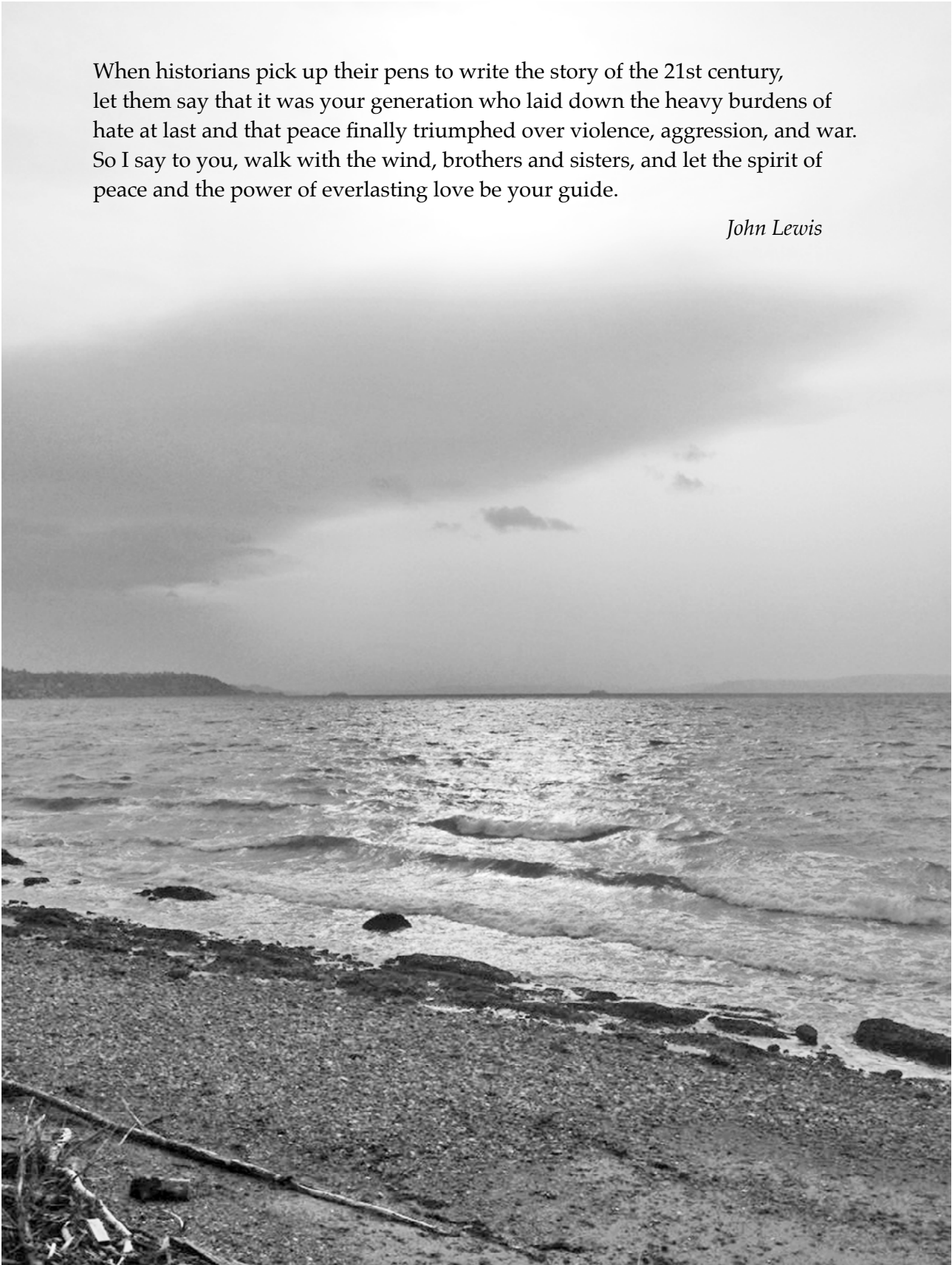


When historians pick up their pens to write the story of the 21st century, let them say that it was your generation who laid down the heavy burdens of hate at last and that peace finally triumphed over violence, aggression, and war. So I say to you, walk with the wind, brothers and sisters, and let the spirit of peace and the power of everlasting love be your guide.

John Lewis



Present Time No. 201 (Vol. 52, No. 4) **October 2020**

Co-Counselors are using RC theory and practice with ever-increasing precision and power in a highly motivated effort to move individuals, constituencies, and the society in the direction of rationality as rapidly as possible. We think you will be encouraged and motivated by the reports—about liberation, Co-Counseling, teaching and leading RC, and making change in the wide world. For the January issue, we'll need your articles and poems by November 16 and changes to the back-pages lists by November 23.

Katie Kauffman and Lisa Kauffman, editors
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How White People Enact Racism, and Guidelines for Allies

by *Barbara J. Love, International Liberation
Reference Person for African Heritage People*

The list below describes some of the ways that racism has been experienced by People of the Global Majority (PGM) in RC workshops, classes, and other activities. The combination of these experiences leads many PGM to describe the RC Community as “racist.” It results in many PGM leaving the RC Community despite the benefits of using the theory and tools of Re-evaluation Counseling. This contributes to a “revolving door” of PGM coming into and then out of the RC Community.

The decision to write and share this list is based on several assumptions:

- That no white person would act in a way that expresses, enacts, or perpetuates racism if they had not first been hurt by racism
- That the language and behavior of white people that PGM experience as racism is done unwaresly and unconsciously
- That if white people knew that their language or behavior would be experienced as racism, they would avoid that language and behavior
- That if white people had more information about the specific language and behaviors that PGM experience as racist, they could make better, more informed decisions about the language and behavior they choose to display
- That white people don't want to engage in racist behavior, perpetuate racism, or participate in maintaining systems of racism

The items on this list are based on my own experiences and observations as well as experiences shared by PGM at RC events. It should be noted that most of what is on this list could also be on almost



MARGIE DOYLE PAPADOPOULOU

any list describing relationships of domination and subordination. Whenever the items on this list are shared at a workshop, young people, women, and members of other targeted groups invariably say that they have had the same or similar experiences. Given the intersectionality of all our identities, it is possible to claim that any work done on discharging racism can potentially have powerful effects on all our relationships.

The experiences of racism described here constitute a lengthy “don't” list. A set of guidelines, a “do” list, is also included at the end for allies. Allies are people who speak up and act against oppression on their own behalf. They object to

oppressive language and behavior because such language and behavior is contrary to their vision of the world they want to enact. Allies act on their own behalf, not on behalf of others. Allies oppose racism on their own behalf, not on behalf of Black people and other People of the Global Majority.

The experiences of racism described below have been broadly categorized for ease of reading and understanding.

ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT INTELLIGENCE

1. Discounting the thinking of PGM
2. Assuming that Black people are not as smart as white people; assuming that Black people are not smart enough
3. Associating intelligence with how a person looks
4. Associating intelligence with the degree of a PGM's assimilation into whiteness
5. Associating intelligence with language, with one's use of “civic” English; assuming that the more a PGM's English usage matches that of white people, the smarter that PGM has to be
6. White person behaving as though they know best
7. White person assuming that their ideas are better
8. White person assuming that they know more about my country,

continued . . .

LIBERATION

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religion, and so on, than I do. White person assuming that they can tell me about my country, religion, culture, and so on

ATTRIBUTION

9. White person repeating what a PGM says as if it is the white person's original idea

10. White person repeating an idea or comment that a white person has taken from a PGM and attributing the idea to the white person rather than to the PGM from whom the white person took the idea; white person behaving as though they didn't hear the PGM share the original idea; white person being unable to hear an idea shared by a PGM and only able to hear it or accept it as credible after it has been repeated by a white person; white person then being given credit for coming up with [thinking of] the idea in the first place

11. White persons taking credit for ideas, proposals, projects, and so on, that are originated by PGM

12. PGM leader sharing ideas in a workshop, and white person later writing the ideas in an article with no indication of the source of the ideas

AUTHORITY AND LEADERSHIP

13. White people assuming that they should be in charge; white people assuming that they *are* in charge; white people taking over the work or leadership of a PGM and putting themselves in charge; white people assuming that if they were in charge, things would go better

14. White people assuming that they can and should tell PGM what to do (telling the PGM leader how to lead the workshop, how to set up groups, what questions to ask, and so on); as soon as the group gets together, a white person assuming leadership of the group and telling people what to do

15. Whatever the topic, a white person assuming that what they know is correct, more important, and more central, essential, significant

VOICE, POWER, AND POSITIONALITY

16. All (or most) of the key leaders being white (token PGM); to be a leader, PGM must assimilate into whiteness

17. White person speaking over a PGM

18. White people being trained to speak first, speak often, speak loudly, and speak last

19. Being unaware and unable and unwilling to make space for voices of PGM

20. White people assuming that what they are doing is more important than whatever the PGM is doing or saying

21. Taking up all the space—at the front of the room, on the mats, in front of the leader, in the circle around the leader, in the discussion, in the questions and answers, and so on

CENTRALITY AND MARGINALITY

22. White people assuming that they are at the center of things; white people behaving as though they assume that they are at the center of things

23. Assuming that PGM will automatically take a position at the back or on the sidelines, in the margins

24. Bringing in the voices and thinking of PGM as an afterthought; completing the plan, program, or position, then asking PGM what they think or whether they want to change anything or add anything to it

25. No seats at the table for PGM

THE "RIGHTNESS" OF WHITENESS

26. White people assuming that the way they do things is automatically the right way (the right way to eat, dress, speak, have a language, paint houses, decorate rooms, organize, write, counsel, client, and so on); white person attempting to teach a Black person "how to talk" because they did not talk like white people

27. Giving in to pressure to do things the "white way"

28. Failing to recognize signs and symbols of whiteness, the presence of whiteness, white hegemony, signs and symbols of white supremacy

FAILING TO SEE PGM AS PEERS

29. White people seeing themselves as counselors, not as peers; white people slipping into relationships of domination and subordination; white people assuming that they can counsel PGM but that PGM are not able to effectively counsel them

30. White person exhibiting language or behavior that is experienced as racist, then attempting to "counsel" the PGM toward whom they have targeted racism so that the PGM can discharge their "feelings" about the mistreatment instead of the white person acting to correct the mistake; failure to assume responsibility for "cleaning up" the racism

VERIFICATION AND CONFIRMATION

31. A white person asks a question. A PGM gives an answer. The white person asks a white person the same question and proceeds with the answer that the white person provided. When they later find out that the answer provided by the PGM was the correct answer, they proceed as though this behavior is perfectly normal and acceptable.

