

Present Time No. 177 (Vol. 46, No. 4) **October 2014**



It is always possible for any individual to take the initiative in any situation.

Harvey Jackins

In this *Present Time*, Tim Jackins dares us not to be discouraged, a number of people share their thinking about Israel and Gaza, and other topics range from knee surgery to Tule Lake to climate change. Several articles are translated into Hebrew, Dutch, and French.

How are you applying RC in your part of the world? Consider writing something for *Present Time*! The deadline for articles for the January issue is November 17. And we'll need any changes to the back-pages lists by November 24.

Lisa Kauffman, editor

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Daring Not to Be Discouraged

From a talk by Tim Jackins¹ at the England Leaders' Workshop, January 2014

There are some young ones who were born after their folks had access to RC and our thinking about young people. Different efforts were made toward those young ones, and the effect was different—not yet good enough, but better. Most of the rest of us, who came into the world before anybody had any idea about RC, were faced with everyone around us still having been beaten down from living in an oppressive society.

Maybe they could surface out of their distresses at the joyous event of birth and really see a young one. Getting to be around a new arrival and see again what it is like to be a fresh human is often the brightest spot in people's lives. It can pull them out of their doldrums.² It can remind them that it really is a wonderful thing to exist as a human being. But, by and large,³ even if people popped out of their distresses momentarily, they were pulled back underneath the surface fairly quickly. And sometimes birth is tough enough on everybody that nobody pops out of distress, and the young ones come out looking and looking and see people like they are when they wake up in the morning trying to remember which direction is up. They come out and are hopeful, but there isn't any human mind showing. That's hard on them. They keep on being hopeful off and on for a while, and they try to discharge the distress of nobody being there to have a relationship with—they try to discharge it, but they don't get to.

If we don't get to discharge, then distress accumulates enough that at some point we give up. We stop trying. The discouragement builds and builds, and eventually we say, "I'm not going to do that again." "You're not going to trick me again." Somebody looked like they were there and they weren't. Maybe we went out and reached for other people and they got upset. Different things happened to each of us. However, because we all live in societies like this one, the overall effect was similar. We each have mounds of distresses that look the same from a distance. If we start working on them, we find that they are quite different constructions, but there's an overall effect, which is that we're discouraged. How do you wake up in the morning? Discouraged. Who do you tell? "What's the point? It didn't work."

As a small child, if you told someone you were sad, they said, "What's wrong? That's not so bad," or they fixed it for you. They fixed the thing instead of helping you with the hurt. There just wasn't the awareness that it could happen any other way. It wasn't that there was a unique mistake in your family. It had to happen. Those were the conditions that existed for everybody.



NANCY LEMON

Some children of Co-Counselors had it a little different. Their parents tried. They often couldn't do much, but they tried. That's significantly different. As a result, those young ones aren't quite so defeated. They are also a little grumpier. We, their parents, promised that it would be better and then we couldn't pull it off.⁴ We knew things could be better, we tried hard, and we couldn't do what we wanted. We put forward what we wanted rather than what we could do. That misled them in a certain way. But the effort had good effects. It was good that we made the effort.

GRIMLY ENDURING THE CHRONIC

So we're discouraged, and we have lived our lives in spite of it. It didn't kill us—that's an important point, it didn't kill us—but we did give up and go along with a whole bunch of distress. Doing that is hard on us individually. It also keeps the oppressive society going. With everyone discouraged, the society can go on being harsh and oppressive without anybody challenging it. Distresses like discouragement keep us from thinking and acting together and figuring out how to change things.

Where does your discouragement affect you? Well, where doesn't it? For most of us it's chronic, it's there all the time, though we can put a good face on it and keep going.

Because we are in RC, we know how to talk against it for someone else. If we teach RC, we know we are supposed to stand against every distress, and we have learned how

continued . . .

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

² "Doldrums" means stagnation and despondency.

³ "By and large" means in general.

⁴ "Pull it off" means make it happen.

... continued

to do that, at least in words. We can push in a somewhat rigid way to be hopeful. But we don't often work directly on the discouragement. It has become too much a part of our lives. It has gone numb and become chronic. If somebody challenges it, we get defensive. It sounds like the criticism we always got from our family and everyone else: "You're doing it wrong." So it's hard for most of us to keep in mind that it is something to work on.

Our struggles against this chronic material⁵ haven't been entirely in vain. We've made gains and kept moving. It hasn't stopped us entirely. But persevering in spite of a chronic, just grimly enduring it, is not the same as taking a direction against it. Not letting it kill us is a triumph, but it's a little short of what is possible for human beings.

ALL ABOUT THE PAST

So how do we work on distresses that we all have in common? Where is the contradiction?⁶ Where is the reference point? How do we see reality, especially with society getting worse and worse, more and more quickly? Mostly we go silent. No humor at all. (*laughter*) It's grim. It's grim. Well, the first thing to question is the grimness of it. Yes, the society is about to destroy itself—and it scares us—but it needs to be destroyed.

I think discouragement is always restimulation. Circumstances can be challenging, but without distresses that wouldn't be discouraging. Discouragement is never about present reality. It's about a lack of resource in the past. There wasn't enough resource that we could discharge the difficulties we ran into.

The discouragement has nothing to do with the present, nothing to do with our minds or our capabilities. It's entirely distress from the past.

We were defeated over and over again as children. Most of us can't even admit that. Not admitting it is how we kept going. We felt it, but we weren't going to admit it to anybody—as if it might give someone satisfaction. So we haven't worked on the defeats. How could we? We were so adamantly holding the position that they didn't happen.

This is all about the past. Because it is about the past, it can't hurt us now. We can't lose to it. It's done the damage it's going to do, and that damage has remained only because we haven't been able to discharge it. The question is, do we have the resource now to discharge it? I think so. I think we get to test that out. Besides, any effort against chronic material is always useful. It changes our perspective.

Sometimes discouragement can lead us to give up on ourselves and work on the distress by blaming other people. This misleads us. One of the earliest and hardest things that happens to all of us is that we give up on our minds. Because we get defeated and don't get to discharge it, we doubt our abilities, including our ability to make up our minds⁷ in spite of distress.

The discouragement has nothing to do with the present, nothing to do with our minds or our capabilities. It's entirely distress from the past. Yet every morning we wake up in the middle of it and it feels

thoroughly believable. Most of us figure out some way to get out of bed. We can all share our individual methods. I suggested to someone that she roll out of bed, fall on the floor, and crawl moaning to the bathroom. It's difficult to take your material seriously doing that.

Of course that's the problem. We believe the material. And we are waiting for someone to make it feel better, feel not so hard. That doesn't happen, because everybody has the same material. But our minds have power in spite of being hurt. We can make decisions in spite of the cloud of distress that may hang over us.

CHALLENGING THE DISCOURAGEMENT

Challenging chronic material brings up all the feelings connected with it. That's what always happens when we challenge a distress. It becomes accessible for discharge. We don't get to ignore it anymore. We don't get to be numb to it. Horrible things happened to us in our childhoods. They did. And we didn't have the resource to discharge them, so all of the feelings are still there.

They are feelings about the past. They are not about us, and we have complete power over them now. We can go back and look at one of those distresses, discouragement, and challenge it in our head. We can refuse to be discouraged in the present. All the feelings will come up, and we will have to hold our ground.

It feels unbearable. It really feels unbearable. It *was* unbearable. Why do you think you gave up? It was that bad. Nobody gives up before that point. What do you think you're going to find back there? You're going to find the thing that you turned away from. It can feel like a mistake to go after⁸ it. It can

⁵ "Material" means distress.

⁶ Contradiction to the distress

⁷ "Make up our minds" means make a decision.

⁸ "Go after" means pursue.

feel like you are letting it happen again. It can't happen again—but it's that hard, the feelings are that confusing. It was that bad. And it's over. You can get rid of it now, with discharge. You have enough resource here, I am quite sure, to make that happen.

We can look at where we first had to give up. As we start to discharge on it, it will change. It will go from unbearable to miserable. It will shift up the scale just slightly, and something interesting will happen in our understanding. If we look at any distress, think about it, and don't just throw ourselves back into it, we see it shift. With every little piece of discharge, something changes in our minds.

A NEW PERSPECTIVE

Most of us learned how to work on heavy distresses by going back and reliving what happened to us. It worked. That's why we are here. We went back believing that we were as small and hurt and victimized as we were back then, we discharged and discharged, and something moved. But that isn't the

only perspective we can work from, and it's not a perspective we want to stay in for too long. It confuses us about who we are now. It doesn't split us cleanly from our distresses. The bad event is over. It's done. It's not happening to us anymore. This time we're going back as an ally to the person it happened to. We're going back to finish an unfinished process. Back then we didn't have the conditions or the resource to finish it. I think we do now. We get less and less confused about our distresses as we discharge. I think we may be at the point where we can take on⁹ anything.

TURNING TO FACE IT

I want us to play with the idea of taking on the worst things that ever happened to us, and the chronic distress recordings that developed. Discouragement is the one that I want us to take on first. I want us daring not to be discouraged.

Do you know how different our faces would look? This is why I look

⁹ "Take on" means confront and do something about.

at babies. I look to see the curve of their lips before any tension gets there. It's not always the same curve, there are all these different ones, but there's this lovely sweet curve of muscles that don't have distress grabbing on to them. It's a sweet little indication that I look for. Our mouths could probably look like that, too. We could have a sweet little curve, a little upturned corner. We probably did. We can probably get it back. We just have a few distresses to pry off to undo how our muscles act all the time.

Do you dare to consider this? Think for a moment. Try to put your mind there. Don't just listen to me. Actually turn in your mind and try to challenge the discouragement. For some people, just sitting up tall and lifting their head is enough contradiction. In my mind I imagine a physical turn. I turn and face the thing that I walked away from forever. I face it and say, "Okay, it's my turn now. I lost, you beat me, it had to be that way, and now I am back." I turn, and whatever the challenge is in my mind, I make the decision to go there.

Actively Intervening as Counselor

There is a critical difference in modality between permissiveness and support only, and being an active antagonist of the pattern on behalf of the client. It is usually better to increase the amount of attention and resource first before resorting to any directions or manipulations of the pattern. However, once the pattern has been clearly exposed, and if the client's resources are insufficient, then the active, sharp intervention of the counselor is useful and is a qualitatively different activity.

*Harvey Jackins**
From a letter written in 1975

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



FRIESLAND, THE NETHERLANDS • WYTSKE VISSER

Echte Macht Zit in het Vermogen om te Ontladen

X—, een HC leraar in ons gebied¹, werd vaak ziek tijdens HC workshops, al vanaf haar eerste workshop 13 jaar geleden. Recentelijk is dit ook het geval na haar co-counselsessies.

Het is mij opgevallen dat mensen zich bij haar diepe ontlading ongemakkelijk voelen. Er zijn meerdere ondoordachte pogingen geweest om mijn counselen van haar te onderbreken. En het is mij opgevallen dat counsel-richtingen van anderen eerder de ontlading verminderen in plaats van groter maken.

Ik vermoed dat de “onderdrukking op ontlading” maakt, dat we allemaal worstelen met het zo volledig mogelijk gebruiken van sessies. Elke cultuur heeft hier zo zijn eigen variant van.

Het is voor mij zinvol geweest om voor workshops naar andere plaatsen te reizen zodat ik me open kon stellen voor diepere ontlading. Wanneer ik dan weer naar mijn eigen land terugkeerde was het alsof er een dikke deken over mij neerdaalde zodra ik de grens overstak. Door de jaren heen werd de deken dunner en dunner, zo dun als een laken. Ik kreeg steeds meer ruimte om voor mijzelf te vechten en voor mijn vermogen om te ontladen binnen mijn eigen cultuur bij mijn eigen mensen.

We hadden het hierover in onze leidersgroep en er ontstond² een plan voor de komende gebiedswerkshop. Toen X— zoals verwacht rond 4u op zaterdagmiddag, ziek werd, begonnen we met een drie uur durende sessie voor haar, met mij als hoofdcounselor (ik werd kort vervangen zodat ik kon gaan eten). We slaagden er in toenemende mate in om haar aandacht van de angst voor misselijkheid te

verplaatsen naar het ontladen van zware angst. Zij kreeg ook duidelijk meer macht over de sessie doordat wij de ontlading aanmoedigden en de verzekering gaven dat zij het heel goed deed door diepere ontlading toe te laten. De veranderingen waren heel duidelijk: minder misselijk, minder overgeven, meer zweten en meer snelle wisselingen tussen warm en koud. Daarna hebben we haar sessie voortgezet als demonstratie voor de gehele workshop. Gedurende de mini-sessies ontladde de groep ook heftig.

Ik heb uitgelegd wat ik dacht dat we ontdekt hadden: *dat bijna alle afleidende gedachten letterlijke opnamen waren van de vroege pijn en dat deze opnamen de ontlading onderbreken en ons vermogen om alles uit sessies te halen hinderen.*

De volgende ochtend stond het counselen-van-de-leider op het programma. Ik kon van het begin tot het eind huilen omdat er zoveel goede aandacht was. Het niveau van ontlading bleef de rest van de dag hoog. En meerdere mensen hadden in de weken na de workshop nog steeds grote sessies. Meerderen hebben nu een groter idee van vechten voor hun wederopbloei. Het lijkt erop dat we enige belangrijke stappen vooruit gezet hebben.

Het counselen met aandacht van de pijn af is iets heel anders dan counselen met de aandacht van ontlading af. Het volgende artikel vond ik erg bruikbaar en relevant: “Away from Distress’ Doesn’t Mean Repressing Discharge,” door Sue Lemon en Harvey Jackins, op pagina 27 van *Present Time* No. 62.

Er zijn een aantal redenen waarom we onze zwaardere ontlading inhouden. We verwarren ontlading met pijn gedaan worden. We

verlangen naar het gemak van een leven zonder pijn. We zijn bang om liefde, vriendschap, verdriet, boosheid en angst volledig te voelen en te laten zien. We zijn bang om “gek”³ gevonden te worden. We zijn bang van en vermijden onze gevoelens over oorlog, conflicten en geweld. We zijn bang om de verschrikkingen die onze voorouders pleegden en ondergingen onder ogen te zien.

In ‘t kort, we zijn bang om te voelen, bewust te zijn en te ontladen hoe slecht we ons voelen en hoe slecht we ons voelen over onszelf. Maar dit is nodig om te gaan begrijpen hoe onderdrukking werkt, wat de rol is van instituties en hoe de maatschappij moet veranderen. Zonder dat inzicht blijven we zitten met een beperkt beeld van de werkelijkheid en kunnen we alleen maar de fouten van onze voorouders herhalen.

Twintig jaar geleden begon ik met een eenvoudige richting: “Ik ben bang om te laten zien hoe ik me voel!”. Daarmee begon ik langzaam te morrelen aan de eerste laagjes angst.

Sindsdien poog ik steeds om het verschil tussen *de aandacht van de pijn af en de aandacht van ontlading af* en het verschil tussen *goed zijn en slecht voelen* te laten zien en uit te leggen. Ik heb geprobeerd te laten zien dat onze werkelijk macht ligt in ons vermogen om te ontladen.

Frank van den Heuvel
Nieuwegein, Nederland
Herdruckt van de e-mail-lijst
voor HC leraren

³ “Gek” in de betekenis van “krankzinnig”



¹ Een gebied is een lokale HC gemeenschap.

² Ontstond betekent dat we het met elkaar bedachten.

English translation of the preceding article:

Real Power Lies in the Ability to Discharge

X—, an RC teacher in our Area,¹ has gotten sick during RC workshops ever since her first workshop thirteen years ago. Lately this has happened after her Co-Counseling sessions as well.

I have noticed that people are uneasy around her deep discharge. There have been several unaware attempts to interrupt my counseling of her, and I have noticed that when others counsel her, their directions often limit, instead of encourage, deeper discharge.

I think that the “oppression of discharge” makes all of us struggle with using sessions as fully as possible. Every culture has its own variation of this.

It has been useful for me to travel to workshops in other places to open myself up to deeper discharge. For many years, when I returned to my own country, it was like a thick blanket dropped over me as soon as I crossed the border. Over the years the blanket became thinner; then it became a sheet. I got more and more space to fight for myself and my ability to discharge within my own culture and with my own people.

We discussed this in our leaders’ group and came up with² a plan for our upcoming Area workshop. When X— got sick as expected, around 4:00 PM on Saturday, we started a three-hour session for her, with me as her main counselor (I got some time off to eat). We managed to increasingly move her attention from (fear of) sickness to the discharge of heavy fear. We also got her more in control of the session by encouraging discharge and reassuring her that she was doing the right thing by allowing deeper discharge. There were obvious changes: less nausea, less throwing up,³ more sweating, and more and more rapid changes between warm and cold. After that, her session continued as a demonstration in front of the whole workshop, and during the mini-sessions the whole group discharged heavily.

I explained what I thought we’d discovered: *that almost all distracting thoughts are literal early distress recordings, and that these recordings interrupt discharge and our ability to get full results from our sessions.*

¹ An Area is a local RC Community.

² “Came up with” means thought of.

³ “Throwing up” means vomiting.

The next morning we did counsel-the-leader. I got to cry from beginning to end because there was so much good attention. The level of discharge stayed high during that day, and several people kept having big sessions in the weeks following the workshop. Several now have a bigger awareness of fighting for their re-emergence. It looks like we made some important progress.

Counseling with attention away from distress is very different from counseling with attention away from discharge. I have found the following article useful and relevant: “‘Away from Distress’ Doesn’t Mean Repressing Discharge,” by Sue Lemon and Harvey Jackins, on page 27 of *Present Time* No. 62.

We limit our heavy discharge for a number of reasons. We confuse discharge with being hurt. We long for the comfort of a life without pain. We are afraid to fully feel and show love, friendship, grief, anger, and fear. We are afraid of being “mad.”⁴ We are afraid of and avoid our feelings about war, conflict, and violence. We are afraid to look at the horrors our ancestors committed and endured.

In summary, we are afraid to notice, feel, and discharge how bad we feel and how bad we feel about ourselves. But we need to do this to fully understand how oppression works, to understand the role of institutions and how society needs to change. Otherwise we can stay stuck with a limited picture of reality and repeat the mistakes our ancestors made.

Twenty years ago I started with a simple direction, “I am afraid of showing my feelings!” I slowly began to scrape off the first layers of fear.

I have since made many attempts to show and explain to people the difference between attention off of distress and attention off of discharge and the difference between *being* good and *feeling* bad. I have tried to show that real power lies in the ability to discharge.

Frank van den Heuvel
Nieuwegein, The Netherlands
Translated by Frank van den Heuvel

Reprinted from the e-mail
discussion list for RC teachers

⁴ “Mad” means “crazy.”

“Awesome! Joyful! Wonderful! Fulfilling!”

I have grown to appreciate restimulations. They point me to the hurt. They show me my distress patterns. My appreciation for them began after I experienced two specific restimulations with my Co-Counselors. Although we had committed to having at least a one-hour (each) session each week, two weeks passed with no sessions. I needed sessions so much, but both my Co-Counselors could not make time in their busy schedules. I felt isolated and neglected, and upset that they were not honouring their commitment.

I decided to discharge on isolation, unfulfilled promises, and a man in my life who had hurt me. It worked! I realised that the feelings were not about my Co-Counselors but about me and my hurts. I discharged. I forgave. I healed. I re-emerged. No more fuzzy clouding in that area of my mind. I was thinking straight and clearly. I took back my power. My decisiveness was restored. I felt inner joy. I became happy and more appreciative.

I am enjoying life. I am like a butterfly that flies over each person and makes their life brighter. My name, Sunshine, has become vibrant. I now purposely bring sunshine to many people's lives. I read more RC literature and other inspirational books. A writer of life-transforming books has also emerged in me. I'm currently writing three different books. I love my life.

My Co-Counselors and I are now so committed. We have one-hour-each-way sessions at least three days a week. We have pushed ourselves to have sessions more frequently as we have realised their great effectiveness and the wonderful experience of re-emerging.

Our Co-Counseling group is fifteen-plus people. We have a healthy emerging Community. We've decided to start a new RC class to reach out to more people. It is Awesome! Joyful! Wonderful! Fulfilling! Thank you for RC!

Nosmilo Sunshine Dlamini
Manzini, Swaziland



Daily Sessions on Skype

I have been doing early-morning twenty-minute sessions on Skype¹ with the same Co-Counselor almost every weekday for the past five years. It started out during a difficult time in my life as a single session once a week between other sessions. Over time we both realized that something important was happening and decided to do it more often even though there was no overwhelming crisis in either of our lives. Eventually it became a daily early-morning check-in.

We both have come to realize how useful a regular and enduring exchange of time has been for our mutual re-emergence. We have built up a huge degree of trust in each other, as well as enough perspective on each other's chronic patterns that we can readily recognize and interrupt them. Daily discharge with the same person has helped me think more deeply and discharge more often about RC theory. It's empowering.

She's a raised-middle-class Jewish woman, and I am a raised-poor-and-working-class ex-Catholic. She totally spots and solidly contradicts the internalized oppression of feeling powerless, stupid, and afraid of visibility that tends to stop me from going all out² or thinking big. It's made a big change in the kinds of projects I take on³ in the wide world, my art, and my Community.

She says that knowing she will have a session in the morning allows her to notice when she is being restimulated and that therefore she thinks more objectively about whatever the restimulation is. She thinks, "Huh, that's interesting. I'll have to tell my counselor about how that thing got to me."⁴ Then she consciously chooses not to react until she has taken time to discharge on it. She says it has made a huge difference in her marriage and her other family relationships.

Suvan Geer
Santa Ana, California, USA
Reprinted from the e-mail discussion
list for RC Community members

¹ Skype is a way of communicating with another person by voice or video over the Internet.

² "Going all out" means acting with full determination or enthusiasm.

³ "Take on" means undertake.

⁴ "Got to me" means upset me.

A New Relationship with My Bathroom Scale

I've been trying out a new relationship with my bathroom scale, with weighing myself.

Many years ago I participated in a weight-loss program with weekly weigh-ins. I had lots of dread and a sense of failure in seeing the numbers go up or stay the same when I felt I had tried my best. Of course there were moments of joy when I would have a lower number on the scale, but ultimately, over weeks and years, I gained gradually—until several years ago when I was able to stop gaining and start to lose. I have much still to discharge about all this, but I've come to understand that I was giving too much power to the scale and not noticing my own.

For some time, and almost all the time since I've been with the Large Women's Health Project,¹ I have held a position that I can discharge and think about what's useful in weight loss. At first I concluded that this meant not using a mechanical guide (scale). I'd come to see it as rigid, unyielding, and unappreciative of my efforts, as it refused to give me the at-least-one-pound I was sure I'd lost (I am trying to be funny). I decided to put attention on discharging and thinking about my body, on recordings² related to it, on food and connection, on eating well and exercising, and kind of³ ignored the scale. I continued to gradually lose and the occasional weighing was not so restimulating, but at times I got stuck and would struggle a bit before I could get back on track.

About a year ago, I decided to be more aware and focused, to take charge and think about how to keep myself moving on my goal of being healthy,

including continuing to weigh less. I thought the scale could help. I figured it was useful to know what I weighed and to think about how to use the scale as a guide to keep moving forward in the direction I wanted. So I started to weigh myself daily and record my weight. Then if I was not moving forward, I would think and discharge about what I needed to do to make that happen. I wasn't depending on this unthinking, unfeeling object (more humor); I was depending on my mind. I would think and discharge and aim myself toward making decisions about nutrition and activity that would allow my body to move in the direction I wanted. I began to think better about the food and activity choices in front of me.



BURMA • MAURA FALLON

As part of trusting myself to be able to think, I continued to not give myself a rigid direction for what I couldn't eat. Nothing was forbidden; I got to think about what made sense for what I wanted for my health. I noticed when my body did not respond well to some foods. I noticed when I just wanted to eat and when I was hungry or needed nutrition. It was useful to see positive progression, but if I didn't progress, I was not worried. I kept to my course and noticed what I learned. My scale's job was to show a number. My job was to use my flexible intelligence. I kept thinking about what I learned and fine-tuning my caring for myself.

I got to notice more about how my body worked. For example, if the same number showed on the scale for three or five or ten days, or a month, and if I kept thinking well (using what I know about food and activity and discharging what feelings came up), then eventually the number would decrease. I began to pay attention to the fact that when I began feeling good about losing weight, and particularly when others noticed, I'd get scared and start struggling (or, simply said, I would want to eat everything in sight and could not tell³ I was full). So I discharged on the recordings that come up when I get attention to my appearance.

My efforts are ongoing, but I feel more in charge more of the time. I feel more of a sense of possibility, more pleased about my body, more enjoyment in moving it. Several times a day, often in front of a mirror, I stretch, dance, or do some exercises or notice my body and my posture and am pleased with myself. I am more accountable to myself. This is not because I'm worrying about what the

continued . . .

¹ The Large Women's Health Project started about ten years ago, with a small group of large women RC leaders coming together to use RC to move forward the work on their health. The group has met at least annually since then.

² Distress recordings

³ "Kind of" means somewhat.

³ "Tell" notice, perceive.

COUNSELING PRACTICE

... continued

scale is going to show. It's because I'm noticing and discharging what I need to in order to keep my decision to think well about my body. If the number is not moving, my banter to the scale might be, "Okay. You're showing me reality. I'm going to keep thinking and acting better and show *you*."

So the scale in my bathroom is a guide. It's calibrated to give me a reliable number. I do the thinking and discharging and re-evaluating, because I am in charge of setting things up so the numbers move the way I want. I think better about how I use other resources toward achieving my goals—resources such as relationships and connection with people and learning more about nutrition for a healthy body.

I treat most recordings like the scale, particularly the ones that impact my body (but don't they all?). I discharge on the many hurts from sexism, racism, and classism, as they all have negative

messages that have an impact on my sense of myself. I remind myself that I, not the messages, am in charge. I keep in mind that recordings from oppression are designed to keep us feeling bad, small, not capable, like we can't think. They are recordings and not what is true about me, or any one of us. I've noticed how the messages in the world about body size, weight, and eating are imbued with messages that we can't think and need to be told what to do. I can think. We all can think. I am not a helpless pawn to the rhetoric.

Connections with other humans are key. I belong to two large-women's groups that have been encouraging and an important resource. I know that the other women and I are buddies in this effort for our health. It has also made a difference to have one relationship in which I can tell that I am completely all right, completely loved no matter what. At the toughest times of doubt and

hesitation, I can look out and follow this beam of reality to that person's mind and be reminded of what is true about me.

I've found that old habits of reaching unthinkingly toward food out of feelings are considerably lessened. I am more in touch with an internal censor that says that those habits aren't useful for me. I almost never crave for more and more of something I thought was "good" or "tasty." I find my old favorite pastries so uninteresting. A lifetime of pulls toward sugar and breads seems to have faded. It's possible that any of these habits and feelings could be restimulated enough to show up again, but if so, I will remind myself that I can think about what is good for me. I know that I can think and decide and that the recordings are not in charge. My mind is.

Marion Ouphouet
Seattle, Washington, USA

Play with No Limits



AM



The last time we had a playdate, my nephew seemed to be having difficulty being in charge of our play and seeing an array of play options. Despite being told he could do anything he wanted, he tended to pick only activities that he thought his caregiver would like and approve of.



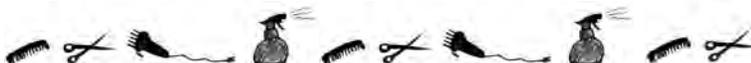
My pressuring him to try something new was not helpful. So I began suggesting silly, illogical, or impossible things I wanted to do—like sit around and pick our noses, dig a hole to Antarctica in the backyard, or just sleep. Then I pretended to be asleep, snored real loud, talked nonsense about him in my sleep, and shifted around a bunch while "accidentally" hitting him lightly. I kept the unrealistic ideas going, insisting they were what I really wanted to do during playtime.



His face was bright and wide-eyed. He smiled and laughed a lot, repeatedly telling me my ideas were wrong, bad, and impossible and that I was not smart. After hearing this, I'd slightly change the ideas, because I wanted to let him know that I was listening and understanding his reasoning.



He discharged. It also seemed like he was feeling more safety to let his mind wander to new domains of play.



Patty Kavanaugh

Austin, Texas, USA

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

A Goal-Setting Group for Friends

I want to tell you all about a cool¹ thing I've been doing lately with my friends. This past winter I started a "goal setting and reaching, and also having fun" group for about a dozen female young adult friends of mine. I started it because I noticed that my friends and I have some beautiful dreams and goals but we struggle with taking steps toward accomplishing them, which often leaves us feeling pretty² stuck.



SWITZERLAND • HOLLY JORGENSEN

looking forward to getting out of⁸ a group like this and one thing they did not want to have happen. People said great things. Although everyone was excited about the group, people were also way⁹ more scared about it than I had realized they would be, which was interesting. We also came up with¹⁰ some ground rules. These included confidentiality, no judging the content of anyone's goals, and remembering that everyone is always doing their best.

I remember Harvey³ saying that happiness has been defined as "overcoming of obstacles on the way to a goal of one's own choosing." I thought that my friends and I would be more effective at reaching our goals if we felt actively supported by each other in overcoming the obstacles. I was also inspired by an RC class I'd attended on goal setting and a meeting of our Regional⁴ young adult support group that I'd led on goals.

Shortly after the New Year, I sent out an e-mail inviting about a dozen young adult women in my life to a potluck to talk about forming a group about actually accomplishing some of those resolutions we'd made on New Year's Eve. Half of the people I invited were close friends of mine; others I knew a little but wanted to know more. Most lived nearby; a few I invited to "Skype in"⁵ from other states. The group included people from a wide range of class backgrounds and sexual identities and ranged in age from twenty-three to thirty-one. Almost everyone responded back enthusiastically. The people I didn't know well were actually the most excited about it. They felt honored to be included. (So much for my feelings⁶ that they wouldn't like me or would think the group was stupid!)

In our first meeting, after a lot of eating and hanging out,⁷ I had everyone go around and say one thing they were

Then I gave a little talk (I called it "Emma's Inspirational Speech"). I was most nervous about this part. However, even though I was worried that my friends would think it was totally bizarre and presumptuous, I decided to do it anyway. I talked about young adult oppression and women's oppression and how they can get in the way of going after¹¹ what we want. I talked about the importance of having goals and dreams and how we never have to settle for anything less than everything. I told them how much I liked them and said that whatever their goals were—they could be anything—I wanted to be a part of helping them reach them. I talked about how as young adults in "radical" circles, we sometimes have a tendency to disengage from society and think that's a way of being radical when often it is colluding with the oppressive society, which is happy for us to disengage (that was the scariest thing to say).

Afterward people clapped! We discussed what I'd said. Then we did some brainstorming and journaling about our goals and did another go-around in which we shared some goals we'd come up with. I asked people to think about goals for themselves, for their communities, and for the world (as Harvey does in *The Necessity of Long Range Goals*¹²). They shared different, but all really awesome, goals. A lot of what they shared was a clear contradiction to their chronic material.¹³ I felt like I got to know them better really fast.

continued . . .

¹ "Cool" means fun, fantastic.

² "Pretty" means quite.

³ Harvey Jackins

⁴ A Region is a subdivision of the International Re-evaluation Counseling Community, usually consisting of several Areas (local RC Communities).

⁵ "Skype in" means communicate by voice or video over the Internet.

⁶ "So much for my feelings" means it revealed that my feelings weren't true.

⁷ "Hanging out" means spending relaxed, unstructured time with each other.

⁸ In this context, "getting out of" means receiving from.

⁹ In this context, "way" means much.

¹⁰ "Came up with" means created, thought of.

