

Trust your own thinking.  
You are as smart as anybody who has ever lived.

*Harvey Jackins*



**Present Time**

No. 183 (Vol. 48, No. 2)

**April 2016**

How great it is that in these pivotal times Co-Counselors around the world are freeing up their thinking and taking more and more leadership—both inside and outside of RC. You'll certainly see that reflected in this issue of *Present Time*.

For the July issue, we'll need your articles and poems by Monday, May 16, and any changes to the back-pages lists by Monday, May 23.

Lisa Kauffman, editor

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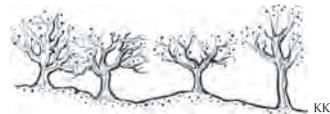
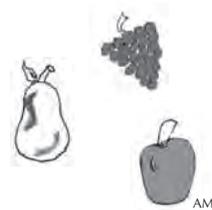
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## Committing Ourselves Fully

*Tim Jackins,<sup>1</sup> at a teachers' and leaders' workshop in Warwick, New York, USA, December 2015*

*A question from a workshop participant:* You've talked about discouragement. You've mentioned deciding to stand in opposition to the distress recording. It reminds me of Harvey<sup>2</sup> talking about not surrendering to chronic patterns—how the loss of integrity takes your legs out from under you.

As an RC teacher, how do you explain to people about deciding to face the hardest spot? Sometimes people have no understanding of where they have settled for the recording or how to wage a battle there. I have twenty-eight years of RC under my belt,<sup>3</sup> and I still can't do this a lot of the time. I'm still not sharp here. How do we talk about it? How do we help each other decide to stay and feel and discharge whatever is necessary?

*Tim Jackins:* I think we all got so defeated in our earliest days that we feel like we can't try again, like it's pointless to try because it won't work. There's that set of recorded defeats and confusions, and we associate it with our present lives. There's a way we have difficulty committing ourselves fully to anything. What would you commit yourself to unboundedly?

The main loophole in this impasse is our children. Those of us who have children or grandchildren get to see what a fresh mind looks like. We get to remember the importance of that mind and



SKY YARBROUGH

can decide to be committed to it, whether we can pull that off<sup>4</sup> or not. Our children are valuable enough, matter enough, that we can again try everything, even if we fail.

Commitment is not about success. We can be committed and fail. Commitment means that we won't abandon something, we won't give in to feeling hopeless. In my mind, I don't care if it's hopeless; I don't care if I fail. That's not what's important to me. What's important is that there be something, somebody, someplace that stands against restimulations and hopelessness, regardless of what happens—that decides to commit, in this case to being fully human. Somebody has to say, "That's possible. I want that to happen." I am committed to someone being able to do this, and to my facing whatever stands in my way of doing it.

<sup>4</sup> "Pull that off" means succeed at that.

An example is when I had my shoulder operation. Lying alone in the hospital as the local anesthesia wore off, it hurt—and then it hurt, and then it hurt—and I would watch my mind handle it. "Okay, I can do this. Can I do the next level of pain? Can I do the next level?" I was watching this interesting battle and making a decision about it. The thing I struggled with was if I couldn't handle the next level of pain, if I needed some drug to interrupt it, should I take it now? I had to decide at each step, "I am still here; let's see what the next step is," knowing that I could be defeated but being unwilling to give in.

I've decided that I will have to be defeated by something external; I will not defeat myself. I have that commitment in my mind. I'm willing to try anything. In one sense, I know that I can't do everything. But I am willing, and I think that I have a shot<sup>5</sup> at it. I am willing to take a shot at it, especially for people.

It's a decision. It's deciding that your mind is still good, still valuable, and that it could be essentially invulnerable—invulnerable to distress. We can be defeated by superior forces, but I don't think we have to be defeated by distress. Once we get enough discharge and perspective, we can make a decision and commit ourselves to it. We can make up our minds about<sup>6</sup> what we want our life to be.

*continued . . .*

<sup>5</sup> "Shot" means chance.

<sup>6</sup> "Make up our minds about" means decide.

<sup>1</sup> Tim Jackins is the International Reference Person for the RC Communities.

<sup>2</sup> Harvey Jackins, the founder and first International Reference Person of the RC Communities

<sup>3</sup> "Under my belt" means behind me.



INDIA • DIANE SHISK

... continued

As a counselor I have to go through my material,<sup>7</sup> battle my distresses, in order to battle for my client. I can't isolate myself and fully fight for them. If I put all of my mind toward them, I have to be standing in opposition to my material simultaneously. I may have to be discharging it to keep my mind on them. So a lot of the time when I'm up here, there are tears in my eyes. I'm trying to keep my mind where my client can see it, and that means I can't be back inside in my distress material. No client sees us well enough through our material. We have to be making an effort out of it.

People can see our effort to get to them and recognize it as part of what was missing back when they got hurt. That's what they can use—somebody who will try in spite of his or her distress. Being committed to doing that in somebody's direction, whether or not it works, whether or not it's recognized, I think is possible and really useful.

We have to be willing to try without success. Most of us can't

<sup>7</sup> "Material" means distress.

try without some sort of guarantee of success. We can't bear the old recorded feeling of failure. But if we're avoiding feelings of hopelessness about the effort, then we're throttling our effort; we don't try everything we could, because the defeat would be too hard. We hold back.

Everybody is waiting for someone who will move without limiting their intentions, without hedging their bets,<sup>8</sup> without playing it safe, without holding something back to make life a little more comfortable for themselves—someone who is willing to put everything out and go as far as they can. Whether or not it works is a different question—maybe an important one, but secondary. At this point we get stuck because we don't dare try hard. We often don't dare make that effort as counselor, or as client. In both roles we struggle in the same place. In some ways it's easier as counselor. We can often try for someone else more wholeheartedly than we can try for ourselves.

<sup>8</sup> "Hedging their bets" means protecting themselves from making a wrong choice.

There are so few examples to look to in our society of people fully trying. An example I've found is in the movie *Heart and Souls*, from the early nineties. One of the characters has wanted to sing all his life. However, each time he has tried to audition for something, he has given up before he's sung. Another character creates another chance for him to sing, and when the first character falters again, the second one talks directly to him, saying in effect, "It hasn't been this way because you can't do it; it's been this way because you haven't tried doing it." So the would-be singer pushes himself forward, through his lifelong hesitation and defeat, and sings. The movie shows the effort involved in changing his behavior, and the results of having done it.

We have been so badly hurt that it's been hard to get a grasp of daring to fully try for ourselves, or to communicate about it to each other. But every time people do it, something shifts in their mind—even if they can't quite make it work the way they'd like to. It's about battling with the reality of the struggles, rather than avoiding them.

## The Reality Agreement

*While cleaning out old files, I found some notes I took years ago after Harvey Jackins led a workshop on the Reality Agreement. I used the Reality Agreement in sessions for at least two years, fairly consistently, and while it was sometimes a challenge to stick to, it was very useful to me as a client, and as a counselor. I still find it useful. I think it is a challenge to use with most people who are relatively new to RC but worth trying with anyone. It is a discipline, which is one way to think of Re-evaluation Counseling. It takes mental discipline to be an active part of the RC Community. Below are the notes.*

This is the way a session goes when using the Reality Agreement:

*Counselor:* For this to work, it is important that you and I are in agreement that the actual reality of the universe and everything in it is completely distinct from the pseudo-reality—accumulated from patterns, oppression, misinformation, lack of information, and the mistakes of the past—which has been presented to us as a substitute for reality. Are we agreed that these two things, the reality and the pseudo-reality, are completely distinct and do not have anything in common at all? (Sometimes working on this alone can take a good portion of a session, but it is worth getting the agreement. The client needs time to think about what it means, and if he or she tries to use the technique before this important first agreement, it will not work. This may be true for a client who has agreed to it many times before in other sessions.)

*Client:* Yes, I agree that this is so.

*Counselor:* And, in particular, that the sub-set of reality that is you, the actual nature of yourself, is different than the pseudo-reality that has often been pushed on you as a description of yourself—the invalidations, misunderstandings, disappointments, and oppression that you have been “told” are what you are like? Do you agree that these two, the reality of your true nature and this old pseudo-reality, are completely distinct from each other? (Again, this may require some time to think about and agree to and may need to be repeated, even by someone who has agreed to it in previous sessions.)

*Client:* Yes, I agree that this is so.

*Counselor:* With that agreement between us, I’m going to ask you some very simple questions, and I need your agreement that you will answer only from the viewpoint of reality itself, without any pseudo-reality being allowed into your answers. You may find this difficult (some people do), but if you slip, I will remind you to keep your answers based in reality, to stand firmly on that viewpoint and not allow any pseudo-reality into your answers.

*Client:* Yes, I agree to that.

*Counselor:* How good are you?

*Client:* I am completely good. (The counselor is patient but firm, reminding the client of his or her agreement to answer only from the perspective of reality, not pseudo-reality, and to stand firm in that agreement, at the very least for this session.)

*continued . . .*



CYNTHIA JOHNSTON

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Other questions a client can work on are many. Some might be "How innocent are you?" "How pure are you?" "How confident are you?" "How powerful are you?" "How completely are you to be trusted?" "How intelligent are you?" "How hopeful are you?" "How willing and able are you to stand up for what is right?" I now think how useful it might be to ask, "How hopeful are you that we can reverse climate change?" and other related questions.

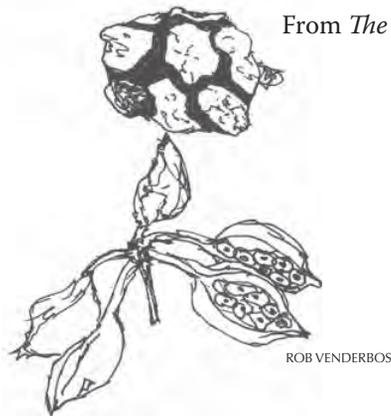
Harvey suggested some advanced versions for people who are able to discharge well with the Reality Agreement, such as, "How 'necessary' is it that you compromise with pseudo-reality?" "How many other people do you actually need to have in agreement with you before you can initiate the actions necessary to save the world and lead a fully proud and powerful life yourself?" One could also try, "How good are other people?" "How safe are you now?" Each of these probably needs to be preceded each time with the first questions, so that in the particular session the client has made a genuine agreement about the complete distinction between reality and pseudo-reality.

Anne Mackie  
Cary, North Carolina, USA  
Reprinted from the e-mail discussion list  
for RC Community members

### The Most Effective Sessions

The most effective sessions follow when *the environment of the session* contradicts the distress pattern, *and the client* is contradicting the distress pattern, *and the counselor* is contradicting the distress pattern.

Harvey Jackins  
From *The List*, page 60



TONTO NATIONAL FOREST, ARIZONA, USA • LISA VOSS

## A Permanent Difference in My Perspective

Thanks for the reminder of the usefulness of the Reality Agreement.\*

Years ago a Co-Counselor and I used it in every session for several months. It made a permanent difference in my perspective.

Since then I know that pseudo-reality is not the same as our true nature (reality), and I can remember that difference in most sessions, both as client and as counselor. I can do this even without consciously thinking about the Reality Agreement.

And even more important, I can remember our true nature much of the time outside of sessions.

Steve Crofter  
Brattleboro, Vermont, USA  
Reprinted from the e-mail discussion  
list for RC Community members

\* See article on previous page.

I am not defined by my scars  
but by the incredible ability  
to heal.

Lemn Sissay

## A Suggestion for Parents

Hi wonderful parents,

I spent some time this past weekend watching two RC DVDs: *How Parents Can Counsel Their Children* and *Counseling the Very Young*. They are RC treasures. I recommend that you watch them when you can.

In the first one, Tim Jackins explains the basics of RC family work, probably to some Co-Counselors who know very little about it. There is something so fresh about his thinking. After Tim talks for a half hour, he answers many questions for more than another hour. The questions and answers are rich and illuminating and address a lot of confusions adults in our society have about young people, as well as the difficulties that parents commonly run into. I myself deepened my understanding from hearing his explanations.

I showed the first thirty minutes of this DVD to my RC class, which includes young people and young adults who grew up in family work. They found the talk fascinating, and I think they felt reassured by Tim's long-term commitment to figuring out how to use RC with young people. One young adult who is new to RC cried because she was so amazed that something like this existed for young people.

The RC booklet *How Parents Can Counsel Their Children* is based on this talk by Tim, but it also includes things that are not on the DVD. And the DVD includes things that are not in the booklet. I found that I enjoyed the DVD more, because I got to hear Tim's tone and see him thinking.

The second DVD, *Counseling the Very Young*, is equally wonder-

ful. It starts with about fifteen minutes of Tim counseling a baby who is about five months old while he explains what he is doing. (People have asked me about resources that explain how to listen to infants. This one is very helpful.) After counseling the baby, Tim goes on to answer questions from parents, which is also illuminating. Then in the last part of the DVD, Tim, Patty Wipfler,<sup>1</sup> and Lenore Kenny<sup>2</sup> answer some questions in a way that gets right to the heart of things and clears away confusions about young people (and adults, too).

These resources also give some historical perspective on RC family work and its development.

<sup>1</sup> Patty Wipfler is the former International Liberation Reference Person for Parents.

<sup>2</sup> Lenore Kenny is an RC leader in San Francisco, California, USA.

Some things can get lost as we communicate RC theory from one class or workshop to the next, many times over. And how we communicate it can change over time. On the one hand, we learn more as our experience grows, and we communicate the new understandings. On the other hand, the clarity, in this case about counseling young people, that came in the beginnings of practicing RC should not be lost. That's why listening to Tim or Harvey Jackins, or others, as they were initially developing RC is so important.

I recommend you buy these DVDs, or get your Community to buy them. They are good for parents, but not just parents.

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

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



INDIA • MAURA FALLON

## Preserving and Deepening a Friendship

I took my son, A—, and his friend S—, two fourteen-year-old boys, to the movies. While at the movies, they started roughhousing (playing in a rough, boisterous way) with each other. This initially was in fun but then turned into something serious. They got mad at each other and didn't speak while we walked to our car.

Since they were good friends, I wanted to help them work the situation out and preserve their friendship. I asked S— what had happened. He explained that A— had been teasing him. A— said that S— had been making fun of him.

S— had started the roughhousing by kicking A—. I asked S— why he'd decided to kick A— instead of keeping the roughhousing playful? He started to cry, saying I didn't know what it was like to have to walk around acting as if everything was okay all the time when it wasn't. He said his dad was very sick and that he might not see him again after December. I listened to him and counseled him. A— started to cry, too, saying that S— didn't know what it was like to be teased at school and that he was embarrassed that he had a learning disability.

It was wonderful to see the two boys connect that way. It preserved their friendship and deepened it at the same time.

*"Sue"*  
USA



NEW YORK CITY, NEW YORK, USA • AMANDA MARTINEZ

## Challenging a Discouraged Client

People caught in patterns of "settling for," being discouraged, being defeated can be helped to contradict these patterns by using directions of "wishing."

A client who cannot repeat a statement such as "I trust you," with any sense of reality, can be asked to say, "I wish I could trust you," as an effective contradiction that will bring discharge. After enough discharge on this level of contradiction, such a client can be asked to use phrases such as "Someday I'm going to trust you," and eventually stronger contradictions, such as "I can" and "I will."

In challenging a discouraged or "defeated" client, it is important to sometimes reduce your expectations down to a *small* change, then praise and encourage and enthuse when the client makes that change, and then ask for another small change immediately afterward.

*Harvey Jackins*  
From *The List*, page 60

**Attention is the rarest and purest form of generosity.**

*Simone Weil*

## Keeping in Contact with Young People

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

We collect the names of young people who would like an RC ally to be a resource for them as they head off on their own. The ally is to stay in touch with them by phone—taking all the initiative, if necessary, for several months; listening to them; Co-Counseling with them (by phone or in person); helping them figure

out how to be in contact with the local RC Community (if there is one); helping them figure out which new acquaintances might make good Co-Counselors; and more. We also have a list of people who want to be allies, and we would welcome more.

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

We would like your help with this project. We want to continue to build both the list of young people and the list of allies, and we ask your assistance in finding people to add to both lists. How about you? Are there others in your Community you could talk with about considering being a part of this project?

Send information to Megan Lynes, at <meganlynes@gmail.com> or 23 Caesar Jones Way, Bedford, Massachusetts 01730, USA. If you e-mail, please put “Allies to Shifting Young People” in the subject line.

Thank you,  
Tim Jackins

## More on the Young People in Transition Project

Here is an update on the Young People in Transition Project:<sup>1</sup>

The project is led by Jenny Sazama<sup>2</sup> and organized by me. Shelley Friedmann<sup>3</sup> coordinates the *Younger Young People’s Transition Project* (for young people transitioning to two-way counseling) that got started last year. Jonathan Smith<sup>4</sup> organizes the allies in England.

The project began in 2006 and currently has twenty-nine pairs—sixteen in the United States, six in the Netherlands, five in England, one in Canada, and one in Spain. Most of the pairs are active, and about two thirds participate in the conference calls that Jenny hosts every six months.

These are the official pairs, who have let us know they are following our guidelines and who reach out for support. There may be others who operate informally. Each time the project is written about

in *Present Time*, a few more people call asking for information or for assistance in setting up a pair.

There are currently about five people who are eager to be allies but who don’t have a young person to pair with. So far the young people have chosen an ally they already know. So the allies who are waiting to be in a pair are probably in an Area with few young people or are not connected enough to their RC Community. Jenny and I have encouraged them to build relationships with young people near where they are.

Sometimes a parent or other adult writes to us about a young person who will soon be going off to college and is not really connected with his or her RC Community at home. The adult has hopes that, in going away, the young person will become involved in a new RC Community or will have an ally. When it’s the adult rather than the young person who is hoping for an ally, the pairing hasn’t worked as well.

Also, we have found that the pairing works best when the ally understands that it’s his or her responsibility to “go after”<sup>5</sup> the young person. The guidelines for the project state that because young

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

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

<sup>3</sup> Shelley Friedmann is an RC leader in Rosendale, New York, USA.

<sup>4</sup> Jonathan Smith is a Co-Counselor in Leighton Buzzard, Bedford, England.

continued . . .

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<sup>5</sup> “Go after” means reach out to.

## COUNSELING PRACTICE

...continued

people's oppression is so hard, the ally is the one who is in charge of all the initiating and reaching out. However, it can be hard for the ally to keep doing this when the young person doesn't respond for long periods of time. If the young person can initiate or respond at least sometimes, the partnership has a lot better chance of succeeding.

The goal is for the pair to have contact every single week, which is often really difficult. But there are some sturdy, fiercely loving, determined allies in this crew! Jenny encourages the allies to have the young person counsel them for some part of each conversation. Allies consistently report how significant, meaningful, and transformational the relationship is, both for the young person and for themselves.

Another goal of the partnership is to help the young people become connected to their new RC Community, or at least stay in contact with RCers while they are away at school. This has been somewhat successful.

It seems clear that the connection the young people have with their ally is a primary one and should not be underestimated. Sometimes it is the only connection they have with RC. While that's better than falling away,<sup>6</sup> it would be ideal if they could become connected to a new Community or remain more connected to their home Community.

In the one-hour conference calls, Jenny has people say a "new and good" relating to their partnership, then she shares some of her thinking about us

as allies, and then we split the time.<sup>7</sup> We get to hear her counsel everyone on all sorts of situations relating to being an ally. Jenny has an insightful mind and can often give a key direction to an ally, even in a short mini-session.

I do my best to organize these calls every six months. People need access to Jenny's fine mind and to be referenced so they don't feel alone with or discouraged about their role. The calls also happen in England, organized by Jonathan Smith, and the Netherlands, organized by Julia Kosteljik.<sup>8</sup>

I think the next step is to remind Regional Reference Persons, and through them Area Reference Persons, that the project exists and that there may be young people in their Region or Area who could benefit from it. It would also be good to tell high-school-age people about it at workshops. And I think that Area Reference Persons of an ally should know about the role their Area member is playing. It is a significant piece of ally work and something that should be referenced by an Area Reference Person and the ally's RC teacher, as well as by Jenny.

I hope this gives a picture of the project. If you'd like more information, just let me know!

*Megan Lynes*  
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<sup>7</sup> "Split the time" means take turns having everyone's attention.

<sup>8</sup> Julia Kosteljik is an RC leader in Nijmegen, Gelderland, the Netherlands.

<sup>6</sup> "Falling away" means losing contact (with RC).



INDIA • DIANE SHISK



DAMIEN COOK

## Holding a Direction

Each one I've ever known wears despair  
Somewhere about him, wrestling with it daily,  
And some do private combat only, feeling  
That decency forbids exposing others  
While some will hide it from the world at large  
But stab and beat those closest to them with it  
As if it were a clay pot they could break  
From off their heads upon their loved ones' strength.

Some dramatize despair instead of living.  
The noises that they tried to call for help with  
Have now enfolded and engulfed the human—  
Insistent hopelessness, embraced and championed  
Enforced, destructively, on all who near them.

Some few have raised this to a theory,  
Constructed new philosophies of funk.  
Their literature has futile, hopeless endings  
With little sprigs of "We must still be brave,"  
"Though all is futile, we can still be kind,"  
Which sometimes brings them literary prizes  
And followings among the insecure.

Yet all of this despair is vicious nonsense.  
The grey discouragement which winds our ankles,  
Yammers within our heads and sags our spirits  
Is only ghostly shapes of childhood terrors  
Only scratchy recordings of those bad times  
When as dependent children we confronted  
A world our store of knowledge could not cope with  
When parents turned into despairing robots  
And still looked like our parents, leaving us  
To face a universe gone mad about us.

These frozen memories re-echo in us  
And are exchanged in daily conversation  
But not to any purpose nor to good.  
Traveling another route we came upon them  
And viewed them from their point of origin  
And saw without mistake their empty nature  
And after much discussion and much discharge  
And putting all our clear spaces together  
We have a rule that works unfailingly for us.

"Always be positive, be optimistic  
Always speak good, always encourage, praise  
Always lead our and others' free attention  
To what is reassuring and inspiring."

To do this is to stand against confusion.  
Dark pseudo-thoughts and feelings will assail us  
From out our own distresses and from others',  
And if we stand insistent on the up-beat  
Those burdened with despairs will come converging  
From miles around and pound despair upon us  
Apparently to force compliance with it  
But really hoping we will stand against it  
And force chinks in their gloom and loan them  
courage.

Ourselves need weep and yawn and storm and  
shudder  
But, as we hold our bearing, all around us  
Reality will lift and show its nature  
More positive than the stand we took on courage  
More reassuring than we dreamed or hoped for.

*Harvey Jackins*  
From *Zest Is Best*, pages 38 to 39

## Happiness

What are the conditions for being happy? What would let your mind be happy?

I don't think it's a large amount of physical resource. I don't think it's having ease and comfort. I think it's having things you can make happen, and allies in doing that. Anybody who gets the idea that he or she can really do something, and build a team to do it with, ends up being rather happy about it.

*Tim Jackins*

From a talk at a teachers' and leaders' workshop in Warwick, New York, USA, December 2015

## Sledding, and Our Patterns

My first Jewish Liberation Workshop, led by Cherie Brown,\* was in the snowy woods of central Massachusetts, USA—an ideal setting for both looking at chronic patterns and going sledding!

The Saturday morning class stands out because of Cherie's demonstrations and this thinking that she shared: The past informs the present, but we are not in the past. The past got internalized, and we rehearse it in the present so we may confuse the two, but they are distinct. We need to look at the past, face it, see what happened there, feel what happened there, and then break from it. It can be as clear-cut as changing our tense from past to present. For example, we may feel that we *are* victimized but we *were* victimized.

In my mind's eye, I could see the change in tense as breaking from the past and forging a new path.

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\* Cherie Brown is the International Liberation Reference Person for Jews.

Going sledding during the break, I could feel the past and present embodied in the sledding trails. Where we start our sled, and its orientation, at the top of the hill (in the past) informs where we end up at the bottom (in the present).

The well-worn sledding trails are like our familiar patterns. The more we pack down the same trail, the faster and more comfortable it becomes. After a while it gets so well worn that even if we try to forge a new trail, we are drawn back onto the familiar pre-existing one. The snow may be so deep that as we pack it down we can't even see over the sides of the trail to glimpse other possibilities.

It may feel like we are making progress, because as we pack down the snow, we go farther and farther each time. But we are still on the same path, when what we actually seek is a new path altogether.

A new path requires a new starting point, because if we return to the same starting point, we are likely to end at the same spot on the bottom of the hill.

The more times we try new paths, even if we are sometimes pulled back to our first route, the more options ultimately become available to us. We can have a whole hill of possibilities!

We don't get rid of the past; we go up to the top of the hill to face it and then break from it, continuing to forge new paths until a network of possibilities eclipse our old rigid thinking.

*Riana Good*

Jamaica Plain, Massachusetts, USA



FRED KELLER

## Another Benefit of “Working Early”

I have known for a long time that working early\* is the more direct route to clearing up distress recordings. But recently I have also been choosing to do it as a way of being disciplined in remembering that my feelings and worries about the present are old.

When I come to a session, I often feel like I need to work on a present-time restimulation. It feels urgent. When I can remember that the feelings are not about the current situation, I can let go of the urgency and feel confident that I will be able to figure out the situation. This leaves my mind clearer about reality in the present, and more of my session time is free for working on early things that I want to shift.

*Nuala Mai Gathercole Lam*  
London, England

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



SOUTH TARANAKI BIGHT, TARANAKI, NEW ZEALAND • LYNDALL KATZ

\* “Working early” means discharging on early hurts.

## New! *Older and Bolder No. 7*

In this new issue of *Older and Bolder*, Pam Geyer, the International Liberation Reference Person for Elders, sets the tone for elders’ liberation work with “It’s a New Day for Elders.” And the rest of the journal supports the truth of that.

More than seventy-five elders share their experiences of and perspectives on being older—what is difficult, yes, but more important what is excellent and how being an elder offers unique, even breathtaking, opportunities.

Pam Geyer’s articles highlight four key activities for moving elders’ liberation forward: promoting health, discharging fears of decline and death, ending elders’ oppression, and enlisting allies.

According to an article by Tim Jackins, one of the most challenging aspects of being older—discouragement—is not even real. Along with having had time to accumulate wisdom, perspectives, and freedom from many distresses, we elders have also had time to accumulate feelings of discouragement. But we can *discharge discouragement completely*. And as we do, all of our strengths will be available to enhance our individual survival and that of the world around us.

Several years ago Harvey Jackins wrote about elders, “We should lead everything.” You will likely draw the same conclusion as you read *Older and Bolder No. 7*.

\$4.00, plus postage and handling  
Ordering information on page 110



HOLLY JORGENSEN

## The List

*The List* is an extraordinary book of Re-evaluation Counseling theory and practice, by Harvey Jackins. He wrote it later in his life, in consultation with many people. It is a collection of all of the insights he had about RC over the decades of discovering, developing, using, and communicating the RC on which many of us base our lives.

*The List* has been available since 1997. It is used by a large number of us who have been in RC long enough to have known Harvey. However, it has not been publicized in recent years, and many people who have come into RC since Harvey's death have not had the chance to become familiar with it.

The book is organized in an accessible manner and is an excellent reference. I think that anyone who has gained the basics of RC theory would benefit from having it available and reading a randomly selected paragraph from it now and then. Also, there will be a downloadable index for it on the RC website, making it easier to locate particular topics.

*The List* is available only in hardcover (as a true reference text). To encourage wider distribution of and access to it, for 2016 we are lowering the price from \$50 to \$30 (plus postage and handling). For ordering information, see page 110.

*Tim Jackins*

## Don't Say Too Much

*Don't* try to help your clients "solve their problems." *Do* help them to contradict and discharge their distress. Be relaxed when the client pauses. Allow the client time to think and feel. Don't say too much. It's usually better to listen longer and to hear more.

*Harvey Jackins*  
From *The List*, page 44

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

You can order back issues as regular literature items (see pages 102 and 110).

## Remembering Goal Number One in RC

*“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.”<sup>1</sup>*

This RC goal is a vital part of a more comprehensive strategy, ultimately aimed at eliminating all oppressions. Racism creates certain divisions among us, making it much harder to fully take on<sup>2</sup> other oppressions, like anti-Jewish oppression, sexism, classism, young people’s oppression, and so on. Our full liberation will require us to come together in a bigger way. Prioritizing the elimination of racism, which directly impacts most humans, can greatly support this effort.

