oppressors keep our power and privileges through invisibility.

Logically, to move toward ending oppression is to give up unearned privileges that flow to me as an agent of oppression. So I ask myself, "What unearned privileges do I gain from having a choice about whether or not to be a Gentile?" One of them is the false idea that I can be innocent of the oppression of Jews. It goes something like "I can ignore anti-Jewish oppression, because Jews have nothing to do with me." Then if I choose to act as an ally to Jews, it is out of goodwill and reflects well upon me. My status as one who can choose to act (or not) is reinforced and my structural position shored up. My privileges are secure.

It seems to me that dismantling oppression requires that those of us in oppressor positions fully claim our irrevocable connection to those we are set up to oppress and, no matter how uncomfortable, find ways to leave our inhuman and destructive positions of invisible power. I suspect this means claiming that I am always a Gentile, in every cell, in every moment. The oppression of Jews is then something I am always connected to, and ending Jewish oppression is a very personal undertaking.



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

* "Take on" means assume, adopt.

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

Thanks very much!
Rational Island Publishers



PILIPINO/A, PACIFIC ISLANDER, AND COREAN WORKSHOP, JULY 2013, MARIN HEADLANDS, CALIFORNIA, USA • CRISTINA MITRA

Growing Up in Leftist Movements

I'm interested in sharing thinking with other people who grew up in revolutionary or left-activist families,¹ or who joined leftist social movements as young people or young adults, about the specific patterns we share. I think it's important for our liberation to discharge about this. Part of the oppression we've experienced, because of official and unofficial repression, is that we've had to keep silent about the difficulties of this identity, for our own safety and that of others.

I grew up the child of communists in a time of political repression in the United States and Puerto Rico. I learned not to talk about confidential matters on the phone, in writing, or inside the house, in case of electronic surveillance. We know that the U.S. government practices extensive spying on our phone and Internet communications and uses the information it collects to repress dissent. At the same time, it's important for us to share our thinking and discharge together. Eliminating the distress patterns of our group contributes more to our security than keeping them secret for fear they will be used against us, or our movements. However, I suggest we not mention specific existing organizations by name and speak only in general terms.

One experience we probably share is being part of a group of people with a lot of hope and determination, a big vision of human liberation, and a strong commitment to bringing it about.² We also probably share the pain of watching how people's patterns got in the way of achieving that vision, and we probably didn't have information about why that was or what to do about it. Seeing how male domination affected various Latin American liberation movements continues to affect me deeply, but racism interferes with my ability to work on it in my sessions.

¹ "Left-activist families" means families active in politically progressive movements.

² "Bringing it about" means making it happen.

Depending on the time and place, we may share having lived with various intensities of repression, or fear of repression. As a group, we have survived surveillance, threats, arrests, prison, torture, assassination, counterinsurgency, wars and other kinds of attacks, and betrayals by those who couldn't withstand the repression or gave in to the temptations of accumulating power or wealth. In the culture of the movements I grew up in, we didn't admit to being scared. We had to hide it and only express pride in our courage.

One of our strengths is having an identity that crosses borders and is based on sharing a liberatory way of thinking and acting. I grew up with a strong sense of human solidarity and of belonging to a global web of human beings with the same goal of freeing themselves. That was more important to me than any other identity.



KATIE KAUFFMAN

I'd like to know what other people from this constituency have discovered or thought about our strengths and distress patterns. I'm interested in having Skype³ sessions with others from this group, from any part of the world.

It's been suggested that participants in this discussion use pseudonyms or write anonymously, given that ours is a group "targeted for destruction." That seems like a good idea. Here in the United States we're seeing investigations and arrests of people who were activists thirty or forty years ago. Sometimes we have patterns of exposing ourselves to danger to prove our courage. This doesn't serve us well. Since we can't know with any certainty what degree of repression we may face, it's better to take precautions.

M—
USA

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

³ Skype is a service that allows users to communicate via the Internet by voice, video, or instant messaging.

Traducción del artículo anterior:
(Spanish translation of the preceding article):



Criarnos dentro de movimientos de izquierda

Me interesa compartir ideas con otras personas que se criaron en familias revolucionarias, o activistas de izquierda, y también los que se unieron a movimientos sociales de izquierda como jóvenes, sobre los patrones específicos que compartimos. Me parece importante para el trabajo de liberación desahogar sobre esto, y es una parte de la opresión que hemos vivido, en forma de la represión oficial y extraoficial, que hemos tenido que mantener silencio sobre las dificultades de esta identidad, para nuestra propia seguridad y la seguridad de los demás.

Yo me crié como hija de comunistas en un tiempo de represión política en los EEUU y Puerto Rico, y aprendí no hablar sobre cuestiones de confianza por teléfono, por escrito o dentro de la casa, a causa de la posibilidad de la vigilancia electrónica. Sabemos que el gobierno de los EEUU practica la vigilancia extensiva de comunicaciones telefónicas y electrónicas, y que esa información se usa para reprimir a la disidencia. A la misma vez, es importante poder compartir ideas y desahogar juntos. Eliminar las angustias de nuestro grupo contribuye más a nuestra seguridad que mantener los secretos por temor de que la información se podría usar en contra de nosotros o nuestros movimientos. Sugiero que no mencionemos por nombre a organizaciones específicas que todavía existen, y hablemos en términos generales.

Una experiencia que creo que probablemente compartimos es de ser parte de un grupo de gente con un visión muy grande de la liberación humana, mucha esperanza y determinación, y un fuerte compromiso para luchar para lograrla. También es probable que compartimos el dolor de ver como los patrones de la gente impedía actualizar esa visión, sin tener buena información sobre el porqué, y sin saber qué hacer. Para mí, el dolor de ver como la dominación masculina afectó a varios movimientos de liberación latinoamericanos me sigue afectando mucho, pero el racismo interfiere con mi capacidad de trabajarlo en mis sesiones.

Dependiendo del lugar y de la época, también compartimos haber vivido con varias intensidades de represión, o de temor a la represión. Como grupo, hemos sobrevivido vigilancia, amenazas, arrestos, prisión, tortura, asesinatos, guerras de contrainsurgencia y ataques de otros tipos, y traiciones por los que no pudieron resistir la represión o cayeron en la tentación de acumular poder o riqueza. En la cultura de los movimientos en que me crié, no se confesaba tener miedo. Uno tenía que disimular, y solo expresar orgullo por nuestra valentía.

Una de nuestras fortalezas es tener una identidad que cruza fronteras, y se basa en compartir una manera libertadora de pensar y actuar. Yo me crié con un sentido de solidaridad humana muy fuerte, y de pertenecer a una red mundial de seres humanos con la misma meta de liberarnos, lo cual era más importante que cualquier otra identidad.

Quisiera saber lo que han descubierto o pensado otra gente de este grupo en cuanto a nuestras fortalezas y patrones. Me interesa tener sesiones por Skype* con otra gente, de cualquier país, que comparte esta historia.

Se ha sugerido que participantes en esta discusión usen pseudónimos o escriben mensajes anónimos, dado que somos un grupo “designado para la destrucción.” Me parece buen idea. Aquí en los EEUU se están dando muchos casos de investigación y arrestos de activistas de hace 30 y 40 años atrás. Al igual que otros grupos en esa situación, a veces tenemos patrones de exponernos al peligro como forma de demostrar nuestra valentía. No nos sirve bien. Como no podemos saber con seguridad el estado de represión que podríamos enfrentar, es mejor tomar precauciones.



M—
EEUU
Reimprimido de la lista de discusión electrónica
para miembros del la comunidad RC

* Skype es un servicio que permite a los usuarios comunicarse por la red electrónica por voz, video o mensajes instantáneos.

Re-evaluating “the Cross”

I work at a church where we read Jesus’ words on a regular basis. It is interesting to see where his teachings have inspired great generosity and courage among our Catholic people and where they can get hooked on our distresses.

This Sunday’s Gospel reading is a good example. In Luke, Chapter 9, Jesus said, “The Son of Man must suffer greatly and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed and on the third day be raised.” Then he said to all, “If anyone wishes to come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it.”

I grew up with this metaphor of “the cross.” Did any of you? Here’s how I heard about it: One of my aunts was commenting to my sister and me about how overweight my mother had become after giving birth to five children. In resignation about my mother’s appearance, my aunt said, “I guess this is her cross.”

There have been other incidents that have seemed to communicate, in the same tone, that the cross is a hardship in your life that you can’t do much about. It’s the price you have to pay. The cross can get hooked with resignation, defeat, and discouragement. At the same time, it can represent a desire and a willingness to persevere. And Jesus can help you carry your cross.

In the last few years I’ve listened to women who were in violent domestic relationships talk about that being their cross to bear, because they did not want to leave their children without a father. In that

context, it can seem like an act of selfless generosity to endure a violent relationship for the sake of the children. There is perseverance, endurance, and resignation all jumbled together.

My mind tends to go to the metaphor of the cross when I am trying to persevere through something difficult. Yet the resignation that’s mixed in with my thinking gives me a clue that I need to keep discharging to figure out where I need to hang in¹ and persevere and where I need to actually fight against something.

Since Jesus seemed to have accepted his cross, even to the point of death, and many of us raised Catholic have internalized that teaching, it can feel hard to us to take a stand against something. So this week, as I was meeting with our different faith sharing groups, I challenged people to rethink the cross metaphor. Is it possible that the cross could actually be the place where we need to take up² our particular liberation struggle, knowing that it will be a struggle but that it will be meaningful because it is leading to liberation? After all, Jesus was fighting for the liberation of his people against a Roman imperialist structure.

Could the cross for a woman in a violent domestic relationship be to figure out how to take up her liberation struggle against sexism? Could the cross for undocumented workers in the United States be to take up their liberation struggle and join the massive organizing efforts needed to pass immigration reform with a pathway to citizenship? Could the cross be the places where we are choosing to pour our love and best thinking into a difficult situation?



MAURA FALLON

I am pleased to say that we parishioners had some interesting conversations this week about the meaning of the cross. It was good to challenge the places where Catholic generosity can get hooked with our distresses, and to keep finding ways to talk about re-evaluating the ideas we grew up with so that we are pointed more in the direction of liberation.

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

¹ “Hang in” means persist.

² “Take up” means begin.