¹¹ "Going after" means pursuing.

¹² A pamphlet by Harvey Jackins that is also a chapter in *The Human Situation*

¹³ "Material" means distress.

COUNSELING PRACTICE

... continued

Here's how the group has continued:

I had envisioned it meeting every month, but people were so enthusiastic that we decided to try meeting every two weeks. At our second meeting, we set up “goal partnerships”—everyone got a partner and committed to checking in with her, over the phone or in person, about their goals at least once between meetings. We had to do a *lot* of laughing about this. Everyone had feelings about people not wanting to be paired with them, or their not wanting to be paired with certain people. After a lot of laughter, we decided to pick names out of a hat (with the caveat that if we picked someone we were in a romantic or roommate relationship with, we had to pick someone else). We also decided to switch partners after a few months. I reminded them that all of us would be great people to pick and encouraged us all to keep laughing, which we did.

The goal partnerships have been awesome. My “partner” is someone whom I didn't know well before, but now we meet at a coffee shop once every few weeks (at least every month) and take turns telling each other about our lives, encouraging each other, and helping each other strategize. At one meeting, I told her, as an aside, that I had been meaning to send in my excise tax bill for weeks and had kept forgetting. She walked me to the post office so I could send it! For the first time in three years I will not pay a late excise-tax fine. We also started texting¹⁴ each other after accomplishing certain things. I had a goal to learn Spanish and go running regularly, and I texted her when I set up a meeting with a Spanish tutor and contacted a running buddy about going running every week. She wrote back, “Yayyyy! You're so amazing!” I wrote back similar texts to her when she did things she had wanted to do. Most people are happy with their partners, and many don't want to switch when it comes time to do that.

¹⁴ “Texting” is text messaging, the sending of a short text message from one cell phone to another.



RANDI FREUNDLICH

Starting with the third meeting, our groups have followed this format:

We each share recent “goal successes.” This is kind of like a “new and good” but specific to our identified goals (people have told me this is their favorite part of the group, that in between meetings they save up “goal successes” to share). Then one person (or two, depending on the time) gets “workshopped”¹⁵ (we are still trying to come up with a better word). She thinks out loud for five minutes (I set a timer) about a particular goal-related issue in her life for which she's looking for support. Then the group has a chance to ask clarifying questions. After the person being workshopped feels confident that everyone understands what she's said, all the group members have two minutes to respond with their thoughts. Everyone speaks once before someone can speak twice. After everyone has responded, the person being workshopped has a chance to add anything or ask an additional question. Then the other people have another (shorter) chance to respond. The whole process ends up taking forty-five minutes to an hour. Once we're done, one or two people volunteer to be workshopped at the next meeting.

Then we do “show and tell.” People get to share their successes, and we get to cheer them on. One friend's main goal was to “have more fun and joy in her life” (she works at an extremely draining social-service job). She used the show-and-tell time to show off new songs she'd learned on her banjo. Another friend who wants to get into the fashion business showed us a music video she had designed the costumes for. One of my goals was to live in an environment that reflected beauty and order. After I spent two full days cleaning and redecorating my room, I took pictures of it and showed them to the group. My visual-artist friend finished a short graphic book and we got to see the first copy.

A lot of wonderful things have come out of this group. For one thing, all of us get together every two to four weeks (in practice, it varies) and talk with each other about real things going on in our lives. That in itself is a success! But I have also heard from people that the contradiction¹⁶ of the group has enabled them to do things they didn't think possible. For example, my visual-artist friend is terrified of promoting her work and being visible. We workshopped her last month, and she asked if we thought it would be a good idea for her to start a Kickstarter campaign¹⁷ for

¹⁵ “Workshopped” is a term usually used in writing classes, where it means members of the class providing feedback to a writer about his or her piece.

¹⁶ Contradiction to distress

¹⁷ A “Kickstarter campaign” is a campaign on the Kickstarter website in which an artist can raise funds for a creative project from many individual donors.

her next artistic project. We all said yes and helped her think through concretely how to do that. She put together a Kickstarter, which will go live next week. She says that without the goals group she would never have taken that step. Her art is amazing, and I am excited for the world to see it.

Last week I got to be the one workshopped. I just graduated from a master's program and am trying to decide what to do with my life (you know, no big deal). I laid out three directions I thought my life could go in and said that I didn't know which way to go first. People asked good questions and gave good thinking, which made it clear that they knew me well and were thinking about what would be best for me. While it's of course super useful to discharge in RC about feelings of not knowing what to do with my life, and get counseling input from my counselors, there was something so sweet about getting input in a somewhat formal way from my closest friends—who also know my material, although they wouldn't call it that. I didn't come out of the meeting knowing exactly what I wanted to do, but I felt like a lot more was possible and I felt more excited about the future.

The group has also helped our individual relationships. Although we each have only one official "goal partner," it's been easier for me to ask any member of the group for her thinking about something, and vice versa. We're starting to see each other as resources in a way we didn't before.

The group has met seven times since late January, with no fewer than six people at each meeting. I've had feelings come up about the group—like that I was the only one committed to it, that organizing these flaky¹⁸ people was impossible, that no one would ever get the hang of¹⁹ the timer, that I wasn't being appreciated enough, and so on. All nonsense. As someone reminded me at our last meeting, this group is actually the most successful sustained endeavor that most of the people in it have ever been a part of.

My next step is getting these people into RC! Three of them went through a fundamentals class before the group started but didn't continue. I'm hoping that when I get certified to teach I can get them back in. In the meantime, the group is a way for me to lead my friends outside of RC, and encourage them to lead each other. It's amazing what people's minds can do with just a little information and a little aware encouragement and support. It's been a re-emergent project. I'd recommend it!



Emma Roderick
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Reprinted from the RC e-mail discussion
list for leaders of young adults

¹⁸ "Flaky" means unreliable, erratic.

¹⁹ "Get the hang of" means understand how to use.

A Believable Contradiction

Question: People are insisting on saying, "I am a wonderful person," when actually "I'm okay" is bringing the discharge. They say the latter is too much of an understatement and we ought to go for¹ the whole thing.

Harvey: A client is doing fine if they're already discharging on the "okay." It needs to be believable. I remember when we first started validating ourselves. I would ask people to say, "I'm a wonderful person," and they would discharge all over the place, one person after the other. So I said to Mary,² "I want to try this." And she said, "All right. Say, 'I'm a wonderful person.'" I said, "I'm a wonderful person," about ten times. Nothing happened. So I sat there discouraged, and she didn't have any ideas. Suddenly a thought crossed my mind. I said, "I'm not the worst son of a bitch³ that every lived." Yawn, yawn, yawn. It was believable. It wants to be⁴ a believable contradiction.⁵

Harvey Jackins
From the 1986 Peace and
Disarmament Activists' Workshop

¹ "Go for" means try for.

² Mary McCabe, a key early developer of Re-evaluation Counseling

³ "Son of a bitch" is an oppressive term for an illegitimate child and means an offensive or disagreeable person.

⁴ "Wants to be" means needs to be.

⁵ Contradiction to the distress



Two Knee Replacements, with Discharge



In January 2014 I had the first of two knee-replacement surgeries. I had prepared for it by watching the surgery on YouTube, having lots of sessions about it, discussing with my surgeon how I wanted it to go, strengthening the muscles around my knee, and arranging for one-way counseling sessions after the surgery. I was able to do it with a spinal instead of a general anesthetic, and without sedation, and to watch the surgery (and talk with the surgeon) as it happened.

As an RC leader, I have lived my life with a minimum of drugs that numb pain, but I had never before faced such a big surgery. I knew that the pain would be intense and expected that I might have to take some narcotics. I did not object to anti-inflammatory or non-narcotic pain-relieving drugs, like Tylenol and Toradol, but I wanted to keep the narcotics to a minimum to avoid the negative effects on my mind. And I wanted the chance to feel and discharge everything fully. The surgery certainly gave me that chance!

After the surgery, I spent two nights in the hospital (a normal period to stay). Many Co-Counselors came in to counsel me, and I tried not to use narcotic drugs. Though I discharged intense pain for many hours on the first night, I ended up taking a low dose of narcotics for about twenty-four hours.

Afterward it became clear, from many sessions on the experience, that heavy early recordings¹ of “this is horrible, it’s never going to stop, there’s nothing I can do to stop it, and no one will help me” undermined my ability to feel the

pain and stay with discharging it instead of using drugs. So between the two surgeries, I spent many of my Co-Counseling sessions working on these early recordings. Having the first surgery, and feeling the pain as much as I’d been able to, allowed me to discharge my early material² in a much fuller, more alive way than before the surgery. Also, the huge contradiction³ of so many people supporting me through that first surgery let me feel that my counselors were with me in a way that I hadn’t been able to feel before. These have been permanent gains for me.

I wanted to . . . push myself to face something difficult, to work deeply on early material, and to discharge a lot right after the surgery and see how that affected the pain in the months of rehabilitation.

My rehabilitation from the first surgery was fast but very painful. I basically cried my way through six hours a day of rehabilitation for the first three weeks and then three hours a day for another couple of months. I didn’t use any painkillers after the time in the hospital. The surgeon was surprised by and pleased with how well I had done, but he couldn’t hear me tell him how important discharge had been. (He thinks I have a high pain threshold. Ha! It had really hurt!)

² “Material” means distress.

³ Contradiction to distress

In the following months, I continued to discharge many hours on the surgery and on the pain of rehabilitation.

With my second surgery, I felt that I had been given a big gift—the opportunity to get to do something hard a second time knowing exactly what would be involved. My main goal with both surgeries was to do everything possible to have the strongest and best-functioning knees I could have. I knew that having minimal drugs during the surgeries and pushing hard without drugs in the rehabilitation were important. But after the experience of the first surgery, I wanted to use the second one for some additional goals: to see how far I could push myself to face something difficult, to work deeply on early material, and to discharge a lot right after the surgery and see how that affected the pain in the months of rehabilitation. I could see that the second surgery was a window of opportunity for a lot of deep, powerful work on early material and pain.

Before the second surgery, I talked with the surgeon and the anesthesiologist and asked them not to give me any narcotics during the surgery. The surgeon wanted to use a small amount of morphine in a cocktail of drugs (mostly anti-inflammatory and local-anesthetic) that he was going to inject into the knee before sewing up the wound. After we discussed it, he agreed to reduce the narcotic to the minimum amount, which I agreed to in order to move the surgery forward.

The second surgery went well. It was very similar to the first. But I asked the surgeon to consider discharging me the first evening if

¹ Distress recordings

I was doing okay, and he agreed. (This is very, very unusual.) I worked hard to be in shape⁴ to go home by evening.

After the first surgery, I'd had trouble with low blood pressure on the first day and been unable to get out of bed. I prepared for that before the second surgery by taking iron supplements for a month (to build up my red blood cell count in preparation for losing blood in the surgery), by eating and drinking a lot the day before, by eating a lot of protein and vegetables and drinking a lot of fluids right after the surgery, and, of course, by discharging lots of fear. After the second surgery, I had no problems with blood pressure and was able to get up and out of bed during the first day. I participated fully in physical therapy that afternoon, including walking more than a hundred feet down the hall (with the help of a walker).

As the spinal anesthetic wore off in the early afternoon, I kept discharging on the pain and issues related to the surgery. Like the first time, I was urged to take a lot of painkillers and other drugs, and once again I declined. I said that I wouldn't take them until I needed them, that I had other ways of reducing pain. Only one health practitioner that day (out of many) was interested in what that other way was.

The surgeon returned in the afternoon and agreed that I could leave after physical therapy. I got home at 8:00 p.m., as the pain was intensifying quite a bit. I had arranged to have two teams of Co-Counselors (two people on each team) with me through the night (from 10:00 p.m. to 6:00 a.m.) so that I could discharge the pain and use a

minimum of medication. (After the first surgery, I'd had two counselors with me the first night, but it hadn't been enough resource. The two teams worked much better.)

By midnight the pain was about eight on a scale of ten, and I was discharging steadily on it. Once it reached the nine to ten level (a little after midnight), I did many hours of deep sobbing about how much I hurt, the fact that no one could help me (the counselors could be close and listen to me, but only I could put my mind on the pain and discharge it), the brutality of the surgery (which involved cutting into my knee, drilling into my bones, sawing off the ends of them, pounding on them, clipping off bone spurs), and how I felt that I couldn't do it much longer. Early material connected to these topics was easily available (I had been working on it since the first surgery eight months before), but when the pain became extremely intense, most of my attention had to simply be on how much it hurt, on discharging the pain directly. I could never have done that in the hospital. It's so great that the surgeon trusted me enough to let me go home.

My highlight of the night of the surgery was understanding in the middle of it that while I was experiencing what felt like the worst feeling of my life (the intense, unrelenting pain), I was at the same time having one of the best experiences of my life—being connected enough to my counselors, and having them understand enough about what I needed as client, that I could discharge heavily through the hours of pain.

A little after 5:00 a.m. we all ran out of attention,⁵ and I took ten milligrams of oxycodone (first I took five, but that did nothing, so a half hour later I took another five). That brought the pain down to a level of seven or eight. A few hours later it wore off and the pain increased again, but not to the same level as the night before. I took another ten milligrams of oxycodone (same as before—first five, and then another five when the first five weren't enough) so that I could go to physical therapy. After that wore off, the pain did not increase again and I didn't take any more narcotics.

⁵ "Ran out of attention" means had no attention left.

continued . . .



PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA, USA • SUE EDWARDS

⁴ "Shape" means condition.

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The rest of that day I focused on discharging how hard the night before had been. My body still hurt all over, and lots of feelings were up from handling so much pain. I had several big sessions recounting the experience. I also spent over six hours doing my physical therapy exercises and other things to keep flexing, extending, and strengthening the knee.

I had not slept since the surgery, but my knee was too painful to allow more than a five-minute nap. I discharged and strategized about how to sleep without using drugs, and that night I had one counselor stay with me to help me during the night. I woke her up many times, and for a few hours I was able to sleep in fifteen- to twenty-minute segments. Walking with crutches helped me take my attention off the pain (it hurt less than sitting and paying attention to the pain). I walked quite a bit throughout the night. The following day was similar.

Then on Saturday, three days after the surgery, my knee didn't hurt much. I kept discharging, had a massage, and walked a lot.

It's pretty clear to me that the discharging I did right after the first surgery, and between the two surgeries, cleared out a lot of the pain recordings I had accumulated over my lifetime, and that this time most of the pain I am discharging is the actual pain from the surgery, without the backlog of old pain recordings.

Mostly my knee didn't hurt unless I pressed on it or strained it.

The next morning, I woke up to realize that my knee had not hurt at all during the night and that I had slept well for about six hours. Since then there has been little pain unless I overuse the knee or press directly on the wound. When there is pain, it doesn't take much discharge for it to disappear.

Now, on Monday, I'm walking without crutches most of the time. During my exercises and throughout the day I'm experiencing a lot

less pain than I did after the first surgery. It's pretty⁵ clear to me that the discharging I did right after the first surgery, and between the two surgeries, cleared out a lot of the pain recordings I had accumulated over my lifetime, and that this time most of the pain I am discharging is the actual pain from the surgery, without the backlog of old pain recordings.

AFTER FOUR WEEKS

My knee has continued to heal quickly, and I am very mobile. I'm experiencing quite a bit less pain this time with the rehabilitation process (mostly bending and straightening the leg, to get maximum flexion and extension, and strengthening the muscles around the knee). Because there's less pain I can do more, so I'm reaching the rehabilitation goals more quickly. Twice in the first week I took a dose of Tylenol (in addition to doing sessions and applying ice packs) to cut the pain enough to be able to sleep, but that is the only time I have taken drugs since the day after the surgery.

Diane Shisk
Seattle, Washington, USA

⁵ "Pretty" means quite.



TIM JACKINS

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

Loud Sessions

Tim Jackins answering a question at the England Leaders' Workshop, January 2014

Question: When someone gets loud in a Co-Counseling session, it sometimes seems to un-numb something that is preventing discharge. But it can also be distracting to people outside the session. Can you talk about loud sessions?

Tim Jackins: Loud sessions can be really useful. Most of us were made to be quiet. All societies try to keep things as quiet and smooth as possible as they creep their way to destruction. For most of us, making any noise at all, trying to object at all, is useful. Trying to get louder and louder is useful, because the pattern was of being quiet. But the effect on people outside the session can be a problem, so you have to take that into account and figure out the best thing to do at the moment.

Some people get frozen in yelling back, so their being loud in a session doesn't contradict the pattern. You can hear the tone. It gets stiff and loud. It's

an imitation of someone yelling at them. It's more a portrayal of the distress than a going against it. You can hear the deadness of it. It's hard to listen to, because it isn't actually discharge.

What do you do when people get stuck in making the same loud noise? You can ask them to object quietly. You can also get them active in a different way. Pushing against you can provide something real and alive, so they're not just yelling at the dead past. It gives them an excuse to come alive in their opposition.

You have to move in to be more in contact with them. Anytime someone is frozen in a pattern, more attention is needed. If you have the slack, you push in, or maybe have them grab your shoulders and shake you, not just stay with the sound alone. If you don't have the slack, then you switch subjects and have them work on something else.



MARIAN FREDAL

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The Rent Check

I own and live in a two-family house and rent out the other apartment. I recently nagged my tenant for her rent, which is chronically late. When I returned on a Sunday night, the check was taped to my door. Shortly thereafter I lost the check. I felt so bad about it that I didn't have the attention to ask her for another check or to search for the original one. I felt horribly, terribly bad. I didn't just feel like a jerk.¹ I felt hated—not just by myself, but by God and all humanity—for being rotten to the core, corrupt, evil.

I am Gay, and I've found that many Gay men feel this way. We get the message that we are perverts, pedophiles, sinful—bad because of who we are. Some people hold up signs at our funerals that say, "God hates Fags."² Some people think God sent AIDS to humanity to get rid of homosexuals. We internalize these messages. Every Gay man I know is operating on top of feeling bad about himself. If we appear cheerful, "the life of the party," your favorite confidante, look deeper. Truly reach for us, and you will find feelings of self-hatred—self-hatred and loneliness.

After realizing I had lost the rent check, I distracted myself from the bad

feelings by looking at pornography and eating unhealthy food. Then I went to bed. I woke up in the middle of the night and was faced again with how bad I felt about myself, how hated by the world. I remembered Tim's³ talks about fighting for ourselves. I realized that I needed to cry out for help from that spot, to get someone in with me, that there was no way I could successfully battle those feelings alone.

I had tried to do that in the past, and it had always been a losing battle. I had been losing that battle since I first started to have sexual feelings for men—in 1984, when I was thirteen years old. There was absolutely no one I could talk to about my sexual feelings or how bad I felt about them. If I had tried to share them, the adults around me would likely have confirmed that they were very bad feelings and that I needed to pray or see a therapist or find some other way to be fixed, because they were so wrong and so sinful.

I grew up Baptist, a type of Protestant. I was told that Jesus loved me no matter what. Whenever things got difficult, he would be there. When I entered adolescence, I found out there was a giant clause in that agreement—that it was conditional on my being

heterosexual and having "normal" sexual feelings and attractions to females; that as a Gay person, God actually hated me and wanted me to burn in Hell for all eternity; and that Jesus, my best friend up to that point, was complicit in this. I lost my best friend at the exact time I most needed help. I was also a thirteen-year-old boy, so I wasn't supposed to ever need, much less ask for, help from anyone.

Finally, after twenty years of RC, I have been able to call for help. I can finally feel other RCers with me in this struggle. I may have been buried by an avalanche of distress, but I am not pushing back against it alone. Discharge has been voluminous.

I hope every man reading this, especially the Gay men, can find a way to call for help from the place you feel most bad about yourself. I am finally seeing the possibility of living a life without chronically hating myself. This new life, unburdened by all the misery and self-hatred, is still hard to imagine. I am scared. It seems unfamiliar. But I am mostly looking forward to it.

Now let me see if I can find that rent check.

"Henry Church"

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

¹ "A jerk" means an unlikable, obnoxious person.

² "Fags" is a derogatory term for Gay men.

³ Tim Jackins'

Our Preoccupation with Hurts

Only young children pay attention to the environment. After age five they are trying to make sense out of their hurts. Most of us spend at least nine tenths of our mental energy not in coping with the environment, where it belongs, but in this often fruitless but persistent, devoted attempt to make sense of ourselves internally.



Harvey Jackins
At Buck Creek III, in
Washington, USA, August 1971

“He Has Figured Out a Lot”

For a long time, falling asleep has been a big challenge for my eight-year-old son. We have tried lots of things—wrestling, cuddling, chatting, him lying on top of me, me massaging him. Co-Counselors have come and been with us as he tried to fall asleep. It has been hard for me to sustain attention, given my own distress, and I have had to discharge on my own sleep issues.

After our most recent family workshop,¹ he proposed that we do a mini-session in bed before sleep. We had never done a two-way session. I followed his lead and we gave it a whirl²—three nights in a row and then several times after that. He wants to have and give three kinds of sessions—laughing sessions, fighting-for-oneself sessions, and talking sessions. He decides when and if we have these sessions, and when they are over. They usually last a couple of minutes.

The first time, he decided that I would be client first. I was lying down, and he sat on top of me and gave me lovely attention. I started laughing. After two minutes he said, “Now we are going to do a different type of

session.” He lay on top of me and told me to push. I began to push. He said, “Keep fighting. You are strong.” The third time was on the night before I would be away at a workshop. I told him I was going to miss him, and he touched his hand to his heart and then to mine. I immediately started crying and cried for a minute or two until he said it was time to stop. (It may well be the sweetest session I have ever had!)

More recently he has been asking me about hard things in my childhood. One night I said that I missed my mom when I was at school. He said (in a stern voice), “You have to go to school now. And you won’t see your mother there!” He understands that his job as counselor is to help me look at things that were hard.

I also give him laughing and fighting sessions. He is using his talking sessions to tell me things. Last night he told me that he was worried there would be a fire and he would die.

So far he is not falling asleep more quickly. If anything, it is actually taking longer. However, he has figured out a lot: that I (not just he) could use sessions before sleep, how to make things lighter and get us both discharging, and how to bring us even closer before sleep.

Anonymous
New York, New York, USA

¹ An RC family workshop is a workshop at which young people and adults (both parents and allies) interact in ways that allow the young people to show and be themselves and not be dominated by the adults. They include time for children to do whatever safe activities they want to do, with the encouragement and appreciation of the adults, and to discharge if they wish. They also include discharge time for the adults.

² “Gave it a whirl” means tried it.



PUGET SOUND, WASHINGTON, USA • KATIE KAUFFMAN

“Discharge Mechanics”

I am in awe of Harvey’s* mastery of “discharge mechanics.” What if he hadn’t said to take every thought, memory, movement, and so on, seriously when we are seeking discharge and re-evaluation?

Pam Maccabee
Glastonbury, Connecticut, USA

* Harvey Jackins’

Drugs and Our Son

The following was written by the spouse of “Jane Roe” (a pseudonym), whose posting to the e-mail discussion list for leaders of parents was published in the July 2014 Present Time (on page 23). She wrote about her seventeen-year-old son who was struggling with using drugs.

For months both “Jane” and I have gotten as many Co-Counseling sessions as we can. It has been easy to discharge. We have also asked for and gotten huge support from other sources: family, friends, drug counselors, and, not least of all, 12-step meetings¹ (both Al-Anon, for family members of alcoholics and other addicts, and Alcoholics Anonymous, for alcoholics).

“Jane” and I have both cried a lot in 12-step meetings, and the people there have helped us with information and guidance. Just being in the company of so many other parents dealing with addicted family members, and taking turns talking about it, has been a great contradiction.² This crisis has helped me to ask for help, against lifelong patterns primarily from male oppression, and I am grateful for the chance to re-emerge in this way.

When “Jane” first wrote to this list, her thinking and mine were far apart on a critical piece of how to deal with our son. She was leaning heavily toward putting him into a residential drug treatment program against his will. I was leaning heavily toward letting go of trying to

control him, and supporting him to come to his own conclusions. It occurred to me that I could lose not just my son, but also my spouse, in this process. That was great fuel for more discharge, especially since “Jane” and I don’t have any inherent differences, love each other a lot, and are both discharging well.

As we continued to discharge and deal with our son, we did try to stop controlling him on a day-to-day basis. (I think “Jane” was able to do that because she had discharged so much.) We were less controlling in part because we had few options for controlling him and in part because it seemed like being less controlling would lead to the best, most honest connection with him. When we asked him to talk with us, we let him know that whatever he said would not lead to any immediate consequences, and we all became more honest and revealing with each other.

He eventually told us some things that we found very

disturbing. It became clear that (1) he was using marijuana not just “frequently” but daily or even several times a day, (2) he had used hallucinogenic drugs (psychedelics) not just once or twice but twenty-eight times in the past year, and (3) some of his beliefs were extremely irrational. Again, this was all great fuel for discharge.

The seriousness of the revelations was a turning point for me. I thought of Marya³ saying that we parents can let our young people make decisions as far as they are able. It became clear that our son was far from being able to make rational decisions about drug use, and was not heading in that direction anytime soon. While his amazing human qualities shown through, it was clear that the drugs were messing up his life in a big way. After more discharge, “Jane” and I both became sure that we needed to intervene against his will.

³ Marya Axner, the International Liberation Reference Person for Parents

¹ “12-step meetings” are meetings that are part of a 12-step program, which is a program designed to help people overcome an addiction, compulsion, or other behavioral problem with group support from people who have similar challenges and by adhering to twelve tenets that emphasize personal growth and reliance on a higher spiritual being.

² Contradiction to distress



MOYIE RIVER, IDAHO, USA • CAROL WILBURN

Here in the United States, and I imagine in other parts of the world, there are comprehensive services to help people recover from addictions. In this country, the cost of these services is not trivial and in some cases is staggering—approaching the cost of buying a house. We decided to put our son into a “wilderness treatment program” for a couple of months, with a possible “therapeutic boarding school” to follow. It cost about as much as buying three new cars. We are currently middle class and were able to pull together the money from our own savings and from family. Also, because our son was not willing to participate in any treatment program, we had to hire an “escort service” for a few thousand dollars. And yesterday a couple of big, strong, gentle men came and took our son to the treatment program.

In choosing the program, we had made sure that it would not rely on psychiatric drugs to “treat” his addiction. While not based on RC, it had seemed compassionate and correct in many ways.

We all have a lot of work to do. We don’t know whether the course we’re taking will be sufficient, but we think it is our best choice at this time. At the very least, our son will have a time without mind-altering drugs in his system, which in itself should help his thinking. In several months he will turn eighteen, and we will no longer have the legal right to compel him to participate in any treatment. I am grateful that we have the opportunity to do it now.

He did not know this was going to happen, and neither did his friends. After he left yesterday,

out of respect for the young people, I told (in person) the friends he is closest to what had happened. His drug-using friends, the people he has been spending most of his time with, were aghast at what we had done. I counseled them as best as I could, with full respect. His non-drug-using friends, with whom he has not been spending much time, were surprised but hopeful.

Directions that have worked well for me as client are as follows:

- I don’t want to lose you, “Jane”!
- I love you, _____ (son).

- I respect you. I’m proud of you.
- Thank you, _____ (son).
- I miss you.
- Don’t make me do this (send him away)!
- Goodbye (because it’s not clear when or if he will end this addiction or be able to improve our relationship; he may never want to see us again, or he may die, or I might!).
- Help!

“Pete”

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

Unfrozen

And as for love, sometimes it’s frozen
Stuck way back there unchosen
Sometimes it’s heard in the song I sing
Within reach and not yet held closely
It grows from person to person
With each connection
Is uncertain in dimension
Then there is my natural human expression
That relaxes with a certain type of knowing
That love is naturally part of me
That stores openly in my heart
Always there for me to see
The beauty between you and me

Lori Joubert
Shoreline, Washington, USA

Helping Teens in Crisis

Now and again¹ I am asked to help an RC parent whose teen hits a crisis. The crisis looks different for each young person. He or she could refuse to go to school, be unhappy for a period of time and not be able to get attention out, want to hurt himself or herself, stop walking, not want to leave the house, or show upset in some other way. Many things can be learned from these times, and they can be an opportunity for all family members, including us parents, to re-emerge.

One mom wrote for help—to me; Patty Wipfler, a former International Liberation Reference Person for Parents; and Janet Foner, the International Liberation Reference Person for “Mental Health” Liberation. What follows is our thinking that came out of that (and other similar crises).

When these crises come up, people are surprised and scared. They think that they shouldn't be happening to young people raised in Co-Counseling. We parents feel especially bad about ourselves. However, because of ongoing oppression and our chronic material,² crises do happen and no parent should be blamed.

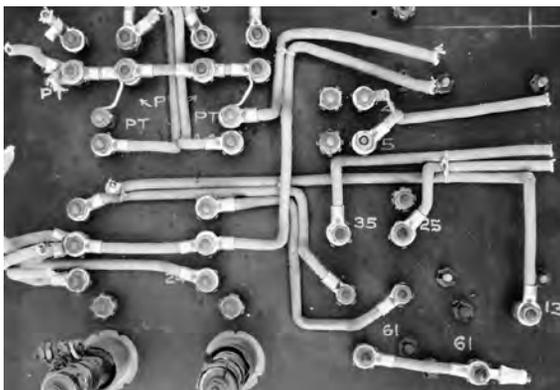
Sometimes they come up when teens go through a big transition, like going to a different school, where they can encounter new challenges or a harsher form of oppression that catches them off guard.³ Sometimes they are just the cumulative effect of young people's oppression, or racism, classism, anti-Jewish oppression, sexism, homophobia, or some other oppression, that hits up against early material and reaches an intolerable level.

Perhaps because we RC parents hold out to our children that things could be better, they refuse to give up on getting rid of their distresses and fighting the oppression they face as young people. Many teens of excellent parents run into a crisis.

¹ “Now and again” means sometimes.

² “Material” means distress.

³ “Catches them off guard” means hits them when they aren't expecting it.



IN THE POWER HOUSE OF THE DIABLO DAM,
ON THE SKAGIT RIVER, IN WASHINGTON, USA • TIM JACKINS

Here is something Patty wrote to the mom:

“Many parent leaders have helped their teens through somewhat similar crises. There can be periods in which ‘all normal life and interactions come to a halt while my teen discharges but can't otherwise function because there's no alternative to facing certain distresses.’ These episodes can last for weeks or months and have, more often than not, resulted in teens coming through in much better shape⁴ than they were before.

“Parents have sometimes needed to change their lives for a while. They have changed their schedules or taken a leave from work so that they could prioritize their teenager and spend a lot of time with him or her. That is often one of the contradictions⁵ the young person needs. When young people falter, they need to know that their parents are one hundred percent behind them. As parents, we need to remember that our children want us, no matter how they may act. We are the ones they count on.⁶

“Parents almost always need to discharge some big chunk of distress to be able to notice and help their child where they haven't been able to before. And there is nothing like a crisis to help make this happen. All parents hit spots where they cannot figure something out and need to discharge for a while, and move through a chronic distress, to be able to assist their child. Often everyone in the family needs to discharge in order to get things moving forward. Parents will usually need a session at least once a day, or several phone sessions a day, to keep up with⁷ what needs to happen. This means they will need to reach out to people and ask for help. That in itself may require discharge.

⁴ “Shape” means condition.

⁵ Contradictions to the distress

⁶ “Count on” means depend on and expect to be there.

⁷ “Keep up with” means be able to think about.

“Sometimes during a crisis, parents become involved with the ‘mental health’ system—either because they’ve asked for help or because the school system has initiated involvement. Once the ‘mental health’ system is involved, it can be tricky⁸ to break free from the influence of those convinced that drugs are a good solution. I think parents in RC should ask for help from their RC Reference Persons before deciding to turn to the ‘mental health’ system, or when the situation demands that they deal with it.