32. A PGM provides information. It is not considered correct or useful information until verified by a white person.

INVISIBILITY AND MISIDENTIFICATION

33. Misidentifying one PGM for another PGM

34. Calling one Black person the name of another Black person, even though they have strikingly different features (height, skin tone, hair style and texture, and so on)

35. “They all look alike.” (Boston white woman said that a Black man molested her and killed her two children. Police rounded up a large group of Black men—tall and short, large and small, brawny, skinny, burly, and light brown to very black. When asked why they’d rounded up the men that they’d arrested and brought in for questioning, the Boston police said, “They fit the description.”)

36. Interchangeability—one PGM will do as well as the next PGM; failure to individualize and recognize the uniqueness of individual PGM

37. Acting as though the PGM is not standing there, sitting there, in the group, and so on—“Oh, I didn’t see you”; PGM is talking to someone and white person walks up and starts talking to that person as though the PGM is not there: “I just have to say something/ask something really quick,” “What I have to say is really important; I will just be a minute.”

38. Not getting the names of PGM correct; mispronouncing the name of a PGM and acting as though it doesn’t matter; calling a PGM by a shortened version of their name rather than learning to pronounce the name correctly; asking a PGM whether they can just give them a nickname, since their name is so



SURREY, ENGLAND • BESS HERBERT

hard to pronounce, instead of asking for coaching on how to say the name correctly

WHITE COMPETITION FOR FAVORED STATUS

39. White people competing with each other and criticizing other white people as a way to elevate themselves

40. Competing to be the best “white ally”

ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT COMPETENCE

41. Diversity, inclusion, and ending racism assumed to be the work of PGM; a focus on racism assumed to be the reason for the presence of PGM; racism work assumed to be the only thing in which PGM can be expert

42. Saying how hard it is to find qualified PGM; whenever a leadership position is open, never thinking of PGM as the person to fill that position; there is always some additional qualification that a PGM needs to attain, some particular piece of distress they need to clean up, before they are assumed to be “fit” to take the leadership position; PGM having to meet rigid guidelines for leadership, even when no other leader in the Region meets those guidelines; PGM engaging in behavior in which other leaders are engaged and the PGM being

dismissed from leadership while white leaders engaging in the same behavior maintain their leadership

WHITE OWNERSHIP AND CONTROL

43. White person assuming that a particular PGM is “theirs” and should get the white person’s permission to do anything; that no other person should do anything with that PGM unless they check it out with the “owner”

44. White person monopolizing the attention and time of a PGM

45. White person assuming undue and excessive familiarity with a PGM

46. White people assuming that PGM will “take care” of them

47. White people assuming that PGM will “service” them

48. White person eliciting PGM to make them feel okay about their racism

49. White people taking unaware, unagreed-on sessions about their racism

ANTI-BLACK RACISM AND OTHER PGM

50. Presuming the superiority of some groups of PGM over Black people; language and behavior giving credence to the “model minority” mythology

continued . . .

LIBERATION

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51. Open or silent questioning of Black people about their “bootstraps”: “Why haven’t you pulled yourselves up by your bootstraps—like the people of X group have done?” “My grandparents, ancestors, and so on, came here with nothing, and look what they/we have accomplished.”

52. Competition for “top” minority status

53. Invisible relationship of immigrant Latino/a people to relationships of domination and subordination based on racial identity groupings; lack of awareness of the impact of racism on members of their group; assumptions of exclusion from racist consequences (in their countries of origin, they are not “minority” or “people of color”)

54. Putting Asian PGM in the position of middle agent between Black people and white people (a strategy used by the British in Africa and the Caribbean during the Colonial Project)

55. Having PGM of another group explain something about Black people—why Black people do what they do, behave the way they behave, speak the way that they speak, or say the things that they say

RACIAL IGNORANCE AND RACIAL BLINDNESS

56. Inability of white people to recognize and identify racism when it is happening in front of them

57. Refusal of white people to look at racism or take responsibility for racism happening around them

58. Inability or refusal of white people to effectively speak up about racism

59. White people witnessing racism but failing to act to interrupt it; getting captured by the “freeze or flight” syndrome; wanting to escape



MANGOES, IN EL SALVADOR • GABRIEL MOLINA

and distance themselves from the white person who has acted in a way experienced as racism

FEAR

60. Holding back from interacting with PGM for fear of making mistakes

61. Failure to interact for fear of doing something racist

62. Lack of connection because of fear—fear of not knowing how to interact or behave, of saying the wrong thing, of inadvertently offending

63. Fear of rejection because other white people have done racist things, because they might not be the right kind of white person, because they might not be “hip, cool, or jazzy” enough

CONNECTIONS AND RELATIONSHIPS

64. “Quizversations” as a way to connect and interact

65. Cornering and corralling PGM

66. Making a mistake and running away

67. When a mistake is pointed out, white person explaining why they did or said it, or what was going through their head, instead of apologizing and cleaning it up

68. White person telling a PGM how much they know about the culture of PGM as a way to make PGM like them; explaining that they

were in the Peace Corps or spent a semester abroad in the PGM’s country and then explaining their country, culture, people, or language to them; romanticizing, exoticizing, fetishizing, sexualizing PGM

69. Exclaiming that a particular group of PGM are the most beautiful because of their skin, hair, eyes, body size or type, culture, language, or way of life; wanting to be like that group; mimicking that group; preferring things related to that group

70. Reacting or responding to members of a particular groups as objects of desire

71. Referring to what white people do as “normal” and what PGM do as “culture”; white people wearing “clothes,” and PGM wearing “costumes” or “cultural outfits”; buildings with corners being “homes,” and buildings that are round being “huts”; clothes with no patterns being “normal,” and clothes with patterns and prints associated with Africa or Asia being “exotic” or “primitive”

CLAIMING AN INDIGENOUS IDENTITY (these items were shared by an Indigenous person)

72. Failure to develop “in the kitchen” [regular, close, ongoing] relationships with “Native raised-Native” people

73. Settlers claiming Indigenous identity

74. People Indigenous to one continent wanting to claim Indigenous identity on another continent

75. People who were raised white and who recently discovered “Native American” ancestry attempting to claim participation in caucus groups, panels, forums, and so on, that are designed to provide a safe space for Native raised-Native Americans

Guidelines for White Allies on Ending Racism

Because we have all been socialized and conditioned in societies characterized by racism, the patterns of racism have been installed on all of us. They are evident in our language, in our behavior, and in our habits of thought. Though we as an RC Community have committed to ending racism, it takes time and conscious, deliberate discharge and effort to interrupt and change the systematic enactments of racism.

Our commitment to ending racism is a fine basis on which to decide, act, and discharge to create relationships, Communities, and RC events that are increasingly less burdened by racism. The guidelines for white allies listed below are meant to help us enact our intention to end racism.

Guideline Number One: Face Racism

When racism happens, don't "go under" [get lost in distress], don't go silent, don't go quiet, and don't go away. Do the following:

- a. Notice it.
- b. Name it.
- c. Interrupt it.
- d. Describe it. Say what was wrong (racist) with the behavior or the language.
- e. Make space for the person to apologize.
- f. Interrupt any attempt to explain. Explanations exacerbate the racism. Explanations can become a way of sidestepping taking responsibility for the racism. Explanations can become a way for the white person to not have to face the fact that what they did or said had an effect that was experienced as racism by the PGM.

g. Where it makes sense, support the person to make the commitment to end the offending behavior or language and to help others learn about, discharge, and end the offending behavior or language.

Guideline Number Two: Meet People

Seek out people from different backgrounds and make connections and relationships.

- a. Organize your life to meet people from different backgrounds.
- b. Abandon the familiar and comfortable.
- c. Make a goal to meet people from different backgrounds.
- d. Say, "I am trying to interrupt the effects of whiteness and white domination on my life." "Will you talk to me?" "Will you be friends with me?" "Could we meet occasionally to talk about the world?"
- e. Join or develop projects and activities that bring you into contact with people from different backgrounds.



PAPAYA TREE, IN TOGO • ELLIE PUTNAM

Guideline Number Three: Parity Engagement

- a. The relationship is not a helping relationship, charity, "do good" work.
- b. Aim for communication, not "quizversation."
- c. Don't replicate patterns of domination and subordination.
- d. Be prepared to stop talking and listen.

Guideline Number Four: Interrupt Patterns of Domination

- a. Not know everything.
- b. Not have the answers, solutions.
- c. Not be the one in charge.
- d. Not be the one to give directions.
- e. Not be the one to go first.
- f. Not have to be right.