In this spirit of strategizing about liberation, we often set up our RC classes and other RC gatherings with considerable thought given to their particular make-up, for example, the proportions of women and men, young folks and older folks, Jews and Gentiles, people of the global majority and white folks. This is to create the best possible conditions for each person’s re-emergence. We don’t want oppressor patterns to dominate these gatherings, as it becomes much harder to contradict oppression. In the end, we want to create a noticeably safe and workable space for all involved.

In my local RC Area, in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, USA, we have made it a priority to create a diverse mix of people of the global majority and white people. As you might guess, this has meant welcoming more people of the global majority into the mix. Over the past three years we have moved from less than twenty-five percent people of the global majority to almost fifty percent. This has involved the entire Area taking on<sup>3</sup> building fundamentals classes of mostly people of the global majority and backing<sup>4</sup> our amazing people-of-the-global-majority leadership to teach. Our white Co-Counselors have introduced us to several people of the global majority with whom they have close relationships and whom they are excited to have as their fellow counselors. This has contributed greatly to our efforts in a way that continues to deepen relationships among all involved while simultaneously growing our Area.

<sup>1</sup> A goal adopted by the 2001 World Conference of the Re-evaluation Counseling Communities and reaffirmed by subsequent World Conferences

<sup>2</sup> “Take on” means confront.

<sup>3</sup> “Taking on” means undertaking.

<sup>4</sup> “Backing” means supporting.

On a more national and international front, I have initiated a similar project to create a more diverse mix of LGBTQ (Gay, Bisexual, Transsexual, and Queer) men of the global majority and white men who attend an annual constituency workshop known to many as the “January Workshop.” This project began with the vision of supporting us men of the global majority in these constituencies to build ongoing relationships with each other throughout the year and ultimately throughout our lives. My thinking has been that we will be more likely to attend this workshop and other RC workshops if we already have strong relationships in place.

We have been organizing conference calls of small groups of men to check in with each other and to strategize about ways to support our moving forward in our local Communities. In leading several conference calls this past year, I learned that the most important contradictions<sup>5</sup> we could offer to the isolation that many of us have felt as LGBTQ men of the global majority were our connections, getting to hear each other’s voices, and remembering the profound significance of our relationships.

Continuing to support a vision of deep connection and diversity, this year’s January Workshop included a twenty-four-hour pre-workshop exclusively for us men of the global majority. It allowed us to be well connected to each other, and consequently to the whole of the general workshop as it began. It also resulted in a historic forty-percent attendance of men of the global majority. Though this has continued to be a work in progress, I have been very pleased

*continued . . .*

<sup>5</sup> Contradictions to distress



AMANDA MARTINEZ

## LIBERATION

... continued

and hopeful about the possibilities presented by this most recent success.

This year's workshop was a profoundly different experience for me and many other men, both global majority and white, whom I had the privilege of hearing from. We were more deeply connected to each other and consequently to ourselves. I was far less pulled by racism to take care of white counselors in the subtle ways I had in previous years. This was, no doubt, because of the connections that had occurred throughout the year, the pre-workshop, and of course the larger percentage of men of the global majority. These conditions made all the difference in contradicting racism, so I was less preoccupied by it.

Moving forward, I think we get to be really intentional about setting up the conditions for contradicting racism in all of our workshops. Don't let this be an afterthought. And we don't need to hold titled positions in order to take initiative here.

I have attended countless RC workshops over the years at which I was one of only a few people of the global majority. I have even been the only person of the global majority. On some occasions I have been asked by leaders of these predominately white workshops, "What would you like us white people to be working on?" Finally I have an answer:

I want you to make close friendships with people of the global majority, especially Black folks. I don't want you

to try to recruit us into your RC Communities; I want you to build deep relationships with us in your lives outside of counseling. (We all tend to share Co-Counseling with people we already have close relationships with.) If you lead or teach RC, I want you to be very intentional about setting up classes, groups, and workshops in contradiction to racism, not just have white people go away and "eliminate" racism. Of course there is important work for us to do separately as people of the global majority and white people, but it can't stop there. Where you can tell<sup>6</sup> it's possible, make sure there is a diverse mix of people of the global majority and white people in your Areas and in your workshops. This will sometimes mean placing a limit on the number of white people.

Finally, I want you to discharge all the early chronic material<sup>7</sup> that is likely to come up when you do all these things. This is the material that, despite your best intentions, plays out<sup>8</sup> toward people of the global majority as racism.

In the end, remember that you are changing the world. You are creating a world without racism and ultimately without oppression. Don't do this as an ally to people of the global majority but rather as a beloved fellow human.

*"Gregory Peck"*  
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, USA

<sup>6</sup> "Tell" means see.

<sup>7</sup> "Material" means distress.

<sup>8</sup> "Plays out" means is acted out.



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## Asking for Help

If you ask for help without rehearsing your distress at the person you are asking, almost anyone in the world will be willing to help and interested in helping you. There is a built-in desire to be helpful to others in every person, and people will generally be able to help you if you are clear, open, and genuine about needing help with something. They will assist you to the extent that they can do so at that moment. (Often complete strangers will give you at least new information or a new point of view and will be happy to have been of use to you, especially if you genuinely thank them.) This is true for both minor and major problems, if you can present each such problem as something *you* personally need assistance with.

*Harvey Jackins*  
From *The List*, page 83

## Hindu Heritage and Liberation

Several questions were recently posed to Co-Counselors of Hindu heritage on the RC e-mail discussion list for leaders of South, Central, and West Asian-heritage people. Here are three people's responses:

**Anu Yadav,**  
Washington, D.C., USA

*What is your earliest memory connected to being Hindu heritage or to Hinduism?* I have a memory of being three years old in India during Diwali (an important Hindu festival, celebrated in the autumn). I remember touching candle wax and being scared that it hurt but also fascinated by how it molded quickly to my finger.

*What's been good about having Hindu heritage?* My first thought is having access to lots of gods. I think that's pretty cool.<sup>1</sup> Images of divinity in female form could be considered feminist. There are also some concepts that seem connected to liberation, such as God being in everything, animate and inanimate. My sense is that this came from Indigenous and pagan cultures that got assimilated into what is now known as Hinduism.

*What's been challenging?* Hindu nationalism. Even the term "Hindu liberation" feels dangerous. Proudly and publicly claiming being Hindu is easily co-opted into a larger landscape of perpetuating the oppression of Muslims, Dalits,<sup>2</sup> women, Sikhs (members of the Sikh religion), Jains (members of the Jain religion), poor and working-class people, and other constituency groups, and promoting a destructive nationalism. It's challenging to stay and fight there, to

<sup>1</sup> "Cool" means great.

<sup>2</sup> Dalits is the self-chosen political name of people historically and currently oppressed and excluded by the caste system in India.



TUCSON, ARIZONA, USA • STEVE BANBURY

claim my relationship more publicly to Hinduism in a way that supports the liberation of all peoples.

*What are key aspects of your life story as a Hindu?* I grew up in a practicing Hindu family in Iowa, USA. It was one of the most important ways I connected to other South Asian families in a majority-white town. It acted as a contradiction to the racism. During discussions of the Gita (a sacred Hindu text) at *poojas* (times of worship), adults were more open to listening to youth, a contradiction to young people's oppression. I understood Hinduism to be inclusive. Our tiny South Asian community was diverse in ethnicity and religion, and many of us were close with each other and in each other's lives in big ways.

*What thoughts do you have about your liberation as a Hindu-heritage person and about Hindu liberation in general?* This is nascent work. I wonder about the role of USers in Hindu liberation and where our USer oppressor material<sup>3</sup> will show up and need to be directly challenged. (I think about this also because my main language is English.) There is information I want and don't yet have. I also have chronic material of not feeling good enough, and I don't

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

want that to be isolating or get in the way of moving forward.

Hindu liberation seems similar to Jewish liberation in regard to a diaspora and the middle-agent role. Growing up, I was targeted by racism in a majority-Christian nation; being Hindu meant being a minority in an oppressed role. However, within India Hinduism has been appropriated by the state in oppressive ways; it is an oppressor identity.

I think my experience in the United States of facing racism and "religionism" allows me some room to think differently and with more clarity in certain ways. I notice this particularly with my family in India.

**Bishu Chattopadhyay,**<sup>4</sup>  
New York, New York, USA

*What is your earliest memory connected to being Hindu heritage or to Hinduism?* I remember celebrating the Goddess Saraswati<sup>5</sup> *pooja* (prayer ritual) at my home in Kolkata (India). I was five or six. I remember placing my schoolbooks and musical instruments at the feet of the goddess with the idea of getting "good grades" in school. I also remember closing my eyes and trying to experience *bhakti* (love or devotion) for the goddess, and looking forward to the feast after the *pooja* ceremony.

*What's been good about having Hindu heritage?* Celebrating Hindu festivals gave me opportunities to connect with friends, relatives, and neighbors. I grew up to be tolerant and inclusive of all religions. I practice meditation following a Buddhist

*continued . . .*

<sup>4</sup> Chattopadhyay is a Brahmin last name in Bengal. During the British colonial occupation of India, Chattopadhyay was anglicized to Chatterjee.

<sup>5</sup> The Hindu goddess of learning and arts

## LIBERATION

... continued

tradition. Many wonderful Buddhist principles originated from Hinduism.

*What has been challenging?* I was born into a Brahmin caste (said with a laugh, since Brahminism is basically a form of hierarchical racism), and I've enjoyed and always felt disturbed by my caste privilege. Once there was a shortage of priests (who officiate *poojas*) in my neighborhood. A neighbor lady asked if I could do the worshipping, since I'd had my sacred thread ceremony (Brahmin boys are initiated to become priests, although no one necessarily has to pursue it). I was shocked to see this neighbor lady, who was my mom's age, touching my feet after the *pooja* and giving me money and clothes because I was a Brahmin.

*What are key aspects of your life story as a Hindu?* I grew up "Hindu light." My parents were spiritual but never put pressure on me to follow the strict religious rules. Though I did not develop a ritualistic Hindu life, I still love the smell of incense, the chants, and sitting down with others in a temple. But growing up Hindu, a majority religion in India, did not help me understand the struggles of minority religious groups.

*What thoughts do you have about your liberation as a Hindu-heritage person and about Hindu liberation in general?* We need to separate the teachings from the authoritarian and patriarchic patterns that have confused Hindus and non-Hindus. We must deconstruct the caste system, created with the collusion of priests and royal families to perpetuate inequality, and challenge the distresses that run deep, from priests to devotees. We also need to challenge some Westerners who participate in Hindu religion, like by singing *kirtans* (de-

votional songs) or unthinkingly getting hooked to other Hindu rituals while remaining comfortable with racism and privilege patterns.

**Amisha Patel,**  
Chicago, Illinois, USA

It's been great to read people's answers to these questions. I hope to hear more!

*What is your earliest memory connected to being Hindu heritage or to Hinduism?* I'm not sure if it's the earliest, but I remember my mom praying in front of the small *puja mandir* (altar where one prays) in her bedroom. I also remember going to the *mandir* (temple) and playing outside with my cousins because I couldn't understand what the priests were saying.

*What's been good about having Hindu heritage?* I love that the divine is feminine. I love that the religion is a philosophy, a way of life.

*What has been challenging?* So much. The early stories I learned were steeped in sexism, especially the versions of the Ramayana (a Sanskrit epic poem) in which Sita had to walk on coals to prove her purity after she had been kidnapped by a demon. So much rape in the culture. I'm also angry about how oppressive Hindus have been and continue to be in India. It feels connected to being Gujarati,<sup>6</sup> with Modi,<sup>7</sup> and his Hindu fundamentalist agenda rooted in anti-Muslim ideology, in power. It's hard to hear the views of my extended family in India, who support Modi. My caste is Varnya, and my partner is Brahmin. It's interesting and at times challenging to see how

casteism shows up in our family dynamics.

*What are key aspects of your life story as a Hindu?* Such an interesting question. When I was little, I went to "Sunday school" in the home of the Hindu family across the street. It was early on Sundays, and eventually I stopped going. I remember asking my parents questions, and they didn't know the answers. That left me wanting a "guru," someone who could answer the questions. Eventually I lost my curiosity. When I read things later, especially when I found the *Amar Chitra Katha* comic books,<sup>8</sup> I got more interested in learning the stories. But again I soon found the male domination a "turn off." For me, it's the cultural connection—*Prasad*,<sup>9</sup> *Aarti*,<sup>10</sup> and the music that brought family and friends together. I feel disconnected from the religion, and it's hard to find good things to say about it.

*What thoughts do you have about your liberation as a Hindu-heritage person and about Hindu liberation in general?* I love that we are doing this work in RC. I think much of who I am connects to my relationship to and experiences with Hinduism. It's been hard to discharge certain things when my Co-Counselors know little about Hinduism. I suspect that many of my patterns stem from being Hindu, so this work we are beginning to do in RC is very important. I do cringe at the words "Hindu liberation"—it feels oppressive and yucky.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> An iconic series of comics that focus on various Hindu stories

<sup>9</sup> *Prasad* is food, often nuts and fruits, that has been blessed.

<sup>10</sup> *Aarti* is a Hindu prayer ritual involving song, in which light (from wicks dipped in purified butter) is offered to a deity.

<sup>11</sup> "Yucky" means disgusting.

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<sup>6</sup> From Gujarat, a state in Western India

<sup>7</sup> Narendra Modi, the Prime Minister of India, who is of Gujarati origin

## Competition, Play, and Capitalism

From a talk by Tim Jackins at the Central European Workshop, in Basque Country, March 2014

Competition is fun, if you are good. *(laughter)* Actually, in our society, competition is always connected to oppression, and this is too bad.

In oppressive societies we are told that we have to fight for ourselves against other people, that there is not enough resource for everyone, and a lot of our games become part of that training.

In family work\* we “fight” with children and let them win. This can be hard for adults; now they are big and can finally win, and they don’t get to. The distress shows itself right there. Who was not a smaller child? Who did not get beaten in games, or beaten up?

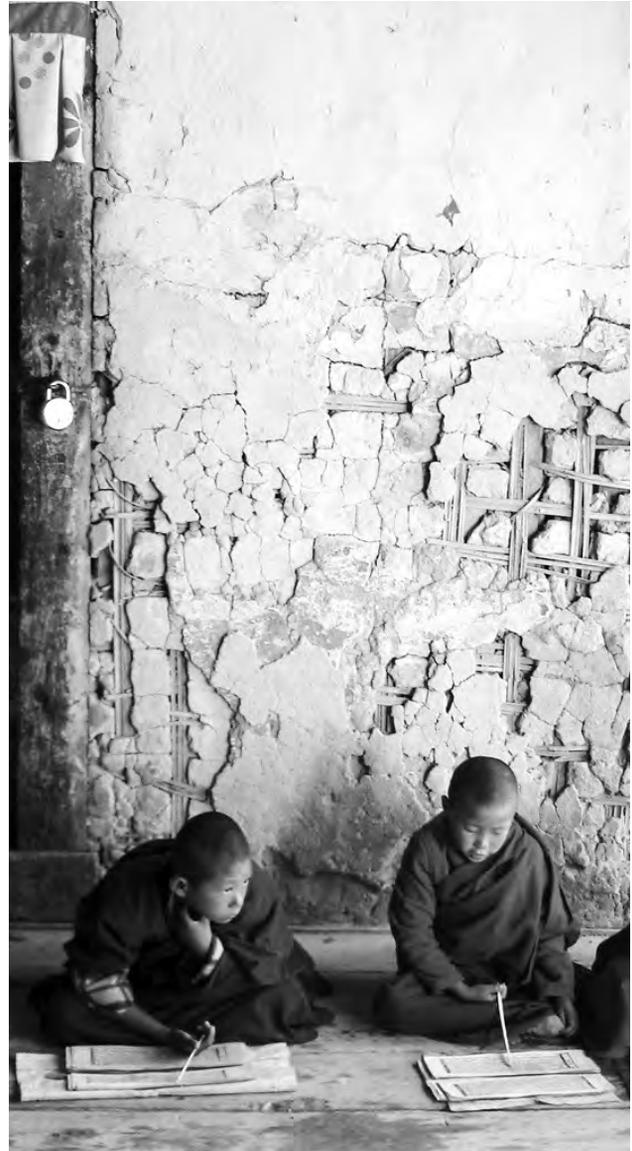
The point of play is not to win. The point of play is to play. The most interesting way to play is to encourage everyone to play more fully. Some of what’s most interesting comes from challenging each other, but the confusion and distress make us try to beat each other. It’s interesting to look at games and figure out how we can play our hardest, and encourage everyone to play his or her hardest. It’s a little like competition, but it’s not quite the same. We are trying to think of a larger goal.

We are forced by capitalism to compete against each other. That’s what drives the whole system. A large part of it is the exploitation of working-class people. But also owning-class people try to drive each other out of business; capitalists love to destroy each other. There is no caring about people at all. We call this competition, and it can infect everything we do

So we get to rethink things. How can we work together, challenging each other—not trying to do better than each other but encouraging each other to do the best we can? There are always ways to do this. However, because we are used to living with capitalist ideas, it is not simple.

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



KOLKATA, INDIA • MAURA FALLON

**It really boils down to this:  
that all life is interrelated. We  
are all caught in an inescapable  
network of mutuality, tied into  
a single garment of destiny.  
Whatever affects one directly,  
affects all indirectly.**

*Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.*

## Middle-Class Workshops in Australia

Seán Ruth, the International Liberation Reference Person for Middle-Class People, led two great workshops in Australia. The first, in Adelaide (South Australia), was for anyone who had been affected by middle-class oppression. That might mean being raised middle class. Or it might mean being raised poor or working class and later being in schools, workplaces, and so on, that were run by middle-class people (or by middle-class patrons). The second workshop, in Perth (Western Australia), was for people raised middle class and their allies.

Because both workshops included people from different class backgrounds, we had the opportunity to show more of ourselves across class “barriers.” I was raised middle class, and working on class with people from other class backgrounds brings up lots of fear for me of being attacked for the way I speak and behave. I also feel guilt, despair, and embarrassment about my privileged life and my place in the class system—oppressor material.<sup>1</sup> And I feel like I have to look after<sup>2</sup> everyone else and not restimulate them! I have plenty to discharge.

It is exciting to work together, rather than in separate groups, toward the goal of leadership by working-class people. The restimulation is immediately there for discharge. If we are to end class oppression, we must be united, and middle-class people will have to come out of emotional hiding and play our part. We have strengths to offer.

Since the workshops I have been thinking about the work on class as another sort of “identity” work. I’m using the direction “claim the identity, clean it up, throw it out.” We Australians like to think that we live in a classless society (clearly untrue) and are tempted to throw out the class identity without discharging first. I think we’ve done well in RC in claiming our class identities but still have a way to go with “cleaning them up.”

The lack of trust can feel overwhelming when Co-Counseling across class “barriers.” I find it a useful direction to name how my counsellor and I are different but also the same. The similarities can be small things. At the very least we are both human!

*Mag Merrilees*  
Adelaide, South Australia, Australia

<sup>1</sup> “Material” means distress.

<sup>2</sup> “Look after” means take care of.



NANCY LEMON

### Hurting, Not “Ill”

The society’s “mental health” systems describe people as “mentally ill.” Re-evaluation Counseling regards such people as *hurting*, not “ill.” People labeled by the society as having “mental illness” simply are carrying particular distresses that the particular society refuses to tolerate. These aren’t “worse” distresses than other distresses.

*Harvey Jackins*  
From *The List*, page 31

## Middle-Class Liberation and the Intersection of Racism and Classism

Of all the class influences in my background, the middle-class one was the biggest. If I wanted to take on<sup>1</sup> class oppression, working on middle-class liberation was going to be my piece of it. So despite my reluctance and resistance, I decided to do it.

I started by working on internalized oppression, relationships with working-class and raised-poor people, and ending class oppression. I have also been leading a middle-class support group for the last three years.

At the recent middle-class leaders' conference, Seán Ruth<sup>2</sup> called upon us to prioritize people of the global majority and young adults. That made me think about what it would look like to put people of the global majority and ending racism at the center of middle-class liberation work.

It's hard for people of the global majority to do this work, and to want to do it. Some of us in Western countries grew up in majority-white-middle-class environments, and the racism we experienced came from white middle-class people. Many of us have working-class and raised-poor roots and don't *feel* middle class in the way that white middle-class people seem to. The racism feels so huge that it's hard to embrace being middle class and to work on internalized middle-class oppression and our oppressor role.

Middle-class people of the global majority are set up to manage and oppress other people of the global majority. We are held up as an example that capital-

ism works and that racism is over. We are used to blame working-class and poor people of the global majority for their conditions.

Middle-class people of the global majority don't just have another flavor or experience of being middle class. Racism grew out of the need to justify class oppression; the two are inextricably intertwined. There's a reason that people of the global majority in the United States are disproportionately poor and working class. There's a structural relationship between racism and classism, which is usually invisible to middle-class white people.

It looks to me like white supremacy leads white people to feel like they should be "winning" in the class system. It's "okay" when people of the global majority are poor or working-class, but when they are middle- or owning-class, it restimulates feelings of competition in white middle-class people and resentment in white working-class people. A few middle-class people of the global majority can be tolerated, but not a lot, and not if they are actually powerful. Look at the attacks on President Obama and the constant undermining of his leadership. Look at the white backlash in some U.S. universities where there is a growing number of Asian-heritage students. In a global context, white-dominated Western countries feel threatened by Asian, Latin American, and African countries that are becoming economically powerful.

I would love to hear other people's thoughts.

*JeeYeun Lee*  
Chicago, Illinois, USA

<sup>1</sup> "Take on" means take action on.

<sup>2</sup> Seán Ruth is the International Liberation Reference Person for Middle-Class People.

You live a new life for every  
new language you speak.

*Czech proverb*



BRYN ATHYN, PENNSYLVANIA, USA • SUE EDWARDS

## Bridging the Separation Between Secular and Observant Jews in Israel

At the recent Regional workshop for Israel, on "Jewish Unity," I called a mealtime table on the topic "Our Relationship to Our Religion." I currently define myself as an "observant" Jew, and the people who came were a mixture of "observant" and "secular."

Here is how I explained why I wanted to meet on this topic: I see our common religious tradition as a great force for unity among Jews, but at least in Israel it often ends up dividing us instead. I cover my hair and wear skirts, and when many people look at me, they think they know something about my relationship to religion because of the way I dress (several people in the group nodded in agreement at that). I briefly recounted my history. I said that I grew up in an "actively assimilated" family in the United States in which both my parents were Jewish but we had no Jewish traditions whatsoever. Instead my parents joined the Unitarian Church, where I attended Sunday school and sang in the choir. I met actively identified Jews for the first time in college and then gradually became more and more interested in Judaism, until finally I ended up becoming observant and moving to Israel.

I said that, really, none of us can assume anything about each other's relationship to religion by the way we look, even though distress patterns in Israeli society cause us to judge each other constantly on this (skirt or pants, head covering or not, length of skirt or sleeves,

kippah\* or lack of one, size and color of kepa, beard or not, and so on). This constant judging and labeling is oppressive and separates all of us from one another.

We then went around the table and each of us said something about his or her family history and relationship to religion. Several of the "secular" people were grandchildren of rabbis, one woman's grandfather had founded a Reform temple in the United States, several people's parents were anti-religious and socialist while the previous generation had been religious, and several of us (like me) had become more observant than our families of origin.

It is clearer to me than ever that every Jew has an important story to tell about his or her relationship to our religion, and that everyone, secular or "religious," has lots of feelings about the religion just waiting to be discharged! I am eager for us in the Israeli Community to do more of this work. Several people told me that the topic table was important for them and that they want to continue at future workshops. We secular and religious Jews in RC can be pioneers in getting close by discharging what separates us from each other.

*Esther Frumkin*  
Ma'aleh Adumim, Israel

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\* A kippah is a brimless cap, usually made of cloth, worn by Jews (more often males) to fulfill the customary requirement of orthodox halachic authorities that the head be covered at all times.

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Hebrew translation of the preceding article:

בס"ד

תרגום של הכתבה הקודמת

## בונים גשר בין חילונים ודתיים בארץ

בסדנה לאזור ישראל באוקטובר 2015, בנושא "אחדות יהודים", אני הנחית שולחן בארוחת הבוקר בנושא "היחס שלנו לדת ומסורת שלנו". אני כרגע מגדירה את עצמי כיהודיה "דתיה", ואלה שבאו לשולחן היו גם "דתיים" וגם "חילונים".

הנה איך שהסברתי למה רציתי להיפגש על הנושא הזה. אני רואה את המסורת הדתית המשותפת שלנו ככוח אדיר לאחדות בין יהודים. אבל לפחות בארץ, היא פועלת לעתים קרובות כדי להפריד בינונו. אני הולכת עם כיסוי ראש וחציאות, וכשרואים אותי, הרבה אנשים חושבים שהם יודעים משהו על היחס שלי לדת לפי המראה שלי (כמה אנשים נענעו בראש בהסכמה כשאני אמרתי את זה). אני סיפרתי בקצרה את הסיפור שלי ביחס לדת. אני גדלתי במשפחה יהודית בארה"ב שהתבוללה באופן אקטיבי. שני הוריי יהודים אבל לא הייתה לנו שום מסורת יהודית בבית. במקום בית כנסת, הורים שלי התצטרפו לכנסייה מהזרם "אוניטריאן", ואני למדתי בבית ספר שלהם בימי ראשון בבוקר ושרתי במקלה. אני פגשתי יהודים שהזדהו את עצמם כך בפעם הראשונה רק כשהגעתי לאוניברסיטה. לאט לאט התעניינתי יותר ביהדות, עד שהחלטתי לשמור מצוות ולעלות ארצה.

אף אחת מאיתנו לא יכולה לדעת משהו באמת על היחס של בן אדם אחר לדת על בסיס המראה שלו, למרות שמצוקות של יהודים ישראלים גורמות לנו לשפוט אחת את השניה ללא הרף בנושא (חציאת או מכנסיים, כיסוי ראש, אורך חציאת או שרוולים, כיפה או חוסר כיפה, גודל וצבע של הכיפה, זקן או לא, וכד'). השיפוט והתייג המתמדים האלה מדכאים ומפרידים את כולנו אחד מהשני.

אחרי זה כל אחת מאיתנו לקחה דקה כדי לספר משהו על ההיסטוריה של המשפחה ויחס שלה לדת היהודית. כמה מה"חילונים" היו נכדים או נכדות של רבנים; סבא של משהי יסד בית כנסת רפורמי בארה"ב; הורים של כמה מאיתנו היו אנטי-דתיים וסוציאליסטים, למרות שהדור הקודם היו דתיים; וכמה כמוני נהיו יותר דתיים מהמשפחה שבה גדלנו.

ברור לי יותר מתמיד שלכל יהודי יש סיפור חשוב לספר על היחס שלו לדת שלנו, ושכל אחת, חילונית או דתיה כאחת, יש המון רגשות בקשר לדת, שרק מחכים לפורקן! אני מחכה להמשיך את העבודה הזאת בקהילה הישראלית. כמה מהמשתתפים אמרו לי שהשולחן היה חשוב להם ושרוצים להמשיך לעבוד על הנושא בסדנאות הבאים. אנחנו, חילונים ודתיים ביעוץ הדדי, יכולים להיות חלוצים בהתקרבות אחד אל השני על ידי פורקן של מה שמפריד בינינו.

אסתר פרומקין, מעלה אדומים, ישראל  
מתורגם מאנגלית על ידי אסתר פרומקין

## When Distress Patterns Are Eliminated

When distress patterns are eliminated from humanity as a whole, when they are gotten rid of and are prevented from occurring in our children, then there is no evidence that we would find continued existence anything but an increasing pleasure. The ability to cope with the environment and to be aware of it and enjoy it seems only to increase with our experience and knowledge.

Harvey Jackins  
From "Is Death Necessary?"  
in *The Human Situation*



COSTA RICA • CARLY FRINTNER

## Connection, Language Liberation, and the Native Basque People

That the Basque people are Native (or Indigenous) is a fact, as it is for other culture groups in Europe. Most of today's scientific community agrees that we Basque people left Africa 75,000 years ago and came here to this corner of Europe about 40,000 years ago, when a climatic period known as the climatic swing or warmer climate oscillation of Göttweig drove back the Würm glaciation, ending the Pleistocene epoch. The ice melted and cleared a large part of the great Ural steppe. Once the frozen mountain passes opened, we came to and settled down where we find ourselves today—our Pyrenees Mountains, on the west coast of southern Europe.