“Young people are one of the main marketing targets of psychiatric drug companies. Parents are under a lot of pressure to put children who are having a hard time on drugs. It is communicated that the parents are bad and negligent if they refuse drugs for their children.”

Janet Foner said the following to a parent:

“Many people, including me, have refused drugs in mental ‘hospitals’ and been forced to take them anyway. I don’t know what you believe about psychiatric drugs, but in my experience, and in the collected experience of many RC leaders, they are never useful. The only thing they do is shut down the discharge and re-evaluation process so that people appear to be ‘better,’ more ‘functional.’ Nothing has really improved. And the people will now have to discharge the original hurt they were trying to discharge as well as the physical and emotional hurts installed by the drugs.

“What people need in order to heal are discharge, re-evaluation, free attention, and thinking. Psychiatric drugs interfere with all of these. Some people can still discharge and re-evaluate while on drugs but not nearly as much as is optimal. The drugs don’t actually heal or

cure anything—psychiatrists admit that. Even worse, they can be damaging. They can cause a multitude of physical problems. Some, like tardive dyskinesia, are permanent.”

Here is another excerpt from Janet:

“I don’t think mental ‘hospitals’ can be truly helpful, although I understand people feeling bad enough to try to get help there. I know hundreds of ex-psychiatric inmates, inside and outside of RC, and of those, only three have been lucky and found their experience in the ‘hospital’ helpful.

“A confusion surfaces among some RCers at times like these. They assume that RC can’t help with ‘mental health’ crises. They feel like it does not have the information or expertise that the ‘mental health’ system does. This, along with the idea that there is ‘mental illness,’ is part of ‘mental health’ oppression and needs to be contradicted. The feeling that one doesn’t have the resource to help is prevalent in our societies, but resource can be created in many ways. And if an RCer hasn’t discharged enough on ‘mental health’ oppression and liberation to be of great assistance in such a crisis, RC ‘mental health’ leaders can provide some slack and clear thinking.”

I will say in closing that we should not isolate ourselves when our children have big problems. This is a time to bring people, especially Co-Counselors, close to us. We may need to discharge some humiliation in order to think about seeking resource, but that is fine. We *can* help our children move through difficult distresses.

Marya Axner
International Liberation
Reference Person for Parents
Somerville, Massachusetts, USA

⁸ “Tricky” means difficult and complicated.

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Mistakes are a fact of life. It is the response to the error that counts.

Nikki Giovanni

Drugs, Alcohol, and Young People

In the July (2014) *Present Time*, there's a series of articles by parents about drugs and alcohol and young people. I'm wondering what your thoughts are, as young people, about drugs and alcohol. I haven't done very much discharging about them, or the Guideline,¹ and would love to know what any of you have figured out.

Anna Boyar
Seattle, Washington, USA



KATHY TAYLOR

Hi Anna and All,

Thanks for posting this question to the list! Although I'm sure that parents have some good thoughts about the topic, it makes sense to hear from us young people.

It would be great to hear from others! What have you figured out? How have drugs and alcohol affected you directly or indirectly as a young person? How have you been able to counsel on them? Have RCers had good attention to listen to you about the subject? How have you counseled or talked to other young people about drugs and alcohol (in or out of RC)? How does young people's oppression or internalized oppression affect stuff related to drugs and alcohol in your life?

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

Hi Anna, Mari, and all my beloved young people!

Thanks for starting this conversation, Anna. Here are a few of my thoughts about drugs and alcohol—specifically about working on our distresses related to them as young RCers and (for many of us) as young people raised in RC.

I agree with the Guideline, but in practice I've had a hard time deciding to act on it and on my own thinking about drugs and alcohol. There are many reasons for this. One is that we young people are targeted by the capitalist society with drugs and alcohol.

We can tell² that the way our world is operating isn't right, isn't fair, isn't based on connection, and isn't good for people. We are told that drugs and alcohol are a way to connect and rebel against society, when in reality they make young people less of a threat to it. We are less likely to organize against it when we're numbed out. I am trying to go against my feelings of hopelessness about changing society and change the ways I interact with the young people and young adults around me.

Another reason drugs and alcohol have been a struggle for me is that my RC Community hasn't had a lot of slack around them. As someone raised in RC, with RC parents, RC has been my primary tool for figuring out hard things in my life. But for a long time I did not find that RC provided a relaxed environment in which to work on drugs and alcohol. It seemed that the tools I had used to figure out everything else in my life were cut off from me when it came to this issue. No wonder I have struggled with it!

Recently my RC class (which has a lot of young people and young adults in it) worked on drugs and alcohol for three classes. We had built a lot of safety, and it was really helpful for everyone. I think that as young people it is our place to challenge the adult Co-Counselors in our Communities (including our parents!) to work on their rigidities in the area of drugs and alcohol, so that they can listen to us about where we struggle and support us in creating spaces with safety to work on the topic.

I would love to hear what other people have figured out about this, especially any thoughts about how to create more space for us to work on it together.

Rae Axner
Somerville, Massachusetts, USA
Reprinted from the RC e-mail discussion
list for leaders of young people



STAN EICHNER

¹ Guideline C.2. of the 2013 *Guidelines for the Re-evaluation Counseling Communities*

² "Tell" means see, perceive.



Toward Liberation Through Connection



The following is a transcript of an RC class in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, USA, led by Xabi Odriozola, who is from the Basque Country. Xabi is the International Commonality Reference Person for Languages and Interpreting.

Someone in the class interpreted into Yiddish, and Xabi interpreted into Basque for the three other Basque people. Someone else spoke Hebrew. So four languages (including English) were spoken all through the class.

The class was transcribed and edited by Nancy Wygant, the Information Coordinator for People Thinking About United States Identity.

Xabi: It's good to see you. I think all of you have some idea of what connection is. All of us, before we came out from our moms, were inside and experienced connection there. We've also experienced other kinds of connection—for example, with nature, energy, God, plants, birds, a dog, a good friend, poetry, good music, a wonderful book, a good idea.

The more connected we are, the less we accept oppression and the harder it is for us to be manipulated into oppressing others.

DISCONNECTION

The whole process of being socialized in a capitalist system is about disconnection. It begins early in our life, in ways we can hardly remember.

The system tries to disconnect us so that we become only consumers and producers. When we are connected with ourselves or with something else, we don't consume so much.

We are not so interesting to the system if we are connected. The

only way we are interesting to it is if we produce something for it. The system wants our money and our labor. If we can give it some money, then we can have a few little rights.

How can the system cause us—intelligent, connected human beings—to disconnect? There are a lot of ways, most of which we are not aware of because they are like our “first skin.”

The first time the system forced us to disconnect, we couldn't discharge about it. As a result, disconnection became part of our reality; we assumed that it was what was waiting for us in life. We were experiencing a lot of hurts at the same time—the oppression of young people, sexism, racism, classism, poverty, and so on. We were piling up experiences of disconnection, one after another, without discharging, and every piece of disconnection formed our new disconnected reality.

Our brains have been colonized by the system. It has put a big lie in our brains, and we have believed it. We have been trained to reproduce the system ourselves when the system restimulates us—something that happens often.

We can become so disconnected that connection becomes a difficult issue. We create excuses in our minds to disconnect from other people and end up believing that those excuses are right and fine. In RC we call those excuses “distress.” (*laughter*) We become so hurt that we often prefer to live with our distresses rather than live a connected life. It feels more comfortable. Why is it more comfortable? Because we became accustomed to it when we were children and accepted

disconnection as the way life should be. We couldn't do something different without getting accurate information and discharging. As a result, our life stories are stories of trying to reconnect with who we were before becoming disconnected.

We try to find ways to reconnect. We are actually good at that. If we have even one memory of being connected, we never give up on trying to find connection again.

As a Native person, I have been discharging about my colonized brain, the part of my brain that was colonized by capitalism. I've realized that when we try to be connected, the system labels us as not “normal”—because “normal” is being disconnected. So, for example, if I show my aliveness, my joy, my happiness, on the streets—if I sing and dance—what will happen? (*makes a siren noise—people laugh*) “Crazy”! There is the “mental health” system waiting for me.

One way to get us disconnected is by taking us a long way away from the people and culture and land we belong to. If you know it is your land and you feel connected with it, then you remember the people who live on it. If you remember who your people are, you feel connected with them and then you don't let anyone hurt your people. You know you belong to that land and to those people.

Your culture, relationships, and language keep you connected. The first thing the capitalist system steals from you is your memory of whom you belong to and where you belong. Because we kept our language with us, we Basque people were able to survive genocide. We knew who we were, where we were, and who our people were.

continued . . .

LIBERATION

... continued

This is why we need people's languages here at this workshop. Interpreting into their own languages helps people be fully who they are.

You Users were badly hurt, right here. You were made to forget where you came from—your ancestors, your languages—as part of surviving in and accepting an oppressive structure built on genocide.

Let's have a mini-session about excuses. What excuses do you use to disconnect? Do you prioritize comfort over a connected life? Do you talk fast, talk high, talk loud, not talk? Do you think that because you belong to the USA you are superior, or inferior? A few light pieces to work on. (*laughter*)

RECONNECTION

A—: Can you talk about what happens when a people doesn't have a land, when there is no place it could go back to?

Xabi: Mother Earth is happy to have you anywhere on this planet. She is waiting calmly for you to make your way back home. You can decide which land is yours, and nobody can deny it to you. I think Mother Earth is happy if you decide that your land is sixteen countries, or only one, or three—whatever you need.

You need to work on decolonizing that part of your brain that says that you don't have any background, or your home and your people disappeared too long ago, or it is impossible to find them. Life has given you a special gift—a mind that is ready to get back for you everything you need in order to accomplish your full re-emergence.

M—: My heritage goes so far back—hundreds of years—that I

don't even know all the places my ancestors came from or anything about them. And there's not just one kind of ancestry; there is English, Irish, German, and others.

Xabi: First you should be proud of your current identity, the identity and language you grew up with, and discharge about it. When you are happy with that, go one step earlier. Maybe after English, behind English, is some other language waiting for you. You can take pride in that second language and discharge on that. Your memory will open, will go on opening wider and wider, and clarity will come to you. You will probably find different languages, different cultures, as you go back through your lineages. And although I think that's a useful way to work, I don't think it's the most important thing. What is most important is deciding that you are going to reconnect with who you really are.

APPRECIATIONS

The following are two of the appreciations for the class:

- Your commitment to using simultaneous translation meant that the class moved at a much slower pace than usual. It made a big difference in my ability to connect with the people in the room and to the theory you presented. Your perspectives on what it means to be human and to live in opposition to capitalism had a huge impact on me. Since the class, I feel supported and affirmed in my choices to move toward connection with others, the natural world, and myself by remembering your words and warm presence.

- Something that has stayed with me and influenced my daily decisions is your reminder about the relationship between disconnection and consumption. When we feel connected, we are not interested in consuming more than we need. Capitalism is interested in keeping us disconnected and busy producing and consuming. We don't get to be our full selves under capitalism. Connected people are a threat to the system.



EVERGLADES, FLORIDA, USA • MARTIN URBEL

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Speaking Out About Ferguson

I have been discharging on Ferguson and the murder of Michael Brown.¹ I grew up in Missouri (USA) and spent summers as a teenager in St. Louis—in Black areas bordering Ferguson and in Ferguson itself. However, it wasn't until a Co-Counselor, a Chicana, texted me several days after the protests began that I could remember my connection to St. Louis and my time there. Just a few words allowed me to put attention on something that I had been “ignoring” because it felt like too much to take on.²

Allies, inside and sometimes outside of Co-Counseling, have been a huge contradiction³ for me as a Black woman. The initial post and subsequent discussion here⁴ have helped to contradict the isolation, powerlessness, and hopelessness that I and other Black women often feel in relation to how Black men are targeted in the United States. They've also been a good reminder of Goal 1 of the RC Communities.⁵ I forget to discharge on Black folks being targeted by racism, although it happens often and with significant media attention (which I am pulled to watch, numbly).

Because of the ways that allies have asked me or spoken up about Ferguson, I was able to remember to take some time on it in the women's RC class I lead. For the past three weeks we had been taking time on “current topics,” such as what's happening in Gaza, but it had never occurred to me to do the same for myself as the teacher and only Black woman in the class. Because I had discharged about and remembered my time in St. Louis, I was able to ask the class to discharge on Ferguson so that they could get their minds around it, inside and outside of Co-Counseling. More importantly, I asked them to discharge about it as my ally. It was significant to ask folks to work on it not just for themselves but for me. It helped me to remember my connection to all of them and to move some of the isolation I've taken on⁶ from the racism aimed at Black people in the United States. And I think it moved us closer as a class.

¹ On August 9, 2014, a white police officer shot and killed Michael Brown, an unarmed black teenager, in Ferguson, a part of the St. Louis, Missouri, USA, greater metropolitan area. It ignited a major protest against the ongoing police brutality aimed at black men in the United States.

² “Take on” means face and do something about.

³ Contradiction to distress

⁴ There were several posts on the RC e-mail discussion list for leaders of women about the killing of Michael Brown.

⁵ Goal 1, adopted by the 2001 World Conference and reaffirmed by subsequent World Conferences, states, “That the elimination of racism, in particular the racism aimed at people of African heritage, be actively made an ongoing, central piece of the work of the Re-evaluation Counseling Community.”

⁶ “Taken on” means adopted.

Discharging on Ferguson also helped me to take leadership in my profession. A week or so after Michael Brown was killed, I attended a gathering of the American Sociological Association, a professional academic association I'm affiliated with as a professor. Several of us there decided to draft a statement against the killing of Brown and in solidarity with the protests in Ferguson. It was a collective, multiracial effort, started by a Black woman, and we were able to put it together and distribute it pretty⁷ quickly. Because I had been discharging, I was able to encourage folks to state early on in the statement that we condemned the murder and stood in solidarity with folks in Ferguson.

I sent the statement to my colleagues at the university, and immediately a man of color “reminded” me that racism is an issue for all people of color, not just African Americans. This is the kind of response that many of us face in the current moment when we talk specifically about racism targeting African Americans. It's aimed to make us think that we should not be talking about the targeting of just one group but rather “the whole group.” My discharging, and the work of allies, helped me in my response to him. It also contradicted the way that I sometimes worry about how Goal 1 is specifically related to people of African heritage.

What's most important to me about discharging and being involved in this public statement is that I've been able to be engaged as a Black woman with Ferguson and the murder of another young Black man. It's clear to me that thinking about and organizing around how Black men are targeted for death and destruction never gets in the way of my liberation as a Black woman.

I'm so glad that my mind is engaged here and not numb, and a huge piece of this is the work of allies. When allies do something—send a text; write a post; ask, “How are you doing with this?”—it makes a huge difference and chips away at the numbness. I will remember this in my own work as an ally, particularly to other women of color, who, because of racism, I often get pitted against.



KK

Much love to all,

Andreana Clay
Oakland, California, USA
Reprinted from the RC
e-mail discussion list
for leaders of women

⁷ “Pretty” means quite.

India's First International Women's Liberation Workshop

In July 2014 I led the first International Women's Liberation Workshop in India. It was held in Pune, several hours by car from Mumbai. Niti Dandekar organized the workshop. As the Regional¹ Reference Person and leader of RC women and men in India, Niti has had to take on² sexism, male domination, and male oppression in order to develop her Community. She has done an elegant job.

The following women also played important leadership roles at the workshop: Azi Khalili,³ initially from Iran and now living in New York City, USA, who has backed⁴ her mother, Vida Mozafarieh, to build an RC Community in Iran; and Sujata Maini, Indian by birth and an important RC women's liberation leader in Sweden.

The participants were smart, beautiful, and open and knew how to have fun. Four women from the Iranian RC Community attended; they already had deep connections with some of the Indian women and were a significant presence at the workshop.

The first class was on "It's great to be female" and "I am fully female in every fiber," which included explaining that biology is the pretext for sexism, not the cause. Women had sessions on feelings of hating their bodies. It seemed easier for them to do this than it is for us women in Western countries—perhaps because of Western pretense about and sexualization of our bodies.

¹ A Region is a subdivision of the International RC Community, usually consisting of several Areas (local RC Communities).

² "Take on" means confront and do something about.

³ Azi Khalili is the International Liberation Reference Person for People of South, Central, and West Asian Heritage.

⁴ "Backed" means supported.

I went over parts of the RC women's liberation draft policy statement. I emphasized the section on not comparing oppressions. Comparing and "grading" the sexism in different countries and societies does not lead to more effective work against sexism. Although being killed for being a girl is obviously worse than being belittled for it, we need to put our attention on ending all forms of sexist behavior, not on comparing the various kinds. Governments of countries in the



global North have compared and graded the different forms of sexism in order to justify racist military, political, and economic policies targeting countries of the South. The governments of some Southern countries (for example, India, South Africa, and China) have instituted policies in the interests of women, but these are seldom publicized in the North.

We did a lot of work on the institution of marriage. Most of the women at the workshop were in arranged marriages. There are various kinds of these marriages, but most now seem to be arranged with the consent of the couples. It was the first time most of the women had worked openly on marriage. I also met with single women, and we looked at the strengths

and struggles connected with being single. Few women had communities of single friends like I am familiar with in the United States, but they were more protected by their families.

Azi did an excellent early-morning class on chronic patterns, discouragement, and early defeats as women. We divided into groups to work on the institutions of sexism: marriage, work, sexual victimization, religion, reproduction, and so on. For many, it was the first time they had been in groups such as these. I asked the women to state what they thought were key issues related to sexism in India. Among those mentioned were sex selection in abortions and the intense internalized oppression that plays out⁵ between married women and their mothers-in-law when the women move in with their husband's family.

I did a class on sexual violence. A lot has been written in Western newspapers about gang rape in India. Some connect it to poverty and men's lives on the streets in large urban areas. Others connect it to the strength of male domination and patriarchy. After the workshop, Sujata, Niti, and I met with leaders of women's organizations. We spoke with a woman who agreed that sexual violence was a big problem in India but that Western media made it seem like it was much worse in India than in the West. When I went home I did some research and found that compared to other developed and developing countries, the incidence rates of rape per 100,000 people are quite low in India. The National Crime Records Bureau reports a rape rate of 2 per 100,000 people. This compares to 8.1 rapes per 100,000 people in Western Europe, 14.7 per 100,000 in

⁵ "Plays out" means is acted out.

Latin America, 40.2 per 100,000 in the Southern African region, and 28.6 per 100,000 in the United States.

We did some work on “trivial” issues—for example, whether or not to dye one’s hair. Iran is a very male-dominated society and, despite the domination of fundamentalist religion, has the highest rate of nose surgery in the world. India has a large beautification industry connected to a big cinema industry. We worked on the connection between racism

and sexist beauty images. We also did some work on fighting for ourselves as women and fighting for other women.

After the workshop, Niti, Sujata, and I met with a group of men from the RC Community. They were eager to hear about our work. I worked with them on sexism and men’s oppression. It was a good beginning.

I learned so much on this trip. I want to continue learning from

women globally, in particular in the developing nations and the nations of the economic South. Much appreciation to Niti, Azi, and Sujata, and to all the women at the workshop.

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



KENYA • TIM JACKINS

The Value of Work

Basically our excellent survival—the fact that there are four and a half billion¹ wonderful humans, with the enormous intelligence that is operating largely covered by distress but ready to be liberated from the distress—is the result of our work. Work is the handling of the environment for human survival. We can broaden that definition to the survival of all forms of life. We’d better pretty² soon.

Work is very much the center of our activities. To realize how important it is and how much the center of our existence, consider our surroundings. We think all these chairs are hard, but we’ve got a place to sit, we’ve got a place to stay warm, we’ve got warm clothing, we have elegant communication, we’ve got advanced equipment here making videocassettes.³ We have access to information from a dozen sources. We have created a wonderful environment. There are a few snags in it—the pollution, the misuse, and so on—but they are tiny compared to the results of our work.

People who work produce everything. Everyone lives on the production of the people who work, and workers in the basic industries of course produce almost all of it.

Harvey Jackins
 From pages 327 to 328 of “From the
 Men’s Workshop,” in *The Rest of Our Lives*

¹ This article is from a talk given in 1982.

² “Pretty” means quite.

³ See footnote 1.

So Much to Learn from One Another

Niti Dandekar, the Regional Reference Person for India, has decided that women's liberation is a key issue for the liberation of India. Iranian RC women, led by Vida Mozafarih (my mom), are also committed to women's liberation as their key issue. The women's workshop in India¹ was a growing experience² for us all—the women from India and Iran, and the three women who live in Western capitalist nations (Diane Balsler,³ Sujata Maini,⁴ and me).

Diane asked the Indian and the Iranian women to name a few of their female leaders and to talk about the accomplishments of females in their nations. The Iranian women said that every woman in Iran is a leader for withstanding the oppressive apartheid laws against women. They spoke about their experience with the "morality police," who target and arrest women deemed to be "immodest." A woman laughing on the street is considered immodest; a woman whose hair shows from under her scarf is considered immodest.

The women worked on some hard topics: love and arranged marriage, the beautification industry, violence and rape, pornography, male domination, and religion (in particular, Hinduism and Islam). It became clearer how male domination requires every female to compromise and give up on⁵ her mind. None of us had a choice back there.⁶ I had good sessions working on my early days of growing up in Iran as a female.

I led a class with Sujata Maini on women and physical power. Every woman in the workshop had a chance to try physical sessions.⁷ I got to watch fifty South and West Asian women pushing, and screaming louder and louder, in the most benign environment ever. It was a lovely scene.

Both India and Iran are still struggling to leave feudalism and vestiges of colonization behind as they enter late-stage (collapsing) capitalism. Women are forced to adhere to the requirements of male domination under



GOLDEN GATE BRIDGE, SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA, USA • GREG GRASS

both feudalism and late-stage capitalism. For example, in Iran, women are still viewed as the property of men while they are also expected to be fierce consumers of products made by profit-making industries, including the beautification industry.

It was clear that pornography is having a devastating effect on the personal lives of Iranian and Indian women. Many of these women have fathers, husbands, and sons who are consumers of this industry. Often their husbands expect them to perform sex like the women in the films. Many Iranian men want Iranian women to look like the actresses in porn, and more women are mutilating their faces and coloring their hair blond to look "sexy" like the porn stars. Despite the sanctions on Iran,⁸ porn created in the United States and Europe is widespread.

We need more opportunities for women from the global South to connect with women from the global North. We have so much to learn from one another.

Azi Khalili

*International Liberation Reference Person for
People of South, Central, and West Asian Heritage
Brooklyn, New York, USA*

Reprinted from the RC e-mail discussion lists for
leaders of women and for RC Community members

¹ See previous article.

² A "growing experience" means an experience that led to personal growth.

³ Diane Balsler is the International Liberation Reference Person for Women and was the leader of the workshop.

⁴ Sujata Maini is an Indian-heritage RC leader in Stockholm, Sweden.

⁵ "Give up on" means no longer try to fully use.

⁶ "Back there" means when we were children.

⁷ "Physical sessions" are sessions in which a counselor provides thoughtful resistance for a client to push and fight against.

⁸ Since 1979, the United States has led international sanctions against Iran, as a way to try to influence Iranian policies.

“We Are Growing Forward”

After five days at the Black Liberation and Community Development (BLCD) Workshop (in July–August in Birmingham, England), I thought, “This was the best BLCD ever!” We people of African heritage can “fly.” We are building the BLCD “village”—a strong village, with beautiful women and men in connection with each other. It is about connection, hope, love, and strength. It gives us space to discharge our internalized oppression and to live the lives we want to live. We are moving forward—the BLCD gatherings are getting better and better.

Rachel Noble¹ led the workshop—in a warm, humorous, and realistic way, with a strong connection with herself and with us. She first invited us to share something that was important to us about RC theory and something about our identity and background. We immediately felt connected with each other, a connection that stayed with us and was tangible throughout the workshop.

No men had applied for the workshop, so we were only women. We worked on reaching out to men, especially black men. I discharged about my relationship with the first man in my life, my father, and how caring and lovely he was. Our collective thinking lifted us up. We also discharged on our experiences from our different class backgrounds—poor, working class, and middle class. Rachel talked about capitalism and how it sets individuals and groups against each other. She also gave space to

¹ Rachel Noble is the Regional Reference Person for Oregon, USA.

several other leaders to share their thinking and leadership:

Dorann² talked about being allies to Jews and how anti-Jewish oppression operates. It was the first time I had understood how it works.

Jenny³ led a class on “mental health” liberation. As a former worker in the “mental health” system, I realized how oppressive that system is and how, in the absence of information, I had unintentionally been a part of the oppression.

Fela⁴ and Olivia⁵ led a class on internalized sexism. We were reminded that we always have the

² Dorann van Heeswijk, the Regional Reference Person for Surrey and London West, in England, and the Information Coordinator for Gentile Allies of Jews

³ Jenny Martin, the Information Coordinator for Black “Mental Health” Liberation Activists in England

⁴ Fela Barclift, the Regional Reference Person for Manhattan, Brooklyn, Queens, and Long Island, New York, USA

⁵ Olivia Vincenti, the Area Reference Person for Islington to Barnet, in London, England

power to take our lives in hand⁶ and to go for⁷ the lives we want.

Alima⁸ led a topic group on oppressor material.⁹ It is painful to realize that we act this out.

I led a support group. We discharged on reclaiming our power and being fully female. I discharged on the pain of internalized sexism and on reclaiming my goodness.

We began each day enjoying sports and play, which helped us stay connected with each other. Then we worked on physical power, and rage and terror.

Yes, this was the best BLCD ever. We are growing forward.

Marlene Melfor

Arnhem, The Netherlands

Reprinted from the RC e-mail discussion list for leaders of African-heritage people

⁶ “Take our lives in hand” means be in charge of our lives.

⁷ “Go for” means pursue.

⁸ Alima Adams, an RC leader in Cambridge, England

⁹ “Material” means distress.

A Complete Sense of Power

Everything indicates that human beings, that all of us, are conceived, and most of us are born, with a complete sense of power—the expectation that the universe will be responsive to our wishes. We are given an enormous voice that adults are observably required to respond to. (You cannot have a child in a meeting and expect the speaker to be paid attention to at all, whether the child is happy or unhappy.) If intelligent adults could be available at the child’s call, the newborn infant would be completely powerful.

Harvey Jackins

From the 1986 Peace and Disarmament Activists’ Workshop

BLCD 2014

I'll try to describe it, but you shoulda¹ been there.
Well, RC "Black" folks gathered at UCONN² in Storrs, Connecticut,³ in July 2014.
We came from all over the Eastern coast of the US of A, including
Virginia, Pennsylvania, Massachusetts, Jersey and New York.
Everybody was eager to hear
The words and wisdom of Rudy Nickens⁴ and Barbara Love⁵
And reunite with old friends
And catch up with⁶ the happenings and goings on⁷ in they⁸ lives
And miss old friends who could not be there.
There was young folk and old folk
Southern folk and Northern folk
Straight folk and Gay folk
New to RC folk and old to RC folk
Folks who could talk in Spanish, English and in tongues and other tongues
First time to BLCD⁹ and veterans of BLCD
Leaders, followers and the non-committed
Fundies¹⁰ classes and ongoing classes
No one left behind.
There was powerful demos,¹¹ creative panels
And even a young people/young adult occupation.
You ask about theory? Plenty!
I'll just state a few: Like—
LIVE Goal 1,¹² not just theorize it
Live our lives as a contradiction to our distresses
Showing public appreciation to others
Behave like we are important enough to take care of ourselves.
And party? You know, yeah.
Child, even folk who usually disappear at the sound of the word "party"
Showed up and had theyselves¹³ a good old time.
Card playing? You bet.¹⁴ There was five tables!
"Culture Share"?
I saved that for last 'cause¹⁵ it was the dessert
The end of a delicious meal
The icing on a cake.



¹ Should have

² University of Connecticut

³ USA

⁴ Rudy Nickens is the Regional Reference Person for Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, and Nebraska, USA, and was the leader of the workshop.

⁵ Barbara Love is the International Liberation Reference Person for People of African Heritage.

⁶ "Catch up with" means get the latest information about.

⁷ "Goings on" means events.

⁸ Their

⁹ The Black Liberation and Community Development Workshop

¹⁰ Fundamentals

¹¹ Demonstrations

¹² Goal 1 of the Re-evaluation Counseling Communities, adopted by the 2001 World Conference of the RC Communities and reaffirmed by subsequent World Conferences: That the elimination of racism, in particular the racism aimed at people of African heritage, be actively made an ongoing, central piece of the work of the Re-evaluation Counseling Community

¹³ Themselves

¹⁴ "You bet" means definitely.

¹⁵ Because

We had a large selection of talent but I'll share just two:
 A gold-coated haunting voice of an angel's song
 Evoking mysterious memories of the past
 Sung in sounds, in no known language, and
 The belting out of a passionate, heartfelt, completely vulnerable rendition of an old tune
 Letting us know that there's an army rising up on the horizon
 Breaking every chain of oppression along the way
 An army that sheds no blood
 Shares the earth with all that live
 Respects and protects the planet
 Uplifts, recognizes and nurtures the rights and intelligence of every human being.
 That's how I saw BLCD 2014 and
 I can tell you 2 things about BLCD 2015 and that is—
 It will be international and
 You should be there!



Patricia Leola Ayoka Thandiwe Mallory-Oduba
 (inspired by and modeled after the works of Paul Laurence
 Dunbar, Langston Hughes, and Zora Neal Hurston)
 Brooklyn, New York, USA

White People with Native Ancestry

The White/Native Workshop, led by Barbara Boring¹ in June 2014, left me with a sharpened clarity about the work for white RCers with Native ancestry and for Native RCers raised white.

The main purpose and goal of the white/Native workshops is to advance and support the liberation of Native people raised Native—those who are living Native lives, on their Native land, in Native cultures.

The goal is not for us white/Native people to deny or ignore the oppressor “white” patterns we have accumulated (in the same way that all white people have accumulated them). Our goal is not to become Native or “not white.” It is to discharge the patterns in order to be more effective in supporting the liberation of Native people raised Native. At each white/Native workshop we discharge on oppressor patterns, and anyone who wants to attend must first do a year of intensive work on claiming his or her white heritage and discharging on it.

On the other hand, we do not want Native people raised white or white people with Native ancestry to ignore the effects of genocide on their family. Working on these effects is another way to understand and free up our attention around Native people raised Native. It can also free us from distresses that our ancestors were unable to acknowledge.

People who discharge on the white/Native identity may end up in vastly different places. We do not advocate, promote, or favor any particular outcome except, of course, discharging and being a strong ally to Native people raised Native.

Some white/Native people may reclaim their lost Native culture or language. Some may join Native people in protests against the ongoing assault on Native lands and resources. Some may teach RC on reserves or Indian lands.

Some may retain their white identity. They may speak out about the history of genocide and its place in the current functioning of the oppressive class society. They may speak out against the ongoing removal of Native young people from their families and how they are forced to adopt white identity and culture. They may lead white people in discharging on ending racism and genocide.

All of this is equally good. It is not the identity or direction we choose that matters. We white/Native people have widely different experiences, so naturally the choice will be different for each of us.

I will now speak for myself as a white person with Native ancestry. I will not speak to the experience of Native people raised white, except to say that the policy of forcefully removing Native children from

¹ Barbara Boring is an RC leader in Seattle, Washington, USA.

continued . . .

LIBERATION

... continued

their families and raising them as white has been and continues to be an active strategy of genocide and that these workshops have been useful to people who have experienced that.