Guideline Number Five: Form Committed Long-term Relationships

- a. Aim for long-term relationships.
- b. Be prepared to stay in the face of discomfort.
- c. Be prepared for differences in lifestyle, values, beliefs, and so on.
- d. Do not run away when things get difficult.
- e. Find shared interests.

Guideline Number Six: Do Not Expect PGM to Service You

Do not expect PGM to do the following:

- a. Take care of you
- b. Reassure you

continued . . .

LIBERATION

... continued

c. Remind you that you are a good white person

d. Do things for you

Guideline Number Seven: Mind Your Manners

a. Get the names right.

b. Get the pronunciation right.

c. Don't confuse one PGM with another PGM; if you do, apologize and go home and study their name and face.

d. Don't tell them about your other PGM friends.

e. Don't tell them about your PGM nanny.

f. Wait a long time to tell them about your PGM childhood friend whom you got separated from and about whom you still grieve.

g. Don't talk about their history or culture as though you are the expert or dwell on your experience with someone or something from their culture.

Guideline Number Eight: Be Prepared to Make Mistakes

a. Acknowledge the mistake.

b. Clean it up.

c. Ask the person what would be needed to repair any damage resulting from the mistake.

d. Resist the urge to explain the mistake or downplay the significance of the mistake.

Guideline Number Nine: Interrupt Patterns of Invisibility

a. Notice when PGM are present.

b. Notice when they have something to say. Encourage PGM to have something to say. Make space for PGM to speak.

c. Don't "walk over" PGM as though they are not there.

d. Don't speak of PGM as though they are not present.

e. Interrupt patterns of racism exhibited by other white people.

- Notice it.

- Name it.

- Interrupt it.

- Explain to the white person the nature of the racism and why that language or behavior is unacceptable.

- Support that white person to repair the mistake.

Discharge, discharge, discharge. Practice, practice, practice. Remember that if you are not making mistakes, it is likely that you are not engaged in ending racism. If you are not engaged in ending racism, then you are contributing to the perpetuation of racism. To do nothing is to support the status quo. Your starting point has to be your vision of a world that meets your criteria for the creation of communities and relationships

characterized by justice, equity, fairness, and inclusion.

Patterns of racism have been installed on all of us but are not a part of who we are. Our goal is to remember and reclaim our full humanness, the chance to have relationships that reflect that full humanness, and Communities that support all our re-emergence.

Love, life, liberation.



SKACIT RIVER, WASHINGTON, USA • TIM JACKINS

Please take a look at the lists in the back of this *Present Time* and let us know if you find any inaccuracies.

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or to
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Thanks very much!

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A “Sisterhood” to End Racism

*From a talk by Dvora Slavin to the white people attending
the “Talk to Co-Counselors on Zoom” by Barbara Love and Tim Jackins, June 2020*

Welcome to the European-heritage white people’s meeting. We are 539 out of about eight hundred people. We are a large percentage of this gathering. I know we are pleased that there are so many of us, but I know we also look forward to the day when the number of People of the Global Majority in RC matches their percentage in the world.

Welcome again my white comrades, my loves, my brothers and sisters. We are in an incredible period. There are opportunities everywhere we look. They are all around us, and we get to go after [pursue] them and make a difference.

STAYING TOGETHER

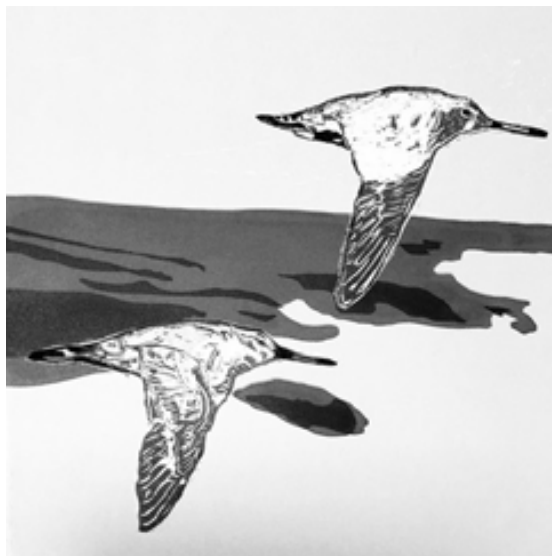
There are several things to keep in mind as we do this. One is our relationships with each other. This is where we can anchor ourselves. We need each other while we build relationships with and become comrades to People of the Global Majority. So let’s stay together. Our white distresses often pull us to go off alone and be disconnected. Let me say it again: stay together.

Diane Balser (International Liberation Reference Person for Women) recently led a women’s workshop in my Region. The word “sisterhood” stood out for me. I invite us all, men included, to make a “sisterhood” of white people to end racism.

We get to claim deep connections with everyone. Anytime we try to connect with someone, it’s a contradiction to wherever we’ve been separated. Keep in mind that racism is about separation, isolation, and disconnection. The more we stand against any separation, the more we dismantle racism.

DISCHARGING OUR CHRONIC DISTRESS

Also, as Barbara Love (International Liberation Reference Person for African Heritage People) said, we need to do three things. The first is discharge, the second is discharge, and the third is discharge. For us as white people, this means discharging our chronic distress, which is experienced as racism by People of the Global Majority.



BAR-TAILED GODWIT • CYNTHIA JOHNSTON

FACING THE EFFECTS OF RACISM

Racism is brutal. It is absolutely brutal to the people targeted by it. It is brutal to white people in a different way, but it is also brutal to us. We get to face what happened to us as white people, the brutality that came at us. I’ve been

calling racism the pandemic that attacked us as little ones and continued to attack us as we grew up.

Our early defeats and isolation are the seedbed for racism. Racism found a place to plant itself in those early hurts, and as we discharge them, we free ourselves from it.

We also get to look at how racism left us limited in a million and one ways. What are the things that confused us when we were little and continue to confuse us? We need to work on the early heartbreak. We need to discharge the terror. We need to go for [pursue] the outrage. This is not the time to allow numbness to take over. This is not the time to have muted sessions.

I think many of us have been able to discharge hard here. I myself have found ways to scream and cry and storm about how racism has hurt our brothers and sisters of the Global Majority. We get to discharge on this.

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LIBERATION

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TAKING ACTION

Then we get to take action to end racism. This means different things depending on what our lives look like, but we have an opportunity to put our minds and bodies out in the world in bigger and bolder ways. I'm talking to each one of you, not the person in the (Zoom) box next to or above you. You are needed. You, personally, are needed out there. We need to take everything we have learned in Co-Counseling about ending racism, being allies, and healing the damage of racism to our minds and bring it to others. You, white person, are needed out there.

We are learning what it means to be an ally. We are not doing it anywhere near perfectly yet. We don't need to do it perfectly, but we do need to get out there. We will make mistakes. Rest assured, you will make mistakes. Don't let that hold you back. We will learn together as we go.

As we go out there, we will encounter situations that tell us about reality and what we need to face. We can't just sit in our Co-Counseling sessions. Now is not the time to limit ourselves to that. You probably don't feel ready, right? Neither do I. But let's not wait until we feel ready.

It may be that you are ready. But you are not going to know that without going out. Maybe you are not ready. Well, you'll find out what you need to discharge to get more ready. We need to go out and see what is going on [happening], for example, with the incredible worldwide demonstrations against racism and for Black Lives Matter.

We get to find the place where we can do this. And we can take each other with us—if not in person, then in our minds and hearts. We don't have to do any of this alone. But now is the time to do it, and to share what we know from RC.

Building, taking action, moving forward mean that we need to have deep and enduring relationships with People of the Global Majority. We get to have these relationships. We get to take back what we were told we couldn't have. We also need the relationships to keep our actions honest and grounded. So a big part of taking action is making new relationships as well as deepening the ones we already have.

We can make lots of new relationships as we are marching, six feet apart and masked because of the pandemic. We just have to learn how to shout as we march, and virtually reach for each other.

A Groundswell of Interest in Jewish Liberation

I recently led two RC webinars on Jewish liberation and anti-Semitism. Eight hundred RCers participated. We were a good mixture of Jews and non-Jews—from Israel, Japan, Australia, England, the Dominican Republic, Hong Kong, Nigeria, South Africa, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Scotland, Wales, Spain, Sweden, Malaysia, Greece, Switzerland, Canada, and the United States. There has been a groundswell [an increasing amount] of interest in Jewish liberation among RCers worldwide.

We worked on how the pandemic is impacting Jews—in particular, on the similarities between anti-Jewish oppression and what many Jews are experiencing in the pandemic. We worked on anti-Semitism, the intersection of anti-Semitism and racism, and being an effective ally. We heard brief reports from Jews in different countries on the anti-Semitism there.

The calls reflected the strong commitment of RCers to Jews-and-allies work.

Yeshet Koach (from strength to strength) to all of us.



Cherie Brown
International Liberation
Reference Person for Jews
Silver Spring, Maryland, USA
Reprinted from the RC e-mail
discussion list for leaders of Jews

Lightly falling rain,
Tiny daisies appearing,
Sweet, sweet reminders

Sojourner Truth
Seattle, Washington, USA

Пространство, где каждый может ясно мыслить и быть услышан

Я недавно участвовала в вебинаре по языковому освобождению. Его вёл Шаби Одриозола, международный лидер для языков и перевода в со-консультировании. В вебинаре участвовали более трехсот человек со всего мира. Шаби говорил о том, как языковое подавление поддерживает структуру власти, лежащую в основе всех других видов подавления. Разнообразие языков - это наше будущее. Сейчас важнее, чем когда-бы то ни было, направить наше внимание на языковое подавление.