Care of the Environment, and RC

by Wytse Visser, International Commonality Reference Person for Care of the Environment

A new RC goal for care of the environment (COE) was adopted at the World Conference of the RC Communities in August 2013. (See the goal on page 3 of this *Present Time*.) It has been fantastic to see so many minds working on it. The goal will be carried out by a big and broad group of leaders.

CARE OF THE ENVIRONMENT, AND INCLUSION

In the past, few people targeted by racism, if any, came to COE workshops. This was also true of working-class people. Slowly the work has progressed. There are participants from a wider variety of backgrounds. I have always wanted the real stories—from those whose lives and lands are most exploited—to be visible in the work on care of the environment.

Last year a group of all-white COE leaders tried to write a COE draft policy. Each member was asked to include the thinking of the people targeted by racism they were close to and of people from non-privileged parts of the world. It was understood that if we wanted a draft policy on COE, it had to be inclusive—from all and for all. It did not develop as we'd hoped. We have stopped working on it until the group has more representation of people targeted by racism, Indigenous people, and people from outside the Western world. This will take time. Many people in these groups feel easily intimidated about sharing their thinking. We all have to keep discharging in this area and reaching to be more inclusive. And we have to work on our feelings of urgency.

Environmental racism and genocide have been almost invisible

to white people in the wide world. Also, the environmental work of Indigenous people and people targeted by racism has been almost completely separate from the work of white environmental organizations. We see a reflection of this as we try to build COE in RC.

Much work on environmental racism and genocide was done at the ten Pre-World Conferences. Our awareness is growing. Our thinking about COE has more depth because of the work done at the Pre-World Conferences. People of the global majority shared how their lives, peoples, and lands have been affected by racism and genocide. This gave all the participants a chance to be more realistic about where we are. We are seeing oppression more clearly as an unaware putting down of, and taking profit from, all life. We are breaking through numbness about the threat we are facing. More RC leaders are participating and giving input into the new goal. COE leadership is developing at all levels in RC.

As we keep pointing our noses in this direction, we can work to find ways to help wide-world environmental organizations become

more inclusive. We can work to become a model of how to bring unity to an organization.

UNAWARENESS, DISCONNECTION, AND NARROW THINKING

In today's world, a relatively small number of privileged people exist in an ocean of inequality. Activists in the Western world have been standing up for oceans, forests, and animals but are often unaware that stricter environmental laws in their own countries mean that companies move to India, China, South America, and Africa. This leads to unemployment at home, increased travel time for food and materials, and more pollution in the less privileged countries. The privileged countries buy products from far away more cheaply than they can buy local products. The result is a vicious circle of degradation. Clothing is one example: Where is our clothing made and under what circumstances? Of what is it made? How has its manufacture been harmful to the air and water and therefore to the whole ecosystem? How many hours did the workers have to work, and how little were they paid? How were they risking their health and lives?

We have the best of intentions. However, our efforts are often based on a narrow way of thinking. If we protect trees from being cut down, what happens to the income of the workers who have to feed a family? How can we care for a tree and not for people? As activists, what do we need to discharge to reclaim our connection with people? What made many of us decide, early in our lives, to trust no one but ourselves?

continued . . .



BRITISH COLUMBIA, CANADA • BETH CRUISE

WIDE WORLD CHANGING

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Harvey Jackins talked about the difference between intellectual action and intelligent action. The development of technology is often an intellectual and narrow activity. The focus is on making a profit. There is little regard for humans and nature. Examples are the nuclear power and oil industries. *Intelligent* technology has an all-inclusive perspective.

In the world of science, things often follow a narrow path. Within the capitalist framework, little thought is given to inequality. A good innovation or solution that does not serve capitalism is ignored or destroyed.

All—governments, technologists, scientists, workers, Indigenous people, people targeted by racism—must unite and put intelligence before profits.

The best things in life cannot be bought. Our future lies in our connection with all of life, and with ourselves. Our early distresses, heavily influenced by a capitalist perspective, make us feel vulnerable and not good enough. We are told to focus on appearance as the way to succeed and be cared for. We are pulled to buy things in order to look like we are successful. Advertisements falsely promise that we will be wanted and loved if we use certain products. In fact, the more an individual owns, the more disconnected he or she tends to become from all of life. Such disconnection may be the biggest threat to human life on earth.

HUMANITY AT A CROSSROAD

Our miraculously complex ecosystems are in danger. There is too much pollution for these systems to maintain the balance needed to sustain all life. Humanity is at an interesting crossroad. We have

to choose which path to follow: continuing down this destructive path or changing course to one that sustains all life.

Our oppressive limitations are in our face. We have no choice but to end the domination of greed. We also have to give up the victim role and the blaming of others. Together we stand, divided we fall. Oppression relies on “divide and rule.” As long as we blame another group or country, oppression wins.

Revolutions often happen when oppressed groups have nothing to lose. However, in addition to any gains they make, these revolutions disrupt societies and confuse people. Then the ruling class gets enough people to follow its lead that it can establish another oppressive system. We want to break this chain. We want *a revolution in people’s minds that will end all oppression*. Standing together, all for one and one for all, is our best chance for our survival and a sustainable planet.

MAKING UP OUR MINDS

In sessions we can connect with the innocent child that is still within us. We can encourage that child to speak and to break through the feelings of discouragement and defeat. That child still knows what is real and is waiting for our help in freeing our locked heart and limited mind. That child is still outraged at not getting to live the life that she or he wanted.

We humans have to make up our minds. We have to make choices that are very different from what we’ve been used to. We have to live with integrity. We have to choose all people and all life over greed and unequal privilege. Old feelings of discouragement and insecurity, handed down through many generations, keep most of us

conforming to the dictates of the oppressive societies. We are at the point of realizing that there is no security except in connection. Even the oppressor’s life is no longer secure. We are now being forced to get rid of oppressive societies and create and establish intelligent ones in which all life is of the highest value and no form of oppression is tolerated.

THE IMPORTANT ROLE OF RCERS

As RCers we are committed to freeing ourselves and each other from all that keeps us small and limits our intelligence. We understand that discharge is key to reclaiming our full intelligence and seeing ourselves as leaders.

We focus not only on individual liberation but on liberation for all. We are getting better at leaving no one and nothing behind. Our awareness of environmental racism and genocide is growing. We continually add to our theory and update our *Guidelines*.¹ Every mind counts in our organization. This, along with what we know about leadership, can play a key role in sustaining all life.

With an increasingly clear direction and perspective we can play important leadership roles, and back² each other’s leadership. If we do this, environmental destruction will end much more quickly than it would otherwise. We can stand side by side. Discouragement will not stop us. We can help the transition to an intelligent society go less harmfully and more elegantly.

Fryslan, the Netherlands

¹ The *Guidelines for the Re-evaluation Counseling Communities*, the policies for the RC Communities

² “Back” means support.

The Widespread Effects of Neocolonialism

The following is taken from a talk given by Teresa Enrico, the International Liberation Reference Person for Pacific Islander and Pilipino/a-Heritage People, at a topic group at the Care of the Environment Conference in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada, in August 2013.

In RC we often talk about capitalism, a system in which the majority of people work and produce for the profit and “benefit” of a few. We understand that in the current period, class oppression (classism) is driven by capitalism.

A new goal for care of the environment was adopted at the 2013 World Conference. It talks about the patterned, never satisfied “need” for more and more resources. This pattern of greed is built into capitalism—the system that the world is running¹ on, especially the West. Generations of hurt feed this system. It’s a system that can no longer sustain itself and that is collapsing. We must look at and discharge about capitalism in order to think well about many things, including effectively caring for the environment.

COLONIALISM

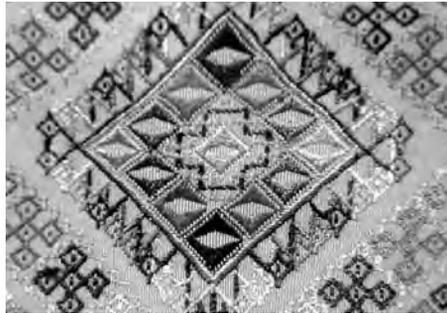
Colonialism is a particularly destructive manifestation of capitalism. It is “capitalism on steroids.” Colonization takes everything from a people—their culture, language, and resources, and ultimately the people themselves. Along with brutally killing the colonized people, it attempts to “colonize” their minds. And it takes money from them and puts it into the pockets of the colonizer. It’s ugly. It’s bad policy. It’s not good for anyone.

At least ninety percent of the countries of the world have been colonized at some point in their history. European countries conquered each other for centuries. Then they “needed” more resources, so they found new places, new lands to colonize. This has continued into the present. The United States is currently the world’s “top colonizer.” Our histories of colonization mean that we have a lot of undischarged feelings about “taking over” and “being taken over.”

The word “colonialism” can make people think that it is something from the past. However, colonial patterns, policies, and practices have evolved with capitalism and are alive today. “Neocolonialism” more accurately

describes our present situation. Colonizers used to get on ships, come to your country, kill people, and steal things. That still happens. However, the colonizers are now corporations. And in many cases, those doing the taking don’t even come to your land—they “take” while sitting at home in the United States or Europe.

Whole economies are built around filling the West’s never-ending “need” for more resources. Crops are planted based on the latest “food want” of the United States. Entire school systems are set up so that everyone learns English. (Indigenous languages are dying at a rapid rate.) People from other countries are “drawn” to the wealthy West in order to survive, which drains their home countries.



INDIA • MAURA FALLON

Colonization predates racism. Racism was devised and used to perpetuate colonization and justify it. Colonization is manifested in class oppression, genocide, slavery, militarization, assimilation, imperialism, and nationalism. It involves dominating and destroying a people and their cultures and extracting from them everything that can be taken. It is what drove the slave trade. It drove the genocide in Africa, in the Americas, and all over the world. Colonization also fuels the destruction of the environment. Under colonialism (capitalism), all forms of life, both human and non-human, are sacrificed to the operations of greed and profit. Colonization describes where we find ourselves today!

COLONIZATION AND SEX

Every oppression includes recordings of violence, domination, and dehumanization. The oppressor group uses violence (or the threat of it) to dominate the target group. The targeted group is dehumanized. All of this is systematic, systemic, and institutionalized.

We are hurt in many ways as young people. As part of this, we accumulate distresses about our bodies, closeness, and connection. The oppressive society manipulates these distresses so that they become connected to sex and sexual distresses.

Our sexual distresses can be understood in the context of colonization—of slavery, domination, dehumanization, and war and other violence. Distresses related to our bodies and to closeness and

continued . . .