Speaking only for myself, the white/Native work has been what has most effectively moved me forward in discharging white racism and working to eliminate it. My family's terror about identifying as Native, and their assimilation and denial of Native heritage, are directly related to my terror in being visible as an ally to people targeted by racism. The recordings² say that standing with a person targeted by racism is just too risky to attempt.

Some of my ancestors were Indigenous people who lived in the area where I currently live in the northeast of what is now called the United States. They lived here for more generations than anyone knows. The Native part of my family (those who survived the genocide) lived in close contact with white European immigrants (the other side of my family) for nearly five hundred years. They may have made first contact over a thousand years ago.

(As a result of this extended contact, a significant number of Native people, including tribal leaders, who speak an Indigenous language as their first language have light-colored skin and blue eyes. This can be another source of confusion for people not familiar with the realities of the Indigenous people of this area.)

² Distress recordings



KOLKATA, BHUTAN • MAURA FALLON

During the time of coexistence, the Indigenous people and the white European immigrants had every sort of relationship with each other that humans have ever had—neighbors, murderers, lovers, wives, husbands, captors, friends, enemies, and so on—but the Native people always had the overt policy of genocide hanging over their heads. A little less than three hundred years ago, or about four or five generations before my grandmother, there was an all-out³ war against the Native people of this area. One of the major Native leaders was killed and for twenty years his head stood on a pike in the center of town. There could not have been a clearer symbol of the danger of being identified as Native.

Many Native people were killed outright, and, according to most U.S. history books, the rest withdrew into what is now Canada. In fact, several tribes retained their tribal organization, particularly in areas removed from white population centers. These Native communities exist today. Some are recognized by the U.S. and/or state government.

Another group of Native people disappeared into the dominant white culture, simply for survival. At the time it would have been hugely unwise to be visible as an Indian except under a few exceptional circumstances. We (though I retain my white identity, in this instance I use that pronoun in acknowledgement of my Native ancestors), out of fear or wisdom, became silent about our identity and assimilated into the white culture that surrounded us. (As some of us white/Native folks might say, we got all of the oppression and none of the culture.)

The oppression we internalized shows itself in various ways: violence acted out mostly on ourselves or our family, the shattering of closeness and the fracturing of family relationships (genocide lives on after the direct killing), heavy humiliation to the point of not being able to speak, terror of being visible or prominent, self hatred, the loss of language and cultural practices.

The strengths of the Native cultures that were passed on to us are not always so visible. Some of them are not particularly helpful in a white-dominated culture. These include a lack of “ambition” (meaning a desire to compete to acquire wealth or status), generosity, a quiet connection to and knowledge of the natural world, and a stubborn persistence in holding on to one's own mind and way of thinking.

³ “All-out” means total.

I wonder what my life would be like if two hundred and fifty years ago there had not been a genocidal war against my Native ancestors. Nearly all of the rivers, many of the lakes, and some of the towns around here have Indian names, so there is no question that Indians were here and that the white people who made the maps knew them and were familiar with their language. The contact must have been much more intimate than the history books acknowledge. Would I speak the Native language and know what the names mean? What would my family's culture look like with a full blend of the diverse traditions?

My mother's father was Welsh (his father was born in Wales), and though he was only around for two years of my mother's life, I doubt that many people would question my claiming Welsh ancestry. With Native ancestry, it is different. One's identity as Native comes under question. Huge political and legal battles are being fought between Indigenous people and the governments imposed on them over who is Indigenous and which peoples the governments are willing to acknowledge. A lot is at stake, and the question of one's individual identity can get all caught up in the struggle.

I am proud of my Native ancestors for the way they lived on the earth and retained important aspects of humanness in a white-dominated capitalist culture.

I am proud to share some of those strengths, which I believe they passed on to me. I am proud to have done a few things to stop the genocide of Indigenous people.

I am proud of my white European ancestors, who were courageous and industrious; who always did the best they could, adhering to principled Protestant values of integrity and discipline; who at least once in a while had human and mutually beneficial relationships with Indigenous people; and whose descendants I now hope to organize as effective allies against all oppression.

Thanks to Barbara Boring for her love of all humans and her ability to organize and present all that we have learned. It was only through her clarity and precision that I was able to clarify these thoughts in my mind. Thanks to Marcie Rendon⁴ for her clarity on these issues and her long-term commitment to healing the hurts of genocide and restoring humanness to all people of the planet who have been harmed by oppression.

Dan Nickerson
Freeport, Maine, USA

⁴Marcie Rendon is the International Liberation Reference Person for Native Americans.



KATIE KAUFFMAN

Adversaries Are Only Patterns

What's our current situation? Our adversaries are only patterns. Nothing supports an oppressive society except patterns. No human beings, as distinct from patterns, will support oppression. This includes people who seem to be all pattern. There is always a human being in there.

Harvey Jackins
From page 12 of "The Rest of Our Lives," in *The Rest of Our Lives*



LYNDALL KATZ

Young People's Work in RC

Goal 2 of the RC Communities¹ is that the Re-evaluation Counseling Community put new and increased efforts into making Re-evaluation Counseling and the Re-evaluation Counseling Communities accessible to young people. I am writing a series of articles about moving forward with that goal.

This is my second article. In the first (on page 49 of the July 2014 *Present Time*) I focused on the basics of young people's oppression and beginning steps for allies. This article is about young people's work in RC. The third article will be on places where we need to make progress.

Young people's work involves young people doing two-way Co-Counseling. Young people's work and family work² overlap, and both go better when the other is going strong. They are also different from each other and need to be thought about differently. When I'm talking about family work in this article, I will call it family work. When I say young people's work, I am not including family work.

Young people's work has not yet been fully taken on³ by most RC Communities, but it is growing. More and more young people in more places around the world are using RC. Everyone's progress will accelerate as young people's work and the elimination of young people's oppression are made a priority.

¹ A goal adopted by the 2001 World Conference of the RC Communities and reaffirmed by subsequent World Conferences

² 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 to not be dominated by the adults.

³ "Taken on" means embraced.

Young people are a tricky constituency in which to develop experienced leadership. By the time they decide to use two-way counseling, they usually have only a few years before they age out of being young people.⁴ However, effective young leaders are emerging. The adults who were once young leaders know how to support today's young leaders and have a good understanding of young people's oppression. Goal 2 has pushed those of us doing young people's work to take ourselves more seriously. And many key RC leaders have put resource into young people's work, to good effect.

YOUNG PEOPLE'S WORKSHOPS

Often there is only one young person, or only a couple of young people doing two-way counseling, in a local RC Community. It can feel lonely and hard when you are the only young person in a Community that is set up by and for adults. It helps to have several young people and experienced allies building relationships with each other—led by the young people. It also makes a big difference when young people can be in contact with the broader RC young people's liberation movement.

At the moment, young people's weekend workshops seem to be the most useful tool for developing two-way counseling among young people. They now happen yearly, in different parts of the world. Occasionally they are constituency-based—for example, for young women or young people of the global majority (people targeted by racism). There are also International

⁴ "Age out of being young people" means are no longer young people.

young leaders' workshops, at which young people who are leading get to see what others around the world are doing, support and learn from them, and think about young people's liberation together. We need yearly workshops that all young people doing two-way counseling can attend. This is especially important for young people who are not in a Community with strong young people's work.

RC leaders need to be aware of the young people in their Communities and help them get to young people's workshops. Even if they haven't fulfilled the usual requirements for workshop attendance (completing a fundamentals class, being active in their local Community), if they are interested in two-way counseling, have some RC experience (possibly family work), and understand RC theory, it can still make sense for them to go, even to an International workshop. We need to be flexible, because (1) young people usually haven't had as much time as adults to learn and lead in RC, and (2) young people's oppression can make it hard for young people to want to attend local Community events. If you think a young person in your Community might be ready to attend a young people's workshop, please contact me or look in *Present Time* for the nearest young people's workshop and contact the organizer.

I went to my first young people's workshop when I was thirteen. I came from an RC Community that didn't have any young people in it who were doing two-way counseling. I was blown away⁵ by having a young person lead the workshop and by seeing other young people building

⁵ "Blown away" means astounded, surprised, pleased.

close relationships, using RC, and working together against young people's oppression. Afterward I started having regular phone sessions with another young person. I also decided to be more involved in my local RC Community, to get a young people's support group going, and to go to adult workshops. All this happened quickly for me because I was ready for RC and could tell⁶ that I wanted it. It doesn't go this quickly for all young people, but they often get a profound glimpse of having RC for themselves.

COMMITTED ALLIES

It makes a big difference for a young person to have a committed ally—someone who can show that he or she likes the young person; who can trust the young person's mind; who can listen to the young person's anger about young people's oppression, without defending the oppression; and who can see where internalized young people's oppression is holding the young person back and counsel him or her on it. It needs to be someone who isn't urgent about the young person discharging or being an RC leader.

I have seen only a few young people who could stick with RC without having a committed ally. Sometimes the ally is their parent, and sometimes not. An ally who is not the parent can help the young person learn about RC in a way that isn't confused with the parent's distress. Things usually go even better if the young person has several committed allies. However, even only one ally, parent or not, can make a huge difference. Allies need to be discharging regularly on their own years as a young person. That will help them to be in close with the young person and remember that being an ally is as

much for themselves and their own re-emergence as it is for the young person.

YOUNG PEOPLE DOING TWO-WAY COUNSELING

It's great if young people can figure out how to do two-way Co-Counseling sessions. It can be really great for them to do sessions with another young person, in person or on the phone. A big part of young people's oppression is the message that young people can't be important to each other. That is not



KATIE KAUFFMAN

true; we young people can be close and a great support for each other. However, we sometimes internalize the false message and believe it about each other. We sometimes need support from allies in our counseling relationships with each other. This could be in the form of a three-way session.

It's also great for young people to have two-way sessions with allies. Although it sometimes makes sense for the young people to take more time than the adults (especially if they are transitioning to two-way counseling from family work), it can be beneficial for adults to be counseled regularly by young people. When being clients with us, it's great for adults to openly show

their struggles and take us seriously as the smart counselors that we are. It helps if the adults work on what it was like for them when they were our age—in sessions with other adults or, after getting our permission, with us. Adults need to be thoughtful when counseling with young people and ask our permission before working on anything that might be hard on us, such as their oppressor recordings⁷ about young people, their feelings about sex, and so on.

YOUNG PEOPLE'S CLASSES AND SUPPORT GROUPS

Young people's classes and support groups are a great idea when several young people live near to each other and are doing, or want to learn how to do, two-way counseling. It is good to be creative and playful in young people's groups (as in all RC groups) and experiment with different ways of doing things so that the young people get to share their thinking and it doesn't look like school. This can mean doing go-arounds in which each young person gets to share his or her thinking on a topic, playing games, having snacks, going on fun outings, and so on, as well as having theory presentations and discharge time.

It is often good to have a couple of adult allies in the class. How many depends on how many young people are attending, their experience with RC, and the relationships they have with the allies. If the allies aren't the young people's parents, the young people get some space to figure out RC separate from their parents. Sometimes a parent is the best option. Parent allies can meet together in a separate discharge group.

It often makes sense for a young person to lead the group even if he or

continued ...

⁶ "Tell" means see.

⁷ Distress recordings

LIBERATION

... continued

she doesn't have as much experience as RC leaders usually do. The young leader should be supported and thought about, just like other leaders. Because of internalized young people's oppression, other young people may feel like the young person chosen to lead is smarter than they are. This can make it hard for them to stay close to and back⁸ the leader. Allies need to interrupt the internalized oppression and help the young leader stay connected to the other young people in the group. Sometimes there isn't a young person ready to lead. If an ally leads the group, he or she needs to learn about young people's oppression and frequently ask for the young people's thinking. If there is a dilemma about who should lead a young people's group, please contact me or someone else experienced with young people's work.

ORGANIZING YOUNG PEOPLE'S CLASSES AND WORKSHOPS

Ideally, young people are the organizers of young people's classes, support groups, and workshops (supported well by adult allies). Adult allies can also do the organizing, at least at the beginning. Organizers can pull in adult allies to help with logistics. Most young people don't have access to cars and need drivers or help figuring out transportation. Allies (and young people) can reach out to young people, listen to them, and encourage them to come to events. They can help them think about details like money (and possibly help them apply for Outreach Funds) and registering.

Young people are capable of figuring things out themselves. However, because of young people's oppression they don't have as much resource as adults do (or the resource is at their parents' or someone else's

disposal). They also have extra burdens, for example, little control over how much homework they are given.

MAKING RC EVENTS GO WELL FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

Things will go better for everyone if we all figure out how to address and discharge on young people's oppression and move toward a more playful and connected way of being together. If we don't do this, RC events won't go very well for us young people. They will be too much like the young people's oppression we face daily. And although at a primarily adult workshop the play and fun should not all be left up to us,⁹ young people do often have good ideas about play, so it's great to get our input.

Things go a lot better at an RC event when there are a few people whose job it is to think about the young people. These allies should be experienced in young people's work (or family work, if that's all that's been available) and/or have relationships with the young people. They should also have worked on young people's oppression.

They can listen to the young people and provide perspective outside of the internalized oppression. They can ward off any adults who run¹⁰ their oppressor patterns at the young people. They can check in with the young people about how things

are going. They can make sure that the young people get good sessions, find topic groups to attend and people to room with, and so on. Until the majority of adults have worked on their oppressor patterns, even a small group who can think well about the young people will make the event go much better for the young people. It is useful for these allies to check in with each other beforehand and throughout the event and to be a team in thinking about the young people. It can also make a difference if the leaders of the event check in with the young people and ask for their input. For example, the sexism that young women face can be different from that faced by older women.

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



NEW YORK CITY, NEW YORK, USA • LYNDALL KATZ

⁸ "Back" means support.

⁹ "Left up to us" means our responsibility.

¹⁰ "Run" means act out.

Moving Toward Real Power

Harvey Jackins, at the July 1986 Peace and Disarmament Activists' Workshop

Probably real power, when we come to it, will be a sort of gentle, constant thing. However, all our models of power are oppressive at this point. So we're going to sound like a Mafia¹ chieftain in order to contradict the "heh, heh, heh" embarrassed timidity.

(Excerpts from a counseling demonstration with J— follow.)

Harvey: I am in complete charge! (*J— repeats*) Of absolutely everything! (*said with growling finality; J— laughs*) From now on, I *am* in complete charge.

J—: I'm a nice guy. (*laughs*)

Harvey: You are, but you are not a nice-guy pattern, and I'm going to cure you of that illusion. (*J— laughs*) What you are discharging is not your nice-guyness. It's your nice-guy patternness. From now on, I'm in complete charge. (*J—repeats*) Of absolutely everything! (*J— repeats*) Including the RC Community!

J—: Including the RC Community.

Harvey: The entire RC Community! And this means . . .

J—: And this means—the first thought was liking myself.

Harvey: Very good. Very good. I'm glad you thought of it. I think you'd better say that about four times. This means liking myself.

J—: But a Mafia Don² doesn't like himself.

Harvey: You're damn right he does (superficially). That's not their weakness. (*laughter*) With them we take a different kind of approach. Say it again: This means liking myself.

(Demonstration continues, with much repetition and discharge by J—.)

J—: And this means liking myself, in spite of what everybody says.

Harvey: Stuff their opinions up their nose! Ha ha! One more crack³ at it: From now on, I am in complete charge of everything, including the entire RC Community. (*J— repeats it*) And this means . . .

J—: And this means liking myself completely.

Harvey (to the group): General commitments⁴ are like snowplows—you saw it here a little bit. They bring up the most important issues in anybody's case. What's his principal issue? What's the one he's got to absolutely discharge completely? Up it came, flying up, boom! Liking himself. The big issue. The general commitment, pushed hard, just digs it all up and lays it out there ready to go.

You could get stuck in thinking that he's already tired and here you want him to take charge of everything. What an enormous, intolerable, insufferable, additional burden you're putting on him, even though he is discharging all over. But the twenty-first or twenty-second time that you ram it through, all of a sudden the light breaks: "Oh hell."⁵ This is nothing additional. I've always been in charge of everything. I was just kidding myself. Gee,⁶ it's nice to be back in touch with reality." And the intolerable additional burden, which was all moonshine,⁷ disappears. You're just back to the fact that, of course, in your universe you're in charge of everything all the time. You've been kidding yourself and making everything extremely difficult by hiding that fact.

(Harvey has him repeat the commitment and related thoughts several more times.)

Harvey: Enjoy it. Enjoy it. You've always wanted to sound like this in front of a whole crowd of people—the sound of power and satisfaction and enjoyment. "They finally left me alone in the candy store! Ha ha ha! (*laughter*) And this means . . ."

J—: And this means liking myself.

Harvey: Promise? From now on you're only going to like yourself? No more self-criticism? Promise? Promise?

J—: Okay.

Harvey: Okay. Well done. (*applause*)

⁴By "general commitments," Harvey means commitments to act against a general category of distress, such as not taking charge.

⁵"Oh hell" is a way of communicating that something isn't going to stop someone from going ahead.

⁶In this context, "gee" is an introductory expression conveying surprise and happiness.

⁷"Moonshine" means nonsense.

¹ The Mafia is a secret criminal organization.

² A "Mafia Don" is a Mafia boss.

³ "Crack" means attempt.

“We Can Make a Key Difference”

I am excited about leading “mental health” liberation (MHL). I’ve led a support group for several years, and I led a daylong workshop for my Region.¹ I organize the GLB² and MHL conference call as well as an invitational GLB and MHL workshop. I’m on the RC MHL calendar committee. And I sometimes write for this list.³ I counsel with and support Janet⁴ and other MHL leaders.

I can see the difference this work has made in my own life. Without it I might have been permanently “treated” by the “mental health” system. Instead I am here, claiming my right to a life—to living well, with some semblance of beauty and order—and inspiring people with my success story.

A full program for “mental health” liberation is not possible without RC. Basic RC theory is the information people need to understand and do something about “mental health” oppression. Through listening, loving, and discharging, we can heal from the “mental health” system’s mistreatment of us and reclaim our humanness. Therefore, we RCers leading MHL are at “the heart of the heart” of ending “mental health” oppression. It’s a great spot to be! We can make a key difference.

I’d like us to spread the theory of ex-inmate liberation⁵ more

¹ A Region is a subdivision of the International Re-evaluation Counseling Community, usually consisting of several Areas (local RC Communities).

² Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual

³ The RC e-mail discussion list for leaders of “mental health” liberation

⁴ Janet Foner, the International Liberation Reference Person for “Mental Health” Liberation

⁵ Liberation for ex-psychiatric inmates—people who have been patients in mental hospitals

broadly in RC. We ex-inmates need to be better understood and thought about. Also, like all constituencies, we need to take ourselves seriously as Co-Counselors and continuously strengthen our counseling skills. We can discharge anything that comes up for us—for example, feelings that “we’re not the right ones” or fears of being perceived as “too intrusive.”

I would also like to see more RCers active in the wide-world MHL movement. We need to back⁶ each other any time we try anything, no matter how small it seems. I’ve recently started telling my story more in both formal and informal settings. I’m

⁶ “Back” means support.

also making friends with wide-world MHL leaders and putting out the policy changes I’d like to see in our society. One of many things I’ve learned is that it is difficult to communicate the theory of MHL to therapists. They often feel that I am criticizing them, when I know that I am not. (I would love any tips readers might offer.)

When I really look at my significance as a “mental health” liberation leader, I get scared. I need you all in close with me, and I want you to know that I am here for you. Whenever you are thinking about this topic, I am there with you and backing you all the way.

“Henry Church”

Reprinted from the RC e-mail discussion list for leaders of “mental health” liberation



JAYNE SCHAUER

Working Together to End Racism

A pamphlet introducing RC from the perspective of ending racism

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

Ordering information on page 110

My Jewish-Ukrainian-Puerto Rican Heritage

My father's family is of Ukrainian Jewish heritage. They have been in the United States since the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. My mother's family is Puerto Rican, of Caribbean Indigenous, North and West African, Spanish, and probably Arab heritage. My parents were both born and raised in New York City, in the United States. I was born and raised in Puerto Rico, in a remote community where there were no other Jews. I only saw my father's family on short yearly visits to the United States.

I love being a Caribbean Jew, mixing two rich, warm, verbal cultures. My parents were excellent allies to each other. I grew up with each of them telling me about the other's culture, with my Jewish father making *tostones* (fried green plantain with garlic) and my Puerto Rican mother making sure there were cheese blintzes (crepes wrapped around sweetened soft cheese) in the freezer, in our house in the middle of a tropical rain forest.

I loved watching my parents twirl around the kitchen, dancing to and singing the Russian song *Kalinka*; my mother singing *Tumbalalaika* in Yiddish¹; and my father lecturing on science and politics and composing silly rhymes in his accented Spanish.

Caribbean Jews have played important roles in the region's struggles to liberate itself from colonialism, and I am proud to be a part of that.

EARLY EXPERIENCES OF RACISM AND ANTI-JEWISH OPPRESSION

My early experiences of racism were with my father's family. My Jewish grandmother tried hard to separate me and my brothers from our Puerto Rican heritage, constantly asking if we wouldn't rather live in Brooklyn (New York City) and trying to give my baby brother, Alejandro, a Russian Jewish nickname. My Jewish cousins, growing up as white USers in the 1950s and 1960s, never asked us anything at all about our lives in Puerto Rico.

My grandmother paid for me to go to a Jewish summer camp in New York State. There was only one other child of color there, a Cuban boy. The other children decided we were a couple. The only adult of color was the African-heritage cook. I would sneak off to spend time with him in the kitchen. I went to a high



INDIA • DIANE SHISK

school with many middle-class Ashkenazi Jews² and few people of color, where I was ridiculed for being Puerto Rican. (Some of the girls sang an offensive song, from a popular musical, about my country: "Puerto Rico, my heart's devotion, let it sink back in the ocean.")

My early experiences of anti-Jewish oppression were in my *barrio*³ in Puerto Rico. Our best friends made little crosses of twigs and then asked my brother and me to step on them, so they could see if it was true that God would strike us dead with lightning. Since we were going to hell anyway, because we hadn't been baptized, it didn't matter. The local priest told his congregation that Jews worshipped the Goddess Diana and were pagans. Many public school teachers were trained at a Catholic college and passed on oppressive misinformation. One teacher I liked told my class that Jews got up every morning, spit on their money, and then counted it. Another said that before

continued ...

¹ Yiddish is a dialect of High German that includes Hebrew words and is written in Hebrew characters.

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

³ *Barrio* means neighborhood in Spanish.

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Jesus Christ was born, everyone lived in trees and counted backwards.

EUROPEAN JEWS

European Jews who migrated to the United States were offered a similar middle-agent role to the one they'd had in Europe, this time in relation to U.S. people of color. They acquired white patterns, including racism and imperialism, while still experiencing anti-Jewish oppression. Because there's much more awareness in the United States of racism than of anti-Jewish oppression, many U.S. Jews with white patterns use ideas about race to try to talk about their own oppression as Jews and will insist that they are not white.

It's true that Jewish white patterns are not the same as Catholic or Protestant white patterns, and that because of Jews' particular history of oppression, Gentiles of color and white Jews have sometimes built strong alliances with each other. But insisting on being identified as not white is in fact oppressor material.⁴ What it says to people of color is that because European Jews have been targeted by anti-Jewish oppression, they don't have to face and clean up racism, that their suffering gives them special rights to continue acting on oppressor patterns. It says, "I suffered; therefore I deserve white privilege." Among many things, it is a profound betrayal of U.S. Jews of color, who find ourselves abandoned to the brutality of racism by our own cousins.

JEWS OF COLOR

I have spent a lot of my adult life, in and out of RC, being forced to choose between being with people of color or with Jews. My Region⁵ has traditionally scheduled Jewish and people-of-color workshops on the same weekend. This is based on the unaware assumption that Jews of color don't exist—that all Jews are white and all people of color are Gentiles.

As a Jew of color, I am expected to act as a mediator between non-Jewish people of color and white Jews. What usually happens is that as I try to explain each group to the other, I am attacked by both, with white Gentiles standing aside as if these conflicts have nothing to do with them when in fact they carry oppressor material about all of us. I am expected to take the risk of speaking for both sides, without being supported or protected.

⁴ "Material" means distress.

⁵ A Region is a subdivision of the International Re-evaluation Counseling Community, usually consisting of several Areas (local RC Communities).

Most white Jews in my life know nothing about Jews of color and have never expressed any curiosity. People of color who show up at Jewish events are assumed to be the Gentile friends or partners of white Jews.

We Jews of color have come to exist by many different historical pathways. Some of us are mixed-heritage, converts, or adoptees. Some of us are from ancient cultures of African, Middle Eastern, or Asian Jews. Some of us are the result of more recent migrations from Europe to Latin America, Africa, and Asia. We're very diverse, but in my experience white Jews hardly think about us at all and are ignorant of our varied histories; or if they do think of us, they see us as an exotic sideshow, not a central part of Jewish life.

I am often assumed to be Sephardic⁶ because of my Spanish surname, even though Latin America has a large population of Ashkenazi Jews. In the United States, Ashkenazi culture totally dominates what's understood to be Jewish. It's taken for granted that all our ancestors spoke Yiddish and ate latkes⁷!

LATIN AMERICAN JEWS

As a Latin American Jew, there's another realm of ignorance I confront. Our entire Latin American continent is targeted on a daily basis by U.S. racism—as it has been, since 1492, by European racism. Our countries have been savagely plundered—first by European owning classes; then by the U.S. owning class, via multinational corporations. Our leaders have been murdered by CIA⁸ agents, our liberation movements violently suppressed by U.S.-trained death squads and torturers, our natural resources stolen, our chosen governments overthrown, our labor brutally exploited. The imperialism under which we've suffered for five hundred years is thoroughly racist. Although it falls far more harshly on visibly Indigenous, African-heritage, and Asian-heritage Latin Americans, all of us in Latin America have been targets of it, even the national elites who are its agents, and all of us battle internalized racism and colonialism because of it.

Latin American Jews are no exception, but when we arrive in the United States we are "reclassified" according to U.S.-centered ideas about race. Those of us who are darker are assumed, like many U.S. Jews of color, to be Gentiles, and those of us who are lighter, who come to this country after, perhaps, half a lifetime

⁶ A Sephardic Jew—a Jew descended from Jews in Spain or Portugal

⁷ Latkes are traditional Jewish pancakes made out of grated potatoes.

⁸ U.S. Central Intelligence Agency

of facing racism at home, are assumed to be white—are expected to identify with white U.S. Jews more than Latin American Gentiles and to have had no experience of racism. In each case, we're cut off from one of our two main sources of allies.

Anti-Jewish oppression plays a role in this. Jews are historically seen as having no allegiance to their countries of origin, as being permanently apart. Here in the United States, Latin Americans with Ashkenazi Jewish surnames (most people are too ignorant of other Jewish cultures to recognize non-Ashkenazi surnames) may be denied access to resources for Latinos/as or refused membership in Latino/a organizations on the assumption that since their ancestors came from Kiev or Berlin instead of Naples or Barcelona, they are not real Latin Americans. Gentile Latin American immigrants aren't asked if they have Native or African heritage.

Being targeted by racism is a political condition, not a genetic one. What communities it makes sense for U.S. Latin American Jews to join, who we can best make alliances with, who can best understand our experiences and offer us safety for discharge, depends on our histories, not U.S. ideas of the blood quantum (a legal classification of people during slavery, based on percentages of African and sometimes Native "blood").



MATT WEATHERFORD

INTERACTIONS OF RACISM AND ANTI-JEWISH OPPRESSION

As middle agents, European-heritage Jews have often ended up being the local administrators of racism and class oppression in urban U.S. communities of color. Jewish landlords, employers, shopkeepers, school administrators, union officers, doctors, and social workers are much more visible sources of oppression to urban Puerto Ricans than the white Gentile owning-class people who own the banks, control the corporations, and run the government. Just as white Jews took on⁹ racism as a path to what looked like security, U.S. Latinos/as have been willing to take up¹⁰ anti-Jewish oppression as a weapon against racism and classism, attacking the Jewish slumlord not for being a slumlord but for being a Jew. As a Jew of color, I get caught between my two peoples, each of them acting out oppression at the other (although the overall societal position of U.S. Jews is much, much better than that of U.S. Puerto Ricans and other Latinos/as).

What this means in my day-to-day life is that even when I'm relaxing with my own people, I am never sure I won't suddenly get hit with an oppressive remark about some part of my identity. Because of their anger about racism and classism, combined with centuries of anti-Jewish oppression in the Catholic church, I am often unable to count on Latinos/as to stand up against anti-Jewish oppression. I have heard everyone from Chilean revolutionary exiles to young Chicano/a students say that all Jews are rich exploiters, responsible for the poverty of their people.

Most Latino/a organizations and groups assume all U.S. Latinos/as to be of Christian heritage, and in California, where the majority of Latinos/as are Mexican, we're all assumed to be Catholic. (Puerto Ricans also have strong traditions of Protestant and Evangelical Christianity.) In and out of RC, it's usually taken for granted that everyone in a Latino/a group shares the experience of Catholic rituals and practices, loves roast pork, and so on. This makes me and the many other Latin American and Latino/a Jews invisible, as if we are oddities.

I contributed a story, by request, to an anthology of Christmas stories by well-known Latino/a authors. I wrote about Christmas in rural Puerto Rico, which I celebrated as a child, and also about Hanukkah, which I also celebrated. The editors left my story as it was

continued . . .

⁹ "Took on" means adopted.

¹⁰ "Take up" means adopt.

LIBERATION

... continued

in the English version but cut out all reference to my Jewishness in the Spanish version. They clearly thought that Spanish-speaking people would have no interest in Jewish culture, perhaps even that it would offend them. It didn't cross their minds that there are Spanish-speaking Jews who might celebrate both holidays.

Several Latino/a political organizations are using as part of their literature *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* (a document created by Russia's Tsarist secret police about a supposed international Jewish conspiracy to take over the world). Allies of color should be demanding that this stop.

Anti-Jewish oppression is of course harmful to Jews. It is also a distraction that weakens the liberation movements of people of color—confusing them about the real structures of economic and political power that they must face and dismantle.

It is painful to run into anti-Jewish oppression within Latin American revolutionary movements, like the independence movement of my own country or, as I mentioned before, the Chilean resistance to the dictatorship of the 1970s and 1980s. In Puerto Rico, where there are few Puerto Rican Jews, U.S. developers who are Gentiles are opposed as agents of imperialism and their religion isn't mentioned, but those who are Jews are identified as such. My Jewish father was a leader in the Puerto Rican independence movement for fifteen years, but this isn't usually mentioned when he is written about.



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

RC Women's Liberation—Then, and Now

Re-evaluation Counseling began in the 1950s. In the 1960s and '70s, the RC Communities came into existence and began to grow. RC liberation theory and practice developed simultaneously with wide-world liberation movements, most of which were based on revolutionary ideas. Harvey would point out how emerging concepts and practices in the wide world—for example, Chinese “speak bitterness” sessions—corresponded to what we were doing in RC, for example, speak-outs by women and people of color.

I feel fortunate to have been a young-adult female activist during the 1960s and '70s and to have experienced the revolutionary movements of that time. I came into RC in the early days of the wide-world women's liberation movement, when global movements for transformational change were increasingly emphasizing the importance of fighting sexism. Many of us quoted Mao Tse

Tung—“Women hold up half the sky.” Harvey Jackins was clear that women's liberation had to be at the forefront of any successful revolutionary movement. Many wide-world women's liberationists came into RC, and many of them became active RC Community builders.