Шаби подчеркнул важность нашей связи друг с другом и необходимость создания условий для того, чтобы каждый голос был услышан. Если мы сбавим темп и признаем разнообразие культур и языков, мы создадим пространство, в котором будем видеть и слышать каждого человека, пространство, в котором каждый сможет ясно мыслить и излагать свои мысли.

Я участвовала в потрясающей группе организаторов перевода двух типов. Первый, на

разных аудио каналах, был синхронный перевод для тех, кто не говорил по-английски. Второй, последовательный перевод на восемнадцать языков, позволил всем участникам вебинара на несколько минут услышать все родные языки присутствующих. Это само по себе уже было большим противоречием стереотипам изоляции, спешки и постоянного напряжения.

Эта работа глубоко важна для меня как русскоязычной иммигрантки, живущей в Соединённых Штатах. Я надеюсь, что она позволит нам создать пространство, где каждый человек сможет свободно мыслить, и его голос будет услышан.

Спасибо всем, кто организовал семинар и принял в нем участие.

Юлия Численко

Нью-Йорк, Нью-Йорк, США

Воспроизведено с дискуссии на электронном листе рассылки для со-консультантов

English translation of the preceding article in Russian:

A Space Where Each of Us Can Think and Be Heard

I recently attended a language liberation webinar led by Xabi Odriozola, the International Commonality Reference Person for Languages and Interpreting. Over three hundred people from around the world participated. Xabi talked about how language oppression holds together the power structure that underlies all other oppressions. Everyone speaking the same language is not the future. Now, more than ever, is the time to pay attention to language domination.

Xabi emphasized the importance of connection and the need for every voice to be heard. By slowing down and recognizing the multiplicity of

cultures and languages, we can create a space where each of us can be seen and heard, where we can think clearly and communicate our thoughts.

I was part of an amazing team that organized interpreting. There were two kinds of interpreting. One was continuous simultaneous interpreting into several languages on different audio channels for those who did not speak English. The other was up-front interpreting into eighteen languages, which allowed the whole webinar to hear for a few minutes each of the native languages spoken by the participants. This was a powerful contradiction to feelings of invisibility

and isolation and to rushing and powering through.

Language liberation has deep significance for me as an immigrant, a former refugee, and a non-native English speaker living in the United States. I hope we keep moving it forward to make sure that every person has a space to think in and a voice that is heard.

Thank you to everybody who participated and made this webinar happen.

Julia Chislenko

New York, New York, USA

Translated by Julia Chislenko

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

I Am Home and in a New World

I'm a young African lady, born and bred in Africa, and the leader of RC young adults in Accra, Ghana. Restimulating, liberating, exhilarating, emancipating, invigorating, manumitting [free], and life-giving—these are words that describe the Black Liberation and Community Building Workshop (BLCD) 2020. And they are the words that best describe my mood after my first BLCD. I feel like I am a new person. I am home and in a new world. I have begun healing from the damage done to me by racism (both internal and external). I can breathe again! Wow! What a welcome! BLCD 2020 was simply extraordinary!

Imagine my excitement when I entered the BLCD Village and saw a room full of beautiful, intelligent, wise, and strong people with same skin colour as mine. Almost all the leaders proudly wore their African hair and African outfits. Hearing my brothers and sisters interpret the meetings into different African languages was liberating. I was super-excited!

The oppressors have stolen my language and have tried to steal my pride as an African woman. I am constantly told that I am not enough, that my skin colour is ugly, that everything black is bad. I hear “black market,” “blacklist,” “black eye,” “black devil,” “black heart,” “black magic,” “black sheep,” “blackmail.” The list goes on. I am Black, and hearing that everything black is bad has made me look down on myself and feel inferior and downgraded—yes, that was the feeling I had before joining BLCD 2020.

Realizing that they have tried to hurt me because they themselves have been hurt in the past makes me understand the whole situation better. They feel inferior, and so they try to make me feel the same; they feel hurt, and so they try to hurt me.

I now know the truth, that I am more than enough. I am now seeing a new world where I get to be me, a better leader for myself and devoid of the confusion, lies, hurt, and distresses around me.

Ekua Forson
Accra, Ghana



PESCADERO, CALIFORNIA, USA • PAM ROBY

“We Need One Another!”

Re-evaluation Counseling provided the opportunity for over two hundred raised-poor people from all over the world to meet. It was a wonderful moment for me. The August 2020 Raised-Poor Workshop was led by Gwen Brown, International Liberation Reference Person for Raised-Poor People.

My highlights included the following:

- We can overcome fear and be good leaders no matter what class we are in or from. We raised-poor people have been lied to about our intelligence. We are intelligent, generous, and immensely creative. After many centuries of our being hurt, this is a very interesting time for us to liberate our minds and help others.
- Many terrifying things have happened to us, and being prevented from discharging has kept us from taking over from those who have subjected us to a lower status. World leaders have manipulated us so that they can stay in power and make money a little longer.
- We have to identify our distresses and look for a way to discharge them. As long as they are there, they will keep confusing us. We must discharge the effects of being raised poor and assume leadership. Parents are leaders. What we show to our children is what they will show to society.
- Writing is a way to speak for the voiceless. We were encouraged to write to the RC raised-poor e-mail discussion list.
- Being a support group leader was a whole new experience for me. Gwen suggested that if we only achieve “just” listening, we should be happy. This helped me throughout the group sessions. In our group we discussed and worked on the importance of discharging, childhood experiences of being raised poor, and leadership.
- We were charged with surrounding ourselves with good relationships. We can reach out to people. This is a critical time; feelings of depression are everywhere. We need one another! We need one another! We need one another!

Alfred Asika
Lagos, Lagos State, Nigeria

BLCD 2020 Worldwide Workshop

It was a worldwide workshop. The Internet made it possible for hundreds of people from every continent to gather in the virtual Black Liberation and Community Development (BLCD) Village for an awesome experience.

Weeks after the fact, I still feel a rush of *ubuntu* [a bond] from thinking about our time in the Village and the insights, the love, and the inner resolve that I drew from it.

I loved the loud and effusive “Africanness” of our greetings. It took a long time for everybody

to introduce themselves, but I loved looking at every single unique beautiful black/brown/tan face while they talked. I loved the interpretation into numerous languages and how so many of us were in our native attire. I *twale* [praise] the organising teams, the tireless tech teams, and the myriad other people who worked in front of and behind the scenes to make BLCD and world history! I loved the randomness of the breakout sessions and the long time assigned for support groups.

The sense and possibility of African-heritage people all over

the world uniting in mutual respect for one another’s identities, peculiarities, struggles, and dreams were giddy. Can you imagine what we could be if we stopped despising and denigrating ourselves? Can you imagine the monumental economic restructuring with us redefining beauty and success in this world? Ha! We are formidable, and with the chains in our minds broken, we will be invincible! Yes! to Black liberation! Yes! to BLCD 2024!

Nez Ibekwe

Awka, Anambra State, Nigeria

“I Think We Better Do the Job”

Comments by Harvey Jackins to a working-class caucus in Europe in 1990*

It’s very plain from my experience leading this project that if a working-class person takes leadership, everybody else will follow. When I get together with sixty owning-class people, they argue a little bit, but then they say to me, “Tell us what to do.”

So you be a clear model. If you will move and do the things that you know how to do, people will follow. The middle class is trying to get their heads clear to do the right thing, but they’ve been made to be much more confused than you have. Owning-class people are good people underneath their patterns, but their patterns keep them tormenting and hating themselves. They don’t know how to move, they don’t know where to go, because it feels to them like death if they don’t do what their parents told them.

We are not that confused. We are timid and we’re easily distracted. “Come have a beer and forget it, Joe.” We have patterns that tell us we are stupid, and we tend to believe we are powerless. However, we live under this oppression, and we see what a screwed-up mess it is. The middle- and owning-class people still think it is the only way to live, and that’s what makes us so important. It isn’t that we are holier than anybody else or more virtuous than anybody else. We just know the score [understand what is happening]. We’re in better touch with reality. Generally life has taught us that if a job needs to be done, the only damn thing to do is to do it. So we’re no better than anybody else, but also we’re at least as good as everybody else, and if we want the human race to survive, I think we better do the job.

I promise you, and I think I have demonstrated this, that the middle- and owning-class people will get behind us and follow us if we’ll just move.

From page 97 of “You Must Lead Leaders,” in *An Unbounded Future*

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

From an “Essential Worker”



I am an “essential worker” working in a cooperative grocery store. I wrote most of this before George Floyd’s life was forcibly taken and the widespread uprising that has happened.

I’m a white mixed-heritage Queer Jewish female in my thirties from a mixed-class background—working class to academic, middle class to owning class. I grew up outside of Boston (Massachusetts, USA) and in New Hampshire (USA) and have lived in the state where I do now my entire adult life. Both my parents are mixed-heritage New York (USA) Jews. Both have working-class heritage and went between middle-class jobs, working-class jobs, and unemployment when I was young. My mixed-heritage Jewish grandfather grew up owning class. I also grew up with two stepmothers and four stepsiblings, all of whom have Catholic and Protestant working-class heritage.

MY WORK AT A COOPERATIVE GROCERY STORE

For nine years I have been a staff member of a collective at a cooperative grocery store in a smaller city. While my co-op grocery work is different than the majority of minimum-wage cashier grocery work, all grocery workers including myself have been on what has been called

the “frontlines” of this pandemic, with high potential exposure to the virus. My own work at the store is mostly cashiering and coordinating customer service, stocking and processing produce deliveries (heavy work!), ordering and stocking meat products, and carrying out some administrative roles.