¹ “Running” means operating.

WIDE WORLD CHANGING

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connection are particularly difficult to discharge because of what was done to us *as a people*. We can also remember that our bodies, and being close to other humans, are our first and primary environment.

IRREVERENCE AS A CONTRADICTION

Sexual hurts, colonization, and racism are heavy topics. Surprisingly, when you put heavy and heavy together, you can make it fun. I did an early sexual memories workshop for white people and global-majority people, with racism and colonization at the center. I asked a white person how he was doing, and he cheerfully said, "I have my direction for the weekend: My people killed your people." Not one to miss an opportunity, I said, "Great!" As a result, the rest of the weekend centered around, "My people killed your people," and, from my perspective, "Your people killed my people." We made up a song to the tune of a well-known Broadway musical. It went something like this (along with dance moves):

*Your people killed my people,
killed my people, you know.
That is why my father incested me,
incested me, incested me.*

The song had several verses, including one about slavery and one about Native people being killed by smallpox in the Americas.

At first we people of the global majority sang it separately. Then we shared it with the white people. Everyone discharged a lot. (I propose that we only use such songs for discharge!) There is something useful in not hedging on what happened in the past. It's useful to say it right out, but with a light enough tone that people can discharge. Bad things have happened, and we can face them now because we aren't going to relive them; we are just discharging their effects. Irreverence can be a contradiction.²

THE DRUG, GUN, AND SEX INDUSTRIES

What are the three most profitable industries in the world today? They are the pharmaceutical, gun, and sex industries. It follows that we are heavily targeted by each of them.

Drugs are generating billions of dollars each year. As many of us know, it is hard to recruit anyone into RC these days (at least in the West) who isn't on or hasn't been on drugs.

We are continually inundated with and manipulated by stories and images of violence, guns, and the

military. As a mechanism of men's oppression, the military systematically conditions men to be isolated and expendable, and to dominate others. The military and the growth of the sex industries are interconnected. Where military presence increases, so do prostitution and pornography, which serve to distract and numb men and reinforce their patterns.

We are all impacted by the sex industries, especially by pornography. At present, we will rarely find students for our RC classes who have not been directly affected by pornography. We need to discharge about the sex industry and pornography to think well about connecting—with ourselves, with other people, and with the environment.

The sex industry has grown exponentially and dramatically in the last thirty years along with the sexualization of society. This is a systematic and worldwide phenomenon. Younger and younger people, both boys and girls, are being targeted and, especially the girls, are ending up sexualized in their appearance and behavior.

Whether or not you think you have any relationship to the pornography industry, you do. Pornography constantly restimulates everyone's sexual distresses as well as their oppression as females and males. It distracts all of us from working to end societal oppression. It distracts us from thinking about and caring for the environment.

Pornography has nothing to do with sex, closeness, or connection. It has nothing to do with our humanness. It is about dehumanizing, degrading, and exploiting people, particularly women. It reinforces the domination of women by men. It keeps men isolated and constantly manipulated into the oppressor role. It is designed to be addictive so that people come back to it over and over again. Users of pornography are preoccupied and in a constant state of not being able to think. The use of pornography is tying up intelligence that could be used to tackle important issues, such as care of the environment.

WE CAN GET OUR MINDS BACK

We can discharge and get our minds back. We can take this on³ for ourselves and hold out to others that they can do it, too. Our minds were "attempted to be colonized." We can reclaim them. I've decided that I will not allow my mind to be used like that. I can decide where to put my attention—and so can you!

What is your relationship to colonization, pornography, and care of the environment?

² Contradiction to the distress

³ "Take this on" means undertake this.

Care of the Environment and Indigenous Liberation Intertwined

Dearest Marcie¹ and all my Indigenous buddies,

*She:kon sewakwekon.*²

I have been involved for some time now with the Idle No More³ solidarity movement here in northern California (USA). My partner, Paul, and I have been to flash mob⁴ round dances, prayer circles, and water blessings and many other gatherings and demonstrations. Members of my Indigenous mothers' and grandmothers' circle support an urban garden, where young people are sharing seeds and learning to plant, and a center that is teaching restorative justice in schools and communities. We have been involved in actions in Washington, D.C.,⁵ and locally to stop the Keystone XL Pipeline,⁶ to stop the poisoning of our community by the local refinery, and to support our Indigenous sisters and brothers both in Canada and across the Americas.

I have thought of this as Native liberation work—as part of what I do as a Native woman in the world. It feels like an extension of what I learned from my Mohawk⁷ elders in the *Ohen:ton Kahriwatekwhen* (Thanksgiving Address), in which we greet, thank, and send love to all parts of creation before and after anything we do.

One of my beloved allies, who is active in environmental work, told me that he saw what I was doing as “care of the

environment.” Interestingly, I had never thought of it that way. At some point in a Co-Counseling session, I could see that Native liberation (and all human liberation) is about loving, protecting, and nurturing this beautiful *iethi'nistenha ohontsia* (mother earth). I think that care-of-the-environment work has to support Indigenous liberation, as the two are completely intertwined.

The more I know about the devastation of our earth on so many levels, which is often directly connected to Native oppression, the more overwhelmed, outraged, and discouraged I feel. It is simply horrifying to face what



HIROSHIMA, JAPAN • EDWARD ELBERS

is going on.⁸ However, the more I see the Indigenous leadership all over the world, and the courageous stands that human beings everywhere are taking, the more hopeful I get. From that place of hope, I can discharge hard and begin to think. And I think that the more that the environmental movement can be aware of, acknowledge, and back⁹ the Indigenous leadership across the globe to protect the earth, the better this work will go for all of humanity.

I have been moved by and found so much contradiction¹⁰ in working with our Idle No More solidarity affinity group—which is mostly Native and led by Natives but also includes allies whom we have invited to join us. Being part of a group that is praying and drumming and dancing, and also reaching for others, educating people, building big puppets, and painting signs together, is powerful. The relationships we are building have deep

continued . . .

¹ Marcie Rendon, the International Liberation Reference Person for Native Americans

² “She:kon sewakwekon” means hello everyone, in the Mohawk language.

³ Idle No More is an ongoing protest movement for Indigenous sovereignty and protection of the environment. It was started by four women in Canada in Indigenous territories—three Indigenous women and one woman of European heritage—and has spread quickly through Aboriginal communities throughout the world.

⁴ A “flash mob” is a group of people summoned (usually by e-mail or text message) to a designated location, at a specified time, to perform some action.

⁵ Washington, D.C., is the capital of the United States.

⁶ The Keystone XL Pipeline is a pipeline that, if built, would transport oil from Canada and the northern United States to refineries on the Gulf of Mexico in southeastern Texas (USA). Because it would contribute to global warming and create a number of other environmental hazards, and would cross many sovereign Indigenous communities and particularly impact Native lands, many people have been working to stop it.

⁷ The Mohawk people originated in what is now called the Mohawk Valley in New York State, USA, and hunted and fished all over the eastern woodlands. While some still live in the Mohawk Valley, many policies of genocide in different periods made others leave the valley for territories in Canada.

⁸ “Going on” means happening.

⁹ “Back” means support.

¹⁰ Contradiction to distress

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roots. We get to care openly and try things, have fun, and enjoy each other. There is a deep sense of love in this work—here and all over the world.

In this group we all have limits—because of work, children, health constraints, various struggles—and so we take turns. We can each be a part of the group without it exhausting any of us. We are ending the genocide on our planet in a way in which everyone gets to participate. We stay aware of each person's abilities and limits and go at a pace that works. This is so different from anything I've ever experienced.

There seems to be a huge contradiction to despair for all the people who show up.¹¹ Seeing young people rapping and drumming, and people of all ages holding out a vision of a different world, saying no to the destruction and yes to life and connection, is healing at a deep level. At all the events, from the smaller spontaneous round dances to the recent huge anti-GMO¹² demonstration, people are laughing, crying, and reaching for others. I see lives changing as people connect and do things together toward a big vision.

¹¹ "Show up" means participate.

¹² A "GMO" (genetically modified organism) is an organism whose genetic material has been altered by genetic engineering.

Being personally involved in Idle No More solidarity and then hearing about humans all over the world taking action—old women chaining themselves to pipeline equipment, young people walking 1,600 miles across Canada to bring a message to Harper,¹³ a small Mohawk community building a community garden for teaching language and going back to traditional foods, ranchers allying themselves with local Native tribes against the pipeline—pulls my attention way out and helps me discharge hard from a place of contradiction. It helps me face the reality of what is happening to our planet without getting lost in feeling powerless.

I can see that a big part of reality is this: *powerful, creative action coming out of love for life is happening at every moment*. People are taking a stand¹⁴ for clean water and nourishing local food, for economic and social justice, for sovereignty at all levels, for connection with, caring for, and thoughtfulness toward all our relations and the planet.

Alison Ehara-Brown
(Iakohnhi:io)

Richmond, California, USA
Reprinted from the RC e-mail discussion
list for leaders of Native Americans

¹³ Prime Minister Stephen Harper, the prime minister of Canada

¹⁴ "Taking a stand" means taking a firm position.



YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK, CALIFORNIA, USA • MAARIT NIEMI

• The Marxist Analysis •

It was a pleasure to get to know you a little, and I'm sorry that I restimulated you in my talk about social change. What I think is simply that we need to make contact with what rational thinking has been done in the past about economics and society, and in my judgment the only people who have been frank and honest in their appraisal have been the leading Marxist theoreticians. I wouldn't ask you to believe them, but I do suggest that people get acquainted with the Marxist analysis. They are going to need it in the days ahead as society gets into more trouble.

Harvey Jackins

From a letter written in 1974

Racism, and Care of the Environment

At a recent workshop near Boston, Massachusetts, USA, Jennifer Wexler¹ led a class on racism and care of the environment. She invited seven people of the global majority to speak about how racism had affected their relationship to the environment and how the degradation of the environment had affected their people. Here's what they had to say:

- In Boston, a laboratory to study weaponized viruses is being built in a working-class community of people targeted by racism. A community college in that neighborhood has been pressured to develop a program to teach students to do the cleanup if a disaster happens, not to do the research. The college has not developed the program and so has been targeted for not wanting to create jobs. Camden, New Jersey (USA), which is poor, has a lot of cancer. I know it's environmental. It's hard to care for the environment when you are fighting for your survival. Wealthy people, often white, control property in commercial areas, including in poor neighborhoods. As a result, fresh food is not available. There are many liquor stores and a lot of packaged fast food.