We have lived here since that time and have created our own culture, worldview, language, and belief system. According to the international Native-Indigenous agreements, these are the characteristics that define a group of people as Native-Indigenous. Being a Native person not only means staying on the same land for a long, long time; it's also something more complex, closely tied to the relationship with Mother Earth and the Universe.

Understanding and experiencing themselves as living beings connected to the Universe, Mother Earth, and each other is the way our ancestors could situate themselves and flourish on this planet, within this galaxy, and in the universe. It was how they understood the world, respected it, and passed it on to us. They thought that everything around them had a soul

and was alive and therefore was worthy of respect. They gave names to everything they saw and heard and also to what they could not see but were affected by. Everything had an



HAWAII, USA • STEVE THOMPSON

explanation and a place in the sacred circle of life, in a kind of web or field of interconnection from which it was not prudent to separate oneself.

For us Basque people, this way of staying on the planet is simply part of our existence as human beings. For us, who have not been as exposed to imperialism as some other people, it is a way that we co-live and understand each other. It doesn't separate us from the rest of humanity or make us special; it helps us have resources for being united with everyone and everything, because all human beings come from connection and union.

### CONNECTION WITH THE OUTSIDE

I remember my father telling me about his parents, about birds and plants, about the night and the stars, about the universe, as things that were part of his everyday world where he was another actor trying to follow the natural laws of the web of connection. He taught me that nothing in the world was unnecessary. His

words are still alive in my mind and have a special meaning to me, linked to his openness and honesty. He used to say that the more knowledge you get, the more humble you become; and the more you get, the more you share. I remember once he divided the only strawberry from his garden into seven tiny pieces, for all of us to have a part. Everything and everyone was of the same importance to him. I cannot remember a single lie coming from his mouth. I would say that he was trying to communicate to me that “we am, and I are.”

### CONNECTION WITH THE INSIDE

When I first came to this world, inside my mum's belly, my body was not more than the union of two cells. During the first weeks, my heart was not yet formed so my mum's heart pushed her blood into my little body. I was fed by her food and had her same blood. Her heart and her blood, nutrients, hormones, vitamins, and so on, were mine. I could say that in some way I was my mum and she was me, until I evolved more of my own organism, like my bones, veins, brain, and other organs and tissues.

I still have feelings from and memories of this early time. It was a time of connection and union with a female energy that was welcoming me fully and giving me its life. That connection was my first contact with life and reality, and it affected me and my whole picture of what being a human being meant, completely and forever.

I have been able to keep that connection with my mum and my inner world. It has prepared me to respond to my environment from a connected position, as long as distresses have not interfered. It has made this world a welcoming world to me, instead of a scary or mistrustful one. I am not scared of life and neither of death. (Mum thinks she will meet all her relatives and ancestors once she leaves this life.) I am only afraid of how my distress (the chronic material I got as I grew up that I was not allowed to discharge) affects other people, the environment, and myself. But this will get better as I keep on leading and teaching.

I think that this primitive connection remains in all people and that only distresses make it difficult to remember, feel, or acknowledge. Perhaps my living in a small country that has not been so badly corrupted and ruined by capitalism makes it easier for me to stay aware of the connection, to feel it in every expression of life on this planet. When white leaders from the United States or northwestern Europe come to my country, they always remark on this. Growing up in a Native community has facilitated the connection, but I think that

all people come from people who were Native at some time. As we've been creating and inhabiting hierarchical, classist social structures, we've been separating ourselves further and further from nature, until now it can be difficult to notice our connection and the interconnectedness among all living beings.

### LANGUAGE LIBERATION

The religious-scientific system has helped to disconnect people from their surroundings and their living and non-living loved ones by introducing misconceptions, laws, and moral punishments (the Inquisition, sin, demons, witchcraft, sacrilege, burning at the stake, torture) for those who have tried to hold on to their Native customs that did not coincide with the new system—with slavery, competition, materialism, guilt, penance, individualism. More recently, “mental health” system oppression has been used to identify, institutionalize, and eliminate people who have refused to abandon their Native customs and non-capitalist values.

We are going to need all the abilities and capacities we have if we want to decolonize our minds from the

huge capitalist hierarchical invasion we suffer from, both inside and outside, and we are discovering that language liberation is an important tool for this. In my workshops, people have understood the importance of discharging on our “lost” languages, roots, and cultures. Working on how we've been forced to forget our ancestors and past cultures in order to assimilate into new oppressive structures is key to reestablishing the visibility of, equality of, and connection among all people, including in the International RC Communities.

A language is not only a tool for communication but also a space—a space where the intelligence of the people who speak that language can evolve, develop, and show itself; a space where they can create their best ideas; a space where they can be themselves and really live, without having to hide part of who they are; a space where they can claim their birthright to be visible and in the center of everything; a space that is not risky anymore but safe; a space that is their home; a space where they can acknowledge and appreciate their ancestors who made it possible for them to exist; a space where they don't have to collaborate anymore

*continued . . .*



J. EISENHEIM

## LIBERATION

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with oppression and assimilation; a space of honesty, integrity, and dignity, without confusion. In short, a space of liberation.

The more we are understanding and using this space, the easier it is for people who do not have English as their native language to be visible and centered. Their minds, their thoughts, their perspectives are more on the scene, so other RCers are noticing these people in ways they have never noticed them before. I have met white people who have never heard the Indigenous people in their Communities speak in their Indigenous language. When I do a demonstration with these Indigenous people and they speak in their native language to the workshop, the whole Community changes. There is new insight and awareness, and important re-evaluations come after the whole group discharges.

### DISCONNECTION

Disconnection—the official and normal way our oppressive societies socialize people from the beginning of their lives—has left us humans living more from fear than from trust or connection or love. We fear, distrust, and flee topics that do not fit in the capitalist scientific parameters we have internalized or that have to do with belief systems different from ours or people who hold different beliefs. We also perceive the world, other people, and ourselves from a place of separation and division. We cannot feel and understand that all people are our people, that we are safe on this planet because we are together and united.

Due to the fear, we (mainly unconsciously) reproduce the oppressive system inside our minds, which reinforces our distresses and fears. This distorts our picture of the benign essence of the world and humanity, our sense of our unlimited power and the huge force of our intelligence and

love. It also places us in a poorer position to think about our leadership and spread it.

Sometimes we can be afraid of life and at the same time afraid of death and can try to live a full life between these two fears. This is not what we deserve at all.

Living with disconnection and fear has resulted in a strong pull toward assimilation (the denial of one's own roots, customs, and languages and the adoption of the imposed culture in order to survive). Many Indigenous and Native cultures have been invaded, annihilated, and assimilated, leaving people with few options but to collaborate with the capitalist system that is oppressing them.

The further away from nature and the more immersed in the capitalist system a culture or a group becomes,

the more it can find the Indigenous culture worthless and strange. I think most owning-class and upper-middle-class people would find the connected and humble Native lifestyles unbearable. White owning-class people in imperialist or strongly capitalist countries can feel the most resistance to these lifestyles, because they are the people who have been most forced to separate themselves. They sometimes try desperately to find connection by taking actions for nature instead of re-finding connection through relationships with humans.

Disconnection makes us forget that real separation does not exist among us, that it has never existed, and that it never will. It is false that we are divided, and it is unnatural not to feel united. “The others” is a wrong concept. We are one. If a very young human being could say what she prefers, she would clearly say, “Oneness; no otherness at all.” I believe we all came to this world with that strong idea in our cells.

### NOT WHITE OR PEOPLE OF COLOR

That we Basques are not white people is something that some groups may find complicated and that even we can find complicated at first. This is due to how strongly oppression confuses all of us.

At present we Basques are not people of color, as we were when we left Africa. After we left that continent, 70,000 years ago, we underwent several genetic mutations to a lighter skin tone so that we could adapt to our new environment, surrounded by snow. We are Native people, neither white nor of color. And the same applies to other Native groups of Europe.

The Basque people are the people with the highest frequency of the genetic constitution R1b (96%)—which



LANCE CABLK

is related to the skin color mutation we experienced once we left Africa—but the others are quite close to us genetically: Irish people (90%), Welsh (89%), North Portuguese (81%), Galician (81%), Asturian (81%), Catalan (79%), Scottish (77%), English (75%), Dutch (70%). So I would say that all of us form a solid, close sisterhood—that we have lived under a distressed veil of false separation.

### OUR NATIVE LIBERATION AGENDA

Our liberation agenda is not the same as the agenda for white people or for people of the global majority. It is our Native-Indigenous liberation agenda, and at its core is *fully understanding the effects of genocide-ethnocide and assimilation on us and freeing ourselves from them*. It cannot be moved forward well within the agenda of people of the global majority or of white people—though some parts of those agendas can be common places to work together at particular times.

Our liberation as Native Indigenous people will come from understanding that our inner connection, and our external connection with everyone and everything, is there, intact, and that we can find it by discharging the hurts that we have suffered from having stayed for the last hundred years in this corner of the world, linked to Mother Earth but exposed to imperialism and capitalism.

These hurts have been determined by the historical, social, and geopolitical situations we have lived through, making us Basque people unique and different from other Native people—not better, or more important, or weaker, or less hurt but simply different—and our liberation different from that of other groups.

One of our first tasks should be *reclaiming the unity* among all Basque



PERU • DIANE SHISK

Indigenous people—the ones who can remember that they are Native; the ones who, because of terrible repression, have hidden this identity; and the ones who were not given adequate information and lost the awareness of this part of themselves.

At the same time, we can reclaim our sisterhood and brotherhood with the rest of the Native people of Europe, Africa, Asia, Oceania, and America.

We must also reclaim our close contact with white people and recognize the importance of our relationships with them, along with working on the effects of being exposed to their imperialism, capitalism, colonialism, and genocide-ethnocide.

Because we have survived in part by agreeing to be oppressed, confused, and assimilated into white culture and its hierarchical structures (slavery, servitude, feudalism, colonialism, capitalism, imperialism), we have developed patterns of behavior closely related to these structures of domination. Some Native Basque people have collaborated with the imperialist or colonizing structures and received material benefit from them.

Under threat of torture, murder, and other violence, we have often denied our Basque Indigenous identity, culture, language, and mythology, which has left a deep impression on our minds and hearts and from which we need to recover.

### MORE ABOUT THE BASQUE PEOPLE

Not every Basque person understands her Native identity in a re-emergent way, and what other people think they know about our people is often not accurate. This is because false propaganda against us has been greatly disseminated—to secure our submission, assimilation, or extinction and to spread fear and mistrust of us so that the rest of the world does not cooperate with our liberation.

There is evidence that we have traveled the world for the last 30,000 years and settled in different places. (It's not unusual to find Basque place names in many parts of the world.) There are theories that we may have traveled to North America in as early as 30,000 BCE.

We have supported many other Indigenous peoples in their liberation and are part of a broad network

*continued . . .*

## LIBERATION

... continued

of Indigenous peoples that help each other survive and achieve justice.

Today we are also part of an industrialized country, though this does not change our society into a simply capitalist, imperialist, or colonizing one. It's good that we have technology and industry, if we make rational and intelligent use of it. But it has also led many Native Basque people to forget or turn their backs on our Indigenous essence and the human skills we've developed to live in connection and cooperation. Our small Basque owning class promotes capitalism and manipulates the working class into aspiring to become middle class and collaborating with the oppressive system.

Part of our liberation work is to see how capitalism is slowly *devouring* us, how we are losing our roots and the connections among ourselves and with Mother Earth, how we are being assimilated and forced to accept capitalist systems as a problem that has no solution, or as the only road to progress.

### OUR OPPRESSOR MATERIAL

Like all other human beings, we carry oppressive patterns. Some of these have come from growing up among white people and the wars, genocide, male domination, and greed that the patriarchal structure has imposed. We hurt people, and we harm each other. If we don't discharge, we can be very harsh to people and even kill to defend what we believe is ours (the language, land, people).

It is essential that we face and discharge this oppressor material. A fundamental step is to be proud of who we are now—to understand that we are fine and do not have to change—and to be proud of having been surrounded by white people and having come to love them, respect them, and include them in our lives. Without this step, our liberation work cannot be complete. It is important for reclaiming a logical, inclusive, re-emergent, and enduring Nativeness.

### OTHER NATIVE GROUPS IN EUROPE

Once we have discharged on the relationships among us Native Basque people and with white people, then perhaps our Native liberation agenda can have points in common with other Native groups in Europe on the way toward their liberation. But still, being Native in Basque Country has different connotations from being Indigenous in other European places like Ireland, Russia, Finland, Scotland, Friesland, Sápmi, Wales, Lapland, Cornwall.

We have only just crossed the entrance to Native or Indigenous liberation in Europe. We will have to discharge for a long time in our original communities about what it's meant to be Native to Europe before thinking about coming together as European Indigenous groups. After we have understood the basic facts about our own heritage and history, and have discharged the hurts specific to our Native communities at home, we will probably be able to

suggest a more appropriate name for the people of Europe: Native or Indigenous, non-Native, migrant, nomadic, permanent, and so on.

Many people who consider themselves white could begin to see their roots from other perspectives and realize that maybe fewer people are white than they had thought. If they witness the liberation work of other Indigenous people, perhaps they'll begin to reclaim their roots—their cultural, geographical, and linguistic heritage—and start discharging on the devastating effects on them of imperialism.

### ALLIES

We Basque people want to live, think, love, and lead as who we are: Indigenous Basque people. This involves doing things in our Native way, which is different from what we have usually known and what has been more valued, supported, and upheld. We want other people to understand this different (no better) perspective and richness and to support our liberation, which is also the liberation of all human beings.

At the same time, we would like to actively support the liberation programs of other oppressed peoples here in Europe and in the rest of the world. It is time to act from what we have already understood: we all are united; we all are one.

Thank you for your precious time.

*Maitasunez eta esker onez*  
(With love and appreciation),

*Xabier Odriozola Ezeiza*  
Regional Reference Person for  
Basque Country, and International  
Commonality Reference Person for  
Languages and Interpreting  
Donostia-Gipuzkoa, Basque Country  
Translated from Basque to Spanish by  
Juan Gabriel and from Spanish  
to English by Zhenia  
English translation corrected  
by Marcy Morgan



MAINE, USA • MARTY POTTENGER

*In May 2015, at an RC gathering in Boston, Massachusetts, USA, thirty of the International Liberation and Commonality Reference Persons talked about their work. The following are three of the talks. (Others were printed in the July and October 2015 Present Times.)*

## Japanese- and Okinawan-Heritage People

Hi. I'm Jan Yoshiwara, the International Liberation Reference Person for Japanese- and Okinawan-Heritage People.

I want to take a little poll and find out how many of you are Japanese or Okinawan heritage or have a relationship of any kind with someone who is Japanese or Okinawan heritage. Raise your hands. Oh—that's great. And how many of you think of yourselves, or would like to think of yourselves, as allies—allies to Japanese- and Okinawan-heritage people? Oooh—that's so great!

So, Japanese- and Okinawan-heritage people are hardworking. We care about the people around us. We know how to pitch in<sup>1</sup> and make things go well for our families and communities. We are excellent problem solvers, and we know how to persevere and take the long view.

In this past period, the United to End Racism<sup>2</sup> project at the Tule Lake Pilgrimage<sup>3</sup> has propelled the re-emergence of our constituency forward. I'll tell you why:

In order to do this project, we've had to discharge the effects of racism on our families and ourselves. At the pilgrimage we've listened for four or five days straight



RANDALL SMITH

to people telling their stories about incarceration and what happened to them and their families during World War II, and to do this we've had to discharge ourselves.

We've had to learn to talk openly about RC to four hundred Japanese- and Okinawan-American activists and be transparent about the discharge process and what RC and liberation work mean to us.

We've also had to think hard about the no-socializing policy.<sup>4</sup> When you're taking RC to a non-RC event that includes people you went to college with, people your sister played basketball with, people your mom went to church with, you have to think hard about how to build connections in a way that doesn't violate that policy.

We have to get good at all these things in order to bring RC to our peoples.

The last thing I want to mention is that we have had to challenge our patterns of insignificance. In order to do this project, we have had to face that Japanese- and Okinawan-heritage people are important, that we matter, and that the resource we pour into this project makes a difference both to us and to our people. This has been a huge contradiction to our patterns of insignificance and invisibility.

Olympia, Washington, USA

<sup>1</sup> "Pitch in" means vigorously contribute.

<sup>2</sup> United to End Racism is a project of the Re-evaluation Counseling Communities in which groups of Co-Counselors go to non-RC events to share what we've learned in RC about ending racism.

<sup>3</sup> The Tule Lake Pilgrimage is a biannual pilgrimage to the site of the Tule Lake Relocation Center, one of the internment camps in which many thousands of Japanese Americans were incarcerated during World War II.

<sup>4</sup> The no-socializing policy of the RC Communities states that Co-Counselors should not set up any relationships, other than Co-Counseling, with other Co-Counselors or with people whom they first meet in a Co-Counseling context.



NAIROBI, KENYA • ELLIE PUTNAM

## Wide World Change

I'm Julian Weissglass, the International Commonality Reference Person for Wide World Change. "Wide world change" is a term Harvey Jackins invented for talking about using RC to transform society into something rational, that's good for all people. All of us are in my constituency, because as young people we knew what was wrong with the world and we wanted to change it. And that got squashed—at different times for all of us, but it got squashed pretty (quite) hard.

In recent years, I've been focusing on four of the main challenges facing humanity:

The first is the survival of the human species. It would be a terrible tragedy if we made ourselves extinct. We have a lot of work to do there. I recently proposed on the RC e-mail discussion list for leaders of wide world change that within two years, fifty percent of our workshops be devoted to ending the destruction of the environment.

Meeting this first challenge will require acting on the second one, which is ending the capitalist society. There is no way that a society based on profit can stop carbon emissions and the destruction of the environment. We have to end the for-profit society.

The third challenge is ending war. War destroys both people and the environment. But the main reason, in RC terminology, why we need to end war is that it installs discouragement recordings on young people about the possibility of changing society. We become hopeless once we learn about war. People actually organize to kill each other? Wow.

And the fourth main challenge I see is USer liberation. We USers have to liberate ourselves from the distress recordings installed on us that make us collude with U.S. imperialism and the domination of the entire world.

Santa Barbara, California, USA

## "Mental Health" Liberation

I'm Janet Foner. I'm the International Liberation Reference Person for "Mental Health" Liberation. I reference everybody, but especially ex-inmates, ex-psychiatric inmates, therapy survivors, psychiatric drug survivors, and relatives of people in all those groups—which is probably almost everyone here.

Basic RC is basic "mental health" liberation. For example, we can't "lose our minds."

"Mental health" oppression keeps people scared to show their feelings at all, which makes it hard to build RC and to make it as big as we want it to be. Also, as RCers we can feel like we're going to go over the edge or go "crazy" if we have a heavy session.

"Mental health" oppression makes it "normal" to be oppressed. It holds capitalism and classism in place with the message that you are supposed to conform, that you are "crazy" to question things. "Mental health" oppression isn't really about "mental patients" or "mental hospitals"; it is about what will happen to you if you "misbehave" in this society.

The newly revised "Mental Health" Liberation Policy Statement is on the RC website and will answer a lot of the questions that might be puzzling you.

New Cumberland, Pennsylvania, USA



NICOLA OSSHER

## A Female Ally to Large Women

I went to a Large Women and Female Allies Workshop last fall in Seattle (Washington, USA) as an ally to some large women in my Community. The workshop was led by Diane Shisk and Teresa Enrico<sup>1</sup> and turned out to be<sup>2</sup> an important workshop for me—a powerful place to face and discharge on sexism and internalized sexism. The suggestions for allies have stuck with me. I took the following away from Diane's and Teresa's talks:



ARIZONA, USA • LISA VOSS

### GENERAL POINTS

- Every woman is beautiful, and every body is beautiful. There is a large range of healthy bodies—many more than the oppressive society says is acceptable.

- Large women's distress is no worse than anyone else's. Some heavy chronic material<sup>3</sup> shows on the outside, and this visibility is used as a pretext to oppress large women.

- The oppression is real and vicious.

- Large women are not to blame, not to blame, not to blame.

- The work is not about losing weight; it's about setting up the conditions so people can work on heavy chronic distress.

- Female allies have been targeted by sexism and male domination; large women, however, have

to deal with an extra layer of the oppression.

### SUGGESTIONS FOR ALLIES

- Do not make any suggestions at all. Take those brilliant lifesaving ideas to sessions and discharge about them. Large women have already tried everything and been told about everything.

- All women have a huge amount of discharging to do about bodies. Allies can lead this work in women's groups.

- Most of us have to discharge a lot about saving people. We are women; we are responsible for the continuation of the species. It's hard to watch people flounder and to not rush in to save or "caretake" them.

- We can't actually liberate another person's mind from oppression. What works is to set up the conditions so that people can discharge. It's about working on the early hurts underlying core chronic distress and about reclaiming minds.

- Our relationships matter. Isolation is a big part of the oppression. Connection is a foundational piece.

- Allies tend to have all their attention focused on weight and

weight gain. Notice that this project is actually about freeing minds from early hurts, living a full life, and being healthy. Some of us try hard not to pay attention to weight, and some of us think about weight all the time. Both are rigid responses. It is possible to pay attention to our bodies and notice when they change size without flipping into the internalized sexism.

- Allies who carry a lot of tension about weight might consider gaining five to ten pounds and keeping their weight there for a year. The idea isn't to gain weight; it's to discharge. Some people might not have access to important material if they rigidly maintain a particular weight. If you decide to gain weight, don't do it with junk food. We can free ourselves from oppression and think about health at the same time.

- Speculation: heavy internalized sexism might be as unhealthy, or even more unhealthy, than excess body weight. Internalized sexism can affect our bodies and lead to illness. We shouldn't have to endure sexism in order to stay thin.

Mary Ruth Gross

Richmond, California, USA

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

<sup>1</sup> Diane Shisk is the Alternate International Reference Person for the RC Communities and has led many workshops for large women. Teresa Enrico is the International Liberation Reference Person for Pacific Islander and Pilipino/a-Heritage People and has led many women-and-physical-power workshops.

<sup>2</sup> "Turned out to be" means resulted in being.

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

## Ending Racism on Campus

This summer and fall I led two RC fundamentals classes for people taking leadership to end racism on our campus. One was for student leaders. Another RC colleague, Mallory Garnett, assisted with that.

The other was for faculty, staff, and administrator leaders, and Hannah Ashley, also an RC colleague, assisted with that one.

We taught RC fundamentals in the context of ending racism. People were more enthusiastic than we had imagined and were consistent about class attendance and Co-Counseling sessions. As we wrapped up<sup>1</sup> the fall cycle, many said their participation in the classes had changed their lives.

This Friday, Barbara Love<sup>2</sup> led a wonderful workshop for the participants in both classes. We also included four RC colleagues from nearby campuses—Carmin Bermudez, Charlotte Jacobs, Victor Donnay, and Mike Reichert. There were twenty people at the workshop. Those in our fundamentals classes benefited tremendously from Barbara's leadership and also from their connections with the other experienced RC colleagues.

Barbara started the day on using RC for our personal lives and well-being. She used the analogy of how at the beginning of airplane flights, the attendants show how to use the oxygen masks and say that one



KATIE KAUFFMAN

should secure one's own mask before attempting to help others. She emphasized that using RC for ourselves builds the base for changing the world. This was a useful frame, particularly for a group of people already committed to changing the world.

She then shifted to how to use RC to work on racism. She had us do one mini-session in which we were to tell early memories connected to race and racism and followed that with another mini-session, in the same pairs, in which we were to notice the feelings about those early memories. I found that strategy very effective, particularly for a group fairly new to RC. It helped people move from telling details of the memories to crying, shaking, and otherwise releasing the associated feelings.

Barbara is an expert at communicating sophisticated information about RC and ending racism while also reviewing basic concepts so that newer people do not get lost. She had us do lots of mini-sessions in which people could try RC in different ways for themselves. She also made room for questions, which she answered clearly. We ended the morning with a three-way session.

After lunch Barbara gave a talk on ending racism that was open to our whole university campus. We publi-

cized it as a United to End Racism<sup>3</sup> event and had United to End Racism flyers there. With the weather forecast calling for a major snowstorm, our university closed just before the talk was scheduled to begin. But even with the closing, over two hundred people came.

Barbara started with a mini-session in which she had people talk about their vision of what a campus and world without racism would look like. People were crying in that mini. Throughout her talk, and in answering questions, she addressed difficult issues related to racism and internalized racism while holding out a hopeful perspective about the possibilities for healing from and ending racism and other oppressions.

After her talk, the RC workshop resumed. With campus already closed and snowflakes starting to fall, we decided to end before dinner instead of continuing through the evening. Barbara asked the participants what they wanted to be sure we covered and then skillfully addressed the key issues in less than two hours. She had the experienced RC colleagues from other campuses share how they were using RC, talked about the intersection of racism and sexism and the media's tendency to erase Black women and portray Black men with a hypersexualized masculinity, and counseled several people in front of the group. The workshop took participants to a new level in their practice of RC and their understanding of how to use it in their lives as a base

<sup>1</sup> "Wrapped up" means finished.

<sup>2</sup> Barbara Love is the RC International Liberation Reference Person for African-Heritage People and Professor Emeritus of Social Justice Education at the University of Massachusetts, in Amherst, Massachusetts, USA.

<sup>3</sup> United to End Racism is a project of the RC Communities in which Co-Counselors bring what we've learned in RC about ending racism to wide-world activists working to end racism.

for the work they're doing to end racism.

Our plan for spring is to continue with the classes—with the student group and the faculty and staff group sometimes meeting together and sometimes separately. We have framed the project as a pilot for what we'd like to do more broadly on campus and are hoping there will be another phase in the fall.

I'm thrilled that these people taking leadership to end racism on our campus now know RC fundamentals and understand something about the emotional work necessary to end racism. I'm honored that this group of almost all people of the global majority has been willing to engage in this project with me. I am grateful to be working with Mallory and Hannah on an ongoing basis and grateful that Barbara was willing to come lead this workshop and move our project forward. I am also grateful to have all of you RC colleagues behind me and with me as I stretch to see what's possible. Many challenges lie ahead, but I'm pleased with what we've tried so far.

I think this is a particularly important time in history to be using what we understand in RC to support wide-world efforts to end racism. As colleagues we are in a unique position to do this. I know about the wonderful work some of you are doing. I encourage all of you to write about how you are using RC on your campus and in your work, particularly in ending racism.

With love and respect,  
*Ellie Brown*  
 International Liberation  
 Reference Person for College  
 and University Faculty  
 Wilmington, Delaware, USA

Reprinted from the RC  
 e-mail discussion list  
 for leaders of college  
 and university faculty

## The Effects of Sexism and Men's Oppression on Parenting

Just over two years ago my wife, L—, died. We had been in a close, committed relationship for forty years and had co-parented five children.

After she died, I began to notice something about my relationships with mutual friends. I saw that there was a lack of deep, meaningful connection between us. I realised that I had lived these relationships through L—, that she had taken the initiative in them and I had taken a backseat. I had hidden behind her comparative ease in getting close to people to avoid showing myself, making myself available, and connecting with people.

I then realised that all of that was also true of my relationships with my children (now adults and a young adult). Although I had good, close, loving relationships with them, I had missed out on having the deepest possible connection, and they had missed out on having me as fully as they wanted and deserved.

I realised that I had never taken full responsibility for any of these relationships, that I had unwarily handed a big part of my responsibility to L—. Discharging the deep feelings of loneliness and despair after L— died enabled me to see that I had no choice but to take that responsibility. She is no longer there for me to hide behind.

All of us dads were conditioned, as young males, into giving up on closeness, but I'd never before seen the extent to which men's oppression, sexism, and male domination can have an impact on our parenting. I'd love for others to share their thoughts on this.

*Keith Charlton*  
 Leicester, Leicestershire, England  
 Reprinted from the RC e-mail  
 discussion list for leaders of parents

### Five-Year Subscription to *Present Time*

Rational Island Publishers is offering a five-year subscription to *Present Time*, at the request of many people who would like to not have to re-subscribe every one or two years. The cost is \$105 in the United States, outside of Washington State; \$115 in Washington State; and \$155 (USD) outside the United States. (A couple of dollars have been added to partially cover the anticipated increase in costs over the next five years.) To order a *Present Time* subscription, see page 111.



LYNDALL KATZ

## New from Rational Island Publishers

### The pamphlet *Sustaining All Life*

The RC Communities sent a delegation to the United Nations climate conference in Paris, France, November 30 to December 8, 2015. A new pamphlet, *Sustaining All Life*, was created for that purpose. It gives a succinct picture of how RC theory and practice are not only useful for but essential to solving the climate crisis.