First, some good and hopeful things: My coworkers have all been working hard for long hours together to keep food and supplies on the shelves for our customers, and the camaraderie we have formed during the pandemic is indestructible. They have mostly been treating me and each other well, being supportive and kind and taking on lots of responsibilities to help each other, despite super-heightened work stress. Many customers are grateful, kind, and patient with the expectations we have of them. My friends have been reaching out to me a lot by phone during the quarantine time. My garden is productive and full of bees pollinating, and I enjoy the outdoors right around my house. Staying at home when I’m not at work has made me acutely aware of my immediate surroundings. I’m noticing neighbors, city wildlife, and each new leaf or shoot on my indoor and outdoor plants. I’m grateful for the Zoom and phone sessions I’ve been able to have when not working.

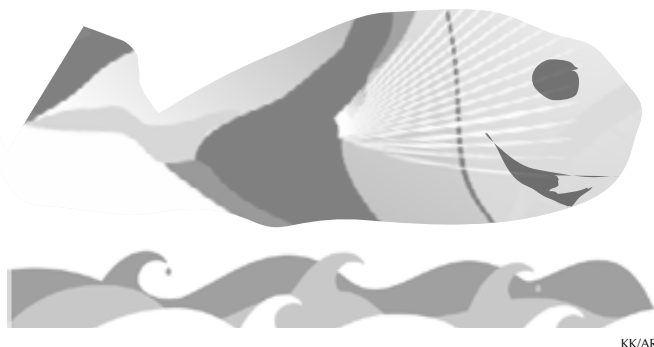
Now some harder parts:

It’s been a very stressful time to help operate a grocery store!

While positive COVID-19 diagnoses in my county have been low compared to some large cities, the potential for spreading the virus is still a big risk. Our governor instituted a stay-at-home order in mid-March in our state due to the early exponential rise in the case count in one of our cities. I remember then when a customer asked if we would close, and it dawned on me [occurred to me] that no, grocery stores will not close, even and especially during a pandemic. (We did decide, however, to close both stores for a day to honor the national Black Lives Matter strike in early June.)

We instituted store protocols for social distancing much earlier than many other groceries. We came together quickly to respond to the situation as a team. Although my reactions came from “scared active,” over-helpful, urgent relying-on-my-thinking-to-save-people patterns, I am proud that I pushed for us to make changes quickly. I sent e-mails to everyone asking us to plan for a pandemic response as a collective, with a list of suggestions about sanitizing and social distance, as did many coworkers. I put up handwritten signs to remind people to wash hands and keep a distance from each other and from us workers, started a lot of surface sanitizing protocols before they were official, and helped coworkers remember to do these things.

As a collective of paid staff members, we had to invent everything by the “seat of our pants” (as fast as possible, using our best knowledge, with limited information). There was little clear guidance or leadership from



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the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) or the government for grocery stores for what to do. The beginning of the pandemic was even more terrifying and stressful in the grocery than it is now because of the uncertainty, the rapid community spread of the virus, and our inability to order enough food and supplies to stock the shelves when “panic buying” kicked in [started].

I am so proud to work with a collective of people operating a grocery store. We all worked together on e-mail, on Zoom, and in the stores to come up with [figure out] the best possible protocols rather than relying on one store manager to make all the decisions. We appointed a small group of workers to make COVID-19-related decisions together, and everyone has figured out how to follow their lead—much in the style of how we follow the lead of an RC class or workshop leader.

At the beginning of March, little was known about the virus and it seemed to be popping up all over our state unpredictably. We installed plexiglass at cash stands and started sanitizing between customers. We limited customer counts to fifteen percent of our capacity at our two store locations and stationed a “door person” to enforce customer limits. We required handwashing, sanitized all carts and baskets, and reminded people to stay six feet (two meters) from others while inside. We put up camp-style handwashing sinks outside. We had signs up all over the store about keeping a distance and wearing gloves when shopping for bulk products. We learned over time that we needed to limit the use of the offices to fewer people. We reduced the number of cashier-stands so customers and cashiers could stand farther apart while waiting. Because automated online ordering systems are expensive for stores to implement, some of my coworkers



JOANNA REDFIELD VAUGHN

invented a system for “curbside pick-up” orders and payment that included renting extra coolers, moving registers outside, and figuring out order-picking protocols—all in just one week. We limited our open hours to allow for more thorough sanitizing and stocking without customers in the stores.

Many of my coworkers with underlying health conditions—some who were older, and some who were just scared—decided to stay at home safe. Fortunately, we have robust health benefits and a good amount of sick pay, so they were able to do this with financial and job security. But fewer workers also meant that the increased work (door shifts, sanitizing, curbside orders, and shifts with more stress) was spread among fewer of us. And anytime a coworker or someone in their household got sick or got a COVID-19 test, that coworker would be away for the required two weeks. Many of us started having to work ten to fifteen more hours per week than we usually do.

In mid-March, “panic buying” was in full swing. We had the three biggest sales days ever, all in a row. On Friday, March 13, our sales were more than double the amount of sales we had ever had in a day. We were all stocking the shelves as fast

as we could. For weeks afterward, the supply chain was completely destabilized. Most of our deliveries, except for produce and local items, were delayed by over a week. Some products have continued to be “out of stock” for the last two months. We didn’t have any beans, flour, rice, toilet paper, or many other staples for weeks. My coworkers who were scheduled to process truck deliveries the first week had to wake up at 5:00 a.m. each day, just to see if the truck might arrive, and wait until 3:00 p.m. just in case. Even now, although most items are back on the shelf, people are buying a week or two weeks of groceries at once, and often items are gone quickly and ordering is difficult.

Supplies like hand sanitizer, gloves, surface sanitizers, bulk food containers, and even paper bags for store use have been difficult to get as supplies run out around the country. Our supplies budget has tripled since the beginning of March to keep gloves, hand sanitizer, surface sanitizers, and everything else in stock. Our supplies buyers tried lots of different sanitizing solutions until we found one that was safe for workers, food-safe, affordable, and available in enough quantity. Bleach fumes were too strong to use throughout the day for workers to be healthy, so we went from bleach to peroxide (which damaged many surfaces) to a “quat” formula (a type of alcohol disinfectant) and hand sanitizer from local distilleries. It took a long time to find the best option. Our protocol is to try to sanitize every touch surface in the store every two hours. The cash-register belts, keypads, baskets, and carts are sanitized between every customer. This means that as workers we are handling disinfectant solutions constantly every day—for example, cashiers sanitize their hands between every transaction. We have found that wearing a pair of nitrile

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LIBERATION

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gloves, and sanitizing or washing the outside of them, is the best and most sanitary option. Without them, the skin on our hands and arms was cracking and irritated from all the sanitizing solutions.

The produce shifts I work have become much more challenging. Everyone has been buying loads of vegetables, and people are still trying to buy a week's or two weeks' supply at a time. I try to stay six feet away from people while working extra fast to keep the shelves full. Customers have a hard time respecting the six-foot distance. Some make a show of leaving space, and others dive right in to grab whatever I'm trying to stock, getting right up close to my face! I often wonder what might happen if they cough or sneeze when our faces are that close.

Most of us started to wear face coverings when volunteers began donating home-made cloth masks. But some coworkers did not wear them until it was required by the state at all workplaces at the beginning of June. There was ongoing conflict among my coworkers about whether to require face coverings at work, and I'm grateful for the state requirement.

It is different, and more difficult, to wear a face covering for eight or ten hours straight, forty or fifty hours a week, than it is to wear one for an hour or two. Some people have health conditions that limit their abil-

ity to wear a face covering for that long, and we have to accommodate them. This takes even more workers out of the store, which spreads the work among even fewer people.

As grocery workers, we are all being used by the state to enforce various rules of social distancing. As a result, we bear the brunt of our customers' restimulations about the rules and their feelings about the pandemic in general. We have suddenly become counselors for the public, as well as for sanitation workers and unwilling police officers.

The majority of co-op shoppers have been gracious and kind and thankful. Many thank us profusely for being "essential workers" in a way that it is difficult to know how to respond to.

Customers also complain, roll their eyes, refuse to follow the rules, and lecture us about what they think should happen. Some complain constantly, act out their impatience (there are often long lines), "talk our ears off" (talk incessantly) because they are lonely at home, or even physically intimidate us by approaching past the six feet or yelling when we politely ask that they wash their hands or wear one of the masks we have available. I've noticed that almost all the people who get visibly agitated and act entitled are white men and women.

When I encounter people who think the virus is a hoax or don't understand asymptomatic transmission, I just nod and listen to their "sessions" about it, gently repeat scientific information I know, and do extra work sanitizing and social distancing. Social distancing takes everyone's participation, and it is exhausting to continuously be the ones who are trying to maintain it on others' behalf.

There have been many reports of actual violence at other grocery stores when door workers ask people to wash their hands or wear masks. We did get one threatened lawsuit but have had no physical violence yet. At this point in the pandemic, we offer cheap poly (non-medical) gloves, hand sanitizer, and paper masks at the entrance, and customers are encouraged to consider all three. But we do not enforce mask wearing, to keep us safe from retaliation.

OPPRESSOR DISTRESSES

Since everyone is restimulated by the pandemic, everyone's oppressor distress (including my own) is showing itself.

Black coworkers have experienced an enormous number of unaware racist microaggressions, from customers and coworkers alike, as well as blatant intentionally racist comments and behavior, especially in this current moment with the widespread coverage of George Floyd's murder and the protests. They have also been targeted for needing medical accommodations, brushed off (ignored or condescended to) when asking for help with racist customers, or left alone to deal with racist behaviors from coworkers.

Jewish coworkers have been singled out for blame for racist or abrasive behaviors that are shared by white Gentiles. Jewish and Black coworkers have been set up against each other.