- Both my parents worked in the cotton mills—my father for forty years. He died of asthma, brown lung,² and emphysema. He had the worst case of asthma the doctor had

¹ Jennifer Wexler is the Regional Reference Person for Boston, Massachusetts, and southeast Massachusetts, USA.

² "Brown lung" is a lung disease caused by exposure to cotton dust in inadequately ventilated work environments.

ever seen. He died of an asthma attack in the waiting room of the emergency room. At some point the mill owners shut down the mill and moved down South.³ There was nothing for the workers, including no pension.

- In Texas (USA), on the Mexican border, in the areas with a Mexican majority, there is no electricity or running water in *colonias*,⁴ and little (if any) recycling service. The Rio Grande River between Texas and Mexico is unnaturally green and foamy, and people swim across it to cross the border. There are high rates of anencephaly, a birth defect that affects the brain, in the border towns. And it's not the people's fault. It's not an accident either.

- I'm an urban farmer in a community targeted by racism. At the farm stand there are crack pipes and liquor bottles. I would like to live in the country, but I would need to move to the South, because there are no black people in rural areas in the northeast (USA). Black kids don't want to be farmers or be in

³ The South is the southeastern part of the United States.

⁴ *Colonias* are neighborhoods of low-income, poor, or working-class people, mostly in Texas along the Mexican border, that often have substandard living conditions.



WATERCOLOR • CATHERINE CARTER

the woods, because of the legacy of slavery.

- On the northern border between Pakistan and India, armies are fighting on glaciers. Soldiers die because they can't survive the conditions. The wars also destroy the environment. Large pieces of glaciers break off, which leads to thousands of people dying all at once. Every border between these two countries has land mines. When there is fighting, the rivers have bodies in them. Children are born without ears. We don't know what the drones⁵ are dropping. Is it chemical? Is it biological? We'll know in ten to twenty years.

- The pastry industry in France was built on the blood of slaves on the plantations in Haiti, which was a colony of France. In one period, forty percent of France's income came from Haiti. The money the United States received from France in the Louisiana Purchase helped to finance the slave trade, and war. In Vietnam, motorbikes are fueled by oil, which causes air pollution. People plant sticky rice to mitigate the pollution, but it's backbreaking work.

- There are things that I and my community know. White folks in labs figure out the same things, at huge costs and with much fanfare for white people. The face of environmental activism is very white, middle class, and intellectual. People in communities targeted by racism have been

continued . . .

⁵ A drone is a remotely controlled military aircraft.

WIDE WORLD CHANGING

... continued

working against environmental degradation for decades but are not the face of activism, progress, and forward thinking. I'm not impressed by "white people in trees."⁶ In my community there are no trees to climb, much less live

⁶ "White people in trees" refers to protests in which (usually white) people live for a while in trees, to protect the trees from being cut down.

in. I'm suspicious of "Fair Trade."⁷ Starbucks⁸ is not Fair Trade. It's not a new way of doing business if the same white men are being enriched.

⁷ "Fair Trade" is a social movement that advocates for higher prices on exports going from developing countries to developed countries and for higher social and environmental standards.

⁸ Starbucks is a U.S.-based global coffee company that offers "Fair Trade" coffee as one of its products.

We've been talking about this forever. You white folks think you were here first and think you had the good ideas. You believe that. We know it's not true. It would be useful if you knew that, too.

*Reported by Elizabeth Saunders,
Karen Young, and Anne Greenwald
Boston, Massachusetts, USA
Reprinted from the RC e-mail
discussion list for leaders in
the care of the environment*

River That Flows Both Ways

River That Flows Both Ways*

Let me come with you

To learn

About moving, dancing and rhythm

About letting go and holding on tight

About making and filling space

Let me see all that you cradle in the palm
of your hand

The bass, blue fish and crab

Bounty for the herons and bald eagles

Barges, planting themselves for what seems
like eternity

Motor boats, speeding by in an instant

A lone fisher, creating her own sense of time

Fresh water and salt water

Mixing together

And blue sky above, forming a ladder to the
heavens

River That Flows Both Ways

Show me how you ebb at one moment

And in the next, turn towards high tide

* This name for the Hudson River, in New York, USA, is a translation of *Mahicantuck*, the name given to the river by Native Americans. *Mahicantuck* can also mean Great Waters Constantly in Motion.

Your length and breadth and longevity
Constantly changing and yet always the same
Source of life for some and a final resting place
for others

Your calm and quiet
Your motion and commotion
The simplicity and grandeur you exude at the
same time

You bridge worlds and waters
Making the impossible seem possible once again
With your offer of a welcome home

River That Flows Both Ways
Teacher and Wise One
Great Water in Constant Motion

Thank you

For the gesture and the reminder—
When we simply are and do not unthinkingly do
When we embrace and do not fight against
When we decide to truly see rather than look away
Then we are choosing life and love and connection
Then we are re-creating and returning to the primal
peace and to the life-giving waters that reside
within each of us

*Rachel Landsberg
New York City, New York, USA*

A Listening Project on Climate Change

This past weekend I led a two-day wide-world listening project¹ on climate change.

I was inspired to do something because a big environmental event was being planned in a city further north in California (USA). I decided that I wanted to participate in something local rather than drive to that event, and then I learned that it was happening on the same weekend as a nearby two-day Strawberry Festival. This festival is an annual family-oriented event featuring music, carnival rides, food, and information booths. Strawberries are an enormous crop in this area, and most strawberry pickers are migrant Mexican farm workers.

My first thought was to volunteer to help staff a table at the festival, for the city environmental education team. However, it turned out² that they weren't having a table, so they arranged for me to have one, at no cost (I think partly because over the past several years I had made a good connection with one of the city employees).

I recruited three long-time friends, two of their teenage daughters, and one new friend—all women of the global majority—to staff the table with me. I had been working on environmental projects with them over the previous several months. I also recruited my husband, our five-year-old daughter, and two volunteers from our farm. My daughter colored in most of the big signs. In working on the project, she started showing me how much she had learned about climate change.

¹ In an RC listening project, several Co-Counselors go to a public place and offer to listen to passersby about some important issue, such as racism or a current war. They may hold signs that invite people to share their thinking about that issue. The author has done something similar with non-Co-Counselors as listeners.

² "It turned out" means as it happened.



HELEN PARKIN

I liked the idea of being at a large mainstream event that didn't have an environmental theme. I expected that the crowd would be more representative of the area's population than the crowds that typically attend "environmental" events.

I talked with each friend ahead of time about listening to people more than talking. My goal was for us to meet people where they were at in their understanding of climate change. And I trusted that listening to and connecting with them would help them move their thinking forward, at least a little. One of my friends was skeptical. But at the event she watched me talk with people and became more and more intrigued by what I was doing.

It seemed to work best to approach people with a general question (in English or in Spanish), such as, "What are your favorite places in nature?" "What do you want life on earth to be like for your children or grandchildren?" or "What have you heard about climate change?"

One friend had made a beautiful collage of images from nature, which drew a lot of attention and was great for starting conversations.

After engaging people in a little conversation off of one of the questions, I would talk about the reason for our booth and ask if they had heard much about climate change. I had expected that many people would ignore us and that some would be very negative. Instead we engaged in thoughtful conversations with hundreds of people, and many of them thanked us profusely for being there. I think we offered people hope as we helped them look at a serious issue.

We made connections with people who were already leading on climate change and with teachers, parents, children, and grandparents. Some people knew nothing about the issue, others were able to say a tiny bit about what they had heard, and others were quite well informed. The majority of people we spoke with were native Spanish speakers.

Seventy-four people pledged to take an action this week to help stop climate change (actions could include talking to others about what they knew) and were entered into a raffle. Twenty-two signed up to be on an informational mailing list.

continued . . .



SØREN HOLM

WIDE WORLD CHANGING

... continued

These are some of the people I especially enjoyed connecting with:

- An elder from Guanajuato, Mexico, who knew a great deal about changing weather patterns in different places and spoke passionately about what he knew. I encouraged him to lead his family and friends in understanding this issue.

- A parent and her ten-year-old daughter who I learned attended the school my five-year-old is entering in a few weeks. I asked the parent if I could contact her to perhaps develop a committee to look at environmental issues at the school.

- A Chicano environmental law student who spoke about protecting people's rights and meeting people's needs

- A teenage Chicana who was exploring shifting to a vegan diet and was frustrated by her friends calling

her environmental concern a "hippie³ thing"

- An African-heritage elder who said she had decided to stop worrying about these kinds of things. I listened to her, agreed that worrying wouldn't help anything, and concentrated on having a good, enjoyable interaction with her.

- The librarian from a school I had worked at a number of years ago who said she knew nothing about climate change and took my information sheet

- A thirty-something-year-old Chicano who was starting to grow some of his food, build a wind turbine, and develop solar power at his house and was considering having chickens, right in downtown Watsonville (California, USA)

³ A "hippie" is someone, often white and from a middle-class background, who adopts an alternative-culture way of dressing, acting, and so on.

- Several people who disagreed with us about what was causing climate change but stayed engaged in conversation and ended up leaving with a slightly changed attitude

- Dozens of other people with whom I had warm, human contact—people who spoke passionately, looked me in the eye, and thanked us for being there

- All the children who told me about their favorite animals, or colored on paper while I talked with their folks

- My friends who left inspired, with ideas for new actions

I believe we had an impact on hundreds if not thousands of people, and began connections with many that we'll be able to continue.

I appreciate so much all that I've learned in RC. My new friend who was part of the project is looking to me more and more as she sees me approaching activism in a different way than she's seen in other organizations.

My dream is to lead a wide-world leaders' group centered on the group of friends who participated in this project with me, and to find ways to share RC perspectives and information with the large numbers of people I met this weekend, including someday inviting them to be part of a local RC Community.

Nancy Faulstich

Watsonville, California, USA

Reprinted from the RC e-mail discussion list for leaders in the care of the environment



THE LISTENING PROJECT ON CLIMATE CHANGE • CONSUELO JUAREZ

To save the planet, we do not need miraculous technical breakthroughs, or vast amounts of capital. Essentially, we need a radical change in our thinking and behaviour.