\$3.00, plus postage and handling

### A Sustaining All Life T-shirt!

Support Sustaining All Life\* by buying and wearing the attractive T-shirt shown in the photo below. The Sustaining All Life logo consists of images of hands placed in a flowering pattern. For available sizes, see page 109.

\$20, plus postage and handling  
(no quantity discount)

### *Sustaining All Life* No. 2

Don't miss the second issue of *Sustaining All Life* (the RC journal about care of the environment)! It's filled with inspiring examples of the clear thinking and good work that Co-Counselors are doing around the world.

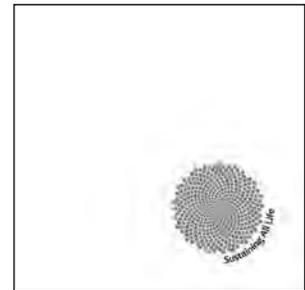
Consider ordering a copy now. We all need to be well informed about climate change and environmental degradation and understand the large role we can play in reversing them.

\$4.00, plus postage and handling

### A Sustaining All Life Hankie!

To raise money for Sustaining All Life,\* we are selling the beautiful handkerchief to the right. It measures 14 inches by 14 inches and is printed on natural-color cotton fabric. It has the Sustaining All Life logo in one corner, so that it will be prominent when the hankie is folded into quarters.

\$10, plus postage and handling  
(no quantity discount)



\* Sustaining All Life is a project of the Re-evaluation Counseling Communities in which groups of Co-Counselors go to non-RC events and share what we've learned in RC about helping people take action to end oppression and save the environment.



YOUNG ADULTS IN THE SUSTAINING ALL LIFE PROJECT DURING THE DECEMBER 2015 CLIMATE TALKS IN PARIS, FRANCE • ROB VENDERBOS

Ordering information on page 110

## People Who Struggle to Stay

Tim Jackins and others at a teachers' and leaders' workshop in Warwick, New York, USA, December 2015

*A workshop participant:* I'm thinking about a bunch of mostly Black working-class and raised-poor Co-Counselors who have been solid Community members for decades but whose heavy chronic distresses are taking them down.<sup>1</sup> We can't seem to get enough resource to them to keep them around. How do we keep them from leaving? I feel like it's about discouragement. The bigger question is, how do we organize for this? How much resource can we put to it? If a local Community hasn't enough resource, how do we think about it as a bigger Community?

*Tim Jackins:* A lot of people have been badly hurt by this society. We don't always have enough resource to take that on.<sup>2</sup> Many people start RC, gain some traction, move ahead some, and then hit something hard. It becomes too restimulating, and they are too alone not to feel discouraged and confused.

Is there any way to inoculate against that? We know it's going to happen. It happens to a good percentage of us. If we are lucky, we have enough resource. We have enough of a relationship with somebody that they don't let us drift off alone in restimulation.

We often try to make RC sound attractive to people so they will try it. We generally don't give them an accurate enough picture of how they will have to face hard struggles at some point.

That people have difficulty staying doesn't mean that there is anything

<sup>1</sup> "Taking them down" means defeating them.

<sup>2</sup> "Take that on" means handle that.



MACHU PICCHU, PERU • DIANE SHISK

wrong with them, or that they are too hurt, or that there is something wrong with our understanding. There simply are hard struggles. They can be won, but it often takes decision. I think we often rely on discharge too much, hoping it will take care of everything. We hope it will ease the feel of the distress enough that people will be able to see a difference, feel enough relief to stick around. We can forget to talk in early classes about how they need perspective, need to stand against distresses. We need to give people a picture of how powerful they are and what they have to go up against.

People who are struggling against oppression are likely to understand something about this. We don't have to say as much to fill in the picture. They know what it means to go against an oppressive structure. But what they don't know is that the oppressive structure has taken up residence in their head, in their distresses, and that they have to fight a battle there.

They also often can't tell<sup>3</sup> that they have allies in their struggle. As nice as we are, as helpful as we try to be, we are still struggling with relationships. So they can't tell that we are committed to their liberation when times get hard. We often don't say explicitly enough that we want them with us and that we know there will be hard times.

I do the monthly introductory lecture at RCCR (Re-evaluation Counseling Community Resources, in Seattle, Washington, USA) maybe a third of the time. I like doing it. Usually it's a small enough group that I can figure out what to say to them. I always say that I am sure that Co-Counseling will work for them and that I know it won't always be easy. I tell them it hasn't always been easy for us. There have been battles to fight through. It is always in our interest to fight those battles, and we try not to fight them alone. I say that doing this

*continued . . .*

<sup>3</sup> "Tell" means see.

## TEACHING, LEADING, COMMUNITY BUILDING

... continued

will make a difference in their lives, that it will be hard at some points, and that they don't have to fight alone; they can build the relationships that will make it possible.

We can also organize counseling support and resource early on, and people can take part<sup>4</sup> in that. They can

learn to offer resource to someone else, and receive it, before they hit heavy and confusing distresses. Local intensives are a way to do this. People band together to support somebody and take turns doing it for each other. This changes the picture of what counseling can be and what these relationships can be. Having that in place

before people hit hard material<sup>5</sup> can make a difference.

*Another participant:* I would like to add a couple of things. We are increasingly trying to think about BLCD<sup>6</sup> not so much as an annual workshop but as a local Community development project. That's why we've decided to organize it regionally. Our goal is to collect resource and bring more Black people into RC.

How do we create conditions in our Communities so it will actually work for Black people to be there? That often means slowing things down, having people do a lot of work so they will have enough attention.

Sometimes white allies listen to me talk about how terrible or hard my life is without their having figured out the perspective piece. They don't see my need to have power and agency in my struggle. They don't know how to just be in there with me and "learn" my life rather than sympathize with me about it. Sympathizing with Black people about their lives is not going to help them re-emerge.

*Another participant:* Despair and discouragement are built into the oppressive society. We breathe them. They're in the air. I experience this culturally as a Latino. I like what you said, Tim, about having to decide. I can feel like shit, but I can decide that it's not going to ruin my day—that there are hard things in my life right now, but that's not my life. We tend to expect tragedy rather than victory. My hunch is that we have to model deciding that we are going to win, even if we don't believe it. I think that is the correct perspective. And it's true that we are going to win.

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

<sup>6</sup> The RC Black Liberation and Community Development Workshops



YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK, CALIFORNIA, USA • LANCE CABLK

## Southern Africa Teachers and Leaders

This weekend I led a Regional teachers' and leaders' workshop for Southern Africa. It had been a long while since we'd had one. I explained to people that the workshops I used to lead every year in the various Communities had not been effective. When I would go to a Community, it would be in exactly the same place it had been twelve months before, if not a worse place. There would be new people who had hardly done any fundamentals, which meant that we would do fundamentals over and over again. This was exhausting for me. It was also quite restimulating, because I blamed myself for not getting it right.

I had to figure out what it meant to be a Regional Reference Person. I consulted with the International Reference Person, who encouraged me to concentrate on building a good support base for myself. I needed people who could think well about me and help me discharge. This took several years. During this period I was able to make a few observations, which I shared with the workshop:

Most of the leaders in the Region have the same challenges. They are committed people who have not figured out how to make their groups meet consistently, discharge consistently, and go through the entire *Fundamentals Manual*.

One of the biggest pitfalls is their sense of urgency. They want to make sure that as many people as possible know about RC, so they end up taking too many people into a class. That was me not so long ago. I reached out to as many people as possible to let them know about this jewel I had stumbled on\*: the benign reality. I thought that if I taught as many people as I could about it, the world was sure to be a better place.

I know now that this never works—not if you are building a Community. There is little consistency in class attendance, and new people are always allowed to join. The class never really becomes a class, since the teacher always has to repeat the lessons. A lot of people are introduced to RC, but they never have a full fundamentals class. Thus the Community's overall understanding of RC theory is low. And with too many people in a class, there is little or no opportunity for real connections.

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\* "Stumbled on" means accidentally encountered.

We raise people's expectations when we teach about the benign reality, but when people get restimulated, we do not have the resources to effectively contradict their distress. Thus their discouragement comes up and they leave the Community.

I have found that it is hard if not impossible for people to hear me when I say that large classes do not work. The cure has been to have lots and lots of contact with the teachers. Then I can help them discharge after every failed class until they figure out that large classes with limited potential for real relationships are probably not the smartest choice. This has worked marvelously.

One of the things I set out to do at the workshop was to let the teachers feel how good it is to be a part of a solid Community. Some things cannot be explained; they need to be experienced. The workshop was characterized by lots of playing and singing, and there was enough time for sessions. We also had support groups in which the more experienced people were assistant leaders. Generally everybody had a good time.

About half the people at the workshop were from my Community. I was hoping they would make connections with the people from the other Communities, so that I would have at least one other person thinking about each of the leaders. I have come to accept that I cannot do this work alone. If I am going to help build solid Communities, I need as many people as possible committed to doing it with me.

*Bafana Matsebula*  
Regional Reference Person  
for Southern Africa

Mbabane, Hhohho, Swaziland



MAURA FALLON

## Leadership

Leadership is necessary. Leadership is an inherent human characteristic. Leadership is natural to us as humans. As we re-emerge, all of us will come to play the role of leading.

Such leadership does not necessarily have to be well publicized or proclaimed. It is possible and sometimes desirable to “lead without being noticed” or to “lead from behind.” The central function of leadership, however, which is to organize other intelligences to act jointly with one’s own for common goals, needs to be released to function for every individual.

This can be partly accomplished by providing challenges, high expectations, and enthusiastic “loaning” of confidence and “cheerleading” for the person whose leadership has been inhibited. It can also require uncovering the distresses that were laid in when leadership was frustrated, denied, defeated, or even punished. Supplied with contradictions, these distresses will discharge, and the person will tend spontaneously to move into effective leadership.

In wide-world activity, rational leadership itself will be a contradiction to the widespread hopelessness that has been installed on humankind about the history and future of our species.

Harvey Jackins  
From *The List*, page 131



MATT WEATHERFORD

We need your “doodles” and drawings for the back pages of *Present Time*!

Send them to Rational Island Publishers, at  
719 2nd Avenue North,  
Seattle, Washington 98109, USA,  
or <publications@rc.org>.

A collection of various hand-drawn doodles and illustrations, including a tractor, a bird, a heart, a ticket, a fish, and various abstract shapes. The doodles are arranged in a grid-like pattern around the central text. Some examples include a tractor, a bird, a heart, a ticket, a fish, a cup, a tree, a musical note, a puzzle piece, a shell, a ticket, a fish, a knot, a bunch of grapes, and a hand holding a pen.

## Language Liberation in Southern Africa

In January 2016, the Southern African countries had a Regional workshop. Twenty-eight people came, from five countries. I do not know how many mother tongues were present, but I would guess about a dozen.

Only two of us, who were white, were native English speakers. Yet the language used by everyone—even for the sessions (when people didn't share a language)—was English.

It seemed to me that in my presence people were struggling to discharge. In the support group I led, I encouraged people to speak in their native tongue, but they were reluctant. So at topic-group time, despite my wearing a good number of oppressor roles, I suggested a group on language oppression and liberation.

It was so hot in the big meeting room that I suggested that our group of five meet in my room. The other people were from countries that are hotter than South Africa, and as the group went on, one by one they began to wrap themselves in blankets. So on top of everything else, I subjected them to temperature oppression! Most of them had come to the group because several languages were spoken in their countries and they imagined that I might have some ideas for managing that in RC classes and in building Communities. None of them had considered that they themselves had experienced language oppression, or were experiencing it at the workshop.

I told them about how language differences are dealt with in International RC workshops, and there was a lot of discussion about in-

terpreting and the need for interpreters to be "properly trained." It was a new idea for them that people might be encouraged to interpret just for their own re-emergence and to contradict isolation.

We had all grown up in countries colonised by Britain—Zambia, Zimbabwe, Swaziland, and South Africa. None of us shared a mother tongue. As I began to explain where I was coming from<sup>1</sup> on the issue of language oppression, some of the group began to realise how much they had been oppressed by language. I suggested that I counsel them all in their mother tongues—"for the hell of it,"<sup>2</sup> I added.

There was some discharge but not a lot. However, when I asked at the end, "So what was that like?" the group exploded with laughter, questions, and feedback. After that, somehow or other,<sup>3</sup> the issue of language oppression began to permeate the whole workshop.

I learned several things:

Some people may have been experiencing RC as duplicating the oppression they'd experienced in school when they were

<sup>1</sup> "Where I was coming from" means my perspective.

<sup>2</sup> "For the hell of it" means for no particular reason.

<sup>3</sup> "Somehow or other" means in some unknown way.



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learning English. In some countries pupils were physically punished for speaking in their mother tongues, so even if they were now being encouraged to speak in their native languages, they were not sure if it was okay and even wondered if it was counter to the principles of RC.

English proficiency in Anglophone Africa can feel like a kind of liberation not oppression. For many it is the key to education, jobs, class mobility, and easier lifestyles. Hence people may show resistance to acknowledging being oppressed by language colonisation.

It is important for me as an ally outside the oppression to stick my neck out<sup>4</sup> at times. The worst that can happen is that people will be angry.

As a native English speaker, it is great to have sessions with non-native English speakers, because they don't get distracted by my fluency.

I realised why language oppression is important to me. My parents were Yiddish-speaking immigrants from Eastern Europe to South Africa. They had to learn English, and they struggled with it and never lost their Yiddish accents. As a child I was ashamed of their foreignness, and the cure turned out to be<sup>5</sup> learning my mother tongue myself and witnessing how much Yiddish was valued by the Gentiles in the course.

*Margaret Green*  
Cape Town, South Africa

<sup>4</sup> "Stick my neck out" means act boldly and risk being criticized.

<sup>5</sup> "Turned out to be" means resulted in being.

## Integrity and Courage

In this century<sup>1</sup> there has been a systematic drift away from earlier social encouragement to live up to high standards of integrity and courage. As the owning-class/working-class society has moved away from its evolving and growing stage and its early conflicts with the ideas of the feudal society it replaced, it has come to systematically encourage dishonesty and timidity. The commercial functions of the society have moved away from invention, improvements in manufacturing and manufacturing efficiency, and improvements in the livability of the environment. Society has become increasingly oriented more toward *wasteful* consumption, *planned* obsolescence, and *monopolistic* rather than competitive functioning.

The conditioning of young people—using the schools, the armed services, and “media saturation”—include “waiting to win the lottery prize,” “getting away with

something,”<sup>2</sup> and “escapism.” Much rebellion is produced but of an unprincipled type done thoughtlessly, unethically, violently, and unsuccessfully.

The simple, human ideas of *courage* and *integrity* are more and more treated as “naive” and “uncool.”<sup>3</sup>

Resisting and recovering from such conditioning is a key task for each of us at this point if we are to regain our effectiveness. Great damage has been inflicted on all peoples by the presently collapsing society. It is an important struggle for each of us to commit ourselves to and model complete *integrity* (honesty and doing the right thing regardless of convenience or comfort) and *courage* (doing the right thing regardless of fear, greed, embarrassment, or humiliation).

Harvey Jackins  
From *The List*, page 186

<sup>2</sup> “Getting away with something” means managing to do something wrong without getting caught.

<sup>3</sup> “Uncool” means unfashionable.

<sup>1</sup> The 1900s



LYNDALL KATZ

Knowing trees, I understand the meaning of patience.  
Knowing grass, I can appreciate persistence.

Hal Borland



## What Are We Doing When We Teach RC?

When we teach RC, we are accelerating our own development and evolution. We are thinking of ourselves as significant, powerful, intelligent, and capable. We are respecting and following our human essence. We are aligning ourselves with the upward trend of the universe.

Teaching RC is a powerful dynamic that causes us to grow and know ourselves and to delve into our own re-emergence in an efficient manner, perhaps more so than for our students.

### WHEN RC BECOMES OUR OWN

The moment comes in the practice of RC when a person feels that the ideas, practices, and projects of RC are also hers and make complete sense in her life. That is when she may take the plunge into sharing with one or more people what is being so important for her. She may be provided with teaching credentials that mean a commitment to her own re-emergence and the re-emergence of others by teaching RC.

Some of the largest resistance we face in ourselves is not to the practice of RC but to its diffusion. This can come from the fear (always old) of being visible in front of others and offering ideas and showing our commitment and adherence to them. Earlier in our lives when we tried to be ourselves, we were not always welcomed with open arms. It was more the opposite: we were criticized, shamed, reproached, or even punished or attacked.

Once we have discharged enough not to automatically believe the fear, we can start to believe and feel that some ideas are defensible and worth offering despite certain risks, and that we may know how to deal with the results of offering them more constructively than in previous periods of our lives.

When we have made our own the complete theoretical body of RC, we want to take care of it. Wanting to take care of something implies wanting to keep distresses from interfering with it. We also want to share it so that other minds can use it, benefit from it, and even improve it. That is when we are RC teachers. It is our project, and we organize to teach it to people whom we will want to have close to us for our whole lives, with whom we will practice RC and develop it together.

### WHO AND HOW MANY TO TEACH

The people we teach will need us at the beginning, while they are still under the strong effects of living in an oppressive, not very humane system that has filled their minds with distresses, confusions, and incorrect information. They will observe us and consider us an important person who is offering them a different perspective. We will be crucial until they can produce for

*continued . . .*



UPPER SKAGIT RIVER, WASHINGTON, USA • TIM JACKINS

## TEACHING, LEADING, COMMUNITY BUILDING

... continued

themselves a perspective outside of their distresses. To get to their own perspective outside of distress can take one class or a decade, depending on how much direct support we can invest in their re-emergence, in their finding their own intelligence and maintaining it in direct contact with ours.

That is one way to decide which students and how many we want in a class. Logically, it is those whom we are able to reach in this way. I don't think it would make sense to recruit more people than that. To do so would demonstrate a lack of understanding of the mutual support and re-emergent relationships needed and what Community building means. If we are not going to be totally in charge of these students (until they decide to be members of

the Community), we are going to have to delegate them to other people. I don't think that would represent our full responsibility toward everything that surrounds us.

Does this mean that only we will be in charge of them? No. We are going to think and design their re-emergence together with other people: our assistant, the experienced members of the Community whom we invite to our class, the organizer of the class, the interpreters, the local Co-Counsellors with whom the students can have three-way sessions (that include us, until they can trust and have individual sessions with people besides us).

It is a process of continuously thinking about others, which leads to continuously thinking about ourselves and

what we need to discharge to be that close and consultable, reachable.

This is a way for me to calculate the number of people I can reach and be a reference for until they "become independent" from me. It is not a standard model to follow (far from it) and perhaps cannot work in some other places. It is only an example—among many others possible—of how we should continuously be thinking about everything and everyone once we decide to become teachers (leaders) of RC.

*Xabi Odriozola*

Donostia, Gipuzkoa, Basque Country  
*Translated from Basque and Spanish by  
Goizalde Galartza and Stéphan Picard*

Reprinted from the e-mail  
discussion list for RC teachers



COP21 IN PARIS, FRANCE • ROB VENDERBOS

## Graduation Cum Laude\*

You have been good children. You're now grown up. From this moment on, I not only permit you, not only free you, but charge you, as intelligent entities, to each build a world-class Community around you.

*Harvey Jackins*

From *The Longer View*, page 275

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\* Graduation with distinction



CAPE COAST, GHANA • MARION OUPHOUET

## Nigerian RC Is Growing

Re-evaluation Counseling started in Nigeria in the year 2002. Circumstances prevented its quick growth, and now only a handful of pioneer Nigerian RCers are still leading RC Communities or teaching RC. For some Nigerians, pursuing a means of livelihood is a constant issue. It entails relocating to different cities and areas and could be responsible for the non-steady rise of RC in the country.

I was unable to be in a particular location for a long time. When I first learned RC in Victoria Island, Lagos, Nigeria, I was living in Ajegunle-Apapa, Lagos. I established a foundational Community in Ajegunle and have heard recently that one of the persons I taught there is today a frontliner in<sup>1</sup> Nigerian RC. How heartwarming!

A look in the back pages of the *Present Time* of October 2015 shows that Nigeria has eight listings under "Organised Areas" and ten under "Teachers in Developing Communities." This is contrary to a few years back when Nigeria appeared under "Teachers Outside Organised Areas" only. That's commendable.

Kudos<sup>2</sup> to Chioma Okonkwo<sup>3</sup> for her resilience and follow-up. Her efforts are beginning to pay off.<sup>4</sup> I'd say we are experiencing a paradigm shift. Communities are gradually but steadily growing and becoming more and more organised. No doubt we are on the way to having more slots in the "Organised Area" status. This year there is rejuvenation in the RC Community, caused by a certain reawakening in us.

*Marshall Ifeanyi*  
Enugu, Enugu State, Nigeria

<sup>1</sup> "A frontliner in" means in the forefront of.

<sup>2</sup> "Kudos" means praise, congratulations.

<sup>3</sup> Chioma Okonkwo is the Area Reference Person for Lagos, Nigeria.

<sup>4</sup> "Pay off" means yield results.



## A Memorable Event

The RC Northern Region teachers' and leaders' workshop in Abuja (Nigeria) was a time of reunion. I enjoyed the sessions that made me discharge efficiently and the love we shared regardless of tribe, class, or personality. A highlight was the colorful and entertaining opening song during which the women, men, and youths all danced together happily. It was indeed a memorable event.

*Igwe Benjamin Ezeoma*  
Abuja, Nigeria

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## 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 104 and 105 of this *Present Time*.

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

The entire 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, and 2015 four-CD sets are also available to anyone, for \$25 per set, while supplies last.

The 12-CD sets for 2006, 2007, and 2008; for 2009, 2010, and 2011; and for 2012, 2013, and 2014 are each available to anyone for \$40 per set.

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. If you are not a certified RC teacher, you can subscribe for \$35 a year. Anyone can order up to three years at a time.



## Each One in Charge



Our Communities certainly have a role to play in the future. In talking about our Communities and what will happen, I urge that we not think of ourselves as a group but as a set of individuals who can think for ourselves as individuals. I propose that each one of us think of himself or herself as *the* seed that is going to grow into the plant that will seed the rest of the world.

There's a little weakness in thinking of ourselves as a "group." We have certain strengths as a group. We have certain advantages. We will explore in our discussions how to use our rela-

tionships in the RC Communities to the best advantage. But there tends to be a hangover from the oppressive use of groups in the oppressive society that can lead to a kind of helpless huddling if we think "group."

If we start thinking, "We are going to do this," the next step is often to think, "I will do this, if you will do this first," or "She didn't do that; I don't see why she should expect me to do it." And other various disheartening notions tend to creep in from the patterns. So I would urge you to think of yourself as "I" rather than part of a "we."

This flies in the face of\* many progressives' notions, because progressives and even revolutionaries have in the past tried to gain enough confidence for themselves by thinking, "We, we, we, we, we." Otherwise it seemed too frightening.

This will possibly feel like a frightening idea, but I would like to place each one of you in full individual charge of this universe of ours (and I give you power to do this to other people, to pass it on).

Harvey Jackins

From *The Longer View*, pages 237 to 238

\* "Flies in the face of" means goes against.

## The 2016-2017 Pre-World and World Conferences

### AFRICA—November 18-21, 2016

Lagos, Lagos State, Nigeria  
Organizer: Chioma Okonkwo  
+234-8023-108-536, chioks4@yahoo.com

### SOUTH ASIA—November 24-27, 2016

Pune, Maharashtra, India  
Organizer: Niti Dandekar  
+91-20-24352771, dandekarniti@gmail.com

### WEST COAST NORTH AMERICA

January 13-16, 2017  
Los Angeles, California, USA  
Organizer: Mary Ruth Gross  
+1-510-243-5934, maryruthgross@gmail.com

### AUSTRALIA/NEW ZEALAND—February 17-20, 2017

Sydney, New South Wales, Australia  
Organizer: Lyndall Katz  
+61-4-1053-1243, lyndallk@gmail.com

### EAST ASIA—February 23-26, 2017

Beijing, China  
Organizer: Ma Lihong  
+86-13552670282, rcmalihong@163.com

### LATIN AMERICA—March 23-26, 2017

Near Santiago, Chile  
Organizer: Carmen Rodriguez Sanchez  
+56-2-2232964,  
carmenrodriguezsanchez@gmail.com

### CENTRAL/SOUTHERN NORTH AMERICA

April 27-30, 2017  
Near St. Louis, Missouri, USA  
Organizer: Alysia Tate  
+1-773-680-9767, alytate@gmail.com

### EASTERN EUROPE AND ISRAEL—May 19-22, 2017

Warsaw, Poland  
Organizer: Jacek Strzemieczny  
+48-601-21-80-32, jacek.strzemieczny@ceo.org.pl

### WESTERN EUROPE—May 25-28, 2017

Near Malmö, Sweden  
Organizer: Fredrik Eklof  
+46-70-885-9171, parsamtal@fredrikeklof.se

### EAST COAST NORTH AMERICA—June 22-25, 2017

Near Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania, USA  
Organizer: Beth Edmonds  
+1-207-865-3869, bethedmonds@gmail.com

### WORLD CONFERENCE—August 8-13, 2017

Storrs, Connecticut, USA  
Organizer: Stacey Leeds  
+1-860-974-1043, leedspechie@charter.net



## Ending Racism, and Divisions among Native People

Last weekend we held our bi-annual Regional Ending Racism Workshops. Jan Yoshiwara<sup>1</sup> led the Liberation for People of the Global Majority Workshop (ten Co-Counselors attended), and Albert Fields<sup>2</sup> led the White People Ending Racism Workshop (of twenty-five Co-Counselors). Both were at the same camp.

This is the third time we have held these workshops. The first two times, I attended the People of the Global Majority Workshop. This time I thought about it differently. Encouraged by things Marcie Rendon<sup>3</sup> and Barbara Boring<sup>4</sup> have said, I looked at how I had been targeted by racism to some extent but how for generations genocide had been the primary oppression aimed at my family. I also wanted to work on how racism had affected me as a person who was raised believing I was white, and I wanted the other Natives raised white to have the same opportunity. And I thought that the people of the global majority needed space to work without the restimulation of white patterns that take up a lot of “airtime”<sup>5</sup>—patterns we Native-raised-white people in our Region tend to have. Finally, I wanted all of us Indigenous Co-Counselors to meet together for a good chunk of time to contradict our assimilation into various racial identities.

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<sup>1</sup> Jan Yoshiwara is the International Liberation Reference Person for People of Japanese Heritage and the Area Reference Person for the Olympia, Washington, USA, RC Community.

<sup>2</sup> Albert Fields is the Area Reference Person for the Bellingham, Washington, USA, RC Community.

<sup>3</sup> Marcie Rendon is the International Liberation Reference Person for Native Americans.

<sup>4</sup> Barbara Boring is an RC leader in Seattle, Washington, USA, who leads workshops for Native people raised white.

<sup>5</sup> “Airtime” means people’s attention.

I wrote the following letter to clarify my thinking, to share it with the other Native-raised-white RCers, and to get feedback from Barbara Boring, Alison Ehara-Brown,<sup>6</sup> and the three Natives raised Native who were coming to the workshops. Then Jan and Albert had the organizer send it out to all the people who were coming.

I think the experiment I suggested went well. It was specific to our Region—I knew all of us, our patterns and our clarity, and the range of “coming home work” (from lots to almost none) that both the Natives raised white and the Natives raised in other identities had done. I don’t think it would apply wholesale to other Regions or Areas.

All of us Indigenous people did meet together during the topic-group time on Saturday. Four of us were from the white workshop; and seven were from the people-of-the-global-majority workshop, three of whom identified as Native, two as primarily Asian or Pacific Islander, and two as African heritage. I said a few things about genocide, assimilation, and discharge, and we each had a four-minute turn. There was much laughter and many tears. We were noisy at times and quiet at times. All my fears that I would be wasting people’s time and would be miserably inarticulate were not realized.

I learned that Native people working separately in the two workshops, acknowledging the different effects that racism has had

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<sup>6</sup> Alison Ehara-Brown is an RC leader in Richmond, California, USA, and the editor of *Heritage*, the RC journal about Native liberation.

on us, was important. But I also learned that being together was important, too. If we don’t come together, we allow the genocide of assimilation, blood quantum, removal, and so on, to weaken and eventually end our existence as Native people.