Queer people, women, and others of us who've been pushed historically into service roles are running into [encountering] customer entitlement at levels we've never before experienced. In a service job like grocery work, entitlement is common, but it has been heightened by people's fear and stress.



IMPROVEMENTS AND PRIDE

It has been such a relief as a grocery worker to have new social distancing laws come into effect in our state with the partial reopening at the end of May. Now there are clear guidelines for workplaces and clear protocols the public must follow in order to shop. Before this phase of reopening, guidelines were not as clear, and it was easy for people to avoid doing the safest possible practice based on their restimulations. Things have slowly gotten more relaxed as people get more and more used to the reality of the pandemic and the care that must be taken.

However, our exhaustion level as workers is enormous and ongoing.

We are all so tired. We want to go home, but we are also proud to be providing food to everyone. So please, be kind to your grocery workers.

“I am a worker, proud to be a worker, and the future is in my hands!” [from the RC commitment for working-class people]

Anonymous
USA

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



KINGSLEY IBEKWE

A journal well worth waiting for!

Side By Side No. 4, Volume 1



It has been several years since the last issue of *Side By Side*, the journal for LGBTQ RCers and their allies. As happens with all constituencies, and as will be clear from the pages of this exciting new issue, clarity and understanding have grown with discharge, re-evaluation, and changing times.

The following is from the introduction to *Side By Side* No. 4:

Side By Side represents the experiences and the work of people from many countries, ages, and identities. It is no longer simply a “Gay liberation” journal. There now exist many identities. These identities provide a home base for people whose lives can often be more fully understood in light of a distinct sex- and/or gender-based identity.

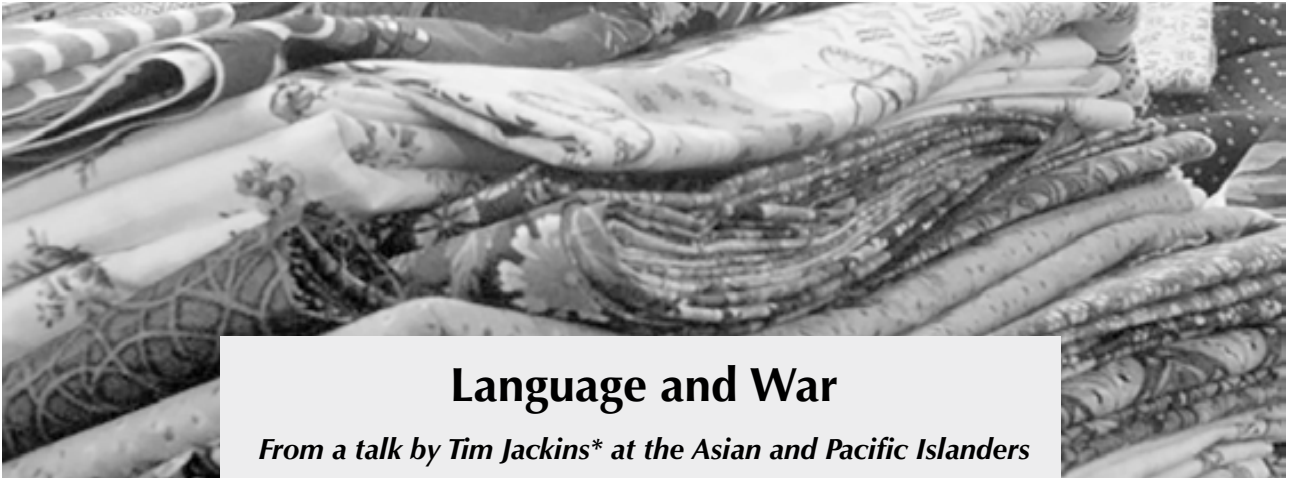
Conditions and cultures are changing rapidly in many places worldwide. These changes affect us all. We are all invited to discharge on sex and identity. Some of our long-held assumptions about what is “normal” may no longer be accurate when seen through the filters of change and discharge.

In Re-evaluation Counseling we are all expected to check our assumptions through the discharge and re-evaluation process. The subjects of sex and identity are no exception.

M—
*International Liberation Reference Person for Lesbian,
Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer People*
and D—
*Assistant International Liberation Reference Person for
Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer People*

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Language and War

From a talk by Tim Jackins at the Asian and Pacific Islanders Leaders' Workshop, on Zoom, in August 2020*

TEXTILES • LISA KAUFFMAN

All communication between humans is important, and every way of communicating is important. Language is one of our most sophisticated forms of communication. With it we can exchange detailed information about the world.

Every people developed their own language, and each language is a wonderful example of human intelligence. Each developed in a different circumstance and has special qualities from those circumstances. That set of special qualities enriches us all and should never be lost. It's important that we never lose another language. We don't want to lose anything that human intelligence has developed.

As we overcome distresses that have kept us separate from each other, we will gain more access to the richness of other languages. And our difficulties and confusion about language are a good indication of the distresses we need to overcome to connect deeply with each other.

Some of us have great difficulty with languages. That is related to distress. Some of the distress is simply our individual, personal distress. And some of it comes from racism, imperialism, and colonialism and is part of our big struggle to see each other as fully human and just like each other. Each of us—in every way, including in our language—is a unique and perfect example of the rest of the us.

WAR

Because we just looked at language, I think we should look at war. I don't know of any people in the world that has not suffered the irrationalities of war.

A few times people have had to leave their lands not because of the irrational workings of power but because of changes in climate. But almost always, it's been the irrational drive for power and resources that has pushed people to enter and take another people's land. And, of course, the invaders bring their language with them, and their language becomes part of how they maintain power over the original inhabitants.

All humans have been vulnerable to being hurt and becoming irrational, so wars have been fought all over the world. We all carry the hurts from those violently irrational times. Our attitudes about languages are part of that. Our attitudes toward other people are part of that.

Everyone seems to wish that they were innocent of the patterns, that "my people never dominated anybody else." That's quite unlikely. *(laughter)* What our peoples did is not our fault. We are not to blame for the irrational actions of the people in power in our country, especially those that happened before we were born. But we are responsible for the distresses that have been handed down from those times by our families and cultures.

We are affected by that history. Most of us wish that we weren't, and we try to act as if we weren't. But although it's correct to restrain our irrationalities, it's not enough—it leaves part of us tied up in the distress.

Those of us who know RC well usually remember to resist acting out our distress. *(laughter)* It's one way you can identify an experienced Co-Counselor. *(laughter)* That we resist acting it out is a good thing. One reason we like being together is that we try to keep distress out of the way when we are with each

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

other. But the hurts from war and the restimulations we feel around other people—especially people from countries that our country has been at war with—need to be more than controlled; they need to be discharged.

We all have feelings from distress because we got hurt. We may not believe the feelings, but we do need to work on them. We need to work on them with someone who won't be upset about them.

We often feel ashamed of the feelings, so we hide them from our Co-Counselors. We feel that our counselors will be confused about us if we work on them. We need to trust each other, and the discharge process. Nothing about us, or our Co-Counselor, is evil. We can recover from every hurt and confusion.

Societies are collapsing, and they are making desperate attempts to continue. A society acquires resources in any way it can. It also blames others for its difficulties. It tries to confuse and distract its own people by citing dangers from others as the cause of the society's difficulties, by asserting that the difficulties are due to "something someone else is doing," not the irrationality of the society. It attempts to create a sense of nationalism, as if the people of one country are somehow different from the people in other countries. A current version of this is being acted out in many parts of the world. We notice that it confuses people we know, and it's important that we not be too scared to speak out against it. We need many rational voices presenting reality clearly enough that people's restimulations are interrupted. We need many rational minds that can listen to distressed ideas without being scared—so that some re-evaluation can happen.

Not Going Silent as White Gentiles

I attended Cherie Brown's Jews and Allies Webinar. (Cherie Brown is the International Liberation Reference Person for Jews.) Cherie explained more about the "hook" between anti-Jewish oppression and racism.

I had previously encountered several instances of the "hook" between a Jewish friend and a Black friend. However, because I am white Protestant, I hadn't thought much about how it affected me. It had just seemed like a dynamic between the two of them. I'd had an interest in understanding it, but it hadn't seemed personal or related to my re-emergence.

Following Cherie's webinar, our local Allies to Jews support group talked about what we usually do as white Gentiles in regard to "the hook." Mainly we stay silent. We recede into the background, glad that we are not the target of the upsets. It is now clear that we need to stand up and speak out when it happens. We mustn't "go silent" and let the Jews or the Black people take the heat [be the targets] when distress is being acted out. We can speak up and encourage kindness and good thinking even if that makes us the target of the distress. With enough discharge, we can be relaxed and helpful when our loved ones act out distress even when they aim it at us.

Kara Huntermoon

Eugene, Oregon, USA

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

Basic RC Literature Now Available in Digital Format

To address the challenges of distributing literature internationally in this era of COVID-19, we at Rational Island Publishers have been converting as much RC literature as possible to a digital format that can be purchased and downloaded from the Rational Island Publishers website.

We have emphasized first the digitizing of the basic literature, in both English and translation, that people use in teaching RC. Most of this basic material is now available in digital format and can be purchased and downloaded from the Rational Island website: <www.rationalisland.com>.

Understanding and Responding to Elders' Oppression

There is no group of people who are the agents of elder oppression, who are in a position of power over elders. People of all ages (except very young children) have been taught misinformation and can act in ways that are damaging to elders.

With some oppressions, a group of people have been trained into the role of agent of the oppression. Their job is to act out the oppression on behalf of the system in exchange for some perceived privilege or safety. Such oppressions include classism, sexism, racism, genocide, the oppression of young people, and anti-Semitism.