Similar to what was happening in the wide-world women's movement, we women in RC were struggling with our internalized oppression and the resulting divisions among us. It became clear that we needed to fight for liberation on two fronts: we needed to contradict and discharge internalized oppression in our Co-Counseling sessions and also act collectively in the wider society to end institutionalized oppression. It became clear that men are not the “enemy” or the cause of sexism, and that all women need to be liberated (some women aren't more “liberated” than others). These were important contributions to women's liberation.

We were also unclear about certain things. It took a while for us to understand men's oppression, and men's oppressor distresses. Over time we learned how to welcome men as our allies, on our terms, with us leading them.

The women's movement came under attack beginning in the 1980s, and RC women's liberation lost what had been an external boost to its momentum. Three hundred RC women went to Beijing, China, for the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women, and made large contributions there, but after that our work “plateaued.” Without our realizing it, RC women's liberation became marginalized and separated from the day-to-day work of the RC Communities. (It's important to note that all liberation movements go through stages of growth, plateauing, confusion, and so on.)

Meanwhile we were doing a lot of work on racism. Racism is the

key division among women, and it had severely limited our progress. Among other things, we had become confused about sexism in various cultures. We took on¹ racism, and as a result we began rebuilding the RC women's liberation movement more broadly and on a firmer foundation. We also began focusing on discharging our earliest hurts, including our early defeats that had led to discouragement. These developments had a powerful effect on RC women's liberation.

In 2005 we started rewriting the RC women's liberation draft policy statement and incorporated into it ideas relevant to the changing times. In 2009 we began holding Contemporary Women's Issues Workshops, which I initiated with the support of Valerie Jaworski² and others. The theme of the first workshop was "Sexism—Forgotten, Hidden, Trivialized, Denied."

At these workshops I talked about how sexism in the Western world had been downplayed (while being magnified in the non-Western world) and the battle against it made invisible. We made the distinction between sexism and male domination and began working persistently on both. (Male domination involves men dominating men as well as women.) Women-and-physical-power work, led by Diane Shisk,³ gave us an additional important way to contradict women's patterned acceptance of domination, submission, and passivity.

Two struggles now need to be addressed. First, most women and men easily forget how important the fight against sexism and male domination is, both for themselves



ASPEN, COLORADO, USA • NIKHIL TRIVEDI

and for ending the oppressive society. Second, particularly in the Western world, "escaping" from the battle against sexism and male domination is glorified and encouraged (and a few people make billions of dollars from that). For example, we are made to confuse sexual exploitation with sexual freedom, and younger women are encouraged to pursue gender change rather than genuine liberation from all oppression.

We women need to see ourselves as the key agents of our liberation. We have often fixed our attention on men. (What do they need in order to change? How can we "fix" them?) Instead we need to understand that we must lead both women and men in ending sexism and

male domination, and transforming society.

We have begun to challenge pornography. Many women have thought that pornography is a men's issue. It is also a women's issue. Women are its primary victims, and its impact on women is much greater than we have yet realized.

There is much to do! Let us build a force, with men, to fight sexism and male domination. We women also have a leading role to play in all of the challenges facing humanity, including saving the environment.

Diane Balseer
International Liberation
Reference Person for Women
Jamaica Plain, Massachusetts, USA

Not everything that is faced can be changed,
but nothing can be changed until it is faced.

James Baldwin

¹ "Took on" means confronted.

² Valerie Jaworski is an RC leader in Seattle, Washington, USA.

³ Diane Shisk is the Alternate International Reference Person.

Men and Women

Tim Jackins, at the East Coast North America Leaders' Workshop, December 2013

Women's liberation is extremely important to everything we want to do. It is a vital issue. We will not remove the grip of distresses on human minds without taking it on,¹ beginning now, and sticking with it.² We can't let this set of distresses continue to determine our minds.

I will say a little for the men: We know this is an important issue. We often don't know what to do about it, and not knowing what to do leaves most of us scared to do anything. Our inactivity is not because we don't want to do useful things. It's not because we don't care. It's because of what happened to us, which leaves us vulnerable in certain ways, especially in the area of people being upset with us. That can crumble a guy's perspective. We have been hurt and socialized in all the ways you women know of, as well as in ways it's been difficult for you to know about.

We want relationships with women that mean something. We men and women generally operate toward each other based on the images we have of each other. We've been denied full knowledge of who we are, how hurt we are, and the ways we have been hurt. We want to know what happened to you. We want to know the full story. It matters to us. We often don't know how to ask. We don't know how not to be scared about it. We don't know how not to feel guilty that it happened to you. We have been trained to be agents of this oppression—and we have been, in spite of our best intentions. We know that, and it is a weight and a confusion on us. We don't want it to determine anything, but it does slow everything down. We are insecure past anything you realize (*laughter*) and very defensive about it. (*laughter*)

We want full and meaningful relationships with you. We have no idea how to accomplish this, but we know we want it. And we know we have work to do. It isn't that we don't want relationships with each other as men. We do. And we are beginning to dare to lean against

each other a little. That will help and will give us more perspective, but that's a different battle than our fight against sexism and male domination, which is a separate and parallel struggle.

We hope women will be our allies in this struggle. We want you to be, but your work against male domination in your own minds has to come first. It has to come first even if you are still unsure of how to do it. It is important that you take on³ this battle fully and not wait for anything else, anywhere else, to happen.

Anytime you can indicate that you want us as allies is useful to us. Every man wants every one of you free from what happened to you. We see the effects, even if we don't understand what happened.

I was listening to a song, an old barbershop quartet⁴ song. One line in it says, "What is the sin in sincere? What is the good in goodbye? Your apprehensions confuse me, dear, puzzle and mystify." We will continue to try to figure this out. (*laughter*) But with all our hearts, we want you—and we want you for who you are, free of what happened to you. We want you to fight for that liberation without hesitation. We don't want you to protect us. We do want you to also understand what happened to us. We will go on together more and more closely as we figure all of this out.

³ "Take on" means undertake.

⁴ A barbershop quartet is an unaccompanied quartet of (usually male) voices singing sentimental songs in four-part harmony.



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You can order back issues as regular literature items (see pages 103 and 111).

¹ "Taking it on" means doing something about it.

² "Sticking with it" means continuing to work on it.

מצב שאינו בר-קיימא

חברות יקרות,

התקופה האחרונה בישראל הייתה קשה ובמוכנים רבים שונה מתקופות קודמות. הייתי רוצה שנתחיל לפרוק ולדבר עליה ביחד. ברור יותר ויותר שישראל זקוקה למדיניות ולמנהיגות אינטליגנטית יותר. יתכן שנוכל לספק אותן.

השבועות האחרונים הבהירו כמה דברים שהיו נכונים גם קודם אבל היו חבויים מתחת לפני השטח. הדבר הראשון הוא שהמצב הנוכחי הוא לחלוטין בלתי יציב ואינו בר-קיימא.

מזה זמן יש העמדת פנים שהכיבוש, יחד עם הרחבת ההתנחלויות בגדה המערבית, יוכלו להמשך עם אבידות ישראליות בודדות בלבד. הרעיון היה שאפשר יהיה להביא את הפלסטינים לסוג של השלמה עם המציאות העגומה של הקיום שמונח לפניהם, בעזרת כמה תמריצים כלכליים שיאפשרו בעיקר למעמד בינוני שיושב ברובו ברמאללה לחיות במידה של נוחות שתאפשר לו "לשכוח" את אכזריות הדיכוי – או לפחות להחליט שלא להיאבק נגדו במלוא העוצמה, על מנת שלא להפסיד את מעט הנוחות שיש לו.

הרעיון הזה התנפץ לנו בפנים עם החטיפה והרצח של שלושת הצעירים הישראלים, ולאחר מכן, עם החטיפה והרצח של הילד הפלסטיני. בימים האלו ראינו גם אלימות רבה של ישראלים כנגד פלסטינים כמו גם את המחאות הפלסטיניות שבעקבותיהן.

הדבר הנוסף שלא ניתן להתחמק ממנו יותר הוא עד כמה החברה הישראלית נעשתה קיצונית, אלימה, כועסת ומבוהלת בשנים האחרונות. קבוצות זעניות ואלימות, המבוססות בעיקרן בקהילות המתנחלים גדלו באופן משמעותי בכוחן בשנים האחרונות. נטייה זו נתמכה על ידי המדינה. ישנה תמיכה רחבה בקבוצות אלה בחברה הישראלית בכללותה. מהרגע שנודע שנרצחו שלושת הילדים הישראלים שנחטפו, כמות הזעם והאלימות שהתגלו בחברה הישראלית היו חסרות תקדים. לא רק ההרג של הילד הפלסטיני משועפט, אלא גם האלימות המילולית והפיסית כלפי ערבים ברחבי ישראל. כל אלה לא נוצרו יש מאין. הפחד, הכעס, השנאה והאלימות הוחדרו באופן שיטתי והתקיימו מתחת לפני השטח (ולפעמים מעליו) שנים רבות.

אני עובד בכרמלית בחיפה. הייתה לי ההזדמנות להקשיב לקולגות שלי ולרגשות הזעם, הגענונות והרצון להרוג. התחושה שלי היא שלא מדובר בקבוצה קטנה של אנשים שמרגישים כך, כפי שנהוג לעתים קרובות לחשוב. מדובר בקבוצה מרכזית בחברה שלנו.

בנוסף, כבר לא ניתן להתעלם מהעובדה שהפלסטינים הישראלים מרגישים יותר ויותר זעם וניכור. הפגיעות של הגענונות, ובכללן ההזנחה ומניעת המשאבים החמורים שהם חווים, לא יכולים להתקיים מבלי שיהיה להם השפעה עמוקה ומשמעותית.

כבר כמה שנים שתנועת השלום הישראלית לא הצליחה לקום מההריסות של הייאוש מתהליך השלום. לא היתה בתוכה קבוצה שיכלה להגיד בצורה מלאת תקווה את המציאות ולתת חזון שבו יש מקום לכולם. במקום זאת, חלק גדול ממנה שם את עצמו בפניה שבה היא מאשימה את ישראל ומשניאה את עצמה על רוב הישראלים. באותו הזמן, הקבוצות הליברליות במחנה השלום נקטו באופן עקבי בעמדות חסרות יושרה ותמכו במדיניות המלחמתית, ובכך שמו את עצמם במצב שבו הם אינם יכולים להציע אף אלטרנטיבה אמינה.

תהליכי השלום של השנים האחרונות היו ריקים לחלוטין מתוכן. ישראל לא הייתה מוכנה להתקדם בכיוון שיבטיח עתיד טוב לאף אחד מהעמים. ואין לה מוכנות לעשות את ההחלטות שידרשו בשביל להביא עתיד שכזה. ההעדפה של המשלוח בישראל הייתה לקדם את ההתנחלויות ולהגן על האלימות המתמשכת כנגד הפלסטינים בשטחים הכבושים, הן על ידי הצבא והן מקבוצות ימין. ההחלטה הזו גובתה בתמיכה שקטה של ארה"ב שמדי פעם דברה נגד המדיניות הזו אבל אף פעם לא יצאה נגדה באופן משמעותי. האינטרסים הכלכליים שמאחורי מצב עניינים זה, לא יציב ככל שיהיה, ממשיכים להוביל את המדיניות, למרות שיש מראית עין אחרת.

KK

אני חושב שהמלחמה של הימים האחרונים על עזה היא עוד ניסיון להשיג עוד קצת זמן – להכאיב ולייאש את הפלסטינים עד כדי ויתור ושתיקה נוספת לזמן מה. קשה לדעת אם זה יצליח או לא. מה שבטוח הוא שהמצב מחמיר. ההרחבה של טווח הרקטות לתל אביב, ירושלים ואפילו חיפה רק שמה בפנים של כולם את מה שאנחנו צריכות להתמודד אתו באמת. מציאות שבה יש מלחמה בעזה פעם בשנתיים לא יכולה להמשך זמן רב. לאף אחד מהצדדים אין את הכוחות או את המשאבים להתמיד במצב כזה.

האם נצליח לקדם רעיונות אינטליגנטיים וחדשים כך שיוכלו לתפוס את מוחותיהם של מרבית האוכלוסיה ולהזיז אותנו מהמקום שאנחנו נמצאות בו? ומה יהיו הרעיונות האלה וכיצד נוציא אותם לפועל? אלה השאלות שמעניינות אותי ושאיני חושב שכדאי לחשוב ולפרוק עליהן יחד ולהתחיל לפעול בכיוון.

מאוחר יותר

חודשיים מורכבים וקשים עברו עלינו. אני משתמש במרבים הסשנים שלי על מנת לעבוד על רגשותיי על המציאות הנוכחית. אני מנסה ליצור קשר עם חברים, הן ישראלים והן פלסטינים, ולהקשיב להם, ולפעמים לומר את מחשבותיי.

יש פעם גדול בין מה שקורה בפועל במציאות לבין האופן שבו מרבית היהודים הישראלים תופסים את המציאות. למדו אותנו לחיות תחת כסות של שקרים והטעויות. אנחנו עיוורים למציאות שבה חיים הפלסטינים ולמשמעות ולאופי האמיתי של מדיניות הממשלות שלנו.

אני מנסה להבין את המשמעות של להיות ישראלי בימים אלה. מה צריכים הישראלים להבין על מנת להתקדם, ומה יכול לחכות? האם ישראלים צריכים לדעת ששיקרו להם לגבי מעשיה של ישראל? האם הם צריכים לדעת עד כמה שיקרו להם? האם הם צריכים לדעת את האמת על סירובה של ישראל לקחת חלק בתהליך שלום של ממש? האם הם צריכים להסתכל על חומרי המדכא שלהם ובשותפותם הבלתי מודעת במדיניות זו? האם יכול להיות שמספיק לעת עתה שהם יבינו שפלסטינים הם אנשים טובים, שאין סכסוך מולד ומהותי בין שני העמים, ולכן יש אפשרות אמיתית לפתרון? האם הם יוכלו להבין את זה מבלי להבין שתפיסתם את המציאות מבוססת לא רק על מצוקות אלא גם על שקרים שהתלבשו על גבי המצוקות האלה?

אני מקשיב לשותפיי לעבודה באופן יומיומי כשהם מדברים על אנטישמייות, גזענות כלפי פלסטינים, המחשבות שלהם על פתרון או חוסר פתרון, הזעם שלהם, והפחד שלהם בנוגע לבית ולמדינה שלהם. לפעמים הם מספרים לי על חששותיהם מיוזמתם, מבלי שאשאל אותם. רוב הסיכויים שעבור רובנו אנחנו חיים מעל רגשות רבים וגדולים שפועלים ברקע ללא הפסקה.

התמיכה של ארה"ב ושל מעצמות מערביות אחרות בישראל *עוד לא* השתנתה באופן משמעותי. יחמת השלום האחרונה של מזכיר המדינה קרי הייתה ככל הנראה ניסיון להגיע לכדי סטטוס-קוו יותר נוח עבור ארה"ב, שלאט לאט הולכת ומאבדת את אחיזתה במזרח התיכון. ארה"ב אינה מוכנה עדיין לוותר על תמיכתה בישראל, בעיקר מסיבות כלכליות. המשמעות של איבוד ישראל ברגע זה היא ככל הנראה יקרה יותר מדי עבורה, מכיוון שארה"ב נמצאת כעת במצב מאוד עדין.

אני חושב שישראל הופתעה מכוחו של החמאס בעזה ומחוסר הנכונות של האוכלוסייה העזתית להיכנע, למרות ההשלכות ההרסניות של המלחמה על העזתים עד עכשיו. שלא כמו שתי ההתקפות הקודמות על עזה (ב-2009 וב-2012) שבהן היה די בעוצמה צבאית להכניע את חמאס למקום שבו הוא ביקש מעט מאוד.

הניסיונות הכושלים להגיע להפסקת אש יציבה משקפים את העובדה שהפערים עדיין מאוד גדולים. ישראל אינה מוכנה עדיין לאפשר לעזתים להרים את ראשם ולקבל את חירותם. עמירה הס, עיתונאית ישראלית מאוד מעורה טענה בעבר שישראל משתמשת בעזה ככר ניסיוני למדיניות, וכדוגמה עבור הגדה המערבית. הפלסטינים בגדה המערבית מתבקשים לקבל את המעט שיש להם על מנת לא להיות בבלאגן שעזה נמצאת בו (זה משמעותי לשים לב לכך שהפלסטינים בגדה המערבית נקטו רק מעט פעולות מחאה כנגד ההתקפה הנוכחית). אם עזה תצליח להשיג לעצמה מידה משמעותית של חירות, אזי שיהיה ברור שהפלסטינים יכולים לקבל לעצמם יותר. ישראל אינה מוכנה בשלב הזה לאפשר זאת. החמאס בבירור אינו

מוכן לסגת מבלי להשיג יותר חירות באופן משמעותי עבור העזתים. זוהי מציאות שונה מזו שהייתה בשתי המלחמות הקודמות.

כמה זמן ימשך מצב זה? קשה לומר. ישראל עדיין יש הרבה יותר עוצמה צבאית והיא סבלה הרבה פחות מאשר העזתים. אני חושב ששינוי תלוי בגורמים אחרים שעשויים להיכנס למשחק: (1) הפלסטינים בגדה המרבית (2) העולם הערבי, במיוחד מאבקים עממיים בעולם הערבי ו-(3) החלטה של המערב להפסיק את התמיכה בישראל תחת התנאים הנוכחיים (יותר סביר ששינוי שכזה יקרה אם תהיה התפרצות של התנגדות במדינות הנפט הערביות).

אנחנו רואים שינויים בגישות במערב. שינויים שאכן יכולים להמשיך בדרך האנטישמיות. ישראל מתמרנת לשחק את תפקיד "הרע הגדול", מואשמת עבור המדיניות שלה, ויש התעלמות מאחריות המערב למדיניות המלחמתית שישראל מבצעת. אם דברים ימשיכו כפי שהם עכשיו, ישראל תאלץ לבחור. האם היא תיכנע ללחץ מערבי בניסיון להציל את עצמה? האם היא תמשיך בניסיונותיה הנואשים להכניע את הפלסטינים ולשמור על דברים כפי שהם? קשה לומר. בעניין זה חשוב לשים לב שלישראל מעולם לא הייתה ממשלה כה ימנית ומיליטריסטית. שאלות גדולות, מצב קשה.

אנחנו עשויים לראות שינויים מפתיעים בימים הקרובים, בין אם בכיוון של הפסקת אש תמידית, שרוב הסיכויים שלא תציע הרבה לעזתים, או בהחמרת הלחימה. למרבה הצער, אני לא חושב שהגיע עדיין הזמן לשינויים משמעותיים בהבנת המציאות או במדיניות.

לוטן רז

חיפה, ישראל

הדפס מתוך דיון ברשימת הדואר עבור

מנהיגים של יהודים ושל חברי קהילת יעזק להערכה מחדש



PARIS • NIKHIL TRIVEDI

English translation of the preceding article:

An Unworkable Situation

Dear friends,

The recent period in Israel has been difficult and in some ways different from other periods. I want us to start discharging and discussing it together. It has become increasingly clear that Israel needs more intelligent policies and leadership. We might be able to provide this.

The past weeks have brought to the fore several things that have been true for a while but hidden. The first is that the current situation is completely unworkable and cannot continue for long.

There has been a pretence that the Occupation, including enlarging the West Bank settlements,¹ could continue with relatively few Israeli casualties. The idea has been to have the Palestinians accept the bleak existence offered them, with several economic incentives to make possible a Palestinian middle class, based mostly in Ramallah,² that is comfortable enough to “forget” the brutality of the oppression—or at least not fight full-out against it for fear of losing the small amount of comfort it has gained.

This idea blew up in our faces with the kidnapping and murder of the three Israeli young people and, even more so, with the kidnapping and murder of the Palestinian child. During these days, there was also other Israeli violence toward Palestinians, and Palestinian protests followed.

The other thing that can no longer be ignored is how extremist, violent, angry, and scared Israeli society has become in recent years. Racist and violent groups, based mostly in settlement populations, have seen a significant increase in power. This has been supported by the state. There is also widespread support for these groups in Israeli society. Once it was known that the kidnapped Israeli children were killed, an unprecedented amount of rage and violence was unleashed. It included not only the killing of the Palestinian child in Shu’afat³ but also physical and verbal violence toward Arabs throughout Israel. This did not come out of nowhere. The fear, anger, hatred

and violence have been systematically installed and have existed under the surface (and sometimes over it) for many years.

I work in the Carmelit, Haifa’s underground.⁴ I’ve had the opportunity to listen to my colleagues’ rage, racism, and feelings of desire to kill. My sense is that those who feel similarly are not a small group as is often pretended. Rather they are a dominant part of our society.

One can also no longer ignore that Israeli Palestinians are feeling more and more rage and alienation. The hurts of racism, including the gross neglect and denial of resources, cannot continue without having a deep and significant impact.

For several years the Israeli peace movement has been unable to pick itself up from despair over⁵ the peace process. No group in the Israeli peace movement has been able to state reality clearly and hopefully and offer a vision in which there is room for everyone. Instead, the movement has largely backed itself into a corner in which it blames Israel and therefore is hated by most Israelis. At the same time, the liberal segments of the peace movement have consistently taken unprincipled stands and supported the war effort, which has put them in no position to present any reliable alternative.

The recent peace process is completely void. Israel has not been willing to advance in a direction that would offer a good future for either people. There is no willingness to make the necessary decisions that would bring about such a future. Instead, the Israeli government promotes the settlements and defends the ongoing violence against the Palestinians in the Occupied Territories, both by the army and from right-wing⁶ groups. This policy has been backed⁷ by the United States. On occasion the United States has come out against it, but only in words and never in any significant manner. The economic interests behind this state of things, unstable as they may be, continue to determine the policies, even though appearances may be otherwise.

¹ The West Bank settlements are Israeli settlements in the West Bank, a Palestinian territory occupied by Israel.

² Ramallah is a Palestinian city in the central West Bank.

³ Shu’afat is a Palestinian neighborhood in East Jerusalem.

⁴ The Carmelit is an underground railway in Haifa, Israel.

⁵ “Over” means about.

⁶ “Right-wing” means politically reactionary.

⁷ “Backed” means supported.

I believe the war in Gaza⁸ is another attempt to gain time—to hurt and discourage the Palestinians so that there will be another round of quiet and giving up. Whether this will be successful or not is hard to tell.⁹ What is clear is that the situation is escalating. That the rockets have reached Tel Aviv, Jerusalem, and even Haifa¹⁰ only puts in everyone’s face what we actually have to look at and handle. A war in Gaza every two years cannot continue for long. No side has the power to persist in such a situation.

Can we put forward new and intelligent ideas that will engage the minds of the majority and move us from where we are? What will these ideas be, and how shall we put them into practice? These are the questions that interest me and that we need to think and discharge about together and start to move on.

LATER

It has been a rough and complicated couple of months here. I’ve been using most of my Co-Counseling sessions to work on feelings about the current situation. I have been trying to reach out to friends, both Israelis and Palestinians, and to listen and sometimes share my thinking.

There is a deep rift between what is actually happening and what most Israeli Jews believe to be true. We have been trained to live with a blanket of lies and deceptions. We are blind to what things are really like for the Palestinians and what our government’s policy has actually been.

I am trying to figure out and balance what it means to be Israeli these days. What do the Israeli people need to understand to move forward, and what can wait? Do Israelis need to know that they have been lied to about what Israel has done? Do they need to know the extent to which they have been lied to? Do they need to know the truth about Israel’s refusal to engage in a real peace process? Do they need to look at their own oppressor material¹¹ and their

⁸ Gaza is a Palestinian territory that has been occupied by Israel since 1967. Israel withdrew its settlements from Gaza in 2005 but has kept it under an economic and civilian siege since Hamas took over control of the Gaza strip in 2006.

⁹ “Tell” means determine.

¹⁰ Tel Aviv, Jerusalem, and Haifa are cities in Israel.

¹¹ “Material” means distress.

unknowing complicity in it? Could it be enough for them to understand that Palestinians are good human beings, that there is no inherent conflict between our peoples, and that therefore there is a real possibility of resolution? Could they actually figure this out without understanding that their perception of reality is based not only on distress but on lies that have been sitting on top of that distress?

I listen to my coworkers daily as they talk about anti-Semitism, racism toward Palestinians, their thoughts about the solution or lack of solution, their anger, and their fears for their homes and country. Sometimes they come to me on their own with their concerns, without my inviting them. Probably for all of us, a big set of feelings is up and constantly operating, and we are living on top of it.

The backing of Israel by the United States and other Western powers has *not yet* significantly changed. The recent Kerry¹² peace initiative was probably an attempt to reach a status quo more comfortable for a United States that is slowly losing its grip on the Middle East. The United States is not yet ready to let go of its support for Israel, mostly for economic reasons. Losing Israel at this point would probably be too costly for a United States that is in a very fragile position.

I think Israel has been surprised by the power of Hamas¹³ in Gaza and the non-surrendering approach

continued . . .

¹² John Kerry, the current U.S. Secretary of State

¹³ Hamas is a Palestinian Islamic organization, with an associated military wing, that has governed the Gaza Strip since 2006.



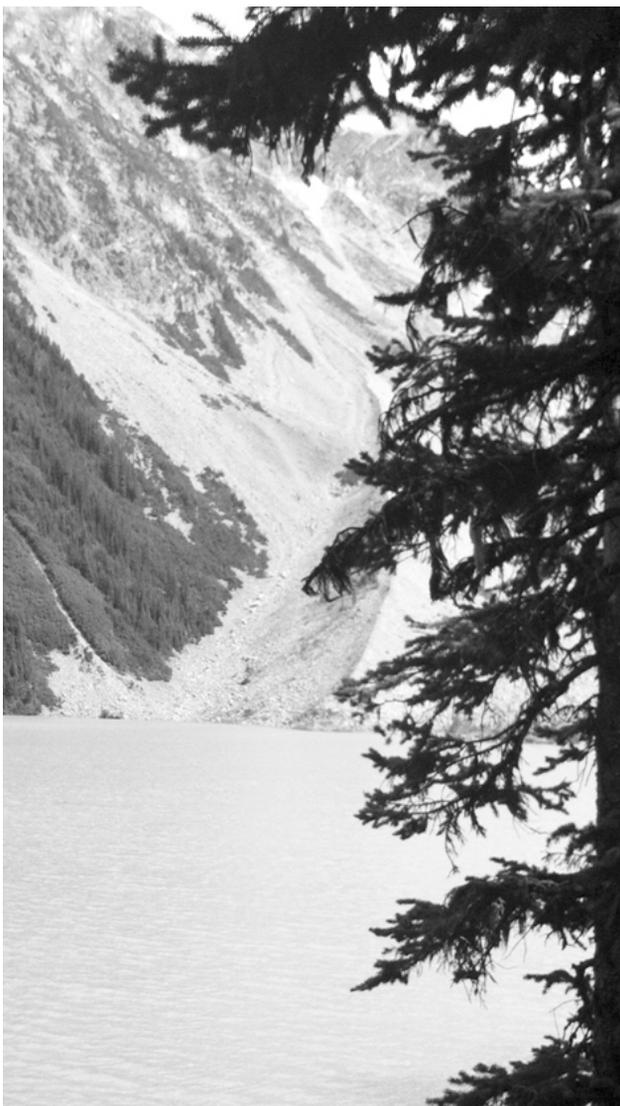
DANE COUNTY, WISCONSIN, USA • HOLLY JORGENSEN

WIDE WORLD CHANGING

... continued

of its population despite the disastrous effects the war has had on Gazans to date. It is not like the two previous attacks on Gaza (in 2009 and 2012), in which military might was enough to bring Hamas to its knees, to where it asked for very little.

The current unsuccessful ceasefire and negotiation attempts reflect the fact that the rift is still large. Israel is not yet prepared for Gazans to lift their heads and have freedom. A well-grounded Israeli journalist, Amira Hass, has claimed that Israel uses Gaza to try out policies and set an example for the West Bank. Palestinians in the West Bank are made to accept the little they have in order not to end up in a mess like Gaza is in. (Indeed, it is significant that the West Bankers have only briefly risen up against the current assault.) If Gaza achieves significantly more freedom, then it will be clear that more is possible for the



JAFFRE LAKES, BRITISH COLUMBIA, CANADA • SHIRA ROSEN

Palestinians. Israel is not yet prepared to allow that. Hamas is clearly not prepared to back down without gaining significantly more freedom for the Gazans. This is different than in the two previous wars.

How long will this continue? It is hard to say. Israel is still much stronger militarily and has suffered far less than Gaza. I think change depends on other forces coming into play¹⁴: (1) Palestinians in the West Bank, (2) the Arab world, especially popular revolts in the Arab world, and (3) the West deciding to no longer support Israel under current conditions (this is more likely if something erupts in the Arab oil states).

We are seeing changes of attitude in the West, changes that do indeed go down the road¹⁵ of anti-Semitism. Israel is set up to be the real "big bad guy," is blamed for its policies, and the West's responsibility for the atrocities is ignored. If things keep going down that road, Israel will be forced to choose. Will it bow down to the West in an effort to save itself? Will it continue its desperate attempts to subdue the Palestinians and keep things as they are? It's hard to say. It is significant that Israel has never before had such a right-wing, militaristic government. Big questions, difficult situation.

We may see sudden changes in the next few days, either in the direction of a permanent ceasefire, which will probably not offer much to the Gazans, or in an escalation in the fighting. Unfortunately, I don't think it's time yet for any significant changes in understanding or in policy.

Lotahn Raz
Haifa, Israel

Translated by Lotahn Raz

Reprinted from the RC e-mail discussion lists for leaders of Jews and for RC Community members

¹⁴ "Coming into play" becoming a factor.

¹⁵ "Go down the road" means go in the direction.

7 Billion Candles

Now, on our darkest day,
Let us welcome Solstice night
By lighting 7 billion
Candles of hope and peace.

Sojourner Truth
Seattle, Washington, USA

From a Palestinian American Woman

Re-evaluation Counseling, with its theory about the goodness of all people and the use of discharge to regain our minds, provides a perfect way for people of West Asia to heal. I have used the discharge process to find my mind and voice as a mixed-heritage Palestinian woman.

For thousands of years, Jews, Christians, and Muslims lived together in relative peace as neighbors in the same lands of West Asia. The Gaza I remember from my childhood was an orange grove, a *bayara*, peaceful and benign—a place of nature we used as a retreat from work and school in Ramallah.¹ My parents owned it for ten years, lovingly tending to the trees and writing in letters and diaries about the progress and care of the trees and land. Mother described the flora and fauna there, and the local residents with whom we exchanged visits. I remember the resident caretakers and their extended family, whom I later visited in a Gaza refugee camp.

But all was not peaceful in Palestine during those years of the British Mandate.² My parents told stories of rebellion—of war between the British on one side and Jews and Arabs (Muslim and Christian) on the other—and of Jews and Arabs fighting against each other. But those struggles seem so mild compared to the genocide being implemented now.

In 1952 my father was heartbroken to see the refugees in Gaza,³ as they begged him, “Dr. Totah, please tell the Americans; please do something!”

¹ Ramallah is a city in the Palestinian territory of the West Bank.

² When Britain controlled Palestine, from 1920 until 1948

³ Refugees from other parts of Palestine, from which they were driven away by invading Zionist armies



ELLIE PUTNAM

He wept after dreaming about trying to reach through a chain-link fence to his orange grove, unable to reach his land and his oranges, all now in Israel.

I was speechless when I heard about the recent attacks on the Palestinians in Gaza, who could not escape, and the deliberate destruction of all infrastructure, including hospitals, United Nations facilities, schools, homes, farms. I have been discharging on how heartbroken I feel at the simultaneous killing of generations of families, on my outrage at the lies being fed to USers, on my hopelessness and discouragement from watching over the years the slow taking of Palestinian land. But despite all this, the Palestinian people remain resilient, resourceful, kind, and generous. The U.S. and Israeli governments try to dehumanize us, but the reality is not that racist portrayal of us.