It was important that an experienced leader, with strong relationships with the Natives raised Native, led the combined Native group. As the leadership of the Natives raised Native develops, it will be good for one of them to lead the group.

Here’s my letter:

Racism is a pervasive oppression that harms absolutely everyone. It underpins injustice and the destruction of the environment. Our ever-more-rapidly-collapsing class societies use it to perpetuate themselves. I have been pondering how we can accelerate the ending of racism in our Region. The upcoming Regional Ending Racism Workshops are an opportunity to do this.

We were all innocent children who were hurt by racism. Children of the global majority were directly targeted by racism and saw it damage the people all around them. White children were made clueless and ignorant about racism and turned into perpetrators of it. We all need spaces where we can discharge our end of the distresses while not causing hurt and confusion to people who got the other end.

People of the global majority and Indigenous people targeted by racism need space away from white people to do this work. Discharging oppressor material<sup>7</sup> (for example, toward other

*continued . . .*

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<sup>7</sup> “Material” means distress.

... continued

groups of the global majority) and hurts from white racism is easier when white allies are not in the room. Yes, we will want to meet together at some point—to learn from one another and do the work together—but for now we want to create the space for people of the global majority to discharge fully without the distraction of white people being present.

White people are, of course, completely good—that is not the issue. This issue is that people targeted by racism need the opportunity to work on racism without having to be careful around or “take care of” white people.

White people are devastated by being perpetrators of racism. Thus discharging their racist patterns goes better when it includes a big dose of discharging on being completely good. They need a place to work openly on being good without restimulating people targeted by racism. And they need to be able to work full-out on how they have been complicit in racism without reinforcing the racism that their beloved Co-Counselors of the global majority have to listen to, witness, and handle every day.

Some of us are Indigenous but grew up assuming, and/or with others assuming, that we were white. We could “pass” for white, and our families assimilated as a way to survive.

We can and often do play an important bridging role—of seeing things from many perspectives and seeing the humanness in people of all races. However, assimilation and “passing” are also a double-edged sword: they act as tools of genocide and at the same time manipulate us into the oppressor role.

For us, and for our Indigenous brothers and sisters who were targeted by racism, genocide is the key oppression. We need the space to work on genocide and internalized genocide con-

sistently and persistently. But we also need to work on racism. This is key to liberating ourselves, all Native people, and all of humanity.

People will be attending the 2016 Ending Racism Workshops from Communities all across our Region. We have built considerable safety over many years, and now we will focus on getting bigger chances to discharge and clean up the distresses from racism. Because of the nature of the distresses, we will need to work in two groups—people of the global majority, led by Jan Yoshiwara; and white allies, led by Albert Fields.

Catholics, Jews, young adults, people with disabilities, LGBTQ<sup>8</sup> folks, and so on, who are targeted by racism will be in the people-of-the-global-majority group. White members of these groups will meet in the white allies group.

Indigenous people who have been targeted by racism will meet in the people-of-the-global-majority group. Indigenous people who were raised white, or assumed to be white in the wide world, and were not targeted by racism will meet in the white allies group. The Natives targeted by racism and the Natives raised white will meet together for part of the workshop.

*Will being in a white workshop make it difficult for Natives raised white to discharge on racism?* Perhaps, so they will meet in a support group together.

Non-Native white people will likely feel pulled to bring up material about Natives when they are around the Natives raised white. They will instead need to work with each other on these distresses and “thoughts” about Native people.

We Natives raised white will need to commit to working on racism, and as-

sisting our white brothers and sisters to do the same, rather than using the workshop primarily for working on genocide.

*Will having Natives raised white in the white workshop make it more difficult for the non-Native white people to discharge on racism?* Perhaps, but there will be ample opportunities, in support groups and sessions, for the non-Native white people to work with other people who do not have Native identity. And I believe we Natives raised white will have good attention for people working on racism that targets people of the global majority.

*Why do I think that Natives targeted by racism and Natives raised white need to meet together as a group for part of the workshop, separate from the non-Native Co-Counselors?* A specific oppression related to genocide can confuse everyone unless all the Native people meet together at least one time. One of the elements of genocide is to see Native people only through the lens of race, and we do not want to perpetuate that. It buys into<sup>9</sup> a pervasive confusion caused by assimilation and annihilation. “Divide and conquer” has been a tool for eliminating tribal communities, and it persists today.

Being Native is not a racial identity. As Marcie Rendon, the International Liberation Reference Person for Native Americans, has said, “All of our children are our children,” and this includes our blonde, blue-eyed children. If they are our children, we claim them fully. They are Native, no matter how they look.

However, for hundreds of years it has been federal policy in the United States to see<sup>10</sup> that fewer and fewer Natives exist. Methods employed have included war, disease, removal from homelands to reservations, systems of

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<sup>8</sup> Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer

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<sup>9</sup> “Buys into” means accepts and cooperates with.

<sup>10</sup> “See” means make certain.

education designed to “save the man but kill the Indian,” shaming children for being Native, and creating “rolls” (as in “roll call”) of who is a tribal member and thus is eligible for treaty rights.

Treaty rights were made to be “inherited” in a way that was understood by Europeans. To have treaty rights, someone had to be a direct descendant by blood quantum (a racial construct). I’m not sure what the mechanism was (executive order, legislation by Congress), but the Feds<sup>11</sup> racialized who was Indian and who was not. Then they turned the blood-quantum tallying over to the tribes, who had to decide on that basis who was eligible for tribal enrollment. No longer would the Indigenous value—each tribal member’s child is a child of the tribe—bring children into the center of the Nation.<sup>12</sup> Yes, the tribes could decide who was a tribal member, but it had to be based on the racialized Euro-concept of blood quantum. This became another way to divide Native people from one another and to “get rid of” Indians.

Re-evaluation Counseling policy has been that all people with any Native “blood” are Native. An outline on page 59 of *Heritage*<sup>13</sup> No. 4 describes the work of “coming home” to our Native selves. We get to discharge, re-evaluate, and decide who we are, claim our unique identity, and toss out any stereotyped or other determination of who we are. A significant and necessary piece of Native liberation is that no one outside of ourselves gets to say who we are.

Native liberation is also much bigger than identity. Identities are a construct and a tool of oppressive societies. We have a draft Native Liberation Policy, printed in *Heritage* No. 4, that pro-

vides an excellent and much bigger picture of what the liberation of Native people entails.

Through no fault of our own, we Natives raised white (like all white people) have been manipulated into the oppressor role with regard to racism. I want us to use this workshop for freeing ourselves from that. It will require that we not attend the people-of-the-global-majority workshop, because to work openly on our racism there would be to expect the people targeted by racism to handle our distresses rather than focusing on their own work.

We do not become non-Native by working on our white oppressor material. We do not become non-white by claiming our Native-ness. And we are all at different places as we do the work of “coming home” to our Native roots.

All the Indigenous Co-Counselors, from both workshops, will meet together on Saturday afternoon or evening. This will be an opportunity for us to discharge on assimilation—as all of

us will be pulled toward assimilating in order to fit in to either workshop.

*Does all this mean that at other workshops we Natives raised white will only meet with white people and not with Native people?* Not at all. This workshop is about working on racism; other topics will require other thinking. Working on “coming home” is important to us, and we will continue to think freshly about what makes sense for our own re-emergence and for the liberation of each of our constituencies.

I’m so pleased that we are persisting in the elimination of racist distresses in our Region. The work being done on this, by people of the global majority as well as white allies, is vitally important. These workshops are meant to support that work and move it forward.

*Shelley Macy  
Regional Reference Person for  
Idaho, Montana, and Washington  
(outside of Clark, King, Pierce,  
and Snohomish Counties), USA  
Bellingham, Washington, USA*



GREAT WALL OF CHINA • DIANE SHISK

<sup>11</sup> “The Feds” means the federal officials.

<sup>12</sup> The Nation means the tribal nation or group.

<sup>13</sup> *Heritage* is the RC journal about Native liberation.

## A Class Series on “Mental Health” Liberation

I just finished teaching, with Marsha Hunter,<sup>1</sup> a class series on “mental health” liberation for the white people’s ongoing class in our Area. It was a thrilling project, and the topic was a great one on which to try out teaching (I am the class assistant).

Discharging on “mental health” liberation has been key for my re-emergence. I identify as a “mental health” system survivor, as several of my family members have been heavily targeted by the “mental health” system.

“Mental health” oppression has been described as the “glue” that holds other oppressions in place. It follows that reclaiming our minds from this oppression is a great way to move against all oppressions, including racism.

We taught classes on basic “mental health” liberation theory, addictions, RC policy in general, and the RC policy on psychiatric drugs. We used the *Guidelines for the Re-evaluation Counseling Communities*,<sup>2</sup> articles from *Recovery and Re-emergence*<sup>3</sup> Numbers 5 and 6, and what I’d learned at a Sunrise Center<sup>4</sup> workshop led by Janet Foner.<sup>5</sup> The following is some of what we communicated:

### “Mental Health” Liberation

In the first class we talked about “mental health” liberation. Our minds are good. We can discharge everything (unless certain parts of our brain have been physically damaged). There is no such thing as “mental illness.”

“Mental health” oppression squeezes us into the limited ways of being that are offered by the oppressive society, into not showing ourselves and risking being targeted if we do. “Mental health” liberation contradicts this. Our goal is to transform society, so that it works for everyone.

We discharged about our own relationship to “mental health” oppression and read and discharged about Janet Foner’s five-point program for keeping one’s attention in the present.<sup>6</sup>

### Addictions

Then we did a class on addictions. Most of us struggle with one or more addictions. This is not our fault. Our struggles are not personal or individual; they are the result of systematic oppression. The society offers us drugs and distractions (*Facebook*, television, and so on) rather than discharge and re-evaluation. We get to discharge the early hurts that pull us to act on addictions.

### RC Policies

After these classes on “mental health” liberation and addictions, we did a class on what policy means in RC. Our RC policies reflect the best collective thinking of Co-Counselors to date. Each one is a draft that we expect to refine as we continue discharging and re-evaluating, and everyone’s thinking is needed in this.

People did mini-sessions on whatever gets in their way of knowing that their thinking is needed in the RC Communities. We held out that without early hurts in our way, each of us would enjoy the invigorating process of using discharge to bring our thinking closer and closer to benign reality and engaging fully with other minds as we do so.

We emphasized the power of our minds, the value of reclaiming them fully, and the lifelong project of distinguishing our distress from our thinking. For me this contradicted early hurts that pull me to adopt a victim attitude toward the value of my thinking. For a week after this class, I was better able to notice my mind, put my attention on my thinking, and enjoy the process of thinking.

### The RC Policy on Psychiatric Drugs

We spent two classes discharging on the RC policy on psychiatric drugs. We wanted people to look directly at whatever feelings came up about the policy, whether they were “good” or “bad” feelings. We read the policy out loud together several times. Then I counseled each person in front of the group for five minutes, as most of them hadn’t yet discharged systematically on “men-

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<sup>1</sup> Marsha Hunter is the Area Reference Person for Somerville, Massachusetts, USA.

<sup>2</sup> The policies for the RC Communities

<sup>3</sup> The RC journal about “mental health” liberation

<sup>4</sup> The Sunrise Center will be a residential drug-free recovery center based on Re-evaluation Counseling theory and practice. It will assist people to free themselves from psychiatric drugs and to teach others to do the same. Through the intensive use of RC, residents will get help with the symptoms of withdrawal as well as the emotional feelings that resurface as the drugs leave their system. They will be active partners in this endeavor, in collaboration with the staff. The goal will be for residents to get off the drugs safely and return home in charge of their emotions, able to use the tools of RC, and with a support system waiting for them.

<sup>5</sup> Janet Foner is the International Liberation Reference Person for “Mental Health” Liberation.

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<sup>6</sup> See *Recovery and Re-emergence* No. 5, page 36.

tal health” liberation. We also did lots of mini-sessions and had long discharge turns in groups.

**“Mental Health” Stories**

In our final class we told and discharged on our “mental health” stories. Someone who has been successfully in getting off psychiatric drugs told her story, including how she has built a team of people and trained them to think about her “mental health” liberation, which includes counseling her on early terror. I am a member of her team. She said she felt safer telling her story after everyone had discharged in groups on their own “mental health” stories.

**Conclusion**

This series of classes allowed me to give our class members important sessions. Several of them had significant re-evaluations. I recovered a clearer view of my own intelligence and moved through a lot of old fear by being visible on a liberation topic I care deeply about. I built resource around myself as a “mental health” system survivor. And not only was it useful for me, it was also so much fun!

*Sarah Harre*  
Somerville, Massachusetts, USA

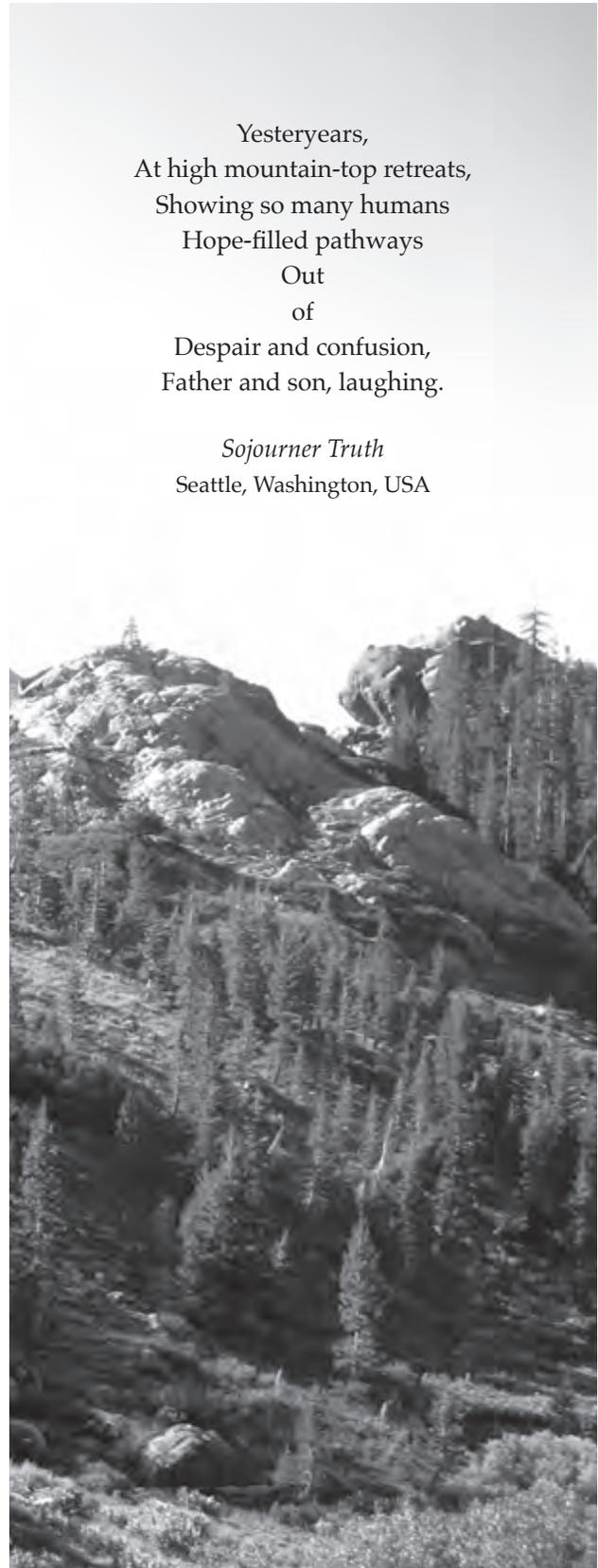
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ANSEL ADAMS WILDERNESS, CALIFORNIA, USA • LISA VOSS

Yesteryears,  
At high mountain-top retreats,  
Showing so many humans  
Hope-filled pathways  
Out  
of  
Despair and confusion,  
Father and son, laughing.

*Sojourner Truth*  
Seattle, Washington, USA

## No Limits Resources

### A New DVD: **No Limits for Women—Beijing Plus 20**

Excerpts from seven No Limits for Women Beijing Plus 20 workshops<sup>1</sup> are now on DVD—an excellent resource for classes, support groups, and workshops:

- Women and Men in Partnership to End Sexism and Male Domination—led by Diane Balser and Rudy Nickens<sup>2</sup>
  - Women Ending Racism—led by Diane Balser and Barbara Love<sup>3</sup>
- Young Women Ending Sexism with Young Men as Allies—led by Emily Bloch<sup>4</sup>
- Women Ending Sexual Violence toward Women with Men as Allies—two workshops, one led by Diane Balser and the other by Azi Khalili<sup>5</sup>
  - Men Ending Sexism and Male Domination—led by Rudy Nickens
    - Women and Leadership—led by Azi Khalili

Each workshop includes RC theory on the topic and a panel of Co-Counselors sharing their experiences and how they've used RC with regard to the topic.

A 2-DVD set (2 hours and 37 minutes)

\$25.00, plus postage and handling

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<sup>1</sup> In March 2015, No Limits for Women, a project of the RC Community, led several workshops at the non-governmental-organization Women's Forum held in conjunction with the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women Beijing Plus 20, in New York, New York, USA.

<sup>2</sup> Diane Balser is the International Liberation Reference Person for Women. Rudy Nickens is the Regional Reference Person for Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, and Nebraska, USA.

<sup>3</sup> Barbara Love is the International Liberation Reference Person for African-Heritage People.

<sup>4</sup> Emily Bloch is the International Liberation Reference Person for Young Adults.

<sup>5</sup> Azi Khalili is the International Liberation Reference Person for South, Central, and West Asian-Heritage People.

### ***NO LIMITS: The Liberation of Women***

(a pamphlet)

In March 2015, No Limits for Women, a project of the Re-evaluation Counseling Communities, sent a delegation to the non-governmental-organization Women's Forum held in conjunction with the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women Beijing Plus 20, in New York, New York, USA.

This twenty-page pamphlet was created to help the delegation inform other delegates about the work of No Limits.

We can continue to make good use of it—in communicating ever more widely what we've learned in RC about women's liberation.

\$3.00, plus postage and handling

Ordering information on page 110

## Challenging Anti-Black Racism

Here in my city, Chicago (Illinois, USA), protesters, large numbers of them Black people, are marching and demonstrating every day against racism in our criminal justice system. They are demanding that our (very openly Jewish) mayor give up his job. They are demanding that our (Latina) county prosecutor give up her job. The mayor was already forced to fire the (white Gentile working-class) police chief. Many people are working in many ways—in government, in community organizations, as journalists—to make big and lasting changes here. They have many proposals and ideas for transforming many aspects of how our city works. This week the federal government began investigating the historic patterns of discrimination of our police force.

The most recent reason for all this was the release of a video of a young Black man, Laquan McDonald, being shot sixteen times as he walked away from a white police officer. But that was just one of many, many acts of violence here against Black people that have been happening for many years. The Chicago Police Department and the political system in Chicago have had a long history of repression and racism.

Of Chicago's approximately three million people, about thirty-five percent are Black. Between 2010 and 2014, police shot and killed about seventy people here, and about seventy-five percent of them were Black. Earlier this year, our city agreed to pay five million dollars in reparations to dozens of Black men (and their families) who were tortured by police over a period of decades,.

We have had just one Black person elected mayor here—Harold Washington, who was extremely popular but who died suddenly in 1987 while he was in office. It took a huge movement of Black people to get him elected, so his death was a huge loss for our city that we have never gotten to grieve. It has left many of us feeling hopeless and defeated.

Now there is a new generation of Black youth who weren't even alive when Harold Washington was elected. And they are ready to transform every system in our entire city. They do not want reform. They want real change, and they are willing to work hard for it. I have lived here for twenty-five years, and I have never before seen this level of activism.

As for the attacks on our political leaders, I hate scapegoating. I know it is wrong and that it goes against RC theory. I know we cannot see individuals as the reason for the problems. But I cannot excuse the anti-Black racism that these leaders and others have fostered under their watch. It has been open and vicious and outrageous. (Before becoming mayor, our mayor worked for President Obama, the nation's first Black president. This is all so complicated in so many ways.)

*continued . . .*



BARAFUNDLE, WEST WALES, WALES • ELENA MOSES

## WIDE WORLD CHANGING

... continued

It has been both exhausting and amazing for me to be working on things from both inside and outside the system. There will be a lot of work to do for a long time, and I love it. It is exciting to see many, many people coming together to demand change. There are so many opportunities here, now that the entire country, and world, is noticing the abuse and racism that our system has perpetuated.

Here are some of the questions I am wrestling with:

How do we take a stand against hating or scapegoating anyone, even if his or her policies are bad and full of racism against Black people? How can people be removed from certain positions and supported to play other roles, without being hated? Can we find other useful roles for them to play as we transform society?

How can we as Black people begin to look at the effects of anti-Jewish oppression on our own minds and our ability to build lasting movements for change?

How can we build a movement of Gentiles and Jews standing together against the intersection of racism and anti-Jewish oppression? Can “progressive” white Jews or Gentiles help other Jews and Gentiles think better about racism rather than turning away from them? How do we get more white Gentiles to stand with Jews even when things are messy and difficult? How do we help more Jews support Black people to play the most visible, vocal roles, even if that means challenging their own internalized oppression and the white privilege of white Gentiles?

How can we as Black people use this moment to face some of the issues (ageism, sexism, homophobia, classism, and so on) that have divided our community?

How can people with middle-class “comfortable” lives be more fully engaged in all that is happening?

How can other people of the global majority build movements together with Black people and put our issues at the center?

How do we help these mostly young activists make issues related to the planet and climate their own and see them as connected to all the big systems they are working so hard to change? How do we connect the issues in ways that honor the hard work of these young people?

Tim Jackins is right when he reminds us that this is a good time to try things—outside of RC. As Co-Counselors we have a lot to do and a lot of perspective to offer.

Please share how you are working on these issues where you live, including in your RC Communities.

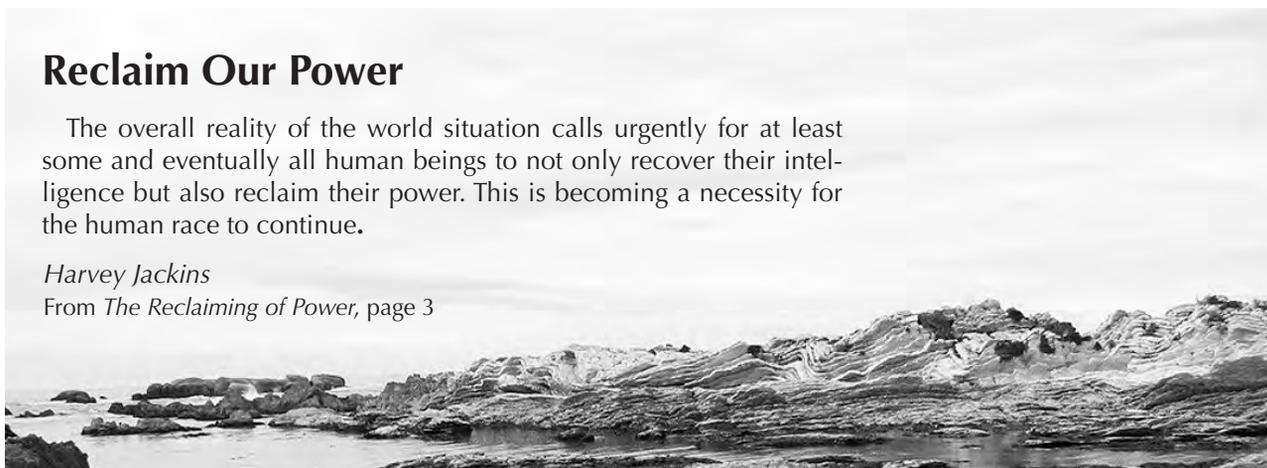
A—  
Chicago, Illinois, USA  
Reprinted from the e-mail discussion  
list for RC Community members

### **Reclaim Our Power**

The overall reality of the world situation calls urgently for at least some and eventually all human beings to not only recover their intelligence but also reclaim their power. This is becoming a necessity for the human race to continue.

*Harvey Jackins*

From *The Reclaiming of Power*, page 3



SYDNEY, NEW SOUTH WALES, AUSTRALIA • DIANE SHISK

## Sessions on Climate Change, and Becoming More Aware

Where I live, in Fryslân, the Netherlands, we had the warmest month of December ever. It was like spring had already started. In January the weather went to the other extreme, and many of us were unable to leave the house for several days. It was too dangerous to travel. Everything was covered with ice. Most young people had lots of fun ice-skating on the streets. Many elders and disabled people struggled with getting food and help. After a day, the highways did get salted, but walkways and small streets stayed dangerously slippery. New layers of ice kept falling out of the sky. There were many damaged cars and many people with broken bones. All schools were closed, and farmers had to throw out milk because no truck was able to get to their farms and drive the milk to the dairy factories. Parts of our economy went down fast. Later the temperature rose again, and some days in January had the highest temperature ever.

How many sessions do we as RCers spend on climate change? Probably not as many as we need to. I have discharged on fear for the future and how deeply sad I feel about all the suffering of humans, other species, and nature on our planet.

It has been key that my counselor has been sad with me and at the same time hopeful about life and what we can make happen if we focus on setting things right in the world. Being able to cry hard in the loving arms of a dear friend has helped me to face where we are and to have more attention in general.

Do you bring climate change to sessions? And if you do, what re-evaluations does it bring?

In what ways is becoming more aware helping you in your care-of-the-environment leadership?

Please write and help us all think more widely about how we can help RCers new to care-of-the-environment work make use of our experience and tools more quickly.

*Wytske Visser*

*International Commonality Reference  
Person for the Care of the Environment*

*Fryslân, the Netherlands*

Reprinted from the RC e-mail discussion  
list for leaders in the care of the environment



SKY YARBROUGH

## Discharging on Climate Change, and Trying Things

At my Community report-back<sup>1</sup> this past weekend, it was clear that most of the people had not worked much on care of the environment. They're taking baby steps—like they need to be really careful. I gave the biggest, most well-rounded picture possible. It's that tricky balance of communicating the urgency of the situation without sounding urgent. I wanted people to leave the event curious, interested, and maybe a little hopeful about care of the environment.

I don't know how long it'll take for the RCers in my Area to become activists. It might be more efficient to go out and teach RC to people who are already activists. One thing is for sure: *they need us*. At a recent local climate event I attended there were nine different speakers and an onslaught of

information, with no time to process, no break, and no chance to talk to the people sitting next to me. I left feeling like I never wanted to go to one of those things again! I made certain that people coming to my Sustaining All Life report-back did not leave feeling like that.

### COUNSELING ON CLIMATE CHANGE

Here are some thoughts in response to Wytke's first question about working on climate change in sessions:<sup>2</sup>

I have helped people reconnect with a sense of "awe and wonder" about the natural environment. When I did this with some people of the global majority during a care-of-the-environment class, I was moved to tears, as I could feel each person's excitement and joy. People told story after story of the in-

credibility around us. We need to get back that sense of connectedness with the rest of the planet.

Something else that's worked is to use music. Recently I discovered two songs by John Denver, "Sunshine on My Shoulders" and "Calypso," that are focused on nature. I listened to them one evening for six hours straight, as I cried and cried. I had things I needed to do, but I just couldn't stop crying, so I kept on listening to them over and over until late into the night. One was like a soothing lullaby, and the other reminded me of the joy and hope I'd experienced on the Sustaining All Life team. When I worked on the songs in sessions and cried some more, I realized that my tears had something to do with the simple "little" things we take for granted, like sunshine on our shoulders, and what it would be like to *not* have them, and with the amazing sea animals and wondering how long they'd last in the increasingly acidic oceans.

As for re-evaluations, when I'm walking to the bus stop early in the morning, I'm more aware and appreciative of the moon in the dark sky, the barren trees, the brisk air against my face, the sun as it rises and lights the sky on fire. I notice the ice crystals on the blades of grass and the puddles of water shimmering in the moonlight. I notice details of life in hibernation, or blossoms coming out in the middle of winter because of the spring-like temperatures. I notice how scared I get when the weather switches from spring-like to a deep freeze in a matter of days, or when people celebrate how warm it is in winter or think that we're "safe" here in Canada. Then I remember that I was oblivious myself just a few years ago.

I've looked at early memories of and feelings about environmental activists ("tree huggers," "hippies"). These mid-

<sup>1</sup> A report-back on the Sustaining All Life project at the United Nations climate talks in Paris, France, in late 2015

<sup>2</sup> See previous article.