There are also oppressions that come from the economic system via various institutions and mechanisms rather than from a specific group of people (agents of the oppression). Some of these are the oppressions of parents, men—and elders.

Elders are as valuable to human society as are any other group of people. We are smart, fun, loving, creative, and courageous. The world would be lost without us!

Yet the oppressive economic system values humans only for how productive they are at creating wealth for the owning class, and age is one of the factors that enters into the calculation.

The system values our precious young people for their potential to create wealth in the future. And classism, racism, sexism, disability oppression, and other oppressions determine how resources are allocated to their survival to adulthood.

It values adults only as workers who create wealth for the owning class.

And it makes elders expendable when any of the following happen:

- We become less productive due to being worn down by work and oppression.
- We have not been trained in needed skills.
- Cheaper labor is available.
- Fewer workers are needed.

Our age, our biology, is the excuse for our being judged as expendable. It is the excuse for elder oppression, not the reason for it. Economic oppression (classism) is the reason for our oppression.

RESPONDING TO THE OPPRESSION

I was recently asked a great question: "Since no age group is the agent of elder oppression, what does this mean in terms of us elders counseling non-elders on their oppressive feelings about us?" She then gave examples of non-elders saying hurtful things to her.

Elders and our allies must never stay quiet when oppression comes at us, no matter where it comes from, but many of us struggle with how to best respond. I have found it helpful to discharge on "If the person in front of me is not my oppressor, where is the oppression coming from and what can I do about it?" The following is an example from my life outside RC:

My father was living with my family and became violent due to confusions caused by Alzheimer's disease. We could not keep him or others (including my mother and teenage daughter) safe in our home. With few choices available,

we found him a "good" nursing home. Family members were with him ten hours a day in shifts. Even though there was that much family involvement, I was appalled by the poor care and angry with the staff for the elder oppression directed at my dad.

With lots of discharge, I realized that the staff were not the problem. The nursing home was under-staffed and under-resourced. It was owned by a corporation that owned many other nursing homes and whose real purpose was to make money for the owners. The residents, their families, and the staff were all in the same seemingly powerless position. Understanding this enabled me to start a "family counsel" for the purpose of supporting residents, families, and staff.

The staff grew to trust me, and we could talk about problems. And the corporation was scared of us once we organized. We were able to pressure it to improve conditions for everyone. We also successfully lobbied our state legislature to raise the minimum wage for some nursing home workers. Needless to say, this all improved my father's experience in the nursing home.

As we better understand elder oppression, we will become more effective at challenging and ending it. Everyone has been taught horrible misinformation about elders, and we can't blame them for it. What will make a positive difference for us, for the other person, and for ending elder oppression? The following are some things we can do in RC:

- We can see that elder liberation is taught in our RC classes and explain that, similar to what we do with all oppressions, non-elders

should not counsel about elders with elders without their permission.

- We can join or form an elder support group, so we aren't alone trying to figure things out.

- If a non-elder starts a session with us about elders, without our permission, we can tell them that we cannot or do not want to be their counselor on that topic.

- We can show our elder selves boldly and proudly and give a more accurate picture of the reality of elders.

- We can hold out an expectation that non-elders will be our allies. If we have the attention and desire, we can offer to counsel them on elder oppression. If we do not, we can refer them to non-elders.

- We can notice if we are in the oppressor role to someone who is targeting us with oppressive behavior. If so, we can discharge and think about how we can remain an ally as we reach for the person to be our ally.

- When we cannot figure out how to respond to some oppressive behavior, we can follow up with the person at a later time, perhaps with a third person present.

- In sessions, we can "blame the person" if it brings discharge, but the goal is to get beyond early feelings of victimization and to take action toward ending elder oppression by reaching for others and making them our allies.

What else can you think of? I'm glad to be growing older with you!

Jerry Ann Yoder
International Liberation
Reference Person for Elders
Yarmouth, Maine, USA

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

Special Time for Dads

Our fathers' support group meets weekly on Zoom. This week we did special time with a child during our meeting.

We fathers have big feelings. We sometimes feel pulled to hurt our children. To abandon them. To give up. We are careful with whom we share these feelings. We know they will restimulate just about everyone, especially those who had fathers who were angry, isolated, or discouraged. We trust each other enough to show them. We don't correct each other's feelings. We trust our minds and our connection. Discharge often occurs.

This week we left the Zoom meeting to do special time with a child for fifteen minutes. Then we came back to Zoom to exchange ten minutes each.

The big feelings were contradicted by the special time. Our difficulties as male parents can confuse us about our goodness. Showing our caring to our children reminded us of reality—that we love our children, that our children love us, that our existence makes their world better. We are talking about trying this again, maybe with a male ally who can join us for the special time.

Mike Newsom
Oxford, Maine, USA
Reprinted from the RC e-mail
discussion list for leaders of parents



KATIE KAUFFMAN

Inspiring and Challenging Each Other as White Allies

I am the moderator of the new RC e-mail discussion list for white allies ending racism. I sent the following to this list to welcome everyone and provide some guidelines. If you have not signed up for this list, I welcome you to do so. The instructions for signing up are on page 90 in this *Present Time* and on the RC website at <https://www.rc.org/page/publication/guidelines_lists/subscribe>.

It is an interesting time to be alive, as racism becomes more visible (mostly to us white people) and responses to it become more powerful and united. We have a lot of work to do, and we can do it now.

I am happy that we now have this RC e-mail discussion list for white allies—for sharing our thinking, our successes, our attempts, and even our mistakes. It also gives us a chance to ask each other questions and share resources that have expanded our understanding and given us accurate information.

This is an incredible time to be doing the work of eliminating white racism. We can use this list to inspire and challenge each other to increase and broaden our actions in the world.

The following are some reminders as we share on the list:

- Make room for folks who don't always get their voices out—raised-poor and presently poor people, working-class people, young people, women, and so on. Be thoughtful.
- Think about the length of your writing (try to make it shorter rather than longer). Think about the language you use. There will be folks on the list whose first language is not English.
- Watch for the pull we white people sometimes have to criticize, reprimand, or act like we know better. Aim for a kind, caring, and supportive tone. Corrections may sometimes be needed, but take a breath and think about how best to make them (feel free to contact me for assistance).
- Use your sessions (not this list) to client about the work you are doing. Do tell us what you've found useful in discharging on white racism.

I welcome you to make full use of the list. This includes remembering the reality of our goodness, the significance of our connections with each other and with our fellow humans of the Global Majority, and our inherent confidence that we can do this. I look forward to hearing from you.

Dvora Slavin

Seattle, Washington, USA

Reprinted from the RC e-mail discussion list for white allies ending racism



STREET ART, IN DENVER, COLORADO, USA • SKY YARBROUGH

An RC Colleagues' Ending-Racism and Liberation Workshop

An RC Colleagues Ending-Racism and Liberation Workshop took place in June 2020. It was led by Ellie Brown (International Liberation Reference Person for College and University Faculty) and Barbara Love (International Liberation Reference Person for African Heritage People). Highlights were the precision in planning and execution, the coordination, the camaraderie, the selflessness of the team that put this awesome workshop together, and all the awesome leaders who hosted numerous Zoom sessions well ahead of the workshop.

Barbara gave deep insights into the cause of racism. Racism is very much linked with classism because it was created to help the owning class make or retain wealth by pitting diverse groups against each other and painting certain groups as sub-human to justify pillaging their resources and raping their cultures. The colour of a person's skin or shape of their nose has nothing to do with intellect or character. It is humans who fabricate lies about racial groups so as to more easily exploit them.

All such lies about racial superiority and inferiority have been scientifically disproved, but unfortunately many people still carry the distorted images in their psyches. Barbara likened RC liberation theory to the Hubble Space Telescope that allows us to see what ordinarily the human eye wouldn't see. Because we put our minds to liberating oppressed groups, we can see things from their perspective. RC also recognizes (one of the first groups to do so) that the oppressor has material [distress] that needs to be worked on because

when people are taught to oppress, they are hurt and lose connection with some of their humanity.

For me the worst part of racism is how we People of the Global Majority have internalized the distress recording that says "white people are better than Black people." We copy white people to ridiculous extents. We shun our languages, religions, and values just to gain their acceptance, but we have never been and—as long as racism remains—will never be accepted. Why? Because no matter how much Queen's English we speak, or how much bleaching cream we rub, or how expensive is the fake white people's hair we wear, or how skillful is the plastic surgery we undergo to be like the white supremacists—they don't care! They want our natural resources, our backs for labour, our servile belief in their gods, for revenue and control. We can only break free when we open our eyes and see our own beauty, intelligence, and goodness and *fight* for them by changing the oppressive narrative.

Ellie opened Sunday's session on sexism with a powerful statement that has been ringing in my mind ever since: "Don't settle for mere reform; push for restructuring." Don't settle. Profound. The message for me is that any type of liberation, so far as it involves changing hurtful stereotypes, is an uphill task that requires not only passion but also perseverance and sacrifice. It's not easy as a woman to stand against male domination at home or at work, or to stand against classism, tribalism, or whatever else ails our society. It takes guts [courage]. It takes a constantly re-emerging mind

that shakes off discouragement and deceptions and speaks its truth with conviction.

I loved my support groups. We had great sessions. I will not be "settling."

Nez Ibekwe
Awka, Anambra State, Nigeria



BARNEGAT, NEW JERSEY, USA • © STAN EICHNER

What Is It Really Like to Be a Man?

I am writing from my perspective as a heterosexual white man who lives in a rich Western country. I am aiming to be as vulnerable and honest as I can, to write as if I am receiving attention and am discharging—it is impossible for me to think about these things in any other way. What I write may not apply to all men.