Writing this article as an Arab woman is very difficult for me. I feel exposed and vulnerable. Dealing with my feelings about the destruction of Gaza and the oppression of the Palestinian people has been possible only with the safety of much support and counseling.

It has been helpful to counsel with my attention away from the immediate horrors, and to work on my early childhood in Palestine and on my Palestinian father. Counseling

on the *bayara* and its peaceful beauty has brought discharge. I have also counseled on my experiences as a small child during the Arab Revolt,⁴ when Arab rebels were on our grounds, shooting; British soldiers were everywhere; there was warfare in Ramallah and all of Palestine; and I was hidden alone in a dark closet for my safety. I have counseled on the unspoken fears of the adults around me that I absorbed.

All my life I have felt, as a mixed-heritage Palestinian American woman, that I wanted to lie low,⁵ to not be seen—especially to not be seen as different. Standing up, speaking up, and being visible as a Palestinian have been scary—as I am a political minority in the United States and face anti-Arab racism—but they have been useful.

Being a woman of the global majority and experiencing anti-Arab racism have left me with low self-esteem and feeling lonely, hopeless, and discouraged. Again, it is support, caring, and counseling that have given me courage to work on the feelings. My wide-world writing (of a book on Bedouin⁶ weaving and a book-in-process about my father) has been a huge contradiction to my internalized oppression.

I am hopeful that Jews/Israelis and Palestinians/Arabs will be able to live together again in peace. I will keep counseling on this, to find my voice and a rational perspective.

Joy Totah Hilden
Berkeley, California, USA

⁴ The Arab Revolt was an uprising, in 1936 to 1939, of Palestinian Arabs against British colonial rule and mass Jewish immigration.

⁵ “Lie low” means be inconspicuous, avoid attention.

⁶ The Bedouins are Arabic-speaking nomadic peoples of the Middle Eastern deserts.

צעד ראשון בכיוון של כוח ותקווה

שלום,

כיתת המשך הנפגשת כבר כמה שנים בצפון ישראל נפגשה ביום חמישי האחרון.

דיברתי בקצרה על הקלטות מצוקה ישנות של הרגשת חוסר אונים וחולשה שגרמו לנו להרגיש שאין לנו אפשרות לחולל שינוי.

על ההיסטוריה האישית והכללית של מלחמות, שהותירה אותנו מפוחדים ומיואשים, על הקושי, בצעירותנו, להשיג מידע מהימן וברור על מה שהתרחש, בין אם בגלל במניפולציות שהפעילה הממשלה, ובין אם משום שהמבוגרים סביבנו היו מפוחדים ומיואשים מדי, וכיצד כל המצוקות הללו מגורות מחדש כעת.

הסכמנו שבחדר בו נפגשנו (היינו 10), יש מספיק חכמה וידע כדי לשים קץ למלחמות (תודה לג'וליאן ווייסגלס*¹ על הכיוון המצויין!)

היה ברור שלפרוק אחת עם השניה על מה שקורה כעת בעזה ובחלקים נרחבים מישראל, יהיה קשה מאד.

לפיכך עבדנו על זכרונותינו המוקדמים ביותר ממלחמה או על הזכרון "החזק ביותר" שיש לנו ממלחמה.

ברגע שבו יכולנו לאתר את הזכרונות הללו ואיתם עלו הרגשות של חוסר אונים ויאוש, היה אפשרי לאתר מתי בדיוק וכמה מוקדם הוטמעו בנו ההקלטות הראשונות של ההרגשות הללו ולפרוק אותן.

יותר מכל דבר אחר, זו היתה תזכורת טובה שמוטב לא להיכנע לרגשות שדוחפים אותנו "להתכרבל במיטה לבד עם הפנים לקיר" ולהרגיש קטנים ובודדים, אלא להיפגש יחד, לחלק את תשומת הלב שלנו, לפרוק ולחשוב.

לעשות ולו רק את זה, מהווה צעד ראשון של ניצחון באתגר להשיב לעצמנו את הכוח והתקווה.

באופן אישי, עזר לי מאד לקבל פניות מיועצים שאינם ישראלים שאני מכירה. אני מעריכה את הפניות האלה על היותן כנות, אכפתיות ונדיבות בעוד שלא הביעו רגשות, דעות או תובנות על המצב הנוכחי.



NANCY LEMON

תודה רבה

באהבה ותקווה

אורנה שומן

בית שערים, ישראל

הודפס מהרשימה המקוונת של הייעוץ ההדדי להערכה מחדש.

¹ ג'וליאן ווייסגלס הוא הרכז הבינלאומי לשינוי בעולם הרחב.

Not Any Smarter

The discovery that "the prominent officials aren't any smarter than I am and don't know any more than I do" has surprised and lifted the hearts of many a Co-Counselor who ventured into dealings with them.

Harvey Jackins
From *The Reclaiming of Power*

English translation of the preceding article:

A First Step Toward Power and Hope

Hello, *shalom*,¹

An ongoing class that has been meeting for many years in the north of Israel met last Thursday. I briefly talked about old distress recordings of feeling too small and too weak to make a change; about the personal and general history of wars that left us feeling scared and discouraged; about the difficulty of getting clear, reliable information when we were young (whether due to manipulations of the government or simply because the adults around us were too frightened and confused); and about how all of this was being wildly restimulated now. We agreed that in that room (we were ten that night) there was enough wisdom

and knowledge to end wars. (Thank you, Julian Weissglass,² for that powerful direction!)

It was clear that discharging with each other on what is happening now in Gaza and vast parts of Israel is very hard. We worked on our first, or “strongest,” memory of war. Once we could trace that, it was easier to notice when and how early feelings of discouragement and helplessness were installed and to discharge them.

More than anything, our meeting was a good reminder that it is better to not give in to the feelings that push us to “crawl into bed and face the wall,” feeling alone

and small, but rather to get together and share our attention, discharge, and think. That alone is already a first step toward reclaiming our power and hope.

For me personally, it’s been very helpful to get short notes from Co-Counselors I know outside of Israel. I’ve appreciated that they’ve been so honest, caring, and generous and not expressed feelings, perceptions, or insights regarding the current situation.

With love and some hope,

Orna Shuman

Beit Shearim, Israel

Translated by Orna Shuman

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

¹ *Shalom* means peace, in Hebrew.

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

Remember Reality, Fight for Our Minds

We all have many feelings about the current situation in Gaza. I find it helpful to discharge on these feelings in support groups, as the restimulations that come up can overwhelm the attention of a single counselor. Possible support groups include ones for Jews, Arabs, Muslims, allies to each of these groups, and people of U.S. or British identity.

It is important for us all to fight for our own minds so that we can think more clearly and not be manipulated by distress patterns. Some of the ways we can work on the current events include discharging on

- early connection and separation;
- hopelessness and discouragement;
- feelings of powerlessness (connected first to young people’s oppression);
- the pool of material* we need to clean up in order to take initiative.

It would be helpful for allies to Jews, Arabs, and Muslims to remember the goodness, smarts, and humanity of all the people living in the region; to not take sides; and to remember that the people of West Asia are natural, longtime allies of each other. There is nothing inherent in their nature to keep them divided.

* “Material” means distress.

The apparent divisions are the product of anti-Jewish and anti-Muslim oppression, racism against Arabs (within the region and globally), and British, Russian, and especially U.S. military action in the region. It would be helpful for U.S. and European allies to discharge on U.S. or European identity and the many roles the United States and Europe play in West Asia.

In counseling Arabs and Muslims, people can remember that for more than a decade West Asians in the United States and Europe have been living under government surveillance and the threat of physical violence, incarceration, and deportation. The United States, in particular, has demonized Arab men as inhuman, dangerous, violent, the most sexist, and so on, in order to justify U.S. military activities in Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq, Pakistan, Syria, and other West Asian countries.

These external circumstances show up in the lives of West Asians in our not actively voicing our thinking and perspectives and in feeling angry, distrustful, scared, and at times alienated from our own heritage. Because the oppression of Arabs and Muslims remains hidden in the United States, a good starting point in counseling Arabs or Muslims might be to ask, “What was it like to be Arab, or Muslim, this week?”

Azadeh Khalili

*International Liberation Reference Person for South, Central, and West Asian-Heritage People
Brooklyn, New York, USA*

Gentiles: Engage with What Is Happening in the Middle East

Dear fellow Gentiles,

This is an important time for us all to stand against anti-Jewish and anti-Arab oppression. What is happening in the Middle East continues to be heartbreaking. It needs all of our hearts and minds engaged—starting from wherever we are. It needs us to decide to let this matter. It is part of our world.

It never makes sense to judge ourselves as too small or too ill-informed. “I can and will make a difference, and this means . . .” is a way forward. And any step we take out of passivity and powerlessness is also a step toward our own liberation, and the liberation of us all.

There is a strong pull in all issues to take sides—to separate the “good people” from the “bad people.” This never makes sense. What does it take to be both for Israelis and for Palestinians? We get to discharge and figure out our way to an answer. It is our own independent, powerful mind that is needed—whatever our background and story.

Let us take steps to be informed—to have as full a picture as possible in whatever way is available to us, with lots of listening, listening, listening. Having a full picture will include understanding the role of anti-Jewish oppression—an oppression that has been deliberately obscured from the whole population.

Anti-Jewish oppression involves setting Jews up to be middle agents¹ and thus be available as scapegoats to be blamed for the actions of those with real structural power. To be

¹ “Setting Jews up to be middle agents” means creating the conditions in which Jews become middle agents.



BEAVERTAIL STATE PARK, JAMESTOWN, RHODE ISLAND, USA • MARJORIE SMITH

scapegoated, Jews must first be given positions of apparent power. (They may also be given some real power but always conditional upon doing the dirty work of those who are really in charge.) Israel has been given the military power to be “the cop on the beat”² in the Middle East. This allows the real exploitative forces to hide behind Israel.

It is also Israel’s job to distract the populations of both the West and the Middle East from their true interests and from organising against the main people who profit from their exploitation.

Israel is set up to act on behalf of the United States and Western Europe. The conditional power given to Israel by these global powers allows Israelis, and all Jews, to be seen as the “bad guys” and to be hated and blamed. This fulfills the purpose of anti-Jewish oppression, which is to obscure the role of those with actual power and influence. Israeli and Jewish terror and experiences of vulnerability from centuries of anti-Jewish oppression are manipulated to support those with power to act out, under cover, their patterns of greed.

We also need to face and act against the injustice of the mistreatment of the Palestinians and how anti-Arab oppression in the West allows them

² “Cop on the beat” means police on patrol.

to be treated as if their lives matter less.

We must discharge any distress that leads us to be self-righteous and take sides, or be numb or feel distant as if what is happening has nothing to do with us.

Let us put ourselves in the direction of informing ourselves and *engaging* in what is happening. It is happening in our world.

However, it is not the only horrendous thing that is happening, and indeed the attention it receives is part of the way that anti-Jewish oppression operates—portraying and focusing on the Jews as the ultimate “bad guys.”

Please do take this to sessions and support groups. Also, RC literature is excellent on this topic, and there are many other resources I would be happy to share with you. We need to keep thinking and discharging as we use wide-world resources, however, as few of them confront both the role of Israel and the anti-Jewish oppression simultaneously.

Whoever we are, let us step out of internalised oppression to discharge and take power now. This is how we reclaim our integrity.

Dorann van Heeswijk
Information Coordinator
for Gentile Allies of Jews
London, England

Discharge, Action, and New Possibilities

Due to lack of space, many reports on what RCers did during the recent military escalation of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict could not appear in this *Present Time*. Co-Counselors discharged heavily on the conflict and on their early distresses attached to it. They gave additional support to Palestinian and Israeli Co-Counselors. They shared their best thinking, inside and outside of RC, about the irrationality of wars, the right of both Palestinians and Israelis to their own homelands, the racism toward Palestinians, the injustice of the occupation, the middle-agent role of Jews and Israel, and anti-Jewish oppression. They held classes and support groups in Israel, Australia, Europe, Canada, and the United States for Jews, Palestinians, and allies. Despite the heartbreak, new possibilities emerged.

Diane Balser
Jamaica Plain, Massachusetts, USA



Jewish-Arab Unity



Harvey Jackins

From *Ruah Hadashah* No. 4 (1980) and *The Benign Reality*, pages 549 to 554

The following is a set of assumptions I worked out for myself before leading the recent workshop for Jewish-Arab Unity, in Israel. These were not distributed at the workshop, since they were my own positions rather than those of the workshop sponsors, but I read some of them aloud so the workshop participants would understand my attitudes better. There were many requests for them from workshop participants and, later, from others, so I am now distributing them.

For the information of those who were not there, the workshop was a brilliant success. All participants deserve congratulations.

I will be assuming, as the leader of the workshop, that I am there not as an expert on the Middle East but as a skillful Re-evaluation Counselor whose role primarily is to guide people in communicating their knowledge to each other and in resolving the conflicts that have existed, or will arise, between them.

I will assume in this workshop that it is eventually possible to achieve warm, cooperative relationships between all peoples presently living in Palestine and Israel and between all the peoples presently living in the Near East.

I will assume in this workshop that it is impossible for any group of people or combination of groups of people to destroy or permanently expel any other group of people from the Palestine-Israel area or from the Near East scene. Each group is too numerous or has too powerful support to be "overcome" by any others in any permanent sense. Each group residing in the area at present must be reckoned with as permanent inhabitants of the region. The Palestinian exiles will not "disappear" or "assimilate" but must be dealt with and their future provided for. Israel cannot be "destroyed" but will be a permanent factor in the Near East.

I will assume in this workshop that governments and government policies are not permanent and, at any given time, do not necessarily represent the real needs or legitimate aspirations of the people whom they govern. Rather, they often function for the purposes of oppressing or exploiting the people of their country or region, sometimes acting on behalf of a group of exploiters in the country and sometimes acting on behalf of foreign exploiters or foreign oppressive governments. On the other hand, the real interests of the people in a country or region are permanent and will eventually find expression in some way or other in spite of temporary interference through oppressive

continued . . .

WIDE WORLD CHANGING

... continued

governments or temporary conflicts engendered between the people by such oppression.

I will assume in this workshop that the real, long-term interests of the Palestinians and the other Arab peoples and the real, long-term interests of the Israelis and the other Jewish peoples are not in conflict; that the apparent conflicts between them have arisen as a result of manipulation by oppressive governments, governments both in the Near East and elsewhere, governments which have oppressed them and taken advantage of them and exploited the lands of the Middle East in so doing.

I will assume in this workshop that all past injustices done to any group of people through the actions or agency of the other groups must be openly faced and acknowledged, but that realistic solutions to present problems or the achievement of a cooperative future cannot be limited to restoring past situations or to achieving reparations or "atonement" for past injustices.

I will assume in this workshop that each aggrieved or injured person or group deserves the right to fully recount all grievances and have them listened to with respect, to speak of all the injuries and injustices of the past fully, including any reproaches or blames which they wish to offer, and to be listened to with respect and attention as they do so, and without any interjections, objections, or "answering back" on the part of the listeners, including those who feel blamed or attacked. The working out of concrete steps for cooperation, for unity, and for dealing with the present and future should not be attempted until this "listening to grievances" has taken place fully, with none of the things said being "answered back" to or argued with.



AMANDA MARTINEZ

I will assume in this workshop that the Israelis and other Jewish peoples present need to take into account that the occupation of large parts of Palestine by the Israelis and the expulsion of large numbers of Palestinians from their homeland has left a great deal of fear and anger among all Palestinians and all other Arabs, and that until this distress is discharged, it will necessarily influence their thinking and response to other issues, so that Israelis and other Jews should not expect the Palestinians and other Arabs to be immediately rational and objective about other issues, remembering that the tragedy of the loss of their homeland and the driving of Palestinians into exile will tend to color their thinking about everything.

I will assume in this workshop that the Palestinians and other Arab peoples need to keep in mind that the background of the Israelis and other Jewish peoples includes a vast amount of fear left by the Holocaust in Nazi Germany and other previous near-exterminations of their peoples, which took place as a result of their betrayal by the rulers of the people among whom they lived, so that there is likely to be ever-present, coloring their views of all matters, a fear of abandonment, of imminent betrayal, of being unable to trust anyone except themselves. This fear must be taken into account until it is thoroughly discharged. The Palestinians and other Arab peoples cannot reasonably expect the Israelis and other Jewish peoples to be immediately rational on other issues but need to realize that their fears and distresses about the past, especially about the Holocaust, tend to color their thinking about everything.

I will assume in this workshop that the Israelis and other Jewish peoples need to remember that the continuing occupation by Israel of Palestinian land and the oppression and other mistreatment of Palestinian people by the Israeli governments and people continue to restimulate the old distress, and that this must be taken into account and understood in communicating with the Palestinians and the other Arab peoples.

I will assume in this workshop that the Palestinians and other Arab peoples need to remember that the continuing danger of war and the threat of war and the frequent terrorist attacks tend to restimulate the past fears of the Israelis and the other Jewish peoples, making it difficult for them to think clearly in terms of reaching cooperation with the Palestinians and other Arab peoples.

I will assume in this workshop that all parties to the conference need to face, and can face, the fact that great injustice was done to the Palestinian people during the establishment of Israel, and that it is everyone's responsibility that the future of the Palestinian people not remain blighted by the results of this past injustice.

I will assume in this workshop that all parties to the conference need to face, and can face, the fact that the destruction of Israel is no longer historically possible, nor desirable for anyone; that it would not be in anyone's real interests; that the injustice that accompanied the establishment of Israel does not in itself justify the destruction of Israel, since all present homelands on the earth were established by great injustice to their previous inhabitants. Attacking the existence of Israel, or seeking to isolate Israel from her neighbors, simply reinforces the pressure on Israel to support a reactionary government and for the government to associate with foreign reactionary forces, such as the governments of South Africa or the Shah's Iran, or to be unduly under the influence of foreign imperialist governments, such as that of the United States.

I will assume in this workshop that proposals for cooperation between the different groups of people involved should start from the present situation and not the past, and should take into account only the real present and future interests of the people involved, including the correction of continuing injustices, but not the distresses of the past nor atonement for the distresses of the past.

I will assume in this workshop that proposals for cooperation should begin with actions that are possible to take now, however small they may be, given the present state of communication and contact. More ambitious proposals, inviting a greater risk of difficulty and disappointment, should be deferred until successes with simpler, easier projects for cooperation have widened the contacts and increased the trust between the cooperating groups and individuals.

I will assume in this workshop that, in the process of being listened to, much re-evaluation of people's positions will take place as a result of that being listened to, so that both individuals and groups reach different positions after being listened to than they have held before. I will assume in this workshop that it is my function as the leader of the workshop to see that each individual who speaks is listened to with complete respect. It is my function to make it clear continually that we listen to each other with respect and thoroughness in order to help each other lower the level of our distress and to understand each other, not to prepare to argue or debate with each other.

Shalom. Salaam.* Peace.

* *Shalom* means peace in Hebrew. *Salaam* means peace in Arabic.

Fundamentals Teaching Guide Updated, and Readings Now on Website!

The *Fundamentals Teaching Guide—Part I*, which now contains twenty-eight class outlines for teaching the fundamentals of RC, was recently updated in the following ways:

- A new topic was added: “Discouragement and Fighting for Ourselves.” (In 2013, the original version was updated to include the new topic “Care of the Environment.”)
- Additions were made to Topic 6, “The Early Roots of Distress Recordings”; Topic 7, “Counseling Techniques”; and Topic 23, “The Re-evaluation Counseling Community.”
- Additional readings (articles by Tim Jackins) for both teachers and students were added to many of the other topics.
- References to the *Guidelines of the Re-evaluation Counseling Communities* were updated to be consistent with the 2013 *Guidelines*.

Future purchases of the *Fundamentals Teaching Guide—Part I* will include these updates. In addition, the updates and all of the readings can be found on the RC website at <www.rc.org/page/ftg1readings>. Instead of making copies of articles for their students, teachers can now refer their students to the website.

Readings referred to in the *Fundamentals Teaching Guide—Part II (Liberation)* are also now available on the website at <www.rc.org/publication/ftg2/readings/contents>.



MACHU PICCHU, PERU • DIANE SHISK

Raised Poor, Thinking About Climate Change

I was raised poor in the Midwest United States and am currently living poor (by U.S. standards) in the Northwest. I have started discharging in Co-Counseling sessions on my fears about climate change. I like the idea of getting connected before initiating the work.

Many of the people I meet are poor, riding buses, homeless. We are all craving connection. Today I met a young adult man, homeless, in front of a grocery store, offering to work. He said, almost with tears in his eyes, how much he appreciated that I stopped to talk with him. That simple act made his day,¹ and mine.

I want to discharge so that I can think and be present with people in whatever situations I find myself in. I am going to lead a raised-poor/working-class support group, and one of the things I want to address there is the new RC goal on care of the environment.²

I recently started reading *Active Hope: How to Face the Mess We're in Without Going Crazy*, by Joanna Macy and Chris Johnstone. Even the title makes me smile. I recommend it.

Mary Daniels
Portland, Oregon, USA

¹ "Made his day" means made him very happy.

² A goal adopted by the 2013 World Conference of the Re-evaluation Counseling Communities:

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

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

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



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



ANZUOLA, GIPUZKOA, BASQUE COUNTRY • JUAN MANUEL FEITO



“Action Is the Antidote”



In August 2014, I staffed for the second year a climate-change awareness booth at the local Strawberry Festival. I like the format of an information booth—the exposure to a wide range of people and the impact that just the presence of the booth has on the thousands who walk by it. This year our posted question, in English and in Spanish, was “What do you think about climate change? We’re here to listen!” People stopped to talk. Several groups of people just walked by but then turned to each other and asked, “What do *you* think?”

This year we included an RC listening project¹ as part of the event and I focused on establishing more significant connections with fewer people. Many shared poignant stories related to the environment and other issues. I took notes about people who I thought had the potential to be interested in RC, or to connect me with other people or opportunities, or to join me in leading this work.

I had made a simple quarter-page handout that explained how to listen and had on it local RC contact information and the RC website. We gave this to a small number of people. After listening to people, we gauged whether or not they might be interested in an RC class and signed some of them up to receive more information. We now have a list of people to pursue. I am hoping to start a new class and invite these people to it.

When I started a conversation with someone, I never knew where it would go, but it almost always ended up being significant in some way. I made

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.

a point of talking with people who were running other booths. These contacts may lead to invitations to make presentations for organizations that serve youth, veterans, union members, and so on. I believe most people wouldn’t have stopped to talk if we hadn’t approached them. Learning to approach people in a friendly way is a key piece of this work. I am white, and most of the people I had contact with were people of the global majority.

I’ve learned that I can invite people to experience the power and beauty of listening partnerships without immediately introducing them to the RC Community. This has given me more confidence to hand out RC tools more boldly. As I get to know people, little by little I can share more information.

I met a Chicano at a listening booth in April. He spoke thoughtfully, and I made sure to invite him to my summer RC class. He attended three out of four meetings and was a terrific participant. He went on to help me with the booth. I brought him United to End Racism² materials and a copy

² United to End Racism is a project of the RC Community in which Co-Counselors bring to people in the wider world what we’ve learned in RC about ending racism.

of *Pensamientos*.³ I’m looking forward to continuing to meet and hopefully to Co-Counseling with him.

An RCer who helped with the August booth said that people were far more receptive and interested in connecting than he had felt they would be. He was also surprised at how concerned they were about climate change. Polls had shown that public concern about climate change was dropping in the United States, but with few exceptions, when we asked, “What do you think about climate change?” the response was, “It’s happening,” or “It’s bad.”

I am learning that doing something, taking some action, leads me forward. I am spreading seeds, not knowing yet which ones will sprout. One action leads to another, and then another, and soon the possibilities are limitless. For anyone feeling like nothing can be done (for instance, about climate change), action is the antidote.

Thank you all for being part of this movement!

Nancy Faulstich

Watsonville, California, USA

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

³ *Pensamientos* is the RC journal for Chicano/a liberation.

Effective Organization

Effective organization consists of you and your ability to get other people to trust you, love you, listen to you, read what you offer them to read, and join with you on specific acts. The close personal tie is the only thing that is durable enough.

Harvey Jackins

United to End Racism at Tule Lake

From 1942 to 1946, the U.S. government interned a hundred and twenty thousand U.S. residents of Japanese ancestry in ten concentration camps. Tule Lake Camp was where some of the Japanese Americans considered “most dangerous” were sent. They may have spoken fluent Japanese and been leaders in their communities or worked as fishermen in a coastal location considered particularly strategic to the U.S. Navy.

In 1943, all incarcerated Japanese Americans over seventeen years of age were asked to fill out a “loyalty questionnaire.” It asked two crucial questions: (1) whether they would be completely obedient to serving in U.S. combat duty, and (2) whether they would swear allegiance to the United States and renounce the Japanese emperor or any other foreign government. Any heads of households, and often their whole families, who answered inadequately (with anything other than a simple “yes”), or refused to answer a question, were proclaimed “disloyal” and put on trains to Tule Lake. They were often referred to as “no-no” families.

Tule Lake was transformed into a camp run by the armed forces. There were guard towers, soldiers, and tanks. It became the camp of “segregation” and was the largest of all of the concentration camps—a total of twenty-nine thousand people lived there at some point during World War II. The Tule Lake detainees resisted their incarceration in numerous ways, including with labor strikes, riots, and other uprisings. Some families renounced their U.S. citizenship as a form of protest and were used in prisoner-of-war exchanges with Japan—until Japan realized that the United States was exchanging U.S. citizens (Japanese Americans) for U.S. citizens (U.S. soldiers and diplomats).

Tule Lake is where some of the worst wartime abuses of Japanese Americans occurred. It has also symbolized division in the Japanese American community.

THE TULE LAKE PILGRIMAGE

The Pilgrimage to Tule Lake began in the 1970s. Students pushing for Asian Studies and other “minority

studies” programs in colleges and universities gathered at Tule Lake as part of their protest movement. They camped out near the site of the original concentration camp and cooked over campfires. After a few years, a handful of

Japanese American former incarcerated came to tell stories of their time at Tule Lake. These were the first of the intergenerational dialogues. When Redress and Reparations—a formal apology by the U.S. government for the incarceration in World War II—were granted in the late 1980s to all Japanese Americans, many of those interned began to talk about their



LYNDALL KATZ

experience for the first time, and some returned to the sites of their internment. Now the Tule Lake Pilgrimage takes place every other year, with three hundred and fifty to four hundred participants each time. Registration always fills up in a matter of days.

THE UER TEAM

This year we are doing the fourth United to End Racism (UER) project connected to the pilgrimage. Some of our UER team had been connected to the pilgrimage for many years before our projects began. Also, the work of the team goes beyond what we do in the four days of the pilgrimage. In particular, Jan Yoshiwara and Lois Yoshishige¹ are in relationship with the pilgrimage throughout the two years between pilgrimages. They develop and strengthen our work by contributing to the planning and organizing of the pilgrimages.

BEFORE THE PILGRIMAGE

Months before each pilgrimage, the UER team, led by Jan, begins discharging and organizing.

Team members call all the elders over eighty years of age who are coming on the pilgrimage. We listen to them and remind them that their stories are at the heart of the pilgrimage and that every memory is important to us and to each participant. Their stories are often still difficult to tell to families and friends, so the pilgrimage can be the moment of a lifetime to remember,

¹ Jan Yoshiwara is the International Liberation Reference Person for Japanese-Heritage People. Lois Yoshishige is the Area Reference Person for South Eugene and Springfield, Oregon, USA.

recount, and heal with our assistance. We ask all the elders who were incarcerated to be resource people in the Intergenerational Discussion Groups during the pilgrimage, to share the stories they got a chance to think about with us.

The UER team meets in conference calls, led by Jan, once or twice a month. This is important for remembering our connection, discharging on the effects of the internment, and getting ready for our work as a team. We also build support in our local Co-Counseling Communities for getting ready for the pilgrimage and doing report-backs afterward. This year, several team members organized local fundraising events for the work of the UER team.

DURING THE PILGRIMAGE

On our first day of the project, we ride buses either up or down the west coast of the United States with three hundred and fifty to four hundred other Tule Lake participants. We get to know people, listen to them, and work to think well about them—especially the elders, for whom the eight- to ten-hour bus ride can be a long journey. Our relationships over the years grow and grow!

When we arrive at Tule Lake, we begin what will be a daily listening project. We listen to people about their experience at the pilgrimage and answer questions they have about UER and Re-evaluation Counseling as tools to heal from racism and war.

That evening everyone assembles for the opening events. At the request of the committee that organizes the pilgrimage, Jan teaches everyone how to do a mini-session.

The next morning, everyone boards the buses again to go to the site of the former camp, now managed by the National Park Service.

At the first stop is a view of a broad, dry landscape in front of a towering stone formation, named Castle Rock, and distant mountains. After the camp was closed, local authorities authorized the excavation of the cemetery. Left behind is a large bowl, covered in sagebrush, where the bodies of the deceased were interred. Within fifty yards of this sacred site, the county has established a dumping site where people bring refuse, including old refrigerators, scrap metal, and rusted water heaters.

We gather in front of a small altar set up in front of several hundred chairs. Behind it is the former cemetery. The pilgrimage remembers, mourns, and pays respects. Everyone is given a flower and folded paper cranes to

bring to the altar, and people wait in long lines to bow and pay respects. The Buddhist priest chants a sutra² into the wind. He chants for compassion in the face of sorrow and injustice. No one speaks, many silently weep. United to End Racism team members gather a small group to place cranes and flowers in the shallow pit from which the remains were removed. People stand in a circle and cry openly and pray for the souls of the lost. It is an important beginning of our day.

That afternoon we tour what remains of the former camp. The sun is intense and conditions are harsh, so the UER team thinks especially about the elders and the young people. We walk with them, bring them water, and listen and talk as we go. Our attention opens spaces for people's stories.

We stop at a plaque naming Tule Lake as a National Landmark. It's at a former Civilian Work Camp that employed Japanese Americans as strike-breakers during the war. We also stop at the foundations of a latrine and shower building and at the Tule Lake jail. This year at the jail, one of the former incarcerated told of having to build the jail for his own people.

In the evening, Lois Yoshishige leads a training for those who will facilitate the next morning's Intergenerational Discussion Groups, which our UER team organizes for the whole pilgrimage. We need about twenty-five groups of ten to fifteen people each, so all the UER team members are facilitators along with other pilgrimage participants we have recruited (a few of whom are Co-Counselors who have come on the pilgrimage on their

continued . . .

² A sutra is one of the discourses of the Buddha that constitute the basic text of Buddhist scripture.



BRIAN LAVENDEL

WIDE WORLD CHANGING

... continued

own). Lois teaches people about mini-sessions, games to get people laughing and ready to share difficult memories, openness to feelings, and the importance of listening well.

The next day is our busiest. In the morning everyone participates in the Intergenerational Discussion Groups that are the culmination of the pilgrimage. People are both reluctant and eager to tell of their experiences in the camps. There is laughter, anger, and tears. Everyone listens. Everyone feels. Sometimes it is the first time family members have really talked since being separated by the internment.

After the groups, all the facilitators meet to debrief. Then later in the afternoon Jan leads, and team members support, an "Introduction to Re-evaluation Counseling" workshop. People we have connected with during the pilgrimage come to learn more about RC.