BALTIMORE, MARYLAND, USA • AMANDA MARTINEZ

dle-class white environmentalists lived very different lives from my working-class immigrant family, who worked to scrape by.<sup>3</sup> It was confusing and left me feeling like I didn't want to be "one of them."

I've watched video clips, documentaries, and other movies on climate change with a counselor or support group, and we've discharged together before, during, and after. We've talked about what we remember and what's hard to remember. Distress can prevent us from being able to hold some things in our minds.

I'm much more deliberate about discharging fear and terror. Lots of fear has come up since returning home from Paris. I keep saying to my counselor, delightedly, "Did I tell you that I'm scared?" Terrifying images of climate change trigger the fear. I often have a bucket ready for the heaving that inevitably happens. If my counselor can stay relaxed and pleased, I feel safer to feel the fear.

The re-evaluation is that I never realized *how much* fear I had inside! I keep reminding myself it is old and continue putting my mind there. I have noticed that I'm driven to eat constantly to keep from feeling the fear. I suspect that my mother put food in my mouth to keep me from crying.

Discharging with other RCers who are activists for the environment has been inspirational and nourishing. It's great to hear about the exciting work they are doing and also to notice that we're all in this together as we give each other a hand<sup>4</sup> with our material.<sup>5</sup> When an environmental activist relaxedly tells me not to lose hope, or that we have a chance, or that they have confidence in me, I'm liable to believe it more, and it brings lots of discharge.

<sup>3</sup> "Scrape by" means barely survive.

<sup>4</sup> "A hand" means some help.

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



LYNDALL KATZ

It has helped to be connected to and discharge with care-of-the-environment activists in other parts of the world. When I was in Paris, I met a climate activist and urban planner from Nepal. He is grounded and connected and has excellent attention. I learn so much from listening to him and his perspective on life, care of the environment, and activism. It deepens and broadens my outlook and makes the world smaller.

#### BEING MORE AWARE

In response to Wytke's second question, being more aware has allowed me to talk about climate change

to everyone and anyone, to whatever extent they have attention, and to make links between climate change and many other things. My awareness allows me to decide what would bring these individuals out to engage with me. I have to work with where they are, not where my patterns of urgency say they should be. I'm trying to be more aware of the language I use, my tone, and where I have or don't have attention, and to really reach for connection, common ground, and a sense of being in the same boat together.

#### TAKING ACTION

Discharging consistently on climate change has allowed me to think broadly about how to be in the world. I've worked on organizing on three levels—a personal level, a community-building level, and a political level. I was stuck in the personal level for the longest time, but discharging the fear and having strong connections have given me space to think about the other two. (I'm still scared, but that doesn't stop me like before.) Taking action on any of these levels brings up *loads* of stuff to work on. It's that old formula again: decide, act, discharge—in that order.

On a personal level, I look at what I can do with my daily habits—at my consumption of food, energy, and so on, and how to reduce it. Halving it, as suggested by Marcie,<sup>6</sup> has been a good direction. I've decided to become vegetarian. I fast the first day of every month to be in solidarity with others in the world who can't eat. My husband and I are growing microgreens and sprouts inside and planning a huge vegetable garden in the front yard, to replace the lawn. We're replacing the old roof with a "green" roof and figuring out how to use rainwater or "grey water" for watering the flowers. We're thinking about where we shop, what we buy, and how far it travels. We're

*continued . . .*

<sup>6</sup> Marcie Rendon, the International Liberation Reference Person for Native Americans

## WIDE WORLD CHANGING

... continued

meeting with our financial advisor to divest from fossil-fuel industries. I'm financially supporting environmental organizations that are doing good work. Dan Nickerson and Seán Ruth<sup>7</sup> have talked about deciding not to organize one's life around comfort. That's been big!

Community building means building a home base for myself with people nearby who share my interests. I've been reaching out to my neighbours—chatting on the street, getting to know their names and their dogs, deliber-

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<sup>7</sup> Dan Nickerson is the International Liberation Reference Person for Working-Class People. Seán Ruth is the International Liberation Reference Person for Middle-Class People.

ately asking them for help, sharing produce from the garden. I'm starting a women-of-colour RC group to support me in my efforts and give me a place to try things. I've looked into neighbourhood agencies that work on women's issues and food sustainability, to see about volunteering. I'm considering joining a neighbourhood church to meet more people in the area.

Political lobbying is totally new for me and has been great for discharge. I've joined a lobbying group that has excellent structures for educating members and keeping them connected. I bring a friend with me to meet-

ings (that scare the crap out of me<sup>8</sup> because I don't know anything). I'm learning about what's happening on all levels of government. And being on the mailing lists of several environmental organizations keeps me busy with lots of reading!

We get to *try* stuff. And it's not about whether we're good at it or there's a guarantee of success. It's simply to stretch ourselves outside our comfort zone and then take all the feelings that come up to sessions.

*Bo-Young Lim*

Toronto, Ontario, Canada

Reprinted from the RC e-mail discussion list for leaders in the care of the environment

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<sup>8</sup> "Scare the crap out of me" means scare me a lot.

## Introduce People to Taking Turns

Everybody hopes, on any date or in any social meeting, to somehow develop the kind of situation that we RCers can very easily create (I'll call it a "support group situation"), in which people get to take turns being listened to.

If you persist and people get any taste of what happens when they do take turns, after a little bit of experience it will become their program and they will deal with anybody who resists abiding by the terms. They will recognize the tremendous value and relief of this turn taking and will be your thoroughgoing\* supporters, once they have had a chance to experience it. Until they do experience it, how could they know?

*Harvey Jackins*

Excerpted from *The Rest of Our Lives*, page 168 to 169

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\* "Thoroughgoing" means complete and zealous.



ROB VENDERBOS

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*

**O**h Precious Planet,  
Mother Earth  
I cry for you and for us, your children.  
Ravaged lands, ravaged minds,  
Gaping holes where poison leaks,  
Sometimes drop by drop,  
Sometimes gushing out,  
Making people short  
Of breath,  
On memory,  
Of temper,  
On love.

Why cry over spilt milk? They say too often these words.

But I say, maybe tears can wash away  
The veil of denial,  
The grime and the grit of everyday struggles,  
The shard of ice from the snow queen's mirror,  
That makes my heart cold.

So I can see again  
With clear eyes,  
With radiant light,  
Our beautiful mother  
And the beauty of me  
And every other living being  
On this,  
Our precious planet.

*Amy Tai*  
Newton, Massachusetts, USA

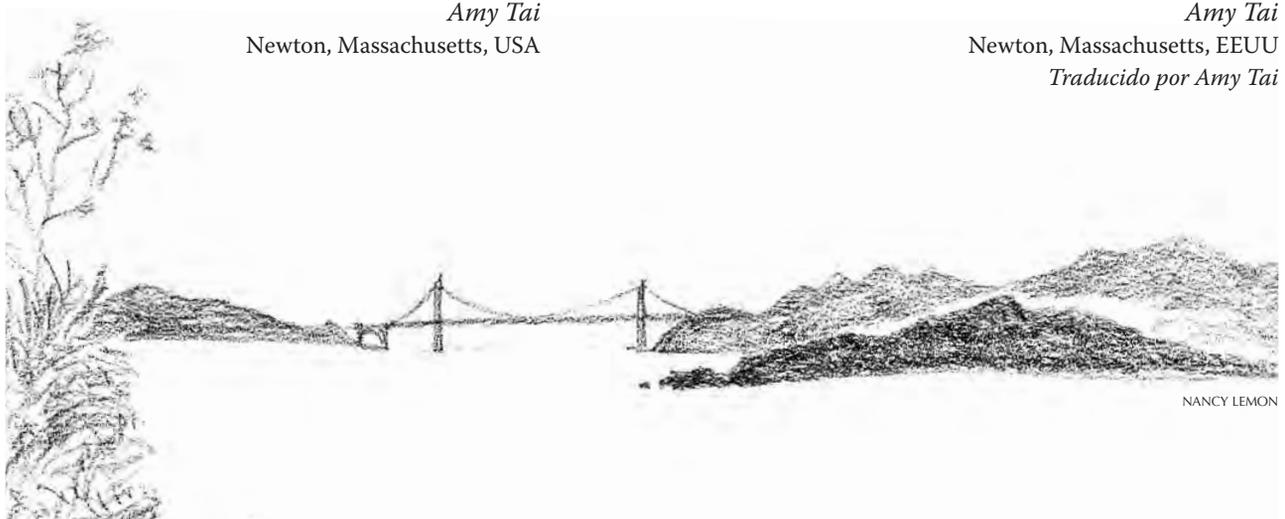
**O** Planeta Precioso,  
Pacha Mama  
Lloro por ti y por todas nosotras, tus hijas.  
Tierras destrozadas, mentes destrozadas,  
Huecos enormes donde sale veneno,  
A veces goteando,  
A veces chorreando,  
Y causa a la gente que les falta  
El aire,  
La memoria,  
La paciencia,  
El amor.

Porque llorar sobre le leche derramada? Dicen estas palabras demasiado a menudo.

Pero yo digo, tal vez las lagrimas pueden quitar  
El velo de la negacion,  
La suciedad y el polvo de las luchas diarias,  
El fragmento del hielo del espejo del la Reina de Nieve,  
Que hace mi Corazon frio.

Para que pueda ver de nuevo  
Con ojos claros,  
Con luz radiante,  
Nuestra madre hermosa  
Y la belleza de mi misma  
Y de cualquier otro ser viviente  
En esta,  
Nuestro planeta precioso.

*Amy Tai*  
Newton, Massachusetts, EEUU  
*Traducido por Amy Tai*



NANCY LEMON

## United to End Racism and Care of the Environment

At the 2013 World Conference of the Re-evaluation Counseling Communities, I gathered a group to discuss the possibility of a United to End Racism project for taking RC, and especially our work on eliminating racism, into the environmental movement. The goal would be to share with environmental organizations what we have learned about freeing people from the distress recordings connected to racism and internalized racism. It was clear that racism was a major barrier to the effectiveness of and unity within the environmental movement. (In consultation with Marcie Rendon, the International Liberation Reference Person for Native Americans, we decided not to address genocide and the oppression of Indigenous people, because not enough work had been done yet on that in most of the Communities.)

We envisioned building ongoing relationships with some environmental groups and working toward leading a monthly class or support group on ending racism, separate from the RC Community, for some of their members (we didn't think people would attend more often than monthly). We also hoped they would go on to use RC in their organizations. We thought we would first need to be involved with the groups for several years, for people to have enough time to be able to see the benefits of RC and eventually want to be in a regular RC class or support group.

We talked about working primarily with predominantly white environmental groups, on the racism within their groups. We also thought of working with an environmental justice group, on internalized oppression and on building relationships with the white groups.



TAMARA DAMON

We approached six different RC Communities in the United States, all of which had a history of strong work on racism, to see if they wanted to be involved in the project. In the last couple of years, RCers in Seattle (Washington), Boston (Massachusetts), and Wilmington (Delaware) have been participating. We initially thought we would stay in monthly contact with each other, learning from each other's efforts. Instead our contact has been more sporadic, usually by phone or e-mail or at occasional gatherings at major workshops. Barbara Love<sup>1</sup> has been consulting with us.

Our Seattle group is comprised of two women of the global majority (Teresa Enrico and Eleta Wright), two white women (Su Theida and I), and two white men (Dave Cook and Lang Marsh). We have met monthly for the last few years. We spent a few months discharging on the commitment required, on our relationships, and on the fact that we were all so busy that to take this on<sup>2</sup> we would need to give up something else. Then we started thinking about how to approach environmental groups, and which ones we would approach. We chose a predominantly white group and began making contact, but then the main person we were connected with in that group got quite ill. We decided

we couldn't continue without that person and pulled back.

During the same time period I had become active in two other predominantly white environmental groups: 350.org and the Sierra Club. I learned that a new organization was forming to address racism in the environmental movement and that it was looking for people of color for its leadership group. Teresa and Eleta joined the organization, and after a few months I did as well. The three of us are now part of the leadership of this organization, called Race and Climate Justice. Over the last year it has held six bimonthly events addressing racism in the environmental movement. United to End Racism has been prominent in two. Most of the people attending have been white.

Our first event was a three-hour one we called Healing from Racism in Order to Build a Strong Climate Justice Movement. Barbara Love happened to be in Seattle at the time, so the leadership team was Barbara, Teresa, and I. We advertised the event as a participatory workshop in which we would do the following:

- Examine the impact of racism (individual and institutional) on the environmental movement and on the global response to climate change
- Share our stories of racism and listen to each other about the impact of racism on ourselves, our families, our groups, and our environment
- Learn about the theory and practice the tools of Re-evaluation Counseling (also called Co-Counseling) as it can be applied to the above, and advance our work to build a strong climate-justice movement

<sup>1</sup> Barbara Love is the International Liberation Reference Person for African-Heritage People.

<sup>2</sup> "Take this on" means undertake this.

We made it clear on the flyer that we “will listen fully to one another in pairs and groups, while encouraging expression of the personal hurts experienced from racism.” We wanted people to know that personal work would be an important part of the evening. About fifty people came, and they really liked what we did.

Our second event was a citywide report-back from climate activists who had been at COP21 in Paris. Teresa and I reported on the Sustaining All Life activities there, and again we were well received.

We had announced a monthly support group to work on ending racism as a follow-up to the first

event, and it has met twice so far. People like having the chance to share personally about racism. One time the group was mixed and the people of the global majority met separately for half the time. The other time it was white people only.

We have also been asked to present about ending racism at an upcoming divestment conference and have accepted. While we don’t think that one-time trainings will make the changes we’d like to have happen, we want to use opportunities to continue to build our reputation and to try things.

Meanwhile, opportunities in the organization we initially planned to work with are opening up again,

and we will meet soon with a group of its global-majority interns.

It is good to have an ongoing focus not only on climate activism, which I am engaged in through 350.org and the Sierra Club, but also on how to bring into it the work on racism, and the oppression of Indigenous people. Being part of the United to End Racism project keeps this second focus alive and in the forefront for me. Racism and the rights of Indigenous people are key issues in the environmental movement now, and there are huge opportunities for us to use what we know.

*Diane Shisk*  
Seattle, Washington, USA

## Price Increase for *Present Time*

Dear RCers,

Our costs for producing RC publications continue to rise. We have always subsidized these publications, but the costs have become more than we can handle without increasing what we ask from you.

Thus, starting now, the price of *Present Time* is \$5 per issue (\$7.50 outside the United States), including postage, and the new subscriptions rates are based on that.

*Present Time* is an important means of sharing RC theory, practice, information, and perspective, and it takes a great deal of thought, and especially work, to produce it. We will continue to subsidize its production, so it is more easily available, but we do need you to help a little more.

Many of us prize *Present Time* highly; it is a great benefit to our lives. I hope you are already one of us, but if not, please consider this an invitation to join us.

The price increase will not affect existing subscriptions—only new ones received from this date forward.

Many thanks.

With love and appreciation,

*Tim Jackins*

### NEW PRICES (a 25% increase):

	<u>USA</u>	<u>Washington State, USA</u>	<u>Outside USA</u>
Single issue	\$5	\$5	\$7.50
One-year subscription	\$20	\$22	\$30
Two-year subscription	\$40	\$44	\$60
Five-year subscription	\$105	\$115	\$155



ADIRONDACK MOUNTAINS, NEW YORK, USA • STEVE BANBURY

## Making a Difference for Displaced People

Insurgency in Nigeria has caused much havoc in the northern part of the country, especially the northeast. Many people have been displaced. Most of them have been put in makeshift<sup>1</sup> camps or are living in the homes of villagers.

The Northern RC group came up with<sup>2</sup> the idea to visit one of the camps a few kilometers away from Abuja. As soon as we got there, we introduced ourselves and started having sessions with the displaced people. It was difficult not to discharge when hearing their stories, but one had to be the listener.

The living conditions were deplorable, but the spirits of the people were inspiring. Regardless of what the world throws at them, they will keep moving.

A little time out of one's day can make such a big difference in someone's life. Their appreciation was more for our coming than for the items we brought. Let's do this again.

*Zainab Musa  
Ajuba, Nigeria*

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<sup>1</sup> "Makeshift" means improvised, temporary.

<sup>2</sup> "Came up with" means thought of.



PUNE, INDIA • TIM JACKINS

All the RCers were wearing an RC printed shirt, which made the start of the day colourful. The chairman of the group welcomed us. Then other people started showing up.<sup>3</sup> We told them the purpose of our visit, explained RC, and then proceeded to have mini-sessions with them. Some of our members interpreted into the language they spoke, which was Hausa.

I had a session with a woman who shared her experience and gave me permission to share it with you. She told me how she and her husband and little boy had to run for their lives, with her being pregnant. Her aunt, who was seven-months pregnant, lost her pregnancy while running. I asked her what was good as of now, and she replied it was having her children alive with her. She also said, "I'm happy you all came to visit us. It means you care. Your presence means more than the gift items we receive."

I felt some kind of attachment to them, since I'm from Borno state, which has the largest number of Boko Haram<sup>4</sup> attacks and displaced persons.

The best part of my day was playing ball with the innocent children. It was refreshing, and we all left happy, with high spirits.

*Hauwa Musa  
Kaduna, Nigeria*

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<sup>3</sup> "Showing up" means coming.

<sup>4</sup> Boko Haram is an insurgent group based in northeastern Nigeria that has killed thousands of people and displaced over two million.

## Sustaining All Life, in Israel

Two Sustaining All Life<sup>1</sup> activities took place in Israel over the past month.

The first was a listening project<sup>2</sup> at the Tel Aviv climate march the weekend before the opening of the climate summit in Paris. For many of us, this was the first time to participate in a listening project.

In the RC *Tikun Olam* (wide world change) class afterward, someone said it had been a breakthrough to be able to speak to strangers in the street and listen to their thinking. Another had noticed that people were happy to be listened to and could use the opportunity to develop their thinking. They often minimized their contributions as environmental activists but when listened to discovered that they were actually doing good things.

The second activity was a Sustaining All Life evening for the Jerusalem Area. Timna Raz led it after returning from Paris, where she'd been an RC volunteer with Sustaining All Life.<sup>3</sup>

The room was decorated with pictures and photographs of nature and



MAURA FALLON

with objects such as flowers, stones, shells, and fossils. Timna encouraged us to get in touch with our connection to the natural environment with the questions “What do you like about nature?” and “What good memories do you have of being in nature?” After hearing everyone’s answers, she explained, lightly and without urgency, what climate change is, what causes it, and what is necessary to turn it around. This was new information for many of the people there. During the presentation she would stop and say, “Shake!” which made people laugh and remember to feel their feelings. She stressed the importance of discharging discouragement and despair and reclaiming our power in order to address the problems.

Then she gave us an inspiring picture of what the RC delegation did in Paris. She talked about the connections people made, the big picture that RC theory offers, and the way RC connects climate change with racism and all the other oppressions. She said this

was a unique perspective among the organizations in Paris.

Timna reminded us that it is worthwhile to work on climate change for ourselves as well as for the environment, because it challenges our chronic patterns of despair and powerlessness and the ways we keep ourselves small. The situation also presents us with a deadline, and that pushes us to work on these patterns. If we are to change things, we can’t wait anymore.

In mini-sessions and demonstrations, we worked on the new RC goal on care of the environment<sup>4</sup> and the direction “It won’t happen because . . .”

I hope this will be the beginning of much more work on the environment in classes and workshops all over the country.

*Naomi Raz*  
Jerusalem, Israel

<sup>4</sup> 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.

<sup>1</sup> Sustaining All Life is a project of the RC Communities in which Co-Counselors bring what we’ve learned in RC to people working, or wanting to work, to stop climate change and the degradation of the environment.

<sup>2</sup> In an RC listening project, several Co-Counselors go to a public place and offer to listen to passersby about some important issue, such as racism or the environment. They may hold signs that invite people to share their thinking about that issue.

<sup>3</sup> In December 2015, a Sustaining All Life delegation went to Paris, France, to share RC tools with the activists gathering there during the United Nations Climate Change Conference.



COLUMBIA RIVER GORGE, OREGON, USA • LANCE CABLK

## Care of the Environment, in Nigeria

A recent RC Care of the Environment Workshop was liberating and helped some of us discharge. It took us to the point where we tuned in to becoming part of the solution.

Our society and community have gradually embraced the habit of drinking water in polyplastic and polyethylene bottles that are not friendly to our environment. We need to reprogram toward better habits, thereby reducing the load on our already fragile environment.

Educating the youths on the need to change their habits will help in the reorientation of their parents and other family members.

Slowly and steadily, we will get it right. We won't relent in our desire to care for, preserve, and restore our environment.

*Nwogwugwu Nwachukwu Enyinnaya Ajama*  
Umuahia, Abia, Nigeria

## The "Non-Client" Viewpoint

Whenever you find yourself in any kind of difficult interaction in your life, it will be useful for you to deliberately adopt the viewpoint of a "non-client," and, possibly, a *counselor*. This will tend to help you think about the situation better, encourage you to take charge, and interrupt any unaware pull on yourself to try to claim someone else's attention and become a "client" in the situation.

*Harvey Jackins*  
From *The List*, page 30

### 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*

## Sustaining All Life, in South London

Earlier this year a small group of friends and I started a community climate and environmental activism group. We decided to screen the film *This Changes Everything*, because it describes how we need system change to address climate change and it looks at how Indigenous rights, capitalism, racism, and other oppressions play important roles. This is in line with our group's goal of engaging people who haven't yet found a way to be involved in climate-change and environmental issues.

My friends agreed that Co-Counsellors from the local RC Area could lead thirty-minute groups after the screening in which people would talk about their responses to the film and their feelings and thoughts about climate change. We would also have a display of Sustaining All Life information<sup>1</sup> and give people the chance to sign up for a future Sustaining All Life workshop.

Just over a hundred people came to the screening. About half of them stayed and took part<sup>2</sup> in the groups. There were eight groups, led by RCers, including one for people under thirty. The Co-Counsellors in the audience had to actively encourage people to take part in the groups.

<sup>1</sup> Sustaining All Life is a project of the RC Communities. In December 2015, a Sustaining All Life delegation went to Paris, France, to share RC tools with the activists gathering there during the United Nations Climate Change Conference. A pamphlet and some handouts were created for that effort.

<sup>2</sup> "Took part" means participated.

Fifteen RCers attended, and they had a big effect on the tone of the event. They were extremely helpful in setting up and clearing up afterward, appreciating people, and making friendly contact. My friends enjoyed the groups and commented afterward on what a helpful and positive group of people the RCers were. Many people left the screening feeling hopeful and wanting to do more, and lots of them said they were interested in a future Sustaining All Life workshop.

Some of my friends were nervous about the groups, especially about whether they might make people feel uncomfortable. Others had heard about similar groups in organisations like Occupy and were enthusiastic. I had to do a lot of negotiating about how the evening would be and had to make some compromises. For example, my friends all wanted to have alcohol there, and I felt I had to agree. As it happened, people drank very little, and my friends told me afterward that maybe I had been right!

My biggest personal achievement was a short speech that I gave before the film. I said that although we feel scared and powerless about climate change, it could be our best opportunity to come together as humans around one issue, maybe our best opportunity to think about how our world should be organised, and that many people around the world were thinking about it and we could join them. I encouraged people to make contacts and connections while they were together for the evening.

*Bess Herbert*  
London, England

*The following thoughts are from RCers who led groups:*

It was great seeing a group of activists slowly realise that this was really a space to share what was happening for them without having to defend themselves. I could see them relax and start to use the time to share feelings. I think they started to feel that their role as activists was important and valued. I learnt that activists should be appreciated and listened to and, most importantly, given space to have and share feelings.

*Sam Herbert*  
Surrey, England

*continued . . .*

## WIDE WORLD CHANGING

... continued

I led a small group of three. Two of us had long experience in RC and were activists. The other was also an activist and had done most of an RC fundamentals class. So it was easy to get on with discharging on the movie, thinking about what we wanted to do next, and understanding the importance of relationships and listening.

*Fio Adamson*  
London, England

It was great being alongside others who were putting attention on so many different aspects of climate change. I was inspired by the film and how it showed the empowerment of groups worldwide that are protesting the mindless destruction of the earth. We looked at our current lives and found creative ways to talk about the subject with our family and friends. We also thought about how to join other organisations that are seeking mindful solutions to the crisis.

*Pam Carnegie*  
London, England

I loved getting to do something publicly as part of Sustaining All Life, and doing it with our local Community. I was moved watching the film and by the large group of people who clapped and cheered at the end. It was a good contradiction to feelings of isolation and despair.

I led a group of young adult students who were not particularly engaged in climate-change activism. Feelings of powerlessness, which could look like cynicism, were on the surface. I loved seeing them feel proud of themselves as they used their time and found that they had thoughts.

I appreciated the power of our simple format of exchanging equal amounts of time. I love how minds can think new thoughts when people are given the space to follow them without interruption. I felt relaxed about not allowing people to interrupt one another and about sticking to the timer. I think that being firm in this way helped create safety.

I left feeling excited and thinking about next steps! Thank you, Bess, for such a genius idea and for organising and leading the event so beautifully.

*Anna Van Heeswijk*  
London, England

It is really important for us as RCers to work on our discouragement. In my group people's default position was discouragement. They would say some hopeful things and then immediately return to their discouraged disposition.

Persistently listening makes a difference. People got to make a little progress on their discouragement, as I just listened and wasn't swayed by it. One guy said at the end that he thought what we were doing was a good idea and that people being listened to makes a big difference.

*Ali Bourne*  
London, England

## A Listening Project at the Helsinki Climate March

Six of us did a listening project<sup>1</sup> at the Helsinki (Finland) climate march. We prepared for it in three meetings—planning the questions, writing the speech we gave after the march, and discharging and supporting each other.

After the march, when people were leaving from the chilly and windy square, one person from our group went to a couple of parliament members, gave them the Sustaining All Life pamphlets,<sup>2</sup> and talked about our perspective on climate change. After that we had a chance to talk briefly with and give the pamphlet to the environmental minister, who was one of the Finnish representatives in the negotiations in Paris. At the end we went to talk with and appreciate the main organizer of the march. It was a good day!

Here are some of our highlights:

- A highlight was giving a speech to more than a thousand activists, parliament members, and others. The contact with the environmental minister was reassuring, and I followed it with an e-mail wishing good luck with the negotiations and appreciating all the initiatives the environmental ministry has taken.

- For me the highlight was doing something so important and meaningful together. We took ourselves seriously and were on each other's and everybody's side. Climate change and the degradation of the environment are a challenge that unites us. The chance to work together is so precious. It is important to be together.

<sup>1</sup> In an RC listening project, several Co-Counselors go to a public place and offer to listen to passersby about some important issue, such as racism or the environment. They may hold signs that invite people to share their thinking about that issue.

<sup>2</sup> Sustaining All Life is a project of the RC Communities. In December 2015, a Sustaining All Life delegation went to Paris, France, to share RC tools with activists gathering there during the United Nations Climate Change Conference. A special pamphlet was created for the purpose.

- The best moment for me was a chat with a young adult who was genuinely interested in our project. She said it sounded exactly like what she had been looking for—something in which everything is put together.

- We listened to people who do and think a lot, and children who were there with their parents. The march as a whole was full of hope and friendship. It contradicted disappointment about the political situation in our country. It was led by a samba-bateria,<sup>3</sup> which reminded us how being together is a celebration.

- My highlight was the sense that our group, and all the people, are doing this together, sending the message to the leaders of countries, "This is what we think." I got a chance to show that I am not indifferent about this; I am taking part<sup>4</sup> and saying what I think. When I was at the march and saw photos from climate marches all over the world, I felt that we are one world; we are the people who can make the change.

At the end of the march, everyone formed a huge heart, standing next to each other. We had different perspectives and agendas, but we all agreed that we are the voice of the earth and we can change the course.

*Eeva Hämäläinen, Elina Malkamäki,  
and Katri Hirvonen-Nurmi*  
Helsinki, Finland  
*Maarit Niemi and Kaisli Syrjänen*  
Mäntsälä, Finland  
Reprinted from the RC e-mail discussion  
list for leaders of wide world change

<sup>3</sup> A samba-bateria is a Brazilian samba band.

<sup>4</sup> "Taking part" means participating.



JERVIS BAY, NEW SOUTH WALES, AUSTRALIA • LYNDA KATZ



CHEN PINGJUN

## Sustaining All Life, in South Australia

We held an RC Community event here in Adelaide, South Australia, to bring together Co-Counsellors, friends, and family to think about the climate talks in Paris and the Sustaining All Life delegation's work there.<sup>1</sup>

A good range of ages—nine to late sixties—was represented. We played, and we listened to people speak about RC theory, the dispossession of Australia's First Nations peoples, the care-of-the-environment goal of the RC Community,<sup>2</sup> and the work of the Sustaining All Life delegation.