We adult men are often those who hurt others in society. We are typically the ones who carry out violent attacks, abuse positions of power, cut employee salaries to make more profit, capture and sell enslaved people, act out sexism, and so on. Unfortunately, the list is long.

In RC we know that to mistreat people, we ourselves have to have been hurt and not allowed to heal from the hurts. Therefore, we know that men have been badly hurt to behave the way they do. This means that men are also victims—victims of men’s oppression. A large portion of the victimisation occurs in men’s early years. The oppression of young men is brutal and painful. It also shuts down men’s ability to feel and recover from their hurts.

The following are four areas of men’s oppression. They are the areas in which I currently notice the impact of the oppression the most, in my work with men and in my own sessions.

MEN ARE MADE TO HIDE HOW THEY FEEL

As young boys, we males have to hide our feelings in order to get by [do okay] or simply to survive. We quickly realise that showing our feelings, including talking about them, is not wanted by those who care about us—that it is stressful, humiliating, or embarrassing for them. As we grow up, it becomes actively dangerous for us to show our feelings. In no part of our lives are they wanted or welcomed. Fortunately, Co-Counselling directly challenges this.

“What are you feeling?” is not a simple question for men to answer. We are trained to feel humiliated about our feelings, to regard them as a weakness or a big problem that needs to be stopped quickly.

I recently asked an adult man to talk about his feelings from the week, but it was too much for him. He wanted to share, but as soon as he started, he was overwhelmed with powerful emotions that took him back to an early terrifying place. He could not answer my question, or you could say that his response—silence and tension—was his answer.

MEN’S VALUE IS DEFINED BY WHAT THEY DO

As men we are trained to think that our worth is based on our ability to earn money. Previously it was about our ability to fight—we were expected to defend the family, the feudal lord’s lands, our country.

It can be difficult to find comfort or feel confident apart from in our work. Work can give us a feeling of self-worth. This often leads to a compulsion to work so we can feel the self-worth we are unable to feel anywhere else. When we are unable to earn money, we may experience heavy feelings, including thoughts of suicide.

Work sets up difficulties in our relationships with women. Women are usually not given the same opportunities to work as men and can feel like this is unfair (which it is). At the same time, we men may feel like we are doing the only thing we can do to contribute to the family or society and that if it is taken away, then who are we? This view of our value is so strong that we struggle to answer the question “Who am I?” without it being about our job or the work we perform.

Men’s bodies are often treated like tools to do a job. We are the disposable tools of war or the disposable workhorses of the economy. Illnesses are to be ignored or worked around. It is hard for men to have judgement about this.

MEN ARE STOPPED FROM CONNECTING WITH OTHER HUMANS

Men have to be disconnected from other humans to behave in harmful ways, to be the tools of the oppressive society—to kill people, to fire people, to carry out acts of violence, to dominate women.

Boys’ relationships with other boys are often considered unimportant or even dangerous. Almost all close relationships are mocked from an early age—for example, “mummy’s boy.” Society suggests that the only way for men to get closeness is through sex.

I read about some research in which adults were given the same baby to be with for a short period of time. Some of the adults were told that the baby was a boy; others were told that it was a girl. The “baby boy” was touched less often and received less verbal intimacy. Some research about teenage boys (I think in care homes) revealed that one of the boys had no physical contact with another human being for a whole

year. These are heartbreaking examples of what it is like to be male.

Early on, wrestling is allowed for boys. However, as they grow up, such contact is often regarded as dangerous because young men are seen as physical threats.

Homophobia is a brutal weapon used against all men. For men to openly love each other challenges the societal status quo. Gay and Bisexual men are viciously and continuously attacked for loving each other and are made to seem different or wrong. Homophobia keeps heterosexual men from being affectionate with each other. When they are, they are treated in the same way that Gay and Bisexual men are treated.

The severing of men from close relationships is brutal, violent, and humiliating, and it impacts our society in many ways. For example, suicide is the biggest killer of men in certain age groups in the United Kingdom and the United States. And the men in those age groups are three times more likely to commit suicide than the women. The conditioning to be disconnected also makes men vulnerable to being manipulated into being the tools of the oppressive society.

MALES LIVE WITH FEAR AND VIOLENCE

Males experience violence and the threat of violence from an early age. Many boys experience a constant threat of violence—on school playgrounds, at home, even with friends.

Many males feel fear on a daily basis, as young boys and therefore also as adults. We may struggle to believe that other men feel fear because they have been trained to hide it. Men I have spoken to talk about constant anxiety, a complete lack of a secure foundation, or a foundation that at any moment could disappear.

People are so used to constant violence, particularly male violence, that they don't realise the impact it has on young boys. Young boys come into the world without violent thoughts or actions, but they are quickly shown a world in which men kill other men and people use violence on a daily basis to get what they want. It is not surprising that some young boys spend a lot of time playing war games and fighting games. These games help boys deal with the information they have received. As beautiful, kind, loving young boys, we see a world and a history full of violence. We could play war and fighting games for decades in an attempt to discharge about that!



ISRAEL • LYNDA KATZ

A little boy is left alone and terrified on a daily basis. All he wants to do is escape the feelings of horror and fear. He doesn't want to feel them, in part because his natural recovery process has been taken away. Later in life he may be able to control and dominate his relationships, the household, the company, so that his feelings are not so constantly restimulated. He may become a controlling person who does anything to avoid feeling that scared again.

A first step for us men is to be honest and vulnerable as we talk about how men's oppression has impacted us. Perhaps if we understand ourselves and each other a bit better, we can challenge the brutal mistreatment of men and the devastation it causes in our world.

S—
England

From a Large Black U.S. Female during the Pandemic

I am a large Black woman living in the United States during the pandemic. In addition to the racism and classism that have been exaggerated in my country's response to the pandemic (I live in a wealthy city but have no hospital in my section of town), I live in constant terror of medical mistreatment because I am fat.

I am also passionate about the elimination of sexism and fat oppression. I use RC for my liberation as a large woman and for building allies for large women in this important work.

I am writing to share some of what my life is like as a large Black woman during the pandemic and how I continue fighting for myself. I will also share how we can use what we are seeing and experiencing right now to see fat oppression more clearly and take a bigger stand against it.

A few years ago, my mother, sister, and I were in the pre-operative area at a hospital waiting for the doctor who was going to do a lifesaving operation on my mother. I had done research and carefully selected the doctor for his credentials and approved of his warmth and thoughtful interactions with my mother in the appointments before the surgery.

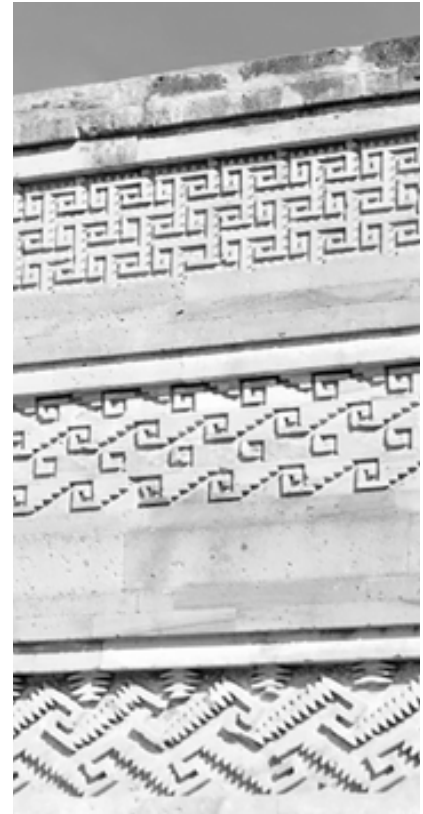
The doctor walked into the curtained area where the nurses had prepared my mother for surgery and began talking about the surgery he had just completed. He said, over and over again, that my mother was “so nice and small” and that her surgery was going to be so much easier than the one he had just done. He repeated at least ten times how big the last woman had been, how hard it had been to operate on her, and how much

nicer and easier it was going to be to operate on my mother because she was “nice and small.” This made her feel pretty, special, and cared for—and it scared me half to death. All I could think was that I had to do my best to never need this surgery because I could not count on [rely on] the doctor being on my side [wanting to help me]. I was also stunned that he would talk about another large woman that way in front of me.

If I were to show up [arrive] at a hospital right now with COVID, I would be placed on a list of people less likely to survive the disease. I would worry about whether they had tested the medications on large people so that I would receive the right dosage. I would worry about whether the doctors or nurses would provide me with the same level of care as others. And, most frighteningly, I would worry that if the hospitals got to the point where they no longer had equipment or medication to treat everyone, I would not be on a list of people worth the effort.

I am living a very restricted life during the pandemic because what is most important to me is that my mother, who is seventy-four and has had some health challenges, survive this period. I am the only person she has spent in-person time with since March. I don't know if I would live such a restricted life if I did not want to preserve my ability to see her.

As a large woman, I already live with heavy messages that tell me I am not supposed to be out in public, take up space, be an up-front leader, and more. It has been fairly easy for me to stay home



MITLA, OAXACA, MEXICO • DIANE SHISK

during the pandemic because I already have few leisure and social activities. I don't go out to eat much because people sometimes watch and comment on what I eat. I don't go to movies and shows because the seating is usually too small for me. I live under a constant message that I am not supposed to exist as a large woman, that I am to blame for being large, and that I should accept that I have no right to things because there is something wrong with me. Blaming large women for being fat, mistreating them, and denying them resources are constant and unchallenged. And if I were to get COVID, I fear the oppression of large women is harsh enough that no one—including my family and Co-