Ted Trainer

Big Hopes and Plans for the Environment

I'm from Switzerland. I have two daughters. When my oldest was about five, she discovered some butterfly eggs on the nettles next to our house and was excited about it. After a while, she started to worry that the farmer could cut the nettles when he was cutting the grass. She spent a whole morning making a sign to put in front of the nettles. She asked me to write on it, "Don't cut the nettles. Butterfly eggs!" I did that, and she was happy for a while.

When the farmer started to cut the grass, she got worried again. What if he didn't see the sign? What if he cut the nettles? She started crying and asked me to tell him to leave the nettles. I did that, even though I felt embarrassed. He agreed to leave them.

In autumn we had many butterflies around our house, and my daughter asked me why there were so many. I could see on her face what she was thinking, and I also remembered the sign she had made. I said, "I think it's because we protected the nettles." She beamed at me and said, "Yes, I also think so!"

Now she is almost twelve, and her projects are becoming more and more complex. I would love to draw a sign with her that says, "Stop polluting the planet, life!" and see the effect of it a few weeks later.

It's heartbreaking for me to notice that I don't know how to save the planet. As a young person, I had big ideas and hopes for the environment. I wanted to change the world. It's my aim to get back there, to discharge my hopelessness and get back to having big plans for our world.

My younger daughter, who will turn nine next week, still loves to save animals. She picks up every snail, worm, and slug from the street and finds it a safe place to live. It makes her happy for the whole day to know that she saved a life. It's good for me to support her with that. And sometimes when I'm on my way to work, I do the same and enjoy it.

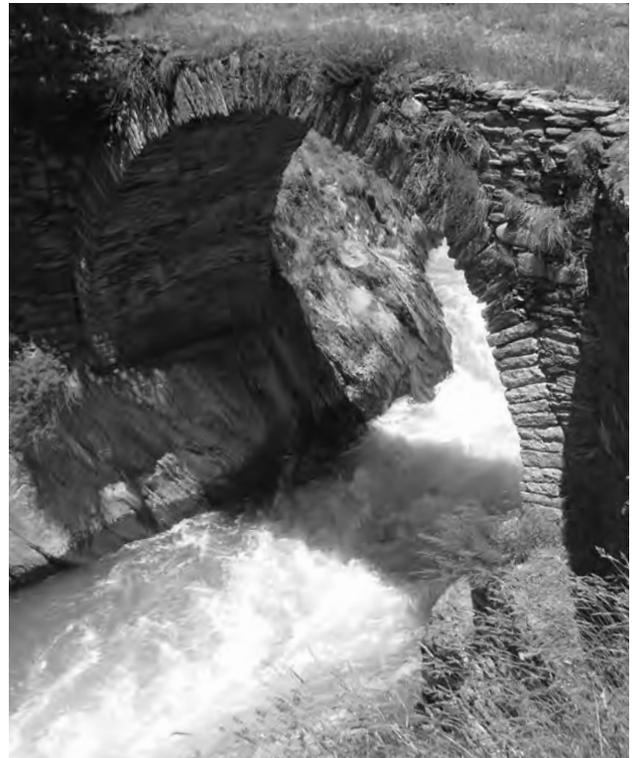
It's good for me to do simple things. It's good for me to go back to a time when I was convinced that I had the power, knowledge, and ability to change something. I keep discharging on having lost this.

I think it's important for us parents to both support our children with their projects, be good allies to them, and give them space to discharge *and* have our own projects for the environment, and discharge, discharge, discharge.

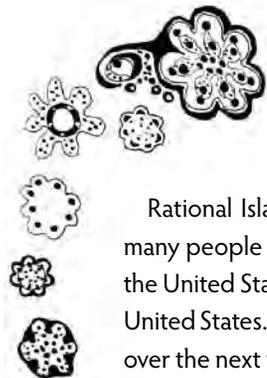
Claudia Joller

Urnäsch, Switzerland

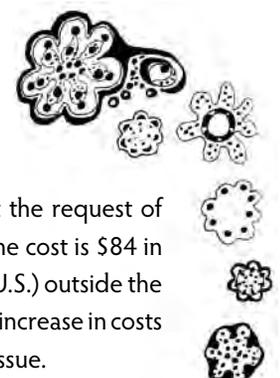
Reprinted from the RC e-mail discussion list for leaders in the care of the environment



PYRENEES, CATALONIA, SPAIN • JUAN MANUEL FEITO GUERRERO



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KK

The “Background Noise” We Grew Up With

The following four articles are from a discussion on the RC e-mail discussion list for leaders of wide world change.

In RC we focus most of our counseling on memories of the individual hurts we received from accidents, from the distress recordings of other people, or as targets or members of an oppressor group. But we have also absorbed ideas, attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors from our families, the culture around us, our religion, our country’s history, and the oppressive society. We may not be aware of these as coming from distinct experiences or realize how much distress they installed on us. We may not have questioned them. We may not be able to easily identify them or know how to discharge on them to regain our full intelligence. Here are two ways of thinking about these attitudes and beliefs:

- They were the “background noise” that was playing so much of the time that we were not aware of it.

- They were the paint or the wallpaper on the walls that we were so used to that we stopped noticing it.

This “background noise” influences everything we do: the way we think, our body language, our facial expressions, our habits, what we are willing to question and not question. It affects our relationships and our language. It affects what restimulates us and what doesn’t, how we discharge and our resistance to certain forms of discharge.

I have begun to make a list of some of the “background noises” that I grew up with. Some of them are uncomfortable for me to counsel on or to write about. I encourage you to make your own list. Discharging on the “background noise” will help us re-evaluate ancient thought patterns and distress recordings, as well as our individual ones, and recover our full intelligence.

Doing this work has clarified for me both how I have been oppressed and how I was manipulated into the oppressor role. I have introduced the idea of “background noise” at workshops, and others have also found it helpful. My guess is that it will take considerable discharge to fully re-evaluate the ideas, beliefs, and attitudes that we absorbed unconsciously from our surroundings.

Here are some of the items on my list:

- *Economic exploitation.* Making money from the labor of other people is permissible and even encouraged. This has been true in some cultures for a long time. It is the foundation for the owning-class/working-class society that we live in.

- *Some people are superior to others.* White people, men, able-bodied people, middle- and owning-class people, straight people, Christians, Western Europeans are “smarter, more worthy, more human, more favored by God,” and so on, than other people. We can be pleased that we have begun to address this assumption in regard to certain groups, but we have much work to do in regard to other groups.

- *Original sin.* Original sin appears in Christian theology in the second century. In the Christian scriptures it is based on the teachings of Paul the Apostle. (I use the term *Christian scriptures* because the term *New Testament* implies superiority to the Hebrew scriptures, at least to me as a Jew raised in a Gentile society.) Different Christian sects interpret original sin differently, and it is rejected by some Christian theologies. The doctrine is not found in mainstream Judaism or in Islam. Re-evaluation

Counseling assumes that *all* people are good. Do we fully believe it?

- *Exploitation of the natural world.* The King James Bible (Cambridge Edition) says, “And God said, ‘Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.’” Rie Shiraishi,¹ in a post to several RC e-mail discussion lists, wrote, “This recording has been used to justify exploitation of the environment and has served the interest of certain Judeo-Christian groups who defined the extent of ‘dominion’ that they saw themselves to be entitled to. I think this recording became institutionalised and has been acted out in Western versions of colonialism, genocide, racism, adultism, and other oppressor patterns. I notice this recording leak into the relationships white people have with me.”

- *The Messiah.* This is a complicated and perhaps controversial subject. The idea of a Messiah began in Judaism—the religion of the ancient Hebrews. The Greek translation of Messiah is *khristos* (χριστος), anglicized as Christ, and Christians commonly refer to Jesus as either the “Christ” or the “Messiah.” For many people, the Messiah came to signify a person who would establish a heavenly kingdom (or kingdom of God) on earth. I imagine that originally the idea was an attempt to give the Hebrews hope in a time when they were living in very difficult conditions with much suffering. Providing hope to oppressed people has value, but it can lead to passivity when it is accompanied by a

¹ Rie Shiraishi is an RC leader in Annandale, New South Wales, Australia.

message that change will come from a supernatural being.

- *Male domination.* Men have dominated and continue to dominate women on an individual and a societal level. As a young person, I never thought about the fact that all the political leaders in the United States that I heard of, with the exception of Eleanor Roosevelt,² were men and that men wrote almost everything I read.

- *“Children should be seen and not heard.” “Who do you think you are?”* These are two of many messages that have installed patterns of silence, lack of confidence, being satisfied with a small life, not speaking out against injustice. They are different for different class, gender, and ethnic

² Eleanor Roosevelt, who was married to U.S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt, was an outspoken advocate for the rights of African Americans, Asian Americans, women, and others, from the 1920s through the 1950s.

identities, but they are present for most young people. We may be more aware of them than some of the other “background noises.”

- *Chemical intervention for distressed behavior is necessary.* This bit of “background noise” has been introduced more recently by the immensely profitable pharmaceutical industry. It has been used to convince people that distress is caused by biochemical imbalance rather than hurtful experiences. Even some RCers have been influenced by this “background noise.” Some Co-Counselors have told me, “I can discharge my distress, but my uncle (or aunt or brother) needs his tranquilizers.”

- *My country is the best one in the world (nationalism).* This “background noise” is used by the class society to manipulate people to fight in and support wars and thus give the owning class the opportunity

to make immense profits—even more than in peacetime. It is often accompanied by other messages about the superiority of the people living in a particular country, or by lies about that country’s policies. In the United States, for example, we grow up with the message that “the United States is and has always been on the side of the oppressed peoples of the world and against imperialism.” In fact, the United States has oppressed people, engaged in genocide, and been imperialistic since before it was a country.

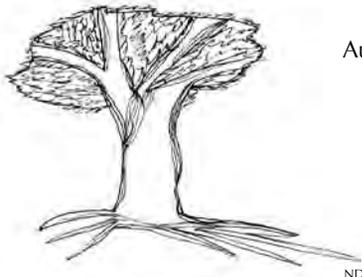
This is some of the “background noise” that I grew up with. Please write about the “background noise” that you grew up with.

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

“Background Noise” from Apartheid

Great topic, Julian.

I grew up in South Africa during Apartheid, when soldiers were always around, troop carriers were driving around in the streets, and letters to and from soldiers were being read on the radio all the time. This “background noise” was a preparation for me to be on full alert always and contributed to patterns of vigilance and a sense of danger.