The gathering was delightful—human, uplifting, confronting, and fun. A Co-Counsellor said later that it was a picture of all that is good about the

Co-Counselling Community—welcoming, thoughtful, playful, and a place where we can confront together the big issues facing humanity and listen to each other as we do this.

Two weeks later, ten members of our Community marched in the Adelaide March for Climate Action behind a beautiful Sustaining All Life banner. Six RCers then set up a listening post at the rallying point at the end of the march.

We have also done some fundraising to support the Sustaining All Life delegation in Paris—selling posters, asking friends and family to make donations, and making donations ourselves.

Although not everything has gone according to plan, these various actions have pushed us to reach out with our thinking, our theory, and our love, to bring the challenge of climate change to others. We have been pushed to face and counsel on environmental devastation, work together as a team at a public event, and become a resource for others so they can face the issue, feel their feelings, and then be able to think about and respond to it.

*Cathy Picone*

Adelaide, South Australia, Australia  
Reprinted from the e-mail discussion list for RC Community members

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<sup>1</sup> Sustaining All Life is a project of the RC Communities. In December 2015, a Sustaining All Life delegation went to Paris, France, to share RC tools with the activists gathering there during the United Nations Climate Change Conference.

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

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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.

## Relaxed Confidence

There are many unsolved issues in the world that are *urgent*, but the more urgent an issue is, the more it deserves to be addressed (and can be addressed) with completely relaxed confidence.

*Harvey Jackins*

From *The List*, page 170

## Talking to My Five-Year-Old about Syria

My son is five. On the day the Paris attacks happened, he and I attended a vigil in a nearby neighborhood with a few friends. At that time we merely explained to him that some people had been hurt and that we were gathering to remember their lives and remind people that peace is possible between all people.

He knows I am an activist but rarely asks me much about it. I am conservative about bringing him to rallies and protests, but I always emphasize the efforts of people to correct the wrongs we see in the world.

Recently I have been helping to gather baby carriers for refugees who are fleeing Syria. My son asked why there was a box of carriers, and I explained that we were gathering them for people who had been forced to leave their homes, many of them carrying little ones in their arms for days. I showed him on a map where Syria was, and he was satisfied and moved on.

I have heard RC family-work leaders say not to answer questions that children aren't asking and not to act on our own urgency or fear. This has been helpful in the past week as my son has been processing the information he is taking in at his own pace.

Last night as he and I were falling asleep together, he turned to me and said he was very sad about the families who'd had to carry their babies because they had lost their homes. He asked me if wars were real. (He has plenty of exposure to violence in *Star Wars* and video games and from older friends showing him things after school.) He had a lot of questions, and for about forty minutes we talked quietly about the confusion of people who run our society and put wealth and power above human life.

We talked about why governments have wrong policies and how when people are scared, it's hard for them to remember that people don't need violence. He was heartbroken to hear that our own government could hurt people and said that he wanted to tell the government that what it was doing was wrong. (He also said he wanted to feed all the fighting sides kidney beans, so that maybe they'd get distracted and forget to fight—which would probably accomplish more than the current strategies.) We talked about writing letters to the governments saying to stop dropping bombs, and to the refugees saying we love them, and about sending more carriers to hold the children.

Both my partner and I let our son know that he could take his time to understand all this. We also told him that adults struggle to understand and act against war.

He asked at one point if children like him were getting killed. I declined to answer, saying I didn't think talking about that would help him understand. (It was far too emotional for me. I am Irish heritage, and although I have worked on feel-

ings about Irish children having died under colonialism, I still struggle to know that my son is safe and will survive.) I held him in my arms or on my lap through the whole conversation, offering him chances to cry and crying a little myself. He sweated a fair amount and told me that he was angry and scared and upset. I let him know that I was so glad he was with me in the world, reminding me of how wonderful people are and how hopeful life is.

When he was satisfied, I cuddled and kissed him, which made him laugh. He wound up\* rolling around laughing until he settled down to sleep peacefully. I even heard him laughing in his sleep.

This morning he was cheerful and relaxed. He did ask my husband a couple of questions but didn't dwell on the subject. I am pleased with how we navigated the conversation and am sure it will continue in all manner of ways.

A—  
USA

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

\* "Wound up" means ended up.

### One Thing We Can Do

Besides helping people discharge, one of the best things we can do is help people gain a large perspective. We can help them understand things that have been so irrational and restimulating that they couldn't make sense of them.

*Tim Jackins*

From a talk at a leaders' workshop in Warwick, New York, USA, December 2015

## Gathering Friends to Look at Climate Change

My partner and I led a care-of-the-environment gathering for a group of families that all know each other well. Seventeen adults and fourteen young people attended.

We welcomed people in a big room with lots of playthings and good snacks. Then we split into two groups: one with half of the parents, and the other with the young people and the other half of the parents. I began by leading the all-parents' group.

I invited everyone to say where they'd been born and a favorite place outside when they were young and why they'd loved it. I shared how I had loved to spend time outside and had cared intensely about every living thing, no matter how tiny—as I believe all humans truly do. I talked about the confusion and heartbreak we can feel when our dearest adults seem not to care about the living world or when they act powerless despite how much they care.

I talked about how as parents and adults we can be totally absorbed with getting by:\* working, cooking, clean-

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\* "Getting by" means surviving.



ICELAND • ALAN EPSTEIN

ing, and so on. It can feel like there's no room in our minds or schedules to notice that something else might need our attention. I said that not noticing climate change and the need to do something about it is partially caused by under-resourced parenting in a time of collapsing capitalism and partially by early heartbreak and confusion.

I read aloud the first four pages of the introduction to Naomi Klein's book *This Changes Everything: Capitalism vs. the Climate*. Some people began discharging right away. Then I talked about "listening pairs" and we did a four-minute-each-way mini-session.

Following the mini-session, people shared thoughts and discharged. Most said they had tried not to pay attention to their feelings about climate change because those feelings would be too big to handle. A few were excited about the challenge and the potential for human liberation in working together to make the world livable for future generations.

People felt bad about their consumer habits. (Our group of white mostly-middle-class USers had been set up to consume *a lot* and prioritize leading a materially comfortable life.) I tried to articulate that changing our lifestyles is part of the solution but that when it's paid attention to out of proportion, it can serve as the perfect distraction from solving the systemic problems.

One of the loveliest parts of the meeting was hearing the stomping and thumping above us in the room where the little ones and half the parents were playing. When my group traded out and got a chance to play, it was a great balance to the meeting.

Everyone wanted to meet again, so we chose a date in mid-March. Any family that wanted one was given a copy of *This Changes Everything*.

Two of the mothers are so excited they are planning their own events. I love this, because one of my goals was to release initiative.

I've concluded that it's time to make more friends and keep pointing all of our minds toward the reality of climate change and the idea that it might be more interesting, hopeful, and exciting to engage with it than to wallow in old feelings of helplessness and denial.

*Anna Shapley-Quinn*  
Monroe, Maine, USA

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



AUSTRALIAN CRANES • DAMIEN COOK

## Joining Organizations and Supporting Working-Class Leadership

In middle-class workshops, Seán Ruth<sup>1</sup> has been talking about the need to organise effectively over the next twenty years in order to stop the worst effects of climate change and ensure that less oppressive societies emerge after the collapse of capitalism. As human beings we are most powerful when we willingly join together in organisations that enable us to combine (rather than suppress) our thinking and acting.

Re-evaluation Counselling is itself an organisation that makes those of us in it more powerful than we would otherwise be. The aim of RC is to change the world by spreading the use of the discharge process, sharing the theory that backs up our practice, and developing Communities that support us to act in connected, powerful ways. We only occasionally act together outside of RC to directly affect the world—for example, in United to End Racism or Sustaining All Life delegations to social forums or United Nations conferences. Mostly, to use our RC understandings to directly change the world we need to become part of organisations and movements outside of RC. We need to organise within them to make them more rational and effective, or build new ones.

Most of the discussion I've heard about getting RC into the hands of working-class people has focused on individuals and small groups rather than organisations. It has been about how to use RC in everyday situations, how to give people sessions rather than look for them ourselves, how to discharge classism or internalised classism. We are getting better at these things, but I don't think they're going to have enough of an effect on what happens over the next twenty years.

Both Dan Nickerson<sup>2</sup> and Seán talk about recognising the strength and understanding of reality that working-class people often have from their life experience and about welcoming and supporting their leadership. It seems to me that a good way to do this is to join organisations in which many (or at least some) working-class people are, or could be, taking leadership. Unions are some of the obvious ones, but there are also political, cultural, and community organisations.

I think RCers will not have time to build the sort of world-changing organisations and social movements that are needed over the next twenty years. Most of us will need to focus on existing organisations and put RC into the hands of their leaders and activists—including working-class leaders and activists. Wherever we decide to work, we'll need to talk about class oppression and liberation and support working-class leadership.

We'll only be able to do this if we discharge on it in sessions. Probably the first (partly) irrational and oppressive organisation we were a member of was our family, and that must have had a massive effect on how we organise and allow ourselves to be organised.

I'd love to hear responses to this.

*Caroline New*  
Bristol, England

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

<sup>1</sup> Seán Ruth is the International Liberation Reference Person for Middle-Class People.

<sup>2</sup> Dan Nickerson is the International Liberation Reference Person for Working-Class People.

*The following twelve articles are about the Sustaining All Life project at the recent United Nations climate talks in Paris, France.*

## Highlights and Challenges at COP21

During the Sustaining All Life project at COP21,<sup>1</sup> I loved getting to co-lead, with Wytske Visser,<sup>2</sup> such a strong delegation of experienced RC leaders from around the world. We functioned as a team, stayed caring and close, and fulfilled our goals. We eagerly took on<sup>3</sup> every challenge and grew from each one. We could tell<sup>4</sup> we were a valuable part of the event. Our tone uplifted everyone around us.

### MORE HIGHLIGHTS

It was a pleasure to work with Wytske. We both have working-class backgrounds and similar understandings about getting a job done. We like each other a lot and complement each other in good ways as female leaders. Each of us was relaxedly and openly supportive of the other's leadership. That was special.

The team was extremely well prepared. All our events (workshops, forums, classes) had been planned ahead of time and the leadership and organizing teams had already been in touch with each other. We'd found a location for our events that was near to the conference. Our handouts had been written and translated into French. Our *Sustaining All Life* pamphlet had been

translated into ten languages. Our delegates and volunteers together could interpret into eleven languages. Everyone had an assigned job, and teams were organized for everything.

We were diverse and international, and we worked well together. We benefited tremendously from the many years of work we'd all done on oppression and oppressor material.<sup>5</sup> We weren't done with that work, but we were a unified

force, able to take on challenging circumstances and stay united.

Our "forums" gave voice to lots of people who otherwise might not have been heard. They addressed a variety of issues and were well attended and appreciated. People used them effectively to share important stories. Without them, many people's stories would never have been heard by a group.

Barbara Love, Marcie Rendon, Teresa Enrico, Hemaima Wiremu, and Azi Khalili<sup>6</sup>—our global-majority and Indigenous women leaders—were strong, smart, and visible. They led us throughout the week and showed how solid our liberation work is.

### BIG CHALLENGES

Every evening, after a day's activities, we met as a group for several hours. There was always a huge amount to do and never enough time. It was challenging to prioritize. We had to figure out which important things we would not address so that people could get into work groups and then finish on time for sleep. Almost every time I addressed the group, I spoke too fast—trying to slow down and not being able to. Everything was being interpreted, so this was hard on

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



ANNE KOPLINKA-LOEHR

<sup>1</sup> In late 2015, a group of Sustaining All Life delegates and volunteers went to Paris, France, to share RC tools with the activists gathering there during COP21 (the 21<sup>st</sup> session of the Conference of the Parties), a United Nations conference on climate change.

<sup>2</sup> Wytske Visser is the International Commonality Reference Person for the Care of the Environment.

<sup>3</sup> "Took on" means undertook.

<sup>4</sup> "Tell" means see, perceive.

<sup>6</sup> Barbara Love is the International Liberation Reference Person for African-Heritage People. Marcie Rendon is the International Liberation Reference Person for Native Americans. Teresa Enrico is the International Liberation Reference Person for Pacific Islander and Pilipino/a-Heritage People. Hemaima Wiremu is an Indigenous RC leader in Otaki, New Zealand. Azi Khalili is the International Liberation Reference Person for South, Central, and West Asian-Heritage People.

AM

the interpreters and the non-English speakers.

Because we had only a week in Paris to accomplish our many goals, we'd had to communicate a lot of information to the delegates and volunteers ahead of time. English was not the first language of many of the delegates, and it was too much to read, so many people hadn't read everything, creating unevenness in what people understood about what we were doing and how we were doing it.

Once we were in Paris, there wasn't time in our evening meetings to go over everything and explain it clearly. (I thought it was more important to get to sleep early enough.) So we moved forward without everyone understanding everything. We had to assume that someone would explain it or that people would simply follow us, their leaders, without understanding everything. It is a tribute to the strength of our group that we were able to function like this for a week. There was never time to "catch up." And there were upsets, but people

discharged and came back into the action. There was no blaming or attacks on one another at all.

Most of the time I was functioning at the edge of what I was able to do—tracking many things, making decisions about issues that were constantly arising. I think this was true of most of us. We were really stretching ourselves and giving our best to the project. Sometimes in situations like this, people are hard on each other. We weren't. We mostly remembered that each of us was at our limit and doing our best, and that it was enough. We stayed connected and strong. We had some fun.

It was challenging to be functioning at the limits of what I could do, and I loved every minute of it. In a way I felt like I had been born to get to try this.

**GREAT SUPPORT**

A final highlight was the support of the delegation and volunteers. I was a good leader—I steered us to make many good decisions in

a difficult situation, I was caring most of the time and even funny sometimes—but I was not always "together"<sup>7</sup> or nice. Sometimes my distresses (and oppressor material) showed and were hard on people. I usually apologize when my distresses run<sup>8</sup> like that, but I didn't this time. (I did discharge a lot about it.) I felt that people were with me. They knew how hard I was pushing myself and were okay with it.

Each person unwaveringly backed<sup>9</sup> both Wytke and me and this huge project we were doing together. I felt the whole gang at my back the whole time. I've never had an experience like that before. We did something really important together. I am so proud of us.

*Diane Shisk  
Alternate International  
Reference Person  
Seattle, Washington, USA*

<sup>7</sup> "Together" means centered and well organized.

<sup>8</sup> "Run" means are acted out.

<sup>9</sup> "Backed" means supported.

## Jong en Krachtig op de Klimaat Conferentie in Parijs

*Hey, Geweldige jonge mensen! Ik ben een jongere uit Fryslân, Nederland en mijn eerste taal is Nederlands. Ik maakte deel uit van het Behoud van al het leven project in Parijs en dit wil ik er over delen. Ik schreef het in het Nederlands en ik heb een Engelse vertaling toe gevoegd.*

Tijdens de Verenigde Naties conferentie over klimaat verandering in Parijs (Frankrijk) in december 2015, heeft een HC delegatie genaamd Behoud van al het leven gedeeld wat we in HC hebben gedeeld met de activisten die bij de conferentie waren. In de delegatie waren jongeren en jong volwassenen uit Canada, Engeland, Israel, Kenia, Nederland en de Verenigde Staten.

We hielden één keer per dag een bijeenkomst voor jongeren. Deze werden volledig geleid en georganiseerd door de jongeren en jong volwassenen in de delegatie. We nodigden de jongeren en jong volwassenen uit die we hadden ontmoette op de conferentie en een aantal daarvan kwamen ook, maar de meeste deelnemers liepen gewoon langs en werden aangetrokken tot een groep jongeren. Veel van hen liepen maar wat rond op de conferentie en voelden zich behoorlijk verloren. Het was een enorme opluchting voor ze om even niet "volwassen" te doen.

*continued . . .*



...continued



Tijdens deze bijeenkomsten vertelde Mari en/of Liam<sup>1</sup> over jongeren onderdrukking en naar elkaar luisteren en ontladen. We speelden ook een spelletje en iedereen vertelde hoe het was om op de conferentie te zijn als jongere. Ik zag iedereen vrolijker, hoopvoller en veel minder geïsoleerd vertrekken. De mensen die kwamen doen geweldig werk voor het milieu, ondanks alles wat het moeilijk maakt voor hun, zoals racisme, seksisme en natuurlijk jongeren onderdrukking. Het betekende heel veel voor ze om te zien dat ze als jongeren niet alleen stonden.

We hebben veel workshops gegeven, waaronder drie workshops die speciaal gericht waren op jongeren in de klimaat beweging. Tijdens de workshops, jongeren bijeenkomsten en ook op andere momenten viel het mij op dat mensen HC theorie die hun werd aangeboden vaak vrijwel gelijk snapt. Toen ze werden verteld over naar elkaar luisteren, oude pijn en onderdrukking snapte ze dit vaak meteen. Mensen waren vaak heel blij als ze hier over hoorden. Toen ik dit zag was ik in staat om tijdens de conferentie met veel mensen over Hc te praten en zelfs met een paar mensen thuis.

<sup>1</sup> Mari Piggott, de internationale bevrijdings referentiepersoon voor jongeren, woonachtig te Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada, en Liam Gaeary-Baulch, een HC leider in London, Engeland



JOSHUA FEYEN

We hebben tijdens de week een aantal forums met verschillende thema's georganiseerd. Tijdens het forum van hoop vertelde mensen over hun successen en andere hoopvolle dingen. Degene die zich van te voren hadden opgegeven vertelden drie minuten hun verhaal. De sprekers waren vooral mensen van buiten HC, maar ook een paar Behoud van al het leven leden hebben gesproken. Mensen waren erg blij om hun verhaal te kunnen doen en ook waren mensen erg blij om de verhalen te horen. Veel van de verhalen waren prachtig en met geweldig denken erachter. Ik heb zelf op een van de forums gesproken, over hoe ik zag dat in mijn vrijwilligers werk mensen zich meer verbonden voelen met elkaar als ze zich verbonden voelen met de natuur en omgekeerd.

Tijdens de conferentie gingen opeens alle jongeren "dood". We vielen allemaal opeens op de grond en bleven daar voor dertig seconden liggen. Dit was niet iets dat was georganiseerd door HC'ers. Het idee er achter weet ik niet eens meer precies, iets in de trend van de wereld sterft en wij ook. De dag dat het gebeurde fluisterde alle jongeren die elkaar tegen kwamen het toe: om drie uur voor dertig seconden "dood" vallen, vertel het niet aan volwassenen! En het gebeurde, om drie uur precies vielen alle jongeren voor dertig seconden "dood" neer op de grond, op de plek waar ze toen toevallig stonden. Het was leuk om te doen en het liet de ongelofelijke kracht zien van jongeren en hoe geweldig we kunnen samenwerken en onszelf organiseren.

De week was vermoeiend, het was keihard werken, maar het was ook een geweldige kans om relaties op te bouwen met mensen buiten Hc en ook binnen Hc, zowel met volwassen bondgenoten als met andere jongeren. Als ik terug kijk op de week ben ik heel blij met het succes dat we hebben behaald en met de geweldige tijd die we hebben gehad (wat erg belangrijk is omdat we het milieu niet kunnen redden zonder plezier te hebben).

Veel liefs uit Fryslân,

*Rob Venderbos*  
Wergea, Fryslân, Nederland

Herdukt van de HC email discussielijst  
voor leiders van jongeren

English translation of the previous article:

## Young and Powerful at the Paris Climate Conference

*Hey, amazing young people! I'm a young person from Fryslân, the Netherlands, and my first language is Dutch. I was part of the Sustaining All Life Project in Paris, and I want to share this about it. I wrote it in Dutch and then added an English translation.*

During the United Nations conference on climate change, in Paris (France) in December 2015, an RC delegation named Sustaining All Life shared some of what we've learned in RC with the activists who were gathering outside the conference. In the delegation were young people and young adults from Canada, England, Israel, Kenya, the Netherlands, and the United States.

We held young people's caucuses once a day. These were entirely led and organised by the young people and young adults in the delegation. We invited young people and young adults whom we had met at the conference, and some of them showed up,<sup>2</sup> but most of the participants had just been walking by and been attracted by seeing a group of young people. A lot of them had just been walking around and feeling pretty<sup>3</sup> lost. It was a big relief for them to not have to be "adult" for a while.

During our meetings, Mari or Liam<sup>4</sup> talked about young people's oppression and listening to each other and discharge. We also played a game, and every-

<sup>2</sup> "Showed up" means came.

<sup>3</sup> "Pretty" means quite.

<sup>4</sup> Mari Piggott, the International Liberation Reference Person for Young People, who lives in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada; and Liam Geary-Baulch, an RC leader in London, England

body got to tell how it was being at the conference as a young person. I saw everybody leave happier, more hopeful, and much less isolated. The people that came are doing great work for the environment, in spite of everything that makes it hard for them, such as racism, sexism, and of course young people's oppression. It meant so much to them to see that they did not stand alone as young people.

Our delegation gave a lot of workshops, three of them especially directed to young people in the climate movement. I noticed at the workshops, and also at the young people's caucuses and at other moments, that people often understood RC theory immediately when they were told about listening to each other, and old hurts, and oppression. They were mostly very glad to hear about all of this. Seeing that enabled me to talk to many people about RC during the conference and even to some at home.

We organised several forums during the week, with different topics. At the forum on hope, people told about their successes and other hopeful things. Those who had signed up beforehand got to tell their story for three minutes. The speakers were mostly non-RCers, but some of the Sustaining All Life members also spoke. People were happy to be able to tell their stories, and people were also happy to hear them. A lot of the stories were beautiful, with wonderful thinking behind them. I myself spoke at one of the forums about how in my volunteer work I'd seen that people felt more connected

to each other when they felt more connected to nature, and felt more connected with nature when they felt more connected to each other.

At one point during the conference, all the young people "died" at once. We suddenly all fell on the ground and lay there for thirty seconds. It was not something organised by RCers. I don't even remember the entire idea behind it, but it was something like the world is dying and so are we. The day it happened, all the young people who met whispered to each other, "At 3:00 p.m. 'drop dead' for thirty seconds, and don't tell any adults!" And it happened. At exactly 3:00 p.m. all of the young people "dropped dead" at the exact spot where they were standing. It was fun to do, and it showed the incredible strength of young people and our amazing abilities to work together and organise ourselves.

The week was exhausting, it was really hard work, but it was also a great chance to build relationships with people both outside and inside of RC and with adult allies as well as other young people. Looking back, I am happy with the success we accomplished and also with the great time we had (which is very important, as we can't save the environment without fun).

Much love from Fryslân,

*Rob Venderbos*  
Wergea, Fryslân, the Netherlands  
*Translated by Rob Venderbos*  
*and Jan Venderbos*

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





## Modeling and Leading

We RC young people and young adults led many successful workshops and caucuses in Paris. We modeled using RC tools, being playful, and supporting each other in the face of young people's oppression.

In the wide world, it is rare that adults trust young people and follow our thinking as much as Diane Shisk and Wytske Visser<sup>1</sup> did. And their backing<sup>2</sup> was in no way a discouraged sitting back and leaving it up to the "hopeful future generation."

A highlight was assisting Janet Kabue and Jean Charles<sup>3</sup> in a workshop on young people ending racism. They spoke about systemic racism and young people's oppression. A young woman of the global majority started crying when Janet described her experiences of racism. Later the woman commented that the workshop was the first time she had talked about her own experiences of racism.

I loved the youth caucuses! Most days we ended up with twenty or thirty young people and young adults. We gave a brief introduction to Sustaining All Life and

the tools of listening. We talked about young people's oppression, played games, laughed, and did go-arounds and support groups with questions like "What is good and what is hard about being a young person at COP21?" and "What is good and hard about being a young climate activist?" Participants talked about the young people's oppression that had led to young people not having a voice in the climate negotiations and not feeling heard or accepted at COP21. They loved the caucuses (as we did) and often stayed to talk to us at the end. Just before I got on the plane to leave Paris, I got an e-mail from a young person who had attended two of our caucuses. He said that he and others from his group of African American university students were going to hold another caucus without us!

*Mari Piggott*  
International Liberation Reference  
Person for Young People  
Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada  
Reprinted from the RC e-mail discussion  
list for leaders of young people



MADISON, WISCONSIN, USA • MARIAN FREDAL

<sup>1</sup> Diane Shisk (the Alternate International Reference Person for the RC Communities) and Wytske Visser (the International Commonality Reference Person for the Care of the Environment) were the leaders of the Sustaining All Life project in Paris.

<sup>2</sup> "Backing" means support.

<sup>3</sup> Janet Kabue is the Area Reference Person for Nairobi, Kenya. Jean Charles is an RC leader in Milton, Massachusetts, USA.

## One of the Youngest People There

At age fourteen I was one of the youngest people at the entire conference. I only met two other people who were my age. I learned a lot from and especially liked the youth caucuses that RC ran. I loved getting to hear other youths' experiences and perspectives and being able to connect with them. I also got to speak at one of the forums and tell my story of how I got interested in climate change through animal conservation.

The whole trip was a life-changing experience. It gave me hope to meet so many people who cared so much about us young people and the future of our planet. A special thanks to everyone who went and to all the supporters back at home.

UN\* Climate Conference Morocco 2016!

*Adam Crellin-Sazama*  
Boston, Massachusetts, USA  
Reprinted from the RC e-mail discussion list  
for leaders in the care of the environment

\* United Nations

## My Highlight for 2015

In Paris I was the only Sustaining All Life member from Japan. I expected to meet Japanese people from other organizations, but there seemed to be few organizations from Japan. After returning to Japan from Paris, I learned that many Japanese organizations had cancelled their participation because of the November 13 terrorist attacks.

I guess people felt frightened. I was also scared of going to Paris, but I had the support of Sustaining All Life members as well as support groups and sessions in my Community. In this way I was able to discharge before my departure the fear restimulated by the terrorism. If I had not done that, I would have been hesitant to go.

I noticed that the more I discharged, the more my decision to go to Paris strengthened. We understand that terrorism happens because of racism and genocide, and it was important to bring that understanding to Paris. I also realized that I would be working with Sustaining All Life members who would understand and listen to my fears when I became restimulated and would know that after discharge I could think and act intelligently.

Working with this team helped me experience safety and the benign universe—while facing the challenge of my loneliness, shyness, fear, and timidity in speaking in English to people whom I had never met before. I was not alone. I could see other RCers who were also challenging their distresses. We all could see the

goal, which is to end all oppressions. And we cared deeply about the environment.

The following is an experience I had at a listening project\* at Gare du Nord, a big station in Paris:

I was holding a signboard that said, “How do you think the oppressions (sexism, racism, ageism, and so on) affect the climate movement? We want to listen.” A young African-heritage man, a non-native speaker of English, stopped in front of me. He seemed a bit upset. He said, “Racism is the color of skin. (*He pointed to his face.*) Black skin! (*He looked at the white man who was walking by.*) White skin. That is racism. Climate is (*he pointed up at the sky*) the weather. So racism and climate are different. This is my contribution.”

What he said reminded me of when I first heard “the environment and racism.” My mind was completely blank. I could not find a connection between them. For me they were totally different things. Somehow I was very scared. Finally, after having sessions, I realized that the connection was the war and the atomic bombs dropped on Nagasaki and Hiroshima. It was so scary to look at that I could not talk about it at all, but if I wanted to talk about “the environment and racism,” I could not avoid it. I felt that if I spoke out, Japan might be

\* 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 the environment. They may hold signs that invite people to share their thinking about that issue.

bombed again. And I needed to speak out, *in English*, in front of people of the United States.

I had to discharge a lot. I found that if I didn't discharge enough, I would get a bad toothache at night. And I don't even have bad teeth. Eventually I could talk about the connection between the environment and the atomic bomb blasts. And I could talk about the Fukushima nuclear disaster as also being related to the atomic bombs, without blaming anybody.

I told my story at the workshop Reclaiming the World: The Environment and People Raised Poor and Working Class. I talked about my father, who died at age sixty after working in a factory his whole life in bad conditions. I talked about my home, Aomori Prefecture. High- and low-level nuclear wastes are buried all through Rokkasho village. I talked about how hard we all had worked protesting the nuclear facilities—the fishermen and their wives, the farmers, and we activists working together. I talked with tears as I remembered my working-class people. The participants listened to me eagerly.