Throughout these first three days, UER team members also spend time with young people, lead discharge groups for Co-Counselors who are not on the UER team, run the listening and literature tables, write posts to the global RC Community, and do lots and lots of listening and building relationships with people. A women's taiko

group,³ founded and led by Karen Young,⁴ performs, leads workshops, works with young adults and young people, and inspires all the generations with its music, spirit, and zest. Each night and morning, the UER team meets to discharge, reflect, and organize ourselves. This is a precious time to laugh, talk, cry, and think together.

On day four, we board the buses amidst hugs, waves, and words of farewell and staying in touch. We continue to connect and listen on our long rides back north and south. Often at this point we talk to people we have built relationships with about their interest in Co-Counseling and how they can get involved in RC. We return to our homes and local RC Communities with all the ways we have pushed our re-emergence forward.



Alix Mariko Webb
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, USA
and *Mike Ishii*
Sunnyside, New York, USA
Reprinted from the e-mail discussion
list for RC Community members

³ A taiko group is a group that plays Japanese taiko drums.

⁴ Karen Young is an RC leader in Jamaica Plain, Massachusetts, USA.

The Critical Turning Point

There are critical points in history, but they cannot be predicted. Many of you have heard me talk about one that caught my attention. Before the 1905 revolution in Russia, the repression was extremely heavy. Executions and pogroms and massacres took place, and the people cowered and cowered and cowered. Resentment grew, but nothing decisive happened. The Czar and his satraps¹ had every reason to think they could continue to rule in their dictatorial way, because every desperate rebellion had been successfully put down in blood.

On the battleship Potemkin, which was stationed in the Black Sea, conditions were very rough, as everywhere. There had been a lot of attempts at rebellion and a lot of cruel repression, but the lid was still on. Then one morning, *one sailor* looked down at his mush and saw weevils in it again and could not abide it anymore. He picked up the mush and put it very firmly in an officer's face. Supporting him, the entire crew mutinied, took over the battleship and its radio room, and steamed up and down the shores of the Black Sea, radioing a call for rebellion to everyone on land. The people responded, and the 1905 revolution began. It wasn't finally successful, but it laid the foundation for a successful one in 1917 that made great gains until it was sold out² by its leadership at a later date. One sailor picked up one bowl of mush.

What will be the critical point in our intriguing and tense situation? We don't know, but it will occur.

Harvey Jackins
From page 310 of "From the Men's
Workshop," in *The Rest of Our Lives*

¹ "Satraps" are subordinate officials.

² "Sold out" means betrayed.

This Year's Pilgrimage

Here a few reflections on this year's Tule Lake Pilgrimage, from the 2014 United to End Racism (UER) team¹:

A STRONGER RELATIONSHIP WITH THE PILGRIMAGE

At the opening plenary, after Jan² taught all the participants how to do a mini-session, the leaders of the pilgrimage warmly welcomed the UER delegation. They asked us all to stand, thanked us for our work, and let people know that we would be organizing the Intergenerational Discussion Groups.

This was the first time we had been so publicly acknowledged. It helped us appreciate how our years of relationship building had strengthened our connection to many leaders of the pilgrimage. They are coming to better understand and appreciate our work and to trust us more. The participants are more eager to share their thoughts and reflections with us. All this makes what we do at the pilgrimage even more possible.

CHANGES IN THE INTERGENERATIONAL DISCUSSION GROUPS

Various forms of intergenerational discussions have been part of the pilgrimage since its beginning. Until the UER team began organizing them, however, they were a hidden part of the program. Also, we have been told that earlier discussion groups left participants with headaches and feeling

sunk. There were also conflicts in the groups between families who had taken different approaches to the loyalty questionnaire.³

Now the calls we make to the elders beforehand mean that we have a good sense of how each of them is doing, how to set things up so that they are able to use a group's attention, and what they may want to talk about during the one-way time they receive. Each group is also put together with great care to make sure that facilitators and elders are well matched, that family members have a chance to be together and hear from one another, and that inter-family politics during the war don't lead to unnecessary conflict.

Every year more families tell us how they get to hear stories they have never heard before, how children get to see their parents and grandparents cry in a safe and supportive space, how groups laugh and laugh together and people reach for each other. People don't leave with headaches anymore! They leave connected and hopeful, with faces that are open and bright.

Another thing we noticed this year is that the oldest generation (today's Nisei generation⁴) of elders is aging rapidly. They are in their eighties and nineties. At the 2012 pilgrimage there were fifty elders and in 2014 there were only thirty-five. Also, with elders who were younger during their time in the camps,

the discussion in the intergenerational groups changes a little. The elders who were younger talk less about what they experienced during the camps and more about their experience after they left the camps. Most families left with nothing to return to. The adults worked at any jobs they could get, often as houseboys or farmworkers. The young people found that former neighborhood or school friends were no longer friendly and instead called them names and threw rocks at them.

A RELAXED UNITY, DEEPER CONNECTIONS

The UER team members have learned to work together. We have a relaxed unity, even when we are spread out across a room or in very different parts of the pilgrimage. We have used the discharge process to fight through our internalized oppression so that we can keep working better and better together and loving each other more.

Many of us have opened up to more of our own feelings about the incarceration. We feel more and are able to keep thinking more at the same time. We are more quickly making deeper connections with other pilgrimage leaders and participants. We are more present and less preoccupied with a set of tasks.

Jan Yoshiwara, Lois Yoshishige, Sue Yoshiwara, Mike Ishii, Betsy Hasegawa, Karen Young, Mary Ruth Gross, Alix Mariko Webb

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



ANNE BARTON

¹ The Tule Lake Pilgrimage is a biannual pilgrimage to the site of the Tule Lake Camp, one of the ten concentration camps in which the U.S. government interned Japanese Americans during World War II. United to End Racism (a project of the RC Communities) has sent a team of Co-Counselors to the last four pilgrimages. For more background on this project, see the article on page 62 of this *Present Time*.

² Jan Yoshiwara, the International Liberation Reference Person for Japanese-Heritage People and the overall leader of the UER team

³ In 1943, all incarcerated Japanese Americans over seventeen years of age were asked to fill out a "loyalty questionnaire." It asked two crucial questions: (1) whether they would be completely obedient to serving in U.S. combat duty, and (2) whether they would swear allegiance to the United States and renounce the Japanese emperor or any other foreign government. Any heads of households, and often their whole families, who answered inadequately (with anything other than a simple "yes"), or refused to answer a question, were proclaimed "disloyal" and put on trains to Tule Lake. They were often referred to as "no-no" families.

⁴ Nisei generation means generation of Japanese Americans born in the United States or Canada to parents who emigrated from Japan.



MUNICH, GERMANY • LANCE CABLK

Can Intelligence Take Control?

Can flexible human intelligence attain control and ride herd on* this great irrational creature called Human Society? Can we make it perform to our intelligent collective will? I think we *can* and, in fact, are on the historical verge of doing so.

Harvey Jackins

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

* "Ride herd on" means supervise.

A Brutal History

One elder at this year's Tule Lake Pilgrimage* had many stories to tell about how badly the incarcerated people had been treated. He had been coming on the pilgrimage for decades, but only this year did he feel he could tell the following story.

He said that in the stockade there were two barracks, one for women and one for men and that before deportation each prisoner was strip-searched. He said that one day he went down to the trains where they were loading people for deportation and saw there some young girls (ages thirteen or fourteen) "wailing hysterically, inconsolably." He asked their mothers what was wrong, and they told him that the white male soldiers in the barracks had been strip-searching all the female prisoners and molesting the children. He went to investigate and overheard the soldiers bragging to one another about who had molested the most girls.

When the elder told this story at the site of the camp to a group of twenty-five people, everyone gasped. Then after about five seconds, their faces became like masks, showing no emotion. They just stared stonily, straight ahead. I realized that many of the ways that I had struggled to feel emotion in my own life were rooted in a survival strategy adopted in my culture.

I think it's important that this form of racism, sexism and male domination, and predation on children be exposed fully before the survivors have all passed on. It's part of revealing the full extent of the hurts my people experienced during their imprisonment. Before I began volunteering at the pilgrimage, I had never heard about these sexual-violence atrocities or the torture and other violence and coercion that went on at the camps. My people have remained stoic about these experiences, struggling under the weight of undischarged trauma and often just blaming and attacking one another.

Tule Lake is in a desolately beautiful place, but the history of this place is full of suffering. The war by the U.S. government on the Indigenous Modoc people; their forced removal from the land; the genocidal, racist policies of the Bureau of Indian Affairs under Dillon Meyers, who ran the Japanese American concentration camps; the horrible events of Tule Lake Segregation Center; the desecration of the Japanese American cemetery at Tule Lake; the old housing on the site of the camp now used for Mexican migrant farm workers. Genocide, racism, sexism, classism—all intersecting here. The suffering is everywhere; it is palpable and it is profound.

It's good that the United to End Racism team is here, thinking about the complexities of this and about all of the people connected: the Japanese-heritage survivors and their families, the Japanese community, the Parks Department workers, the townspeople, and so many others. It's good that we put our minds toward healing the hurts in every way that we can figure out.

I am proud to be with my people at this place. When I am here, I am in solidarity with people everywhere. Something gets righted.

Mike Ishii

Sunnyside, New York, USA
Reprinted from the e-mail discussion
list for RC Community members

* See articles on pages 62 and 65.

Not Just a Fundraiser

Since 2009, United to End Racism¹ (UER) has sent a team of eight to twelve Japanese, Okinawan, and ally RCers to the biannual Tule Lake Pilgrimage² to teach RC anti-oppression theory and the basics of RC, including how people can listen to each other. In June 2014, the Olympia (Washington, USA) RC Community participated in a Tule Lake UER fundraiser, sponsored by the Olympia Japanese American Citizens League (JACL).

I had the idea for the fundraiser for almost two years. I wanted to pull in my friends in the Japanese community along with Co-Counselors in the RC Community but was scared to show that much of myself to them all. I set the date three times, discharging coming up to each date, and we finally pulled it off.³

I wanted it to be a Japanese community event, so I asked the Olympia JACL to sponsor it, which they enthusiastically agreed to do. They made a nice flyer, brought delicious homemade Japanese food, and helped spread the word.⁴ I asked the Olympia RC Community to help with food and setup but more importantly to bring their friends. The Olympia women's support group discharged about whom they could bring, and most of them brought someone. Everyone in my class for people of the global majority came.

¹ United to End Racism is a project of the Re-evaluation Counseling Communities in which teams of Co-Counselors go to wide-world events and bring RC tools and information to activists working to eliminate racism.

² The Tule Lake Pilgrimage is a biannual pilgrimage to the Tule Lake Segregation Center, one of the concentration camps in which the U.S. government interned Japanese Americans during World War II.

³ "Pulled it off" means successfully accomplished it.

⁴ "Spread the word" means publicize it.

The organizer of the event, Hisami Yoshida, was a Co-Counselor who is also on the Olympia JACL board. She and I have good relationships with folks in both groups and with each other. We held the event at our local Jewish temple. Susan Rosen,⁵ who is a leader at the temple, took on⁶ the role of host. She invited the rabbi, who came and stayed the entire time.

Four elder Niseis⁷ who had been incarcerated during the war or had attended the pilgrimage were on a panel. I asked them questions about their wartime experiences that allowed them to show themselves to each other and to the group.

The audience and the panel members did two mini-sessions, one before and one after the panel. I first explained how to do a mini-session and why listening to each other helps us heal from hurts. I also proposed questions for the minis: "What is your relationship to Japanese American incarceration?" for the first one, and "What did you think about what you heard from the panel?" for the second one. The RCers spread out in the room to do minis with the non-RCers, including each of the panel members. The elders had been so honest and compelling, some people cried.

⁵ Susan Rosen is an RC leader in Olympia, Washington, USA.

⁶ "Took on" means assumed.

⁷ A Nisei is a person born in the United States or Canada whose parents emigrated from Japan.

On each table where people were sitting we had put some of the UER handouts that we use at the pilgrimages, along with donation envelopes. The end of the program was the scariest part. I said that we were raising money to support the UER team to go to the pilgrimage and that people could leave donations in the envelopes.

After I got home, I opened the envelopes and totaled the checks. Three times. We had collected \$1,206. About thirty-five people had been at the event, most of them not RCers. One person had put a hundred dollars in cash in an envelope and not written their name. All four of the panel members had written checks. I was overwhelmed. I called Lois⁸ for a session and cried really hard.

I think this was a mini-UER event, not just a fundraiser. We got to share pieces of RC theory and practice with our friends and family members. We were proud to show them what we do in RC and UER, and our perspective on more openly using RC shifted. I was terrified about bringing Olympia RC and JACL folks together to work on a common project, but I think they liked each other.

continued . . .

⁸ Lois Yoshishige is the Area Reference Person for South Eugene and Springfield, Oregon, USA, and is one of the leaders of the UER team at the Tule Lake pilgrimages.



KATIE KAUFFMAN

WIDE WORLD CHANGING

... continued

LATER

In the last two weeks, I have collected five more checks from friends who couldn't make it to⁹ the fundraiser. Now we are up to almost fifteen hundred dollars. The Olympia Japanese American Citizens League is so proud of sponsoring the event that they want to do it again next year.

Today at the farmers' market, I ran into¹⁰ a woman of color who'd been brought to the fundraiser by

⁹ "Make it to" means attend.

¹⁰ "Ran into" means encountered.

an Olympia Co-Counselor. She said she was impressed by what we are doing with United to End Racism and wanted to learn how to listen to people in the way that she saw us listening at the fundraiser. We talked about fundamentals classes while buying vegetables at the market, and she decided on the spot¹¹ to join my global majority class.

I can't believe the ripple effects of this event—well beyond raising money. I totally get¹² why the Re-

¹¹ "On the spot" means right at that moment.

¹² "Get" means understand.

evaluation Foundation¹³ has been encouraging RCers to raise money one to one. It's about connecting with people. I also understand now that people *do* want to give money to projects that are meaningful and hopeful.

Jan Yoshiwara
International Liberation Reference
Person for Japanese-Heritage People
Olympia, Washington, USA

¹³ The Re-evaluation Foundation is a non-profit corporation that collects and disburses resources to help get RC ideas, skills, and leadership training to people whose circumstances limit their access to RC.



KATIE KAUFFMAN

A Taste of the Tule Lake Pilgrimage

Jan's fundraiser¹ today was *fabulous!* It was a taste of the Tule Lake Pilgrimage.²

People got to participate in a mini-intergenerational discussion group. Four elders, including my mother, told some of their stories of being interned in Tule Lake and really felt heard. (My mother was impressed with how present people were. She said she could see in their faces that they were really listening.) They appreciated how Jan's open-ended questions gave them the room to talk about what was up for them.³ Some revealed how they continue to learn from their reflections as they peel back the layers of avoidance, pretense, and distress that sit on top of their memories of that time. I watched them marvel at their own growing understanding of what really happened.

For years my mother has talked about how it wasn't too bad being in the camp as a teen. This time she told a story I had never heard before about the moment when she suddenly realized she was actually in a prison camp—a sobering experience for her. Others got to talk about how hard things had really been in Tule Lake and how they had learned to manage those challenges. By the end of the event, I could tell⁴ that they all felt much more connected with each other, Jan, and the rest of us.

The Olympia Co-Counselors were so thoughtfully attentive, welcoming, and caring. And I was glad that they got this taste of Tule Lake, since they have been so supportive of Jan and the others on the Tule Lake team. That the event was co-sponsored by the Olympia Japanese American Citizens League and the Olympia RC Community, and hosted in the Jewish Temple with one of the rabbis present, made it especially meaningful to many of us. I think we all felt proud and fortunate to be there. Great job, Jan!

Betsy Hasegawa
Bellingham, Washington, USA

¹ See previous article.

² A biannual pilgrimage to Tule Lake Segregation Center, one of the concentration camps in which the U.S. government interned Japanese Americans during World War II. United to End Racism (a project of the RC Community) has been sending a team of Co-Counselors to each of the pilgrimages since 2009.

³ "What was up for them?" means what was coming up in their minds.

⁴ "Tell" means perceive, see.



We Can Eliminate Poverty and Save Our Beautiful World



Most of the world's people are poor, and poverty interferes with and diminishes poor people's lives. For that reason alone, we should all be interested in the elimination of poverty. What is often harder for us to see is that when inequalities exist in the access to, control of, and distribution of resources, *everyone's* life is diminished. We humans are just beginning to understand that poverty in any city, suburb, rural area, or country hurts everyone and even threatens our existence as a species, as well as the existence of most other species. As much as we do not want to think about it, global poverty is a problem that we must face and figure out how to solve if we want future generations to flourish.

As children, none of us, from any economic class, wanted to look out and see our world the way it was. We wanted things to be right for all people. We were born with open and caring hearts, and the many unjust and difficult things we experienced, and watched others experience, hurt us. In addition to our caring hearts, we were born with great minds, eager to learn and figure out solutions to problems. When we saw things that were not right, we tried to make sense of them and make them right. But we were children, with a limited understanding of what was happening in the world, and our efforts were defeated over and over again. We had to settle, when we knew things were not right.

We reached adulthood with heavy recordings¹ of discouragement in our minds, and it has become difficult for us to think clearly about the challenges confronting us today—especially oppression, liberation, and the need for leadership. Far too often when we face big problems, irrational self-defeating messages come to the front of our minds and confuse us about what is possible. No matter what our class background, class-based distresses interfere with our ability to feel good about ourselves, feel hopeful about our future, be in good connection with others, and think and act powerfully. They interfere with our ability to think about eliminating poverty and solving the many other personal, local, national, and global problems we human beings need to solve—and soon.

With such a long history of defeat, do we dare think we can change things?

In spite of our fears that things will never change and that we are not enough, we *can* eliminate class oppression, and the many other oppressions that divide us, and we *can* eliminate poverty. Class oppression has been a part of societies for a long time, and we humans have come to believe it will always be with us. To ensure the survival of our species, we must think better about global economics and turn things in a direction that is workable for all people and all species, and for our air, land,

and water. None of us can afford to turn our eyes away. We are all needed to take on² the many challenges that lie ahead. And we will not be alone in this endeavor. Awareness is growing, and people all over the world are trying to think about and organize for change.

As thousands of years of our history have shown us, doing the right thing can be a challenge for us humans. The confusing, painful class-based distress recordings we have been saddled with pull us to make many irrational decisions. In particular, we tend to give up when the going gets tough, and to get harsh and self-centered when we feel most alone and our fears about our own life surface. To have the successes we want, we will have to tackle, in earnest, the project of helping ourselves and all humans break free of the class-based distress recordings that are the only real barrier to our thinking clearly and acting powerfully.

Why Re-evaluation Counseling?

Now, with RC, we have a powerful liberation tool for freeing ourselves of class-based distresses and making our lives all that they can be. By building supportive listening relationships and discharging, we can move toward the greater clarity of thought we must have to set big goals, create unity of purpose, and build effective alliances. We can think about and put into place the personal and political policies we need for us to enjoy our lives and create a world free of economic injustice, oppression, and endangered species.

As RC's International Liberation Reference Person for Raised-Poor People, I am offering on the RC website³ a longer overview of poverty and class oppression. I hope it will help us discharge our way to ever clearer actions and policies. Whether you are a raised-poor person or an ally to raised-poor people, you can use the theory and the action steps in sessions, support groups, and workshops to promote discussion and discharge.

As we liberate our minds from painful emotions and the confusions we carry, we will be able to change the economic policies that have, for so long, disregarded the well-being of most of the human population in the service of a few—policies that now show the same disregard for all the precious species living on our earth.

Thank you for caring.

Gwen Brown
International Liberation Reference
Person for Raised-Poor People
Wilmington, Delaware, USA

¹ Distress recordings

² "Take on" means confront and do something about.

³ <www.rc.org>

New from Rational Island Publishers:

Co-Counselling

The Theory and Practice of Re-evaluation Counselling

by Caroline New and Katie Kauffman

In 2004, RCers Caroline New (Bristol, England) and Katie Kauffman (Seattle, USA) together wrote *Co-Counselling—The Theory and Practice of Re-evaluation Counselling*, for Brunner-Routledge Publishers. It is part of a series of textbooks on “advancing theory in psychotherapy.”

In the preface, the series editor, Keith Tudor, wrote, “Co-Counselling publications have, to date, been largely written and read ‘in house’ and have not generally been available to a professional therapeutic audience. It is therefore particularly significant and gratifying that this book is appearing in this series, and I recommend it, especially to the sceptical reader.”

This text may be especially useful in presenting RC to your less adventurous friends.

The book is structured like a fundamentals class. The reader meets several Co-Counselors from different places and backgrounds as they learn the theory and practice of RC and share their actual experiences with it.



\$25.00 (U.S.), plus postage and handling
Ordering information on page 110



Une nouvelle édition de

A New Kind of Communicator

en français

La cinquième édition de *A New Kind of Communicator* (un recueil d'articles-clé sur l'enseignement destiné aux formateurs et formatrices de Co-écoute) est parue il y a dix-huit ans. Depuis cette date, la Réévaluation par la Co-écoute n'a cessé de croître et de se développer. Les idées de la Co-écoute se sont répandues, et nous avons amélioré notre façon de les communiquer. Les Communautés de Co-écoute continuent de se multiplier et de se développer dans le monde entier.

La sixième édition de *A New Kind of Communicator* contient quatre des articles de Harvey Jackins contenus dans les précédentes éditions ainsi que quatorze nouveaux articles décrivant ce que nous avons appris depuis que ces premières éditions sont parues.

Je suis confiant que vous trouverez cette nouvelle édition à la fois agréable et utile.

Tim Jackins

\$5.00 (U.S.), plus frais de port

A new edition of

A New Kind of Communicator

in French

The fifth edition of *A New Kind of Communicator* (a collection of key articles on teaching, for RC teachers) was printed eighteen years ago. Since then Re-evaluation Counseling has continued to grow and develop. RC ideas have spread, and we are better at communicating them. RC Communities continue to multiply and develop worldwide.

The sixth edition of *A New Kind of Communicator* includes four of Harvey Jackins' articles from previous editions as well as fourteen new articles describing what we have learned since those earlier editions were published.

I am confident that you will find this new edition both enjoyable and helpful.

Tim Jackins

\$5.00 (U.S.), plus postage and handling

Discharging About and Handling Attacks

From a talk by Tim Jackins at the England Leaders' Workshop, January 2014

Attacks happen—and they don't just happen when we challenge an oppression or the rigidities of an institution. They often happen on a personal level.

Most of what are felt to be attacks are naive. The people attacking don't really understand what they are doing. They are restimulated and act it out at you. We get attacked in relationships, at work—just about anywhere.

Almost always, being attacked is an indication that you are doing something rather well. If you weren't, people wouldn't bother to attack you since there wouldn't be any hope of getting help from you with their material.¹

What the “attackers” need is a session. They need help understanding their material. If they are not in RC, they generally believe their feelings. That's what we all do until we get some theory and some perspective on our distresses.

It's fine to be their counselor if you choose, if you think it's the right thing to do to move the situation forward. But it isn't usually enough to be a permissive counselor, to try to drain the pond by listening to them long enough. They need to know what's happening. At some point you can start guiding the session. You can ask them what they are feeling, if they feel that way often, if other people have made them feel that way, if they remember a time long ago when the same thing happened. You can try to help them get a perspective on what's going on.²

Sometimes an attack isn't this naive. Instead, the person is looking to others for support for it. His or her material is hunting for other people's agreement. Many people were ganged up on as children and are pulled to act that out. You usually need to interrupt this kind of attack before trying to counsel the people involved.

One thing that works well is to not look worried. When three or four people come through the door looking unhappy, ideally you are not at all restimulated by it.

Sometimes you know what's happening and why. If your relationships with them are good enough and you are confident enough, you can give them a session. You can give them a better picture of reality than their distress presents. People really are hunting for reality, even when they get lost and target someone with their distress.

You may need to talk about what you did that upset them. If you did a dumb thing, you need to say so. That can be enormously disarming and reassuring, because everybody is expecting you to rigidly defend everything you ever did.

If what you did was necessary but restimulating, you get to say something like, “I am sorry that what I did was hard on you, but something needed to be done, and that was the best way I knew how to do it.” You can describe what needed to be done and ask them if there was a better way.

You are trying to get their minds out of their restimulations so that they can think about reality. Sometimes it works, and sometimes it doesn't.

It always helps to discharge on our feelings about attacks before they happen, to work on our own experiences with and fears about them. We can also discharge about the people who are likely to attack us. We tend to avoid talking about attacks because we don't want them to ever happen, but we can't make things nice enough that they won't. We need to be able to handle contention and upset, even when it turns into an attack. Every fundamentals class needs to look at this.

We don't have to “go victim.” Yes, it's an attack. Yes, we are being targeted. So what? We don't have to fall into all the feelings from having been attacked when we were small and helpless and react as if that's happening in the present. It isn't the same. We are not the same. We have a lot of information and abilities now. We have people who know us. We have allies.

People often feel like they should handle an attack themselves. In general, it is more effective if someone else can step in and handle it. Most of us are afraid when

We don't have to fall into all the feelings from having been attacked when we were small and helpless and react as if that's happening in the present. It isn't the same. We are not the same.

¹ “Material” means distress.

² “Going on” means happening.

continued . . .

TEACHING, LEADING, COMMUNITY BUILDING

... continued

somebody is attacked, so we step away. We get scared that there is a real problem, that we were fooled by the person. This happens consistently around anything connected with sex, or children. All you have to do is raise the issue and everybody backs away, even though usually they have no information at all. Their reaction is not the result of understanding something and deciding the best thing to do. They get scared that they have been fooled by the person being attacked and that maybe they themselves have colluded and will be blamed, too.

We all need to work on our versions of this fear so that we stand by each other. It would be nice to get to where



"COUGAR ANNIE'S NEIGHBOR" (PAINTING) • © SAMANTHA SANDERSON

we can look forward to handling attacks. We can imagine seeing an ally being attacked and ourselves stepping in and saying, "That's it! No more. We will talk later. Back off! You don't get to behave that way, no matter what happened in the past. Maybe there is a problem. Maybe there isn't. We will figure it out. But you don't get to treat anybody that way. I wouldn't let anyone treat you that way. You have to stop, now."

Just that step, by itself, will help everyone involved. Once you settle the waters, you have a basis for listening to people and working on things and figuring out what, if anything, needs to be done. Some people will want to run away. You will need to counsel them. You will need to tell them that attacks are inevitable, that you can promise them that. You can ask them, "Have you ever known anyone who was attacked? Have you gotten attacked yourself? What do you hope you will never be attacked for? Where are you most vulnerable? What would make you run away, or fall down and die?"

Another question is, "What mistakes have you made that you hope will stay hidden forever? (*laughter*) We've all made mistakes. We've done things out of our distresses that didn't work at all and were hard on people. It's all right. Whatever the mistake was, it's all right. It isn't all right to leave in place the distresses that could make us vulnerable to doing it again. That's where the problem is. The past is not the problem. The problem is what's messing up our ability to handle current events.

We need to talk about attacks before they happen. It's much easier to get through to people before they are restimulated. We can be funny about it. We can suggest that they have a few raw eggs in their desk drawer so that when an attack comes through the door they have a way to respond. We can make light of it so that they can laugh about it. Most of us have been hurt in the area and need to discharge so that we are not immediately thrown into a panic when an attack happens.

Attacks will happen. I've been through a number of them that were really mean, really vicious. People tried to get me fired from my job, and so on. It can feel miserable when this happens. We can feel unjustly treated. We need to get sessions. We also need to talk to our allies. They need to see us willing to talk about it. The more scared we act, the more restimulated they get. We often try to hide our restimulations, but that doesn't work. It scares people to see us restimulated and to not know what's behind it, not know how bad something is or isn't. We can get things out in the open so that we don't add to people's restimulations.

“I Just Organized My First Workshop”

I just organized my first workshop, and in the process I learned some new things about myself and about leadership.

When my own efforts to assist or get closer to someone are overlooked, I begin to feel like I am not being well thought about or like someone doesn't trust my mind because of my age, heritage, or class background. My experience in organizing this workshop opened my mind to the possibility that other people's struggles to connect with me may not have anything to do with me¹ at all. While oppressive things do occur in the present, the moments when I feel oppressed are usually when I take other people's distress personally.

I also realized that I do not know how to delegate. This isn't due to a lack of confidence in the abilities of others but rather my inability to relaxedly let go. As a young person, because of the harsh realities of racism, I was encouraged to always be exceptional. I was convinced that I had to “go above and beyond” in order to succeed. I was also told, “If you want something done right, you've got to do it yourself.” This left me with perfectionist patterns and chronic fears of failing or disappointing someone, so relinquishing control of certain tasks at the workshop felt excruciating.

Discharging about all this reminded me that I actually do want and need help with things and it is okay to ask for that. Also, I don't have to take it personally when others choose not to include me in their plans. In fact, nobody is “out to get me.”² I can decide not to “go victim” because of someone else's, or my own, confusion. I can use the discharge process to continue fighting for the connections I want.

I appreciate that the project of Co-Counseling encourages people not to lead in isolation.



Nneka Inniss

New York, New York, USA

Reprinted from the RC e-mail discussion list for leaders of African-heritage people

¹ “Have anything to do with me” means be about me.

² “Out to get me” means deliberately trying to harm me.

Discharging Fear by “Scorning” It

At one workshop I asked each leader, “What is your fear, and what is your best direction against it?” Everybody handed me a reassurance. When I gave each one a real contradiction* instead, the whole group started shaking.

To scorn and discharge our fear, including the fear of death, is currently a *crucial* task. How? I think all of us must model stepping outside of our fear. The thing you are most afraid of, go do it. Go do it. Ride the roller coaster and shake. Break a hole in the ice next winter and go swimming through it. For safety, your Co-Counselor can tie a rope around your waist or something like that.

I'm not advocating death or danger; I am advocating the *scorning* of fear of death or of danger. Wherever a consistently scornful attitude is taken to the fear, people discharge all over the place. We are pent up from not getting out of our fear. We need to.



Harvey Jackins

Excerpted from

“The Frontiers of Counseling,”
on page 86 of *The Benign Reality*

* Contradiction to the fear

Une belle journée en Côte d'Ivoire

Dimanche 6 juillet, les membres de la Communauté de Co-écoute de Côte d'Ivoire ont tenu leur premier atelier de l'année. Ils voulaient consacrer une journée entière à la décharge.

Je savais que comme toute activité humaine, ça n'allait pas être facile, mais tout est possible à qui sait oser. De fait, nous avons subis des pluies torrentielles jusqu'à la veille de la rencontre, journée pendant laquelle il avait plu pendant plus de quinze heures. Des voies entières étaient coupées. Des maisons étaient inondées. Pourtant, les membres étaient bel et bien là le lendemain matin.

Nous attendions vingt personnes, et dix-neuf sont venues. Je crois que cela était dû au fait que j'avais établi un lien personnel avec chacune d'entre elles en tant que dirigeant. Les appels téléphoniques et les fréquentes visites pour des séances avaient permis de créer des liens profonds entre elles et moi. A quelques jours de l'atelier, j'avais visité tour à tour chaque personne et fait une courte séance avec elle.

L'atelier a démarré vers 9h. Après les présentations de chaque membre et un bref résumé de la théorie de base de la Co-écoute et du *Guide**, les participant-e-s ont déchargé sur divers thèmes: entre autres, les faits marquants de leur enfance, les difficultés liées à la crise socio-politique depuis 2002, les relations parents-enfants et l'engagement dans la Co-écoute.

Un groupe de femmes et un groupe d'hommes ont été formés. Les hommes ont parlé du travail, alors que les femmes ont planché

sur l'éducation. Les participant-e-s en étaient tellement ravis que juste après le déjeuner, ils ont demandé que l'atelier reprenne aussitôt.