*Selwyn Polit
Austin, Texas, USA*



YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK, CALIFORNIA, USA • LISAVOSS

“The World Will End” and “Independence Is Good”

We have been talking a lot in Native liberation about the “religious” beliefs that permeate societies as fact. Some factor into the care-of-the-environment conversation, for example, the “end of the world” beliefs and theories—the idea that “the world will end” and we need to be prepared. (It seems that all major religions that arose from the lineage of Abraham have some version of this.) This collection of beliefs fuels the panic in care-of-the-environment work. In my mind there is something here that needs to be discharged, so that we can think, without the attached panic, about the care-of-the-environment work that needs to be done.



ARIZONA, USA • LISA VOSS

Another “background noise”: Independence is good, to be strived for (U.S. dogma). This is used to justify expansion, stepping on and over anyone else, Manifest Destiny* (preordained by God).



Marcie Rendon
International Liberation Reference
Person for Native Americans
Minneapolis, Minnesota, USA

* In the United States in the nineteenth century, Manifest Destiny was the widely held belief that U.S. settlers were destined to expand across the North American continent. There were three basic themes: (1) the special virtues of the U.S. people and their institutions, (2) the U.S. mission to redeem and remake the world in the image of itself, (3) a divine destiny under God’s direction to accomplish this task.

Such a doctrine was already firmly entrenched in the Western legal tradition, going back to Biblical times. Abraham needed a reason for dispossessing the Canaanites. The reason, according to the Bible, was that God had given the land to Abraham’s people. As God said through Joshua, “I gave you a land on which you had not labored, and cities which you had not built, and you dwell therein.” (Joshua 24:13) The dispossession was also justified on the grounds that the Indigenous inhabitants were idolaters, cannibals, and human sacrificers—neither civilized nor of the true faith.

The colonizing religions of the Old World—Judaism, Christianity, and Islam—all trace back to Abraham, and through him to Noah and to Adam, in order to inherit this “chosen” status and thus to inherit the earth and dominion over it. As it is written in the Book of Psalms, God said, “Ask of me, and I will make the nations your heritage, and the ends of the earth your possession.” (Psalms 2:1-11)

“Background Noise” in the South of the Netherlands

I grew up in the Catholic South of the predominantly Protestant Netherlands. My province was added to the Netherlands in 1813 and considered an occupied territory until 1957. When I was born, in 1962, the “background noise” in the culture was still “don’t trust the government and officials.” Doctors, police were all imported from the rest of the Netherlands, and that continued until at least 1977. We did our own thing* amongst ourselves, ignoring officials as much as possible.

Because I was born in the sixties, the social changes in that era contributed to my turning away from the Catholic Church. I was disappointed that a church preaching love would at the same time make such a mess of human relationships and abuse the power of the religion to manipulate people. I remember the day that I rejected the Catholic answer to the question about the point of life. I think that my current opinion, “The point of life is what I choose to be the point of my life,” is very much a reflection of the “background noise” in the sixties.

When I went to a polytechnic school, I discovered that we were mainly being trained to give known answers to known questions, while real life is often about discovering what the question is. Now, after thirty years, I still see us running after answers to questions that we don’t understand. There is still little room to question the questions. The world would look very different if we were able to hold up a question in the air for a longer time, and look at it and discharge and look at it again, before even thinking about answers.

Frank van den Heuvel
Nieuwegein, the Netherlands

* “Did our own thing” means did what we wanted, without worrying what anyone else thought of us.

Challenging Anti-Jewish Oppression in the Church

A few weeks before Easter,¹ I spoke to our priest about trying to do something different during Holy Week.² He was delighted that I wanted to take on³ the issue of Good Friday⁴ services. He has often spoken during his sermons about anti-Jewish oppression within the Church (although he has never named it as such), and I think he was pleased that one of his “flock” was showing an interest. We agreed that I would e-mail the music director, whom I had worked hard to have a relationship with over the past few years, and I did.

Her reaction was *huge*—unlike anything I had expected. She saw my suggestion as a personal attack and lashed out accordingly. I got really restimulated but had some *great* Co-Counselling sessions discharging about the times I had fought for something as a young person, not been listened to, and eventually had to give up.

I checked in with the priest, and he told me to “back off.”⁵ So I wrote a brief letter to the director, apologizing for any hurt I had caused. I clarified that my intent had never been to criticize or to call into question her goodness.

The matter seemed to disappear, but then a week later the priest wrote to tell me he had printed out a page from the Council of Christians and Jews web site that explained the historical antecedents of the Holy Week gospel. It was handed out along with the pew sheets.

The music director personally apologised to me and gave me a big hug when we next met. And last week in Vestry,⁶ she surprised me by cheerfully asking for the matter to be minuted⁷ as part of

¹ Easter is a Christian holiday celebrating the resurrection of Jesus Christ on the third day after his crucifixion.

² Holy Week is the week preceding Easter.

³ “Take on” means do something about.

⁴ Good Friday is the Friday preceding Easter and is a time when Christians commemorate the crucifixion of Jesus Christ.

⁵ “Back off” means retreat, withdraw from my position.

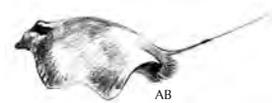
⁶ Vestry is a church meeting.

⁷ “Minuted” means noted.

the follow-up to the Holy Week celebrations. She publicly acknowledged that she had “reacted badly.” Everyone agreed that the services had gone off⁸ well and that the additions had been worthwhile.

I am proud of what I achieved. The events of the week served to remind me that being an ally to Jews is also about the liberation of myself as a Gentile. Without trying something new, without speaking up, I would never have gotten to have those sessions about fighting for something as young person, about believing in something but ultimately failing. I got to work on a piece of old material⁹ that had precious little¹⁰ to do with Jews, Gentiles, Christianity, or even fighting for social justice.

The week’s events also showed me the value in making room for people’s feelings. I don’t know if the music director actually ever discharged, but I think that my decision to respond calmly, to not overreact and instead be loving toward her outburst, allowed her to change her way of being in the world, at least for a few meetings. The whole incident “cleared the air” of something.



Bruce Clezy
Northcote, Victoria, Australia
Reprinted from the newsletter
of the Melbourne, Victoria,
Australia, RC Community

⁸ “Gone off” means gone.

⁹ “Material” means distress.

¹⁰ “Precious little” means very little.

We Need to Play

We need to play together. The last time you had good relationships was probably back when you played with people.

Tim Jackins
From the European Men’s Workshop,
the Netherlands, May 2006

Women's Liberation and Environmental Transformation

Women are naturally the champions of an environmentally safe world. However, few people automatically make the connection between women's liberation and environmental transformation. Certainly male domination within the context of a class society plays a major and critical role in the destruction of the environment.

I was recently speaking to a woman who left the feminist movement to become an environmental activist. She said that many of the female activists she knew in the environmental movement were feminists but that

they were scared to raise feminist issues.

In the environmental movement, as in other progressive movements for social change, many, many women are involved, particularly on a grassroots level. Some are in leadership positions. However, environmental organizations still tend to be male dominated. In general, men often lead on the "larger issues," such as peace and the environment, while women's issues, like reproductive rights, are marginalized. Women are also expected to set aside their issues during crises. Few people recognize that reproductive issues are global

issues and that they have a major environmental impact.

If we are to be effective in our work on the environment, we need to make the connection between women's liberation and environmental transformation. We also need female leadership, and to challenge male domination, along with classism, racism, and all the other oppressions.

I invite both women and men to share their thinking about this.

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

Land and other natural resources have been turned into commodities and property to be owned and used for profit. Male-dominated governments create policies and fight wars in order to acquire these natural resources—exploiting and polluting our environments and, in turn, destroying our health, homes, and communities. Seeing the natural world as something to own, something separate from us as people, makes it easier to exploit and destroy.

In many countries outside the United States, particularly those that are still developing into industrialized nations, the connection between women and care of the environment is very visible. This is because women are the ones who are often in the field gathering drinking water and firewood. They are thinking about their family's health and where to find nourishing food and clean air. They see firsthand how destroyed our earth is, and they are actively trying to reverse that. Through daily chores and actions,

projects they create, and movements they build, they are addressing how their lands and other natural resources are being polluted or are disappearing and how their communities are being destroyed by the wars waged for these natural resources.

Wangari Maathai, a Kenyan woman, started the Green Belt Movement in which women plant trees. Planting trees helps to solve problems like scarce firewood, soil erosion, water pollution, and poor animal nutrition and contributes to human survival, health, and well-being. It also gives women jobs so they can support themselves. Maathai spoke publicly about the problems of a male-dominated post-colonial Africa, and she was beaten, jailed, and called a "crazy woman." Her husband divorced her, claiming adultery, but she believed he did it because she was "too educated, too strong, too successful, too stubborn, and too hard to control." She was the chairperson of the National Council for Women in Kenya, a member



MAURA FALLON

of the Parliament, and a winner of the Nobel Peace Prize. In 2011 she died of ovarian cancer.

There must be countless women all over the world, especially from the grassroots, whose stories of women's liberation and the environment are not recognized because of male domination, sexism, classism, racism, the oppression of Native and Indigenous peoples, and other oppressions. Their efforts are also marginalized and made invisible because fighting for the environment is fighting the capitalist agenda.

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

The environmental justice movements in the United States are based on an analysis of power, oppression, and liberation. This makes it easier for them to recognize and raise issues of male domination and sexism in their work. Making the connection between people and the environment also facilitates seeing the connection between women's liberation and the environment. However, because of sexism and male domination, it's still hard for those of us in these movements to remember to keep that connection central and visible. Because it's easy to trivialize experiences of sexism and male domination, it's easy to forget that the connection between the environment and women's issues is important and needs to be talked about.

Many of the mainstream U.S. environmental organizations lack an analysis of power and oppression. This is reflected in how deeply divided they are from environmental justice movements and movements for Native liberation. The absence of such an analysis also makes it harder for people in these organizations to identify male domination and sexism in their work.

EFFECTS ON WOMEN'S HEALTH

Women's health and reproduction are directly affected by the destruction of the environment. An example is

the effects of dioxin. Dioxin is a waste product of common industrial processes that pollutes the water and land and gets lodged in the bodies of animals we eat. It causes cancer—in particular, breast cancer, as it is attracted to fatty tissue—and reproductive problems, such as birth defects, decreased fertility, and inability to maintain pregnancy. Agent Orange, used by the United States for chemical warfare in Vietnam, contained dioxin and killed and maimed hundreds of thousands of people.