Going to Paris as a Sustaining All Life delegate is my highlight for 2015, and these memories are my treasure.

Wako Ono  
Regional Reference Person for Japan  
Sapporo-Shi, Hokkaido, Japan  
Reprinted from the RC e-mail  
discussion list for leaders in  
the care of the environment



*One of the handouts from the Sustaining All Life project in Paris:*

## The Work of Sustaining All Life

It is possible to limit the effects of human-caused climate change and restore the environment—and some big changes are needed if this is to happen. These changes will require a massive movement, spanning the globe, of people of every background.

In Sustaining All Life we believe that the barriers to building a sufficiently large and powerful movement include (1) longstanding divisions (usually caused by oppression) between nations and between groups of people within nations, (2) widespread feelings of discouragement and powerlessness among the populations of many countries, (3) denial of or failure to engage with the environmental crisis, and (4) difficulties in effectively addressing the connections between the environmental crisis and the failures of capitalism. Sustaining All Life works to address these issues and others.

### ***The source of the environmental crisis***

We modern humans have lived on the Earth for about 200,000 years. For much of this time we have struggled for survival. Ancient fears for our survival have been passed down to each generation and have resulted in societies based on exploitation, oppression, and division.

These societies demand growth and profit with little regard for people, other life forms, or the Earth. And they have come to rely on scaring us, discouraging us, and hurting us in other ways, to keep us from making meaningful change.

### ***The role of oppression***

Oppression (such as racism, classism, and sexism) is institutionalized in our societies. This makes it much more difficult for us to address and end climate change. All of us, at some point in our lives, are targeted by oppression. We are all harmed by it. Then we are pulled to act out on others the hurts that we have experienced. Much of the emotional damage done to humans is the result of this passing on of hurt. Oppression is neither inherent nor inevitable in human beings. It arises from and operates on the basis of emotional hurt.

### ***The importance of healing personal damage***

The emotional harm done to us in our societies interferes with our ability to think clearly and sets

groups of people against each other. This makes it difficult for us to think about and respond to the environmental crisis. People would not cooperate with a society that exploits people and damages the environment if they had not first been hurt.

We can heal from hurtful experiences if someone listens to us attentively and allows and encourages us to release the grief, fear, and other painful emotions. This happens by means of our natural healing processes—talking, crying, trembling, expressing anger, and laughing. Sustaining All Life uses the tools of Re-evaluation Counseling\* to help people build ongoing mutual support for this personal healing.

Healing from the hurts that drive oppression and other damaging behavior is not quick or easy work. Many of us resist it. We may feel that we have been able to succeed in life only by not showing anyone how much we've been hurt. We may feel ashamed of or embarrassed by our feelings. We may feel it would be unbearable to look at and to feel them again. Perhaps this is because we have had no opportunity to tell our stories or have not been treated well when we have tried to tell them.

We may have survived by numbing ourselves to the damage we carry and by assuming that we will never be free of it. In Sustaining All Life we have learned that it is possible to free ourselves from it.

By releasing distressed feelings in a supportive network, we can stay united, hopeful, thoughtful, joyful, and committed. This will strengthen us in building our movements.

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\* Re-evaluation Counseling (RC) is a well-defined theory and practice that helps people of all ages and backgrounds exchange effective help with each other in order to free themselves from the emotional scars of oppression and other hurts. By taking turns listening to each other and encouraging emotional release, people can heal old wounds and become better able to think, to speak out, and to organize and lead others in building a world in which all life forms are valued and the environment is restored and preserved.

**For more information, see:**  
[www.rc.org/sustainingalllife](http://www.rc.org/sustainingalllife)  
**or write:** Sustaining All Life, 719 Second Ave. North,  
Seattle, WA 98109, USA.  
**Email:** [ircc@rc.org](mailto:ircc@rc.org)  
**Tel:** +1-206-284-0311 | **Fax:** +1-206-284-8429

Un des tracts du projet SAL à Paris:

## Le travail de *Sustaining All Life*

Il est possible de limiter les effets du changement climatique provoqué par l'activité humaine et de restaurer l'équilibre environnemental – mais il faudra des changements majeurs pour y parvenir. Ces changements exigeront un mouvement de masse à l'échelle de la planète, composé de gens de toutes origines.

Au sein de *Sustaining All Life*<sup>1</sup>, nous pensons que les barrières qui empêchent le développement d'un mouvement suffisamment vaste et puissant sont les suivantes : (1) des divisions de longue date (généralement basées sur l'oppression) entre les nations et entre les différents groupes d'une même nation, (2) des sentiments de découragement et d'impuissance très répandus dans de nombreux pays, (3) un déni de la crise environnementale et de la nécessité de s'y impliquer, et (4) la difficulté à traiter efficacement les liens entre la crise environnementale et les défaillances du capitalisme. Le travail de *Sustaining All Life* consiste en particulier à traiter de ces questions.

### **L'origine de la crise environnementale**

L'homme moderne vit sur la Terre depuis environ 200 000 ans. Pendant l'essentiel de ce temps, nous avons dû lutter pour notre survie. Les peurs ancestrales liées à notre survie se sont transmises de génération en génération et ont engendré des sociétés basées sur l'exploitation, l'oppression et la division.

Ces sociétés exigent croissance et profit et n'ont que peu d'égards pour les personnes, les autres formes de vie ou même la Terre. Elles en sont arrivées à employer la peur, à nous décourager et à nous blesser de différentes manières pour nous empêcher de changer radicalement les choses.

### **Le rôle de l'oppression**

L'oppression (par exemple le racisme, le classisme ou le sexisme) est institutionnalisée dans nos sociétés. Elle nous complique énormément la tâche de remédier au changement climatique. Tout le monde, à un moment donné de sa vie, est la cible de l'oppression, et tout le monde en est blessé. Nous sommes ensuite poussés à reproduire sur d'autres les comportements blessants que nous avons subis. La plupart de nos blessures émotionnelles résultent de ce phénomène de reproduction. L'oppression n'est ni inévitable ni inhérente aux êtres humains. Elle résulte des blessures émotionnelles et s'appuie sur elles.

### **Guérir des blessures individuelles est important**

Les blessures émotionnelles qui nous ont été infligées interfèrent avec notre capacité de penser et dressent les uns contre les autres. Elles nous empêchent de réfléchir à la crise environnementale et d'y apporter une solution. Aucun être humain n'accepterait de coopérer avec une société qui exploite les gens et détruit l'environnement s'il n'avait été préalablement blessé.

<sup>1</sup> Préserver la vie sous toutes ses formes

Nous pouvons guérir des expériences blessantes du passé lorsqu'une personne nous écoute avec attention, qu'elle nous invite et nous encourage à évacuer la tristesse, la peur et toutes nos émotions pénibles à travers des processus naturels de guérison – parler, pleurer, trembler, exprimer sa colère, rire. *Sustaining All Life* se base sur les outils de la Réévaluation par la Co-écoute<sup>2</sup> pour aider les gens à établir entre eux un soutien régulier permettant cette guérison personnelle.

Guérir des souffrances qui mènent à l'oppression et nous poussent à des comportements blessants n'est ni rapide ni facile. Cela peut susciter beaucoup de résistance. On peut avoir le sentiment que l'on a réussi dans la vie justement parce que l'on ne montrait à personne à quel point on était blessés. On peut avoir honte ou se sentir gênés de ressentir des émotions. Il peut sembler insupportable de regarder et de ressentir à nouveau ces blessures, peut-être parce que pendant si longtemps on n'a pas eu l'opportunité d'en parler, ou que l'on n'a pas été bien traité quand on a tenté de le faire.

Il se peut qu'on ait survécu en se rendant insensible aux blessures que l'on porte en soi, pensant qu'il était impossible de s'en libérer. Mais au sein de *Sustaining All Life*, nous savons que nous pouvons en guérir.

En nous libérant de nos émotions douloureuses avec l'aide d'un réseau de soutien, nous pouvons renforcer notre unité et garder espoir, disponibilité, joie et engagement. Cela donnera aussi envie aux personnes qui se sont insensibilisées et découragées de se joindre à nous.

<sup>2</sup> La Réévaluation par la Co-écoute consiste en une théorie et une pratique grâce auxquelles des personnes de tous âges et de toutes conditions peuvent apprendre à s'entraider pour se libérer des blessures émotionnelles causées par l'oppression ou par d'autres expériences douloureuses. En s'écoutant à tout de rôle et en s'encourageant à relâcher leurs émotions, elles peuvent ainsi guérir de blessures anciennes et arriver à mieux réfléchir, à faire entendre leur voix, à s'organiser et à entraîner les autres pour créer un monde dans lequel toutes les formes de vie seront respectées et l'environnement sera préservé.

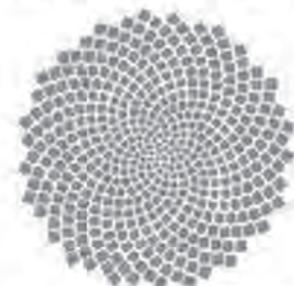
Pour plus d'informations, voir :

[www.rc.org/sustainingalllife](http://www.rc.org/sustainingalllife)

ou écrire à : Sustaining All Life, 719 Second Ave. North,  
Seattle, WA 98109, USA

Courriel : [ircc@rc.org](mailto:ircc@rc.org)

Tél : +1-206-284-0311 | Fax : +1-206-284-8429



**Sustaining All Life**



## They Need Us, and We Need Them

I love talking to people about RC and have confidence in myself when doing it, but I have never done it with a group of people who pushed themselves to be so bold and open with what we know. I am much braver now, with the Sustaining All Life team burned in my mind.

I had the honor of teaching a daily RC fundamentals class with Alima Adams.<sup>1</sup> I love teaching fundamentals, and I loved teaching it at COP21. We were able to spend an hour and a half with a small group of people every day and teach them in depth about the discharge process. One man had been doing climate work for years and had ridden his bike to Paris from Vietnam. He first said he was going to quit doing climate work after the conference, but at the end of our class he changed his mind.

I was also a recruiter for and greeter at two of our three forums. People would wander by and see the energy coming from our area and be interested in what was happening. Many said that what we were doing was different from what any other group in the building was doing.

Many people wanted to tell us all about their organization and their mission. But Diane Shisk reminded us to keep people talking about themselves and personal things. And it was easy to get them talking about themselves, and why they were there and why they cared and how they were feeling.

Many of us had the experience of listening to people for just a few minutes and their crying with us.

People were open because they cared and were on the front lines. For example, we met a group of young people whose island home was going to be underwater in fifteen years.

Reaching activists is important. They are the people who will keep this movement alive and moving with integrity. They need what we know, and we need them.

We were thinking about what people needed from us to feel hopeful again, to open their minds, to listen to other people, and to share where they were coming from personally. We were like a colony of bees. We would get nutrition from each other in the mornings and at night and then be disciplined in our pollination efforts during the day.

What we know as RCers about discharge and distress patterns and racism and more is without a doubt the key piece of information humanity needs in order to turn the climate situation around. We humans are stuck in survival patterns that were passed on to us from ancient ancestors; we can't tell<sup>2</sup> that there are enough resources on this planet for everyone.

I got a picture of the connection, the discipline, the bravery, and the kind of team that will be necessary as we build our "army" for the revolution. And it is clear from being at this event that that is coming soon.

*Jenny Sazama*

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

<sup>1</sup> Alima Adams is an RC leader in Cambridge, Cambridgeshire, England.

<sup>2</sup> "Tell" means see, perceive.



SYDNEY, NEW SOUTH WALES, AUSTRALIA • DIANE SHISK

## I Loved Being Part of the Delegation

Re-evaluation Counseling is a solid organization, with a solid theory and powerful tools that are needed by individuals and organizations working on solutions to global warming.

At COP21, over and over, we heard young people, Indigenous people, people of color, women, activists, and representatives of coalitions tell us that our tools were exactly what they had been looking for. People were attracted to our theory, our attention, our listening skills, our friendly tone, our ability to connect with and welcome them, our inclusive gatherings, our kindness, and our diversity. We are an attractive group, and activists are curious about us.

I loved being part of the Sustaining All Life delegation—following the lead of two working-class women;<sup>1</sup> getting to know other RCers from around the world; discharging fears, isolation, hopelessness, and despair; and going out into the conference with the other delegates as a united, disciplined force. All the work Co-Counselors have done in going public with RC was apparent in Paris. We were less scared; bolder; less confused by racism, sexism, and classism; more confident about our theory. We could function in the midst of chaos (in this case, in a police state, post terrorism) better than ever before.

I had the good fortune of staying close to Diane Shisk and assisting her with whatever she needed. She led us extremely well, through a lot of unknowns and changing rules and conditions. She was firm and correct and stayed on task.

<sup>1</sup> Diane Shisk, the Alternate International Reference Person; and Wytse Visser, the International Commonality Reference Person for the Care of the Environment



PAM ROBY

I also got to connect with individuals from around the world:

- I heard a presentation on the melting of the Greenland ice sheet and how it's causing the oceans to rise and flood cities around the world.

- I listened to women from the Pacific Islands talk about the recent super typhoons and how we must limit global warming to no more than 1.5 degrees Celsius or many islands (including theirs) will go underwater during our lifetimes.

- I listened to many people talk about how rich capitalist nations are outsourcing CO<sub>2</sub> emissions to poor nations. For example, China burns coal to power factories that produce cheap things for U.S. and European consumption.

- I listened to activists from Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Africa talk about how severe droughts are turning their lands into deserts, damaging their countries' agriculture, and causing malnutrition and potential mass starvation. And while we were in Paris, epic amounts of rain in Chennai, India, triggered the region's worst flooding in over a hundred years, drowning the city of 4.8 million. The affected people were not victims of mass shootings or killed by ISIS, so the international news hardly covered it.

- At the airport a group of Syrians told me that water shortages in Syria, Iraq, and Turkey had killed livestock, driven up food prices, and forced 1.5 million rural residents into the outskirts of overpopulated cities in Syria—just as that country was exploding with refugees from the U.S. bombings in Iraq. All this, combined with high unemployment, bad government, and U.S. interventions in West Asia had helped to tip Syria into violence.

Speaking of violence, the night before I left for Paris, I edited a section of an article that Diane and Tim had written on terrorism and COP21, and I added the following paragraph:

"No human is born a terrorist. No group of humans is more prone to terrorism than another. Humans are pushed into acts of terrorism and other violence because of the unbearable conditions they are forced to endure. During this particular period, people of West Asia who have been terrorized for generations by destructive Western military interventions are acting irrationally by committing violent acts of revenge. 'Terrorism' is the desperate acts

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of individuals. 'War' is organized violence, funded by the public and waged by professional militaries. While neither is rational, humane, or defensible, the latter is far more destructive and lethal."

I went to Paris as an RCer and an Iranian Muslim woman. I was happy that the Sustaining All Life team was staying at a hostel in an Arab and African working-class neighborhood. I felt at home. I had decided in advance that I was going to say greetings in Arabic, *As-salamu Alakom*, to every visibly Muslim person I came

across and to make eye contact and smile at every woman in a hijab.<sup>2</sup> I wanted my actions to be a contradiction to the hatred with which the world has been targeting Arabs and Muslims. At night I could hear the police sirens, loud and scary, in the neighborhood where we were staying. During our stay the French police carried out a hundred and twenty raids in eight cities across France. Thousands of Arabs were arrested on suspicion of terrorism.

<sup>2</sup> A hijab is a traditional head covering often worn by Muslim women.

When I came back home, I did report-back presentations on COP21 for immigrants' organizations and at the New York City Mayor's Office. I mostly spoke about RC theory and why it's a necessary ingredient in building mass movements and a more intentional economic system that values sustaining all life, not profit.

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

## Paris Reflections

I had the privilege of going to Paris as part of the Sustaining All Life project.<sup>1</sup> It was a moving, challenging, exciting experience. Big appreciations to all of us for how we stretched on each other's behalf and reached for so many people. We worked hard. We got closer. It was a big contradiction.<sup>2</sup> And many feelings came up for me afterward.

Repeatedly, as I have tried to write about my experience, I've been hit with feelings of having failed. This is even with the clear evidence that as a team we did good, important, effective work. My early material<sup>3</sup> has not let me see that I was an integral part of what we were able to do.

I have had to work on early feelings of failure and insignificance. I have discharged on what I wasn't able to do in my early childhood in the face of oppressive things happening to me and to others around me.

After much discharge and encouragement from others, I want to challenge the failure recordings.<sup>4</sup> I want to share what I think about what we did in Paris and notice what I was a part of.

<sup>1</sup> Sustaining All Life is a project of the RC Communities. In late 2015, a Sustaining All Life delegation went to Paris, France, to share RC tools with the activists gathering there during the United Nations conference on climate change.

<sup>2</sup> Contradiction to distress

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

<sup>4</sup> Distress recordings

### WHAT I LEARNED IN PARIS

One part of our environmental goal<sup>5</sup> is to become fully aware of the current situation in the world. We had the opportunity to do that in Paris. We got to hear directly from people from all over the world about the conditions under which they are living and how climate change is affecting them.

I learned that the situation for many people is worse than what most of us know. Climate change is not in the future; it is happening to millions of people right now. And the frontline communities are poor people and nations that have been targeted for centuries by sexism, racism, colonialism, attempted genocide, and other oppressions. These communities contribute the least to global warming, yet they are bearing the brunt of the impact, and the worst is yet to come. The difference between a global temperature rise of 2.0 degrees

<sup>5</sup> 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.

and 1.5 degrees Celsius is the difference between losing or not losing millions of lives and whole islands and other land masses.

The connection between ending oppression and ending environmental degradation is clear. It is important that this connection be talked about and that people get to heal from how the oppressive society has impacted them. Explicitly talking about racism, genocide, and other oppressions is key for moving the work forward in the environmental movement and key for the world as a whole. In our workshops, other events, and all our contact with people in Paris, we did that, and people were eager to engage with us.

Although the governments reached an agreement at COP21, we cannot expect that the solutions will lie with governments or elected officials. The difference will be made at the grassroots level, with us. We have to keep moving against the oppression and our distresses, and organize other people to do the same. We get to challenge and change the institutional policies that perpetuate oppression and environmental degradation. Governments and corporations, especially in the economic North, must acknowledge what's happening and take responsibility for mitigating the effects of it on frontline communities and nations.

The big presence of Indigenous people at COP21 broadened my understanding of how much is at stake for Indigenous peoples worldwide. Their lands, ways of life, and very existence continue to be threatened, with very little acknowledgement from the oppressor nations that have set that up.

Indigenous groups from every corner of the world have been sustaining themselves and working to protect the environment for centuries. We all have much to learn from how they have lived and what they have done and are doing. They know a lot about building community and staying connected in the face of huge difficulties.

**AN EXCITING AND SCARY TIME**

This is an exciting time to be alive. We are a part of the first few generations to be aware of and more intentionally use the discharge and re-evaluation process to free our intelligence. We understand the difference between distress and the human mind and have a growing understanding of the oppressive society and its massive effect on us and on the physical world. We have a picture of what all humans are like inherently: good, cooperative, loving, powerful, zesty, flexibly intelligent, creative, and more.

It is also exciting because we have an opportunity that we have never had before. We have a chance to finally end oppression, because it has to be ended in order to solve the environmental crisis. We have to build solidarity among all people against the distresses that have led us to this point.

This can feel like a scary time as well. As young people we were powerless, had little or no chance to discharge, and were hurt in ways that left us feeling isolated, hopeless, helpless, timid, or urgent. We were left discouraged in the face of repeated defeats. And now the undischarged

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WASHINGTON, USA • DIANE SHISK

... continued

patterns of greed that are driving advanced capitalism are careening us toward certain death for millions of people and many species of plants and animals. The distresses installed on humans and institutionalized in society have brought us to a world that is not good for any human or any life on our planet, and this is constantly restimulating our early distresses.

### GOOD NEWS

When we humans are listening to each other, at least two minds are in contact. We can open up, and our minds can function outside of distress. Our human caring can show through. This is a reliable way to build relationships. It is simple yet profoundly human. When our attention is turned toward each other and toward the challenges, we can solve problems. It is what we do. And even with our distresses, society has continued to evolve in good directions. Distresses have not deterred the upward trend of the universe.

### BEING ACTIVE IN WIDER AND WIDER ARENAS

One of the exciting things about being in Paris was the many people who had come there trying to make changes in the world. They are activists in their local communities. Activists are people who care—who want things to be different, who want to make permanent changes. To be with people like that was great.

I've been thinking about being an activist. Early on in our lives, we expected to be able to influence the world around us. We still can expect to influence and change what isn't working. We can make certain that things go well, the best they can.

We in RC are always trying to be *active* against our distresses, to move against them in our minds and in our actions. I think we must do that in wider and wider arenas to fully contradict the powerlessness we carry. Tim Jackins has talked about moving against our timidities, against the distresses that keep us immobile. It's occurred to me that we need to create activism at every level of our lives in order to contradict our deepest hurts from the oppressive society. We can influence the things around us. We can work to see that things are right for all humans, for all life. And when we do that, it puts our minds in a more connected, caring, and powerful place.

Whether we see ourselves as "activists" or not, we get to move against our early distresses and figure out how to engage our minds in bigger and bigger circles of influence.

### BUILDING PEOPLE POWER

Community organizers in the wide world talk about "building power" amongst people in order to win campaigns. They talk about needing an effective core of people who make their thinking and wishes visible and don't accept anything less than what is good for all.

Changing the institutionalized oppression and destructive policies in our society will require lots of people power. Larger and larger groups of people will need to move against their own distresses and move in sync with one another against the forces of the oppressive society.

Along with being "active" against our own distresses, we get to work with others against the "chronic distresses" of our oppressive society. The changes we want will not happen without this kind of concerted, coordinated movement. We need a powerful, united core of people, in many places throughout the world, to take on climate change.

And we want people moving against the forces of oppression not within their distresses but on the basis of their fresh and creative thinking. The more that people are listened to and can tell that they are cared about and respected, the more their minds will open up. The more they know they are not alone, are part of a community, and the more they understand the effects of oppression, the more they'll be able to access their inherent human power and move with others against oppressive forces. They'll be able to tell that their human interests align with one another. They'll know that we can build an all-for-one-and-one-for-all world.

The better we can think about ourselves and about each other, the more good things will happen. We have inherent human power. We know about showing caring, getting closer, building connection, and creating community.

*Teresa Enrico  
International Liberation Reference Person for  
Pacific Islander and Pilipino/a-Heritage People  
Seattle, Washington, USA*

## Holding Out a Hopeful Perspective

I was one of the twenty-five RC volunteers with the Sustaining All Life project in Paris. Seeing RC going public was fantastic. Loads of brilliant, flexible thinking and organizing, together with warm attention, made it irresistible to attend the thirty-four workshops and forums led by Sustaining All Life—not to mention all the planned and spontaneous listening projects<sup>1</sup> and the fundamentals class held every day.

The forums we arranged gave people a chance to share their personal experiences about climate change for three minutes each. I learned more about the situation in Madagascar, Nepal, Congo, Brazil, La Réunion, the Philippines, Indonesia, Alaska (USA), and lots of other places around the world. The topics of the forums included Indigenous People and Climate Change, Young People and Climate Change, and Climate Change in Developing Countries.

I helped recruit people to our forums and workshops and asked them afterward if they were interested in learning more about RC and Sustaining All Life. I used five of the six languages I speak and had lovely connections with three men of the global majority—from Singapore, Nepal, and Paris—who attended several of our events. Having people share their personal stories instead of only talking about their organization made a big difference.

<sup>1</sup> In an RC listening project, several Co-Counselors go to a public place and offer to listen to passersby about some important issue, such as racism or the environment. They may hold signs that invite people to share their thinking about that issue.

Something I experienced when I was alone handing out flyers for one of our workshops has led to massive discharge. Across the street from the workshop site were apartment buildings where lots of people of the global majority lived. And several times I saw the police use violence against young men of the global majority. I was furious. I wanted to cross the street and walk up to the boys, ask them about their experiences, and invite them to the workshop. I wish another RCer had been by my side to support me to dare to initiate a listening project.

During the conference it became clear to me what we are holding out to people. Sustaining All Life is interested in relationships with other humans and with our planet. This is hopeful, and people sensed it and wanted to be part of it.

The discharge process is a powerful tool that people long to use, and they want to be listened to. We need to spread this to more

people if we are going to think well about the environment and each other as humans. We have distresses we need to discharge to be able to do our best thinking about how to divide resources equally and replace a system based on profit and competition with something else.

Since I came back, I have decided to have sessions on a regular basis with four of my friends, as a way to spread the listening tool. I want my friends to have big lives. Hopefully some of them will join the fundamentals class I am starting in the spring. I am following Azi's<sup>2</sup> direction of increasing the numbers of South, Central, and West Asian-heritage Co-Counselors.

*Sujata Maini*

Stockholm, Sweden

Reprinted from the RC e-mail discussion list for leaders of South, Central, and West Asian-heritage people

<sup>2</sup> Azi Khalili, the International Liberation Reference Person for South, Central, and West Asian-Heritage People



MATT WEATHERFORD



## People Were Receptive

I was one of the volunteers in Paris. We did a lot of listening, to offer people some connection and a chance to move their thinking forward or to unload some upset. Sometimes we put forward our perspectives.

A young Sami woman from Lapland wanted to learn to use RC with her people. A white European woman said that our way of taking turns listening to each other was just what her climate change organization needed. A man from Congo and a man from Nepal both said that what we were teaching was what the whole world needed.

A Latina said that she could talk for days about all the racism she had experienced but that the four-minute mini-session at our workshop felt like a gift because she'd so rarely had an opportunity to talk about racism without being interrupted. Several people said they had never experienced anyone engaging people around difficult topics with such lightness and a sense of possibility as we RCers were doing.

We met many people who shared our view that only a massive, inclusive movement could force governments and corporations to do what must be done about climate change. This gave me a heightened sense of the importance of widespread access to RC tools that enable people to think better, connect more deeply and widely, and take action based on thinking.

*Russ Vernon-Jones*  
Amherst, Massachusetts, USA

## Remarkable Flexibility

We belong to a remarkably flexible organization. Our plans had to be totally reworked in the wake of the devastating attacks in Paris that occurred only a few days before we were scheduled to arrive. For example, we had planned that our first action would be joining with hundreds of thousands of people marching through Paris. Then the government banned the march.

In Paris when we met an activist who was interested in RC or our perspectives on care of the environment, we could direct her or him to a relevant group meeting soon and not far away. Several times I could say that we had a relevant event happening right at that moment, offer to walk the person over to it, and introduce her or him to a leader there. This demanded exceptional flexibility from the leaders, since people would keep arriving throughout the event. Also, since the spaces were public, anyone could come or go anytime.

I think because of our discharge work, our group could handle the many challenges that reality placed before us with a lot of creativity and grace. For me, wielding this human power together was among the most hopeful aspects of our Sustaining All Life project.

*Glen Hauer*  
Berkeley, California, USA



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## The RC Website

There is a website for Re-evaluation Counseling at <[www.rc.org](http://www.rc.org)>. At this site you will have easy access to a large amount of information about Re-evaluation Counseling, including:

- RC theory (basic theory, including an introduction to RC, *The Art of Listening*, *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, and language liberation information
- Articles from recent journals and *Present Time*
- 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](mailto:ircc@rc.org)
- United to End Racism: [uer@rc.org](mailto:uer@rc.org)
- Rational Island Publishers (orders, and billing questions): [litsales@rc.org](mailto:litsales@rc.org) (or order on our website at <[www.rationalisland.com](http://www.rationalisland.com)>)
- Re-evaluation Counseling Community Resources (Intensives and office matters only): [rcoffice@rc.org](mailto:rcoffice@rc.org)
- Automatic response e-mail about RC: [info@rc.org](mailto:info@rc.org)
- For sending photos: [photos@rc.org](mailto: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/onlineclass](http://www.rc.org/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](http://www.rc.org)>. The e-mail address for UER is <[uer@rc.org](mailto: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.

## Sustaining All Life

Sustaining All Life (SAL), a project of the RC Communities, sent a delegation to the United Nations Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP21) in Paris, France, in late 2015. Sustaining All Life presented workshops, held public forums and caucuses, and led support groups, fundamentals classes, and listening projects as part of the work of taking the tools of RC to climate change activists. We will be sending a delegation to COP22 in Morocco in November 2016. For reports on our activities and more information, see <[www.rc.org/sustainingalllife](http://www.rc.org/sustainingalllife)>.