De la littérature de Co-écoute, comme le fascicule «*Comment débiter la Réévaluation par la Co-écoute*», a été distribuée aux participant-e-s. Vers 16h, l'atelier s'est terminé par des appréciations.

Au total, ce fut une belle journée!

Cyrille Zounon
Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire

Impressions de quelques participant-e-s

Je me sens à l'aise. J'étais un peu crispé au départ, car je me demandais comment ça allait se dérouler. Au final, j'ai découvert d'autres personnes, et j'ai énormément déchargé. Je souhaite qu'on ait ce genre de rencontre plus souvent!

Un membre de la
Communauté de Co-écoute

Cyrille me donnait des textes que je lisais. Mais j'avoue que c'est aujourd'hui que je découvre réellement la Co-écoute. Ma préoccupation, c'est de faire en sorte que la Co-écoute se propage vite ici.

Un participant nouveau
dans la Co-écoute

J'avais quelques appréhensions en tant que responsable religieuse. Je devrais être à une grande réunion ailleurs. Je suis restée et je ne regrette rien. Je me sens libérée. La Co-écoute est une famille.

Un membre de la
Communauté de Co-écoute

Que dire, sinon que je viens de découvrir une nouvelle famille. Je n'ai jamais vu ça. Je suis prête à suivre vos réunions. S'il vous plaît, faites-moi signe à tout moment... Merci beaucoup!

Une participante nouvelle
dans la Co-écoute



FRIESLAND, THE NETHERLANDS • WYTSKE VISSER

* Le Guide pour les Communautés de Réévaluation par la Co-écoute — les règles de fonctionnement des Communautés de Co-écoute

English translation of the preceding article:

A Great Day in Ivory Coast

On Sunday, July 6, members of the Ivory Coast RC Community held their first workshop of the year. They wanted to have a whole day of discharge.

I knew that, like every human activity, it wasn't going to be easy, but everything is possible for those who dare. In fact, we survived torrential rains right up to the day before the workshop when it rained for more than fifteen hours. Entire streets were cut off. Houses were flooded. However, the participants were indeed there the next morning.

We expected twenty people, and nineteen came. I think that was because as a leader I had a personal connection with each one of them. Phone calls, and frequent visits for sessions, had made possible the deep bonds between them and me. A couple of days before the workshop, I had visited each person and had a short session with him or her.

The workshop started at 9:00 a.m. After introductions and a brief review of RC fundamentals and the *Guidelines*,* people discharged on various themes, such as key events of their childhood, difficulties related to the social-political crisis since 2002, parent-child relationships, and commitment to Co-Counseling.

A women's group and a men's group met. The men talked about work, while the women talked about education. The participants were so thrilled that after lunch they asked that the workshop start up again right away.

Pieces of RC literature, like *How to Begin Co-Counseling*, were distributed to the participants. Around 4:00 p.m., the workshop ended with appreciations. All in all, it was a great day!

Cyrille Zounon
Abidjan, Ivory Coast

Impressions from Some of the Participants

I felt at ease. I was a little tense at the beginning, because I was wondering how this was going to go. In the end, I discovered other people and discharged hugely. I wish we could have this kind of meeting more often!

RC Community member

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

Cyrille had given me some literature to read. But I admit that it was only today that I really discovered Co-Counseling. My wish is that Co-Counseling spread fast here.

Participant new to RC

I had some apprehensions as a religious leader. I was supposed to be at another big event somewhere else. I stayed at the workshop, and I have no regrets. I feel liberated. Co-Counseling is a family.

RC Community member

What to say, other than that I just discovered a new family. I have never seen anything like it. I am ready to follow your classes. Please let me know when. Thank you so much!

Participant new to RC

Article translated by
Ellie Putnam and Régis Courtin

Appreciating the *Guidelines*

I have participated in a number of World Conferences at which we have revised the *Guidelines for the Re-evaluation Counseling Communities*.¹ Every time we do it, I am convinced that it is the last time, because it is hard to see how they could be improved. And every time, they turn out² much better than the previous version.

It has now happened again! I just got the new *Guidelines*, and I am impressed. I had particularly looked forward to the section on teacher requirements (left for a committee to work on). The result is excellent. We will be spending some time in classes becoming familiar with this new version. Surely, it has to be the last!

Allan Hansen
Cypress, California, USA

¹ The policies for the RC Communities

² "Turn out" means result in being.

Overcoming Timidity

One of our greatest difficulties is the timidity that has been installed on us. That we must submit to intimidation, that we don't have any power, is probably, in a sense, the greatest lie laid upon us.

It takes a great deal of mistreatment to make this stick. A child has to be whacked down thousands of times before he or she agrees to become a timid adult. The powerful child has to be terribly mistreated before he or she agrees to grow up into a powerless adult.

We are often timid about communicating our insights about reality. Sometimes it makes sense to be cautious. There is no use asking a person to feel all their fear all at once without some theoretical understanding first. They will look at you like you are a threat and back off because at that point they can't tell* the feeling of the fear that is contradicted from actual danger. It feels to them like you are threatening their life now, instead of pointing them in a direction that will allow them to feel and discharge all their old fears.

Over time such timidity works against us. There is a real point to the agreements that we make with each other not to be timid. This is part of our regaining our power—the agreements to remind each other of what we tend to forget alone, the agreement to remember that your fear is not my fear.



KK

Harvey Jackins
From pages 144 to 145 of "The Uncovering
of Reality," in *The Benign Reality*

* "Tell" means differentiate.

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 pages 105 and 106 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 Rational Island Publishers website at <www.rationalisland.com>.

For ordering information, see page 110.

A Teachers' and Leaders' Workshop in Lagos, Nigeria

The one-day Lagos State (Nigeria) Teachers' and Leaders' Workshop has come and gone, with lasting good memories. All the local RC Communities were well represented.

We began by listening to each other answer the following questions: What is your thinking about the Chibok girls?¹ Do you think the government is doing enough? What is racism? How does racism affect global warming? What are pseudo-survival illusions?

There was general agreement that ill treatment of the environment in so-called Third World countries (polluting; cutting trees without replacing them; littering with cellophanes, which cannot decay to form manure; dumping toxic waste) has effects all over the world and hurts both the oppressor and the oppressed in the form of global warming.

We discussed some of the causes of pseudo-survival illusions: faulty guesses, ignorance, and misinformation. To counter these, we need to discharge and re-evaluate, organize, and get good information.

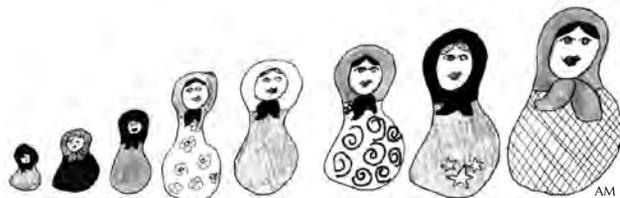
We also had Co-Counseling sessions, and Onii² reviewed the fundamentals of Co-Counseling.

Nobody was in a hurry to leave, and everyone wanted to have more frequent workshops.

Chioma Okonkwo
Lagos, Lagos State, Nigeria

¹ In April 2014, 276 female students were kidnapped from the Government Secondary School in the town of Chibok in Borno State, Nigeria. Boko Haram, a terrorist organization based in northeast Nigeria, claimed responsibility. As of June 29, more than two hundred students are still missing. The Nigerian government has been heavily criticized for failing to protect the population and put an end to Boko Haram's terrorist acts.

² Onii Nwangu-Stevenson, the Area Reference Person for North Central Lagos, Nigeria



More on the Lagos Workshop

Big ups to¹ Chioma and Onii² for a wonderful and highly enlightening RC workshop held on the seventh day of June 2014. I'm happy that RC is opening up now to a whole lot of people, because I find daily that a lot of people in the society need RC, especially in the area of *listening without judging or criticizing*.

We discussed the environment, racism (even our local communal differences), the elderly, the challenges of young adults, and the elimination of all forms of oppression.

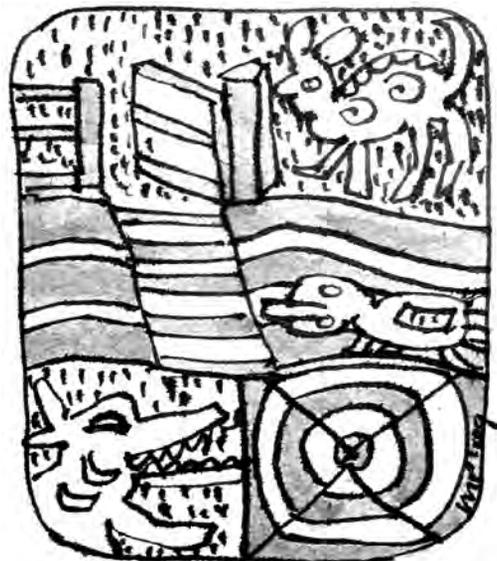
We also had listening sessions on our growing-up experience, and the environment as we knew it then and the way it is today, and talked about the impact of technology on the youth.

In all, it was an enlightening and enriching workshop. Keep the good flag of RC flying, and together we can make the world a better place for all of us.

Mrs. Oge Agbazue
Lagos, Lagos State, Nigeria

¹ "Big ups to" means lots of respect for.

² Chioma Okonkwo, the Area Reference Person for Lagos, Nigeria, and Onii Nwangu-Stevenson, the Area Reference Person for North Central Lagos, Nigeria



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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 and 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 <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

The Six-Legged Table

Below is a summary of a class I led this spring for RC teachers, leaders, and assistants in the Basque Country. It was edited by Shirley Thatcher.¹

What we understand as RC determines how we teach and how we build our Communities. Our personal understanding can affect our perspective on the only point we need to agree on, our one-point program: “to use RC to seek recovery of one’s occluded intelligence and innate humanness and to assist others to do the same.”

It is not always easy to define RC. My definition has been changing over time. The more I make RC central in my life, the easier it is for me to provide an understandable definition of it for those who do not know about it. (The less central it is in my life, the harder it is for me to explain it understandably.)

Sometimes I see RC as a big round table with six legs. One leg on its own cannot support the table.

FIRST LEG: DISCHARGING

Because in the beginning I was astonished by the effects that discharge could have on my mind, I used to talk about RC from the angle of discharge. This can work for reaching those who are able to release emotions, but they are not the majority of people in our oppressive capitalist systems. If my perspective on RC relies only on the effects of discharge, I am not going to reach all the people who cannot yet use the discharge process. I am using only one leg of the whole RC project. I need to have a broader perspective.

¹ Shirley Thatcher is the Regional Reference Person for Bristol and the southwest of England, including Cornwall.



KAS, TURKEY • LANCE CABLK

SECOND LEG: RC LITERATURE

Sometimes getting accurate information can help people re-evaluate wrong information or pseudo information and stop the hurt that bad or incorrect information is creating in their minds. Without the chance to discharge, people commonly use this strategy.

I find RC literature really important. Having in mind our firm and logical theory helps me work better against my distresses. My “weapons” are stronger. I do not necessarily need the counselor’s thinking as a life jacket. I become the creator of my own discharge process (though it is noticeably improved by the full attention of my counselor). The probability that I will stay in RC, even if I am not having “good sessions,” is greater. I can be going through a hard period with sessions because I am fighting a deep chronic,² but even though I

² Chronic pattern

feel bad after the sessions, I don’t leave RC. Knowing what RC is about (it is very well explained in our literature) helps me stay and not give up, not make decisions based on feelings.

THIRD LEG: THE PEOPLE AROUND US—OUR COMMUNITY

The more I know about RC theory, the more I understand where it comes from: people like me. There is no more mystery about it.

When we meet together and create spaces for re-emergence rather than for restimulating each other, our thinking improves and enough space appears in our minds to think in new ways. If we have a little but committed group of people around us, we can do things that were impossible on our own. It will make all the difference in our life—including being the tool we need to build and engage with the “framework” of the Community, which will help us make better use of the re-emergent, hopeful spaces.

continued . . .

... continued

FOURTH LEG: STRUCTURE AND GUIDELINES

If we build relationships according to some kind of organized thinking (guidelines), everything becomes easier and goes faster for everyone. Our minds get better with the structure. We can produce good ideas we have not had before and so contribute to the whole Community. When we see that a structure allows and encourages our re-emergence, and that of the people around us, we want to become a part of that structure.

FIFTH LEG: LEADERSHIP

We may notice that when someone is thinking about the whole group, not just about his or her own re-emergence, everything grows and moves forward in rich and new ways. Leadership is natural for us, is inside of us. I think that we would love to be that person who thinks about the whole group, that we personally want to preserve the structure and make it even better. We cannot wait for someone else to do the job.

There is a huge difference between thinking of RC as something that can

give us good sessions and make our life easier, and understanding RC as a whole project—a project that will help us make changes that at first look impossible. If we understand it as a whole project, we do not guide our own re-emergence, and the re-emergence of the people we are leading, according to whether it generates good or bad feelings. We can tell³ that the process is good and worthy no matter how we feel about it. We don't depend anymore on our feelings as a guide. Instead we depend on our thinking, and our capacity to make the right decisions based on that thinking. This is a big relief. Feelings can confuse us, but our logical thinking will not.

SIXTH LEG: THINKING A BIT BIGGER THAN USUAL—THE INTERNATIONAL RC COMMUNITIES

Once we have understood and based our functioning in RC on these five legs, it is time to look at the sixth leg, the International RC Communities.

Unless we have discharged a lot about our own first community

³ "Tell" means perceive, see.

(probably our first family, at home), we will find it difficult to understand, create, and stay in a community. It is a long journey to decolonize our mind from the structures of the first communities based on capitalism that we were exposed to in our childhoods.

At some point we need to believe that we are worthy of a community and that it can (and must) be the best place for our re-emergence. We need to start thinking of ourselves as right in the middle of our RC Community, whether it is an Area or a Region.⁴ When we have grasped this idea, we have somehow understood that giving is as important as taking, that it is exactly what will create relationships bigger than our limits. We take as we give. In my language (Basque), the word *harreman* means relationship. It is formed from *har* (to take) and *eman* (to give).

We could decide to be bigger and put ourselves in the center of the International RC Communities. This is about "increasing our zoom." The International Communities are not strange and far away. They are not for only some few of us who have had the luck to have access to them. No. They are there just waiting for *you*. They are yours. You only have to decide that they are yours, and believe it.

Language or distance is not a problem. If you do not speak English, this is not a problem—as you will find out. It is only an opportunity for your mind to keep on growing, evolving, and broadening. It is an opportunity to think of yourself as a person with no limits. It is up to you⁵ to decide what role you want to play in this

⁴ An Area is a local RC Community. A Region is a subdivision of the International RC Community, usually consisting of several Areas.

⁵ "Up to you" means your responsibility.



"VIEW FROM BOUGHTON HILL" CHARCOAL DRAWING • KATHY TAYLOR

life: the victim role (“I probably will not be able to do it”) or a more real role (“Why not me?!”). My mind develops, evolves, grows, is faster and deeper, and surprises me much more in the second role. And your mind and mine are really similar.

My little Region has been able to create and maintain a structure from

which a Regional Reference Person and an International Commonality Reference Person have been created. We are not smarter than you at all. We are not a huge number of convinced people. We are about fifty people, working every day on this project. If we have grasped something, it is because we have

been inspired by the decision one of us made that he was as human and intelligent as anyone else in RC. I would not want you to lose the opportunity to believe that this is true of you, too.

Xabi Odriozola
Donostia, Basque Country



BURMA • MAURA FALLON

Sharing *Present Time*

I was on the subway reading Rita Davern’s article about Irish-heritage USers, in the July 2014 *Present Time*, when a young woman next to me saw the title and got interested. She said her husband was Irish heritage (he was sitting next to her), and so her daughters were, and she was curious about what that meant.

I talked to her awhile, asked about her own heritage (Salvadoran and U.S. white, with a lot of other things mixed in), explained that *Present Time* was the magazine of a peer-counseling group, and tried to keep her talking. Then my stop came, and on the spur of the moment¹ I said, “Well, if you’d like to read this, I can always get another copy.” She and her husband were thrilled to take the copy of *Present Time*. Who knows what they’ll make of it.² You never know. But now I need another copy for myself. And another to share!

Susan Whitlock
New York, New York, USA

¹ “On the spur of the moment” means on impulse, without premeditation.

² “Make of it” means think about it.

Counsel Better and Faster?

Unless you tackle the world’s problems with intelligence and responsibility, and use what you know of RC and what you’re going to invent and learn about RC in the future, the world hasn’t a chance. This lovely planet that we happened to develop on over a period of six billion years is going to be a failed experiment. . . .

Does that put any responsibility on you to learn to counsel better and faster? I have an opinion, but I’ll let you answer that.

Harvey Jackins
From pages 16 to 17 of “Live Up To and Practice Our Theory,” in *An Unbounded Future*

Raised in RC, Now Teaching It

This spring I began teaching a fundamentals class in Seattle (Washington, USA). I started teaching it because a young woman I know wanted to teach RC to some of her friends at college.

I taught the class, and she assisted me. We met in a dorm room, which was interesting because sometimes friends visited unexpectedly. (Two friends came unexpectedly to the introduction and stayed for the whole class.) It was hard to find times for class and sessions, because everyone was busy with college classes and jobs, but we found a time by switching back

and forth between Tuesday and Wednesday nights.

I had taught some of my friends RC before, which ended up being kind of¹ hard, so it was hard to do it again. However, this time my assistant and I talked a lot before each class, and that helped. I was raised in RC and never took a fundamentals class, so I felt like I didn't know what to talk about. But my assistant and I bought the *Fundamentals Teaching Guide* and would read that to figure out what topics to teach.

¹ "Kind of" means somewhat.

The class went well. The students liked it. We are taking the summer off² because most of them went home for the summer, but we will probably start again in the fall. I hope to teach them more basic RC theory and introduce them to more people in our Area.³

Fiona Clark
Seattle, Washington, USA
Reprinted from the RC
e-mail discussion list for
leaders of young people

² "Taking the summer off" means not meeting during the summer.

³ An Area is a local RC Community.



MAURA FALLON

Teaching RC to Friends

Yay Fiona!¹ So good to hear what you've been up to!² I ran into³ some challenges while teaching a class to some friends last year. It can be easy to get restimulated about leading, but it's encouraging for me to hear that you're going for it⁴ despite all the challenges. Cool⁵ idea to switch between Tuesday and Wednesday nights! Backing⁶ each other as young leaders is so important, and sharing what works and what's hard is a great way to think together about sharing RC! Yeehaw!⁷

¹ See previous article.

² "Up to" means doing.

³ "Ran into" means encountered.

⁴ "Going for it" means going forward with it.

⁵ "Cool" means good, wonderful.

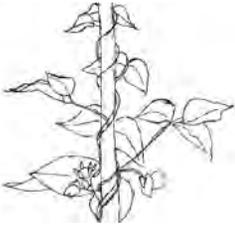
⁶ "Backing" means supporting.

⁷ "Yeehaw!" indicates joy and delight.

I was teaching in a place where there were not a lot of active Co-Counselors, so finding enough local support when feelings came up was a little challenging. Balancing counseling and just being friends was also challenging but ultimately good in a lot of ways. After folks had a general idea about discharging, we had some great spontaneous sessions! And we all got close and got to be there for each other throughout the whole thing.

I'd like to hear from other people about their experiences with leading. What's been hard? What's worked well? Much love!

Arlo Cristofaro-Hark
Northfield, Minnesota,
and Bar Harbor, Maine, USA
Reprinted from the RC e-mail discussion
list for leaders of young people



Community Building

Tim Jackins answering a question at a multi-Regional workshop on Community building, in the Basque Country, March 2014



Question: I would like to hear about RC Community building, especially about how Communities handle class, age, and race. For example, is it a good idea to wait to teach a fundamentals class because so far everybody who wants to take it is white and middle class?

Tim: Building a Community is difficult. Where would you have learned how to do it? How many good examples have you seen? Most of us haven't seen any.

One of the first questions is why do we want to build Communities? Why don't we just have a Co-Counselor or two? Well, RC ideas do work with one Co-Counselor. (Some people have no Co-Counselor near them and Skype* over long distances.) We can have good sessions, as long as we are aware of that other mind. But the people who are in that position want to build a Community around them. They want to build it because Co-Counseling works better where there is a larger group.

I think you can make it work all by yourself. I think you do sometimes. There is no one else around and you find a safe place and allow yourself to discharge. And it helps. But if you are in a class every week, and you see other people trying to make their lives better, and others' lives better, your sessions go better—just knowing that you are not alone in this. Part of what we all struggle with is isolation.

Our experience has been that Co-Counseling works best in

* Skype means communicate by voice or video over the Internet.

Communities. If you have thirty people around you, it works better than if you have five. It does matter who those people are. For example, you need some experienced people at the center of the Community. That gives everyone confidence and provides resource when people get confused.

We can counsel with anybody, but not everybody will work well as our counselor—often because they are too much like the people who were involved in the ways we got hurt. Sometimes people carry distresses that don't let them be aware of us, so there are places we don't go in our sessions with them. Many of the difficulties are due to distresses connected to the oppressions of gender, race, or class. They are due to many things, but especially the oppressions.

It would be wonderful if all our Communities were diverse in all ways. (*To a person*) How old are you? Twenty-eight? Someone here is twenty-six. It would be lovely to have sixteen-year-olds here. Some Communities have them. It would be lovely to have more people from all different classes and races. That's the work we all need to do.

One of the best ways to change the composition of a Community is for different people to teach. If your Community is middle class with two working-class people, the middle-class people need to be discharging about class. They need to be figuring out how to build friendships with working-class people, not trying to get them into Co-Counseling. They need to figure that out before

working-class people will survive well in the Community. But those two working-class people should be encouraged to teach a class, because that would be a place where other working-class people could come and learn RC.

We all want everyone to get along easily. However, things are still more difficult than that. You don't want people to have to act like everything is okay. The goal of RC is not to have a happy Community. It's to have a Community that liberates people's minds. And if that's hard work, that's okay. We are not trying for easy lives. We are trying for better lives, lives that are free of distress.

There are good Communities that struggle a lot as they try to look at their difficulties and not just act happy. Good lives can be hard. That's all right. It's all right if we need to keep working on things all the time to move ahead. The fact that we get restimulated and feel bad doesn't mean that something is wrong. It may mean that we are finally facing and discharging the things that have stopped us.

As for teaching fundamentals to white middle-class folks, I don't think it makes sense to wait. What are you waiting for? You are waiting for something to change when you could be trying to change it. It's hard for me to advise anyone to wait. You will learn much more if you don't wait, and so will everybody else. You need to be teaching those people to face and work on the oppression. And it might not work. But you will know more and have a better chance at success next time.

A Class on the Environment

I recently led a class on care of the environment. My goals were to learn how to teach this subject and to move each person one step forward. Twelve people attended. They were middle- and working-class folks. Eleven were white, and one was of mixed heritage but raised primarily with a white identity. All but one person were raised and currently living in the northeast of the United States.

I talked about every human being's *inherent connection to the environment* and asked people to share an early memory of this connection. Everyone had a memory of a strong connection. After the go-around, people seemed to feel more connected to both themselves and each other.

I talked about how people generally feel powerless, confused, and numb about the environmental crisis. I said that these feelings have deep roots and that working on our *early hurts connected to the environment* can help us think about the environment in the present. I asked people to share a memory of when they knew something was wrong in humans' relationship to the environment. Nearly half of the group talked about seeing litter (trash that ends up in the environment instead of in trash containers). They reported feeling sad, confused, and powerless. One woman worked openly on the feeling that people who didn't litter were better than folks who did and on how society was set up to make it seem like middle-class folks were less likely to litter than working-class or raised-poor people, or people of the global majority.

Then everyone shared a short personal experience involving *class, race, and the environment*. Most of us could easily connect our relationship to the environment with classism and racism. I suggested that white people are deliberately misinformed and confused about the true causes of the environmental crisis. It was clear that how we experienced the crisis was rooted in our

white identities. I pointed this out, not wanting people to assume that their experience was the same as that of people from other backgrounds.

I had a large poster with the *new RC goal on care of the environment** written on it, and we took turns reading it out loud. Then someone had a turn discharging about it. Because the goal is long and includes both perspective and action items, I guided her to work on the goal in general, occasionally bringing her attention to key phrases. At one point we focused on "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." The client, a longtime environmental activist, wanted to remember to use the discharge process as she moved forward with her life, and she discharged about that.

I myself am trying to have one conversation per day about the environment. I ask folks I am close with, cashiers at stores, anyone, "What are you thinking about the environment these days?" Doing this keeps my mind focused on the issue.

Chris Austill
Somerville, Massachusetts, USA
Reprinted from the e-mail discussion
list for RC Community members

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

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

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

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



NANCY LEMON

You gain strength, courage, and confidence
by every experience in which you really stop
to look fear in the face You must do the
thing you think you cannot do.

Eleanor Roosevelt

Leading and Learning in El Salvador

Things went well during my six days in El Salvador. On Saturday morning, Lorena¹ and I had a Co-Counseling session and talked about my plan for the RC introduction that afternoon. She stressed the importance of U.S. leaders speaking respectfully as peers and encouraged me to talk about my previous visit to the country and connections with Salvadoran people in my life.

The introduction was held in San Salvador. Lorena had drawn on longtime friendships to get people there, and she created safety with her caring and powerful leadership. Sixteen of us attended, including five experienced Co-Counselors and eleven new people. The participants were mostly poor, working-class, and campesino/a² folks. A majority were women, but there was a good group of men, too. There were also a few middle-class people, two university students, a few ex-guerrillas, and several people from Mejicanos, a poor and working-class part of San Salvador with tough conditions, gang activity, and a high level of violence. My Salvadoran friend attended and also came to the event for experienced Co-Counselors the following day.

I shared basic RC theory in Spanish. Lorena did the demonstrations, as we thought they would flow more easily with her native Spanish. We introduced mini-sessions to the new people and did several of them. After four hours together, there was a positive, enthusiastic tone in the room, and most of the new people registered for Lorena's next

¹ María Lorena Cuéllar Barandiarán, an RC leader in San Salvador, El Salvador

² Campesino/a means peasant or farmer.



RC fundamentals series. Lorena seemed pleased afterward—that was one of my highlights.

The next morning we had a second four-hour gathering of seven experienced RCers—three women and four men, which people said was a rarity (usually there are mostly women). The topic was Community building and working-class leadership, including work on the working-class commitment.³

This time I did both the theory and the demonstrations, in Spanish, and it was fine. (I am grateful for the support and appreciation I received.) I shared my perspective from the work I had done in Los Angeles (California, USA). Because I didn't want to duplicate Lorena's

³ The RC working-class commitment:

I solemnly promise that, from this moment on, I will take pride in the intelligence, strength, endurance, and goodness of working-class people everywhere.

I will remember to be proud that we do the world's work, that we produce the world's wealth, that we belong to the only class with a future, that our class will end all oppression.

I will unite with all my fellow workers everywhere around the world to lead all people to a rational, peaceful society.

I am a worker, proud to be a worker, and the future is in my hands.

work, I focused on a few areas that the local Community had not yet done much discharging on. One of these was the genocide of Indigenous people in El Salvador. I remembered enough from the last issue of *Heritage*⁴ to offer perspectives and directions, and there was some deep discharge.

After the weekend, Lorena went back to work and I stayed in a hotel for a few days and did sessions and informal Co-Counseling classes. In the afternoons we visited the nearby University of Central America, where in 1989 six Jesuit priests, an employee, and the employee's daughter were brutally killed. There is a Monseñor Romero Center⁵ with photographs and history of that period. A quote on the wall of the center was useful to me in a session: "With Monseñor Romero, God passed through El Salvador," or, in my words, "A glimpse of the benign reality passed through El Salvador" at a time when the people really needed it.

The RC gatherings were the first events of their kind I had led outside of southern California. They were good for my re-emergence. I would like to go back and see if I can continue to be a useful ally. Doing working-class work in a Latin American context is also helpful to me in my Community building in Los Angeles.

Victor Nicassio
Los Angeles, California, USA

⁴ *Heritage* is the RC journal about Native liberation.

⁵ Óscar Arnulfo Romero y Galdámez was a bishop of the Catholic Church in El Salvador. He became the fourth Archbishop of San Salvador and spoke out against poverty, social injustice, assassinations, and torture. He was assassinated while offering Mass in 1980.

The RC Website

There is a website for Re-evaluation Counseling at <www.rc.org>. At this site you will have easy access to a large amount of information about Re-evaluation Counseling, including:

- RC theory (basic theory, including an introduction to RC, *The Art of Listening*, *The Human Side of Human Beings*, and the RC postulates)
- Introductory talks (in audio) by Harvey Jackins (1986) and Tim Jackins (2008)
- RC practice (how to start RC, what to do in a session, counseling techniques, how to lead support groups)
- The *Guidelines for the Re-evaluation Counseling Communities*, 2013 edition, and forms
- Updates to the *Fundamentals Teaching Guides*
- Translations of articles into many languages
- Language liberation information
- Resources for workshop organizers
- Contact information for ordering literature from Rational Island Publishers
- An online fundamentals of Co-Counseling class
- Outlines for teaching fundamentals classes, in English and Spanish, and articles about teaching RC
- An ever-growing collection of back issues of *Present Time* (currently 1974 to 1998)
- "Today's Thought"—a short daily thought from a Re-evaluation Counseling perspective
- International Reference Person Perspectives
- And more

How to Contact Us Online

- The International RC Community: ircc@rc.org
- United to End Racism: uer@rc.org
- Rational Island Publishers (orders, and billing questions): litsales@rc.org (or order on our website at <www.rationalisland.com>)
- Re-evaluation Counseling Community Resources (Intensives and office matters only): rcoffice@rc.org
- Automatic response e-mail about RC: info@rc.org
- For sending photos: photos@rc.org

Online Fundamentals Class

An online fundamentals of Co-Counseling class is available for people who are interested in learning more about RC.

Active participation in the class is reserved for those who do not have fundamentals classes in their geographical region. Learning Re-evaluation Counseling via 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.

Please see the RC website at <www.rc.org/page/onlineclass> for more information about how to sign up for membership in the online fundamentals class.

United to End Racism

United to End Racism (UER), an ongoing program of the Re-evaluation Counseling Communities, is on the web at <www.rc.org/publication/uer/contents>. 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.



JOSHUA FEYEN

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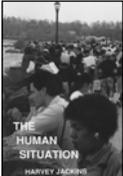
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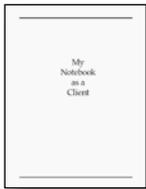
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The Translation Coordinators for each language are listed on the RC website at <www.rc.org> and on page 99 of this *Present Time*.

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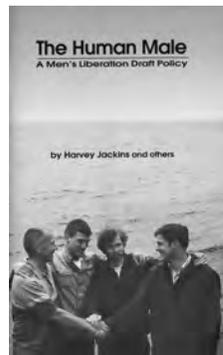
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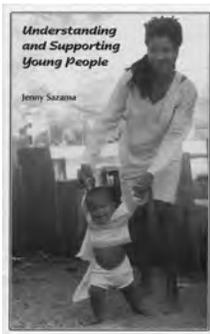
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| THE ROLE OF WHITE PEOPLE IN ENDING RACISM (1 hour) with Tim Jackins <i>A talk at a United to End Racism workshop at the NGO Forum of the United Nations World Conference Against Racism, in Durban, South Africa, August 2001.</i> | DVD 231 VHS 231 |
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When adequate emotional discharge can take place, the person is freed from the rigid pattern of behavior and feeling left by the hurt. The basic loving, cooperative, intelligent, and zestful nature is then free to operate. Such a person will tend to be more effective in looking out for his or her own interests and the interests of others and more capable of acting successfully against injustice.

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