THE NATURAL WORLD AND THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

I grew up in an immigrant Chinese family in a suburb that still included working farms, open space, trees, and animals. My grandmother reused everything—plastic wrap, paper towels, tin foil. She kept as many lights off as possible and tried not to let water run in excess. She loved growing and taking care of plants.

When I moved to New York City (USA), it was hard to be away from the kind of nature I was lucky enough to grow up around. I found it useful to recall pleasant times of being around nature and to discharge on the loss of my daily contact with it. I also had to change my definition of the environment to include the built environment.

Many women workers (paid and unpaid) live in the built environment. This includes many poor and working-class women, and women of the global majority, who work as domestic workers and caretakers of theirs and other people's homes and other spaces. People expect and rely on these women to think about and take care of the physical environment, while undervaluing, underpaying, and not respecting their work.

Irene HongPing Shen
Brooklyn, New York, USA

Reprinted from the RC e-mail discussion list for leaders of wide world change



GARIBALDI LAKE, VANCOUVER, BRITISH COLUMBIA, CANADA • PHIL JOHNSTON

A crowd of lovely people is not crowded;
Two patterns can't find room enough on Earth.

Harvey Jackins
From notes for future poems

Capitalism and the Threat to the Environment

At all of my workshops over the past few years, I have raised the issue of capitalism and the threat to the environment. Because of what is happening with the economic system and the desperate attempts to patch it up by squeezing more and more from those less well-off,¹ and because of the ongoing destruction of the environment, the depletion of natural resources, and the threat of climate change, it is difficult to see how this economic system and our current wasteful lifestyles can continue much longer.

I have been challenging people to counsel on all of their feelings about these issues and the possibility of the collapse of the system. I have emphasised the need to resist the pull to settle for other people's formulas or answers, and the need to be completely honest with ourselves about our feelings about the ending of capitalism and class oppression. It's important not to get pulled into pretending that we have no difficulties with these things.

¹ "Well-off" means affluent.

Our goal as counsellors is not to counsel people into any particular position or point of view but to assist them to reclaim their ability to think about the issues. As part of this, I have raised with people various questions: If this system is facing collapse, what shall we do with the rest of our lives? What would it mean to settle for having enough? What is enough locally, and what is enough globally? What would it mean to give up organising our lives around comfort and security? What would it mean to go for² having a big life in the face of these challenges?

At this stage, it seems that work on class and on care of the environment go hand in hand. We have to do both pieces.



JULIE FORGIONE

Seán Ruth
International Liberation Reference
Person for Middle-Class People
Stillorgan, County Dublin, Ireland
Reprinted from the RC e-mail discussion
list for International Liberation
and Commonality Reference Persons

² "Go for" means pursue.

● ● ● ● ● A Secure and Sustainable Future for All ● ● ● ● ●

Seán Ruth, the International Liberation Reference Person for Middle-Class People, has challenged the middle class to give up its fears around "comfort and security." Working-class people of the world's most wealthy countries also need to face their role as "agents of oppression" and accept the same challenge.

In some sense, working-class people of the First World countries* have adopted an unsustainable "middle-class" lifestyle and level of consumption made possible only by the exploitation of the majority of the world's people and the resources of their homelands.

What would working-class liberation look like if, rather than striving to be like the rich and capture some of their wealth, working-class people advocated for a sustainable and secure future for all people and for all living things on our planet? What would each working-class RCer have to discharge in order to lead the transition? How would we begin to organize our own people around such a program? What sorts of goals, policies, and programs would we advocate, for both working-class liberation and the sustaining of all life on our planet? Have you had any successes in your unions, in your workplaces, or with your working-class peers in moving toward such a policy?



LK

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Reprinted from the RC e-mail discussion
list for leaders of working-class people

* The "First World countries" are the highly industrialized countries of the world.

Thoughts After a Protest Rally

Last night I went with my eleven-, thirteen-, and seventeen-year-old grandchildren to a rally in downtown Minneapolis (Minnesota, USA). The rally was calling for justice in the black community following the murder of Trayvon Martin and the acquittal of his murderer. Trayvon was a seventeen-year-old black teen who was shot to death by a neighborhood watch person, George Zimmerman, a Latino man. Zimmerman had stalked Trayvon, who had gone to a convenience store for snacks, because Zimmerman thought Trayvon “looked suspicious.”

A few thousand people were gathered in protest. My eleven- and thirteen-year-old grandchildren, who are Ojibwe¹ on their mother’s side and African American on their father’s, pushed to the front of the rally to hold a banner calling for justice. They also went to the rally organizers (without my knowing) and asked to speak at the microphone.

They talked to the crowd of thousands about what it was like for them as thirteen- and eleven-year-old young Native and Black women, about how hard it was in the inner-city community where they lived and at school, and about their dreams for the future. The youngest talked about wanting to be a teacher and said that

she didn’t know if she would make it.² At that point, those thousands of folks started chanting to her, “Yes you can. Yes you can.”

I cried listening to my granddaughters’ brilliance, seeing their bravery, and hearing them proudly claim both their mother and their father in front of the world.

My children have relatives who identify as Chicano/a. My grandchildren have fathers who are African American. As a family we identify and live as Native Americans. And, of course, somewhere there are white ancestors also. All of these people are our people. We all live on one earth.

Although I grew up going to demonstrations and protests for

² “Make it” means get there.



MATT WEATHERFORD

Native and civil rights, being at this rally with my grandchildren scared me, given the recent shootings of children in the United States and the use of paramilitary tactics against civilians at rallies and protests. For much of my time there, I was hyper-alert and on guard, always scanning the crowd.

I woke up this morning asking myself, “What do I have to offer to all these things that are happening? How can I make this world into the world my granddaughters asked for last night? I have this tool of Co-Counseling. Is there a better way I could have used it to be ready for last night?”

Looking back, a handful of Co-Counselors were at the event (I found out from Facebook³ this morning). If I had planned ahead, I could have gathered us together prior to last night, so we could discharge about our intentions for being at the event, how we could take leadership if need be, and how we could support the folks who were organizing and leading the rally.

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

³ Facebook is an online social networking service.

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

You can order back issues as regular literature items (see pages 103 and 111).

Untangling Key Difficulties, Creating Preconditions

In past years in the northern United States, logs were often cut in the woods in winter and sent to market by floating them down river in the spring. Lumberjacks would shepherd and guide vast quantities of timber down the fresheted¹ rivers. On occasion the mass of logs would jam at some point in the river and great pile-ups would develop. It became a crucial skill to find the “key log” in the jam, the removal of which, with peavey,² pry bar, or dynamite, would free the whole mass of logs to continue on their course downstream.

The progress of events and the development of movements are subject to similar obstacles. The untangling of “key difficulties” which are holding up progress on a broad front can be compared to the freeing of the “key log” in a logjam on a river. If a person playing an important role in a movement becomes non-functional through accident, illness, preoccupation with distress, or unforeseen circumstances, to restore that person to functioning or to replace that person in the role with a functioning person is a key activity that releases the development of many other activities.

Creation of pre-conditions for events which one desires to take place has a similar effect.

If one wishes to produce a motorcar, for example, it will be necessary to find (or even construct) an iron mining operation, and mills to produce steel; smelt the iron; and cast or forge or machine parts in order that the manufacture of an automobile can proceed. In other kinds of manufacturing, the transportation, warehousing, and sub-assembling of materials are pre-conditions that must be met for the desired product to be attained.

Leading a large number of people in a world-class community organized around oneself to achieve mass re-emergence, eliminate nuclear hazards, and construct a rational society will certainly have analogous pre-conditions at every stage.

Harvey Jackins
From *The Longer View*, pages 35 to 36

¹ “Fresheted” means overflowing due to heavy rains or melted snow.

² A “peavey” is a lumber-worker’s lever that has a pivoting hooked arm and metal spike at one end.

Standing Against Hydrofracking

Today I’m attending a mass rally in Albany, New York, USA, against hydrofracking—a process of deep-well gas drilling that shatters the earth and releases gas that is sold all over the world at a great profit.

I live in a small farm town and have been the chief organizer of an eight-month effort to stop the drilling from coming here. Last week forty-five of us went to the town board meeting and presented 658 signed petitions to prohibit drilling. This was in a town of only a thousand registered voters. Despite our efforts, the town board has refused to act. To me this means we have to get smarter and even better organized. We are up against the most powerful industry in the United States.

I can’t tell you¹ how important Joanne Bray’s² recent workshop was for me. Being in the midst of such loving Catholics and led by such a brilliant and capable leader, I felt at home and at peace with myself. I was able to discharge deeply in all my sessions.

¹ “I can’t tell you” means it’s difficult for me to express.

² Joanne Bray is the International Liberation Reference Person for Catholics.

Joanne gave me time in front of the group to talk and discharge about the work I am doing to end hydrofracking. At one point she had people raise their hands if they would be willing to listen to how scared I feel doing it (panic attacks at 3:00 a.m.), and everyone’s hand shot up. I was moved. There is something powerful about being backed³ by fellow Catholics who understand what I am doing and what it means to take charge of making the world a better place. The words *solidarity* and *communion* come to mind.

The work goes on. Two other people and I are running for our town council, in order to enact a ban on drilling. This is something none of us have done before. It has already caused two council persons to step down from the election. I counsel almost daily on being this visible, as my Catholic upbringing, among other things, taught me to be quiet and obedient.



Phil Rose
Fenner, New York, USA
Reprinted from the RC e-mail
discussion lists for leaders of Catholics
and for RC Community members

³ “Backed” means supported.

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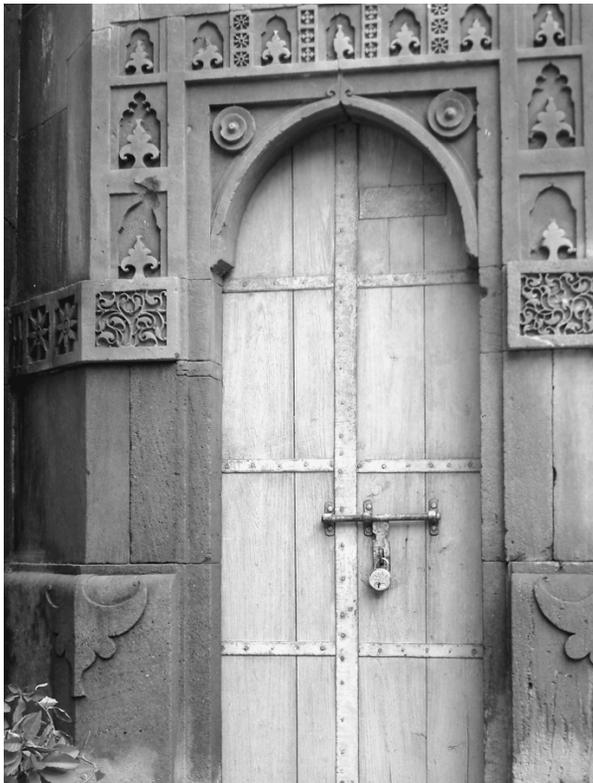
Challenging the Limits of Internalized Racism

A talk by Barbara Love,
the International Liberation Reference
Person for African-Heritage People

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This CD offers a look into the work of Black liberation at the Black Liberation and Community Development Workshop. In this talk from 2010, Barbara speaks candidly about the content and effects of the racism directed at African-heritage people. She stresses rejecting the oppressive messages, discharging their effects, and completely claiming the goodness, brilliance, and beauty of Black people.

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Ordering information on page 110 • Bulletin de commande en page 110

The RC Website

There is a website for Re-evaluation Counseling at <<http://www.rc.org/>>. At this site you will have easy access to a large amount of information about Re-evaluation Counseling, including:

- RC theory (basic theory, including an introduction to RC, *The Art of Listening*, and the RC postulates)
- An introductory talk (in audio) by Harvey Jackins (1986)
- RC practice (how to start RC, what to do in a session, counseling techniques, how to lead support groups)
- Policies, forms, and the *Guidelines for the Re-evaluation Counseling Communities*, 2009 edition
- Articles by RC leaders and Community members (quotes and selected articles from *Present Time* and other RC journals)
- Translations of articles into many languages
- New materials on language liberation
- Resources for workshop organizers
- Rational Island Publishers (contact information and literature ordering)
- Ordering RC publications on the web: <www.rationalisland.com>
- An on-line fundamentals of Co-Counseling class
- Outlines for teaching fundamentals classes, in English and Spanish
- An ever-growing collection of back issues of *Present Time* (currently 1974-1995)
- An index to all issues of *Present Time*
- "Today's Thought"—a short daily thought from a Re-evaluation Counseling perspective
- International Reference Person Perspectives

How to Contact Us On-Line

- The International RC Community: ircc@rc.org
- United to End Racism: uer@rc.org
- Rational Island Publishers (orders, and billing questions): litsales@rc.org (or order on our website at www.rationalisland.com)
- Re-evaluation Counseling Community Resources (Intensives and office matters only): rcoffice@rc.org
- Automatic response e-mail about RC: info@rc.org
- For sending photos: photos@rc.org

On-Line Fundamentals Class

An on-line fundamentals of Co-Counseling class is available for people who are interested in learning more about RC.

Active participation in the class is reserved for those who do not have fundamentals classes in their geographical region. Learning Re-evaluation Counseling via e-mail is much more difficult than learning it in a regular class and requires a higher level of commitment to the learning process and to regular Co-Counseling sessions.

If you are already participating in a regular RC class, or are an RC teacher, you may still have access to the articles used in the on-line class by enrolling in the class as an inactive member. Please note, however, that all of the materials used are already published and available in printed issues of *Present Time* and other Rational Island Publishers publications. The on-line class organizes these materials, making them more easily accessible.

Please see the RC web site at <<http://www.rc.org/class/fundamentals/>> for more information about how to sign up for either active or inactive membership in the on-line fundamentals class.

United to End Racism

United to End Racism (UER), an ongoing program of the Re-evaluation Counseling Communities, is on the web at <<http://www.rc.org/uer/>>. The e-mail address for UER is <uer@rc.org>.

United to End Racism is working with other groups involved in eliminating racism, and sharing with them the theory and practice of Re-evaluation Counseling.

Electronic Mailing Lists

The RC Community maintains a number of electronic mailing lists for particular categories of RCers. These lists are for active members of the RC Community, and most of them are for active leaders only. (If English is your first language, part of being an active member of the Community is subscribing to *Present Time*.) If you would like to subscribe to a list, first e-mail the person in charge of the list, then forward that person's approval, your request, your contact information (phone number, mailing address, city, state, postal code, country), and whether or not you have a subscription to *Present Time*, directly to the International Reference Person at <ircc@rc.org>. Read the information below for the various lists and whom you need to contact for approval to subscribe to them.

RC Community Members: <rc@mail.rc.org>.

Contact any Area, Regional, or Liberation Reference Person.

RC Community Members Involved in Eliminating

Racism: <uer@mail.rc.org>. Contact any Area, Regional, or Liberation Reference Person. (This list is for trading information on the theory and practice of using RC in the fight to eliminate racism, both inside and outside of the RC Community.)

Regional Reference Persons: <rrp@mail.rc.org>.

Contact the International Reference Person at <ircc@rc.org>.

Area Reference Persons: <arp@mail.rc.org>.

Contact the International Reference Person at <ircc@rc.org>.

International Liberation and Commonality Reference

Persons: <ilrp@mail.rc.org>. Contact the International Reference Person at <ircc@rc.org>.

RC Teachers: <teachers@mail.rc.org>. Contact the International Reference Person at <ircc@rc.org>.

Editors of RC or non-RC publications:

<editors@mail.rc.org>. Contact the International Reference Person at <ircc@rc.org>.

Translators of RC Literature:

<translators@mail.rc.org>. Contact Truus Jansen, Rational Island Publishers Translation Coordinator, at <ircc@rc.org>.

Activists for the Liberation of "People Targeted for Destruction by Society Because of the Patterns Imposed Upon Them":

<access@mail.rc.org>. Contact the International Reference Person at <ircc@rc.org>.

Leaders of African-Heritage People:

<black@mail.rc.org>. Contact Barbara Love, International Liberation Reference Person for African-Heritage People, at <bjloverc@gmail.com>.

Leaders of Artists: <artists@mail.rc.org>.

Contact John Fehringer, International Liberation Reference Person for Visual Artists, at <rc@fehinger.com>.

Leaders of Asians: <asian@mail.rc.org>.

Contact Francie Chew, International Liberation Reference Person for Chinese-Heritage People, at <franciechew@gmail.com>.

Leaders in the Care of the Environment:

<environment@mail.rc.org>. Contact Wytske Visser, International Commonality Reference Person for the Care of the Environment, at <wytskevisser.coe@gmail.com>.

Leaders of Catholics: <catholic@mail.rc.org>.

Contact Joanne Bray, International Liberation Reference Person for Catholics, at <jmbray@aol.com>.

Leaders of College and University Faculty:

<colleagues@mail.rc.org>. Contact Pam Roby, International Liberation Reference Person for College and University Faculty, at <roby@ucsc.edu>.

Leaders on Disability, Chronic Illness, and Health:

<health-disability@mail.rc.org>. Contact Marsha Saxton at <marsax@wid.org>.

Leaders of Educational Change:

<education@mail.rc.org>. Contact Marilyn Robb, International Commonality Reference Person for Educational Change, at <joyfulplace@yahoo.com>.

continued . . .

RC ON THE INTERNET

... continued

Leaders of **Elders:** <elders@mail.rc.org>. Contact Pam Geyer, International Reference Person for Elders, at <pgeyer@medcetera.com>.

Leaders of **Family Work:** <family-work@mail.rc.org>. Contact Chuck Esser, International Commonality Reference Person for Family Work, at <ckesser1@gmail.com>.

Leaders of **Irish-Heritage People:** <irish@mail.rc.org>. Contact Sheila Fairon at <fairon@fastmail.fm>.

Leaders of **Jews:** <jewish@mail.rc.org>. Contact Cherie Brown, International Liberation Reference Person for Jews, at <nrcbiinc@aol.com>.

Leaders of **Latinos/as and Chicanos/as:** <latino@mail.rc.org>. Contact Lorenzo Garcia, International Liberation Reference Person for Chicanos/as, at <lgrc@aol.com>.

Leaders of **Men:** <men@mail.rc.org>. Contact the International Reference Person at <ircc@rc.org>.

Leaders of **"Mental Health" Liberation:** <mental-health@mail.rc.org>. Contact Janet Foner, International Liberation Reference Person for "Mental Health" Liberation, at <jbfoner@verizon.net>.

Leaders of **Middle-Class People:** <middle-class@mail.rc.org>. Contact Seán Ruth, International Liberation Reference Person for Middle-Class People, at <seangruth@gmail.com>.

Leaders of **Native Americans:** <natives@mail.rc.org>. Contact Marcie Rendon, International Liberation Reference Person for Native Americans, at <mrendon703@aol.com>.

Leaders of **Owning-Class People:** <owning-class@mail.rc.org>. Contact Jo Saunders, International Liberation Reference Person for Owning-Class People, at <jo.saunders@btinternet.com>.

Leaders of **Parents:** <parents@mail.rc.org>. Contact Marya Axner, International Liberation Reference Person for Parents, at <maryaaxner@gmail.com>.

Leaders of **Raised-Poor People:** <raised-poor@mail.rc.org>. Contact Gwen Brown, International Liberation Reference Person for Raised-Poor People, at <gbbrown@udel.edu>.

Leaders of **Trade Unionists:** <unions@mail.rc.org>. Contact Joanie Parker, International Liberation Reference Person for Trade Unionists, at <jep7ok@aol.com>.

Leaders of **Wide World Change:** <wwc@mail.rc.org>. Contact Julian Weissglass, International Commonality Reference Person for Wide World Change, at <weissglass@education.ucsb.edu>.

Leaders of **Women:** <women@mail.rc.org>. Contact Diane Balsler, International Liberation Reference Person for Women, at <dibalsler@comcast.net>.

Leaders of **Working-Class People:** <working-class@mail.rc.org>. Contact Dan Nickerson, International Liberation Reference Person for Working-Class People, at <dnickerson122@comcast.net>.

Leaders of **Young Adults:** <young-adults@mail.rc.org>. Contact Emily Bloch, International Liberation Reference Person for Young Adults, at <bloch.emily@gmail.com>.

Leaders of **Young People:** <young@mail.rc.org>. Contact Mari Piggott, International Liberation Reference Person for Young People, at <marikathleenp@yahoo.ca>.



BOB ROMERO

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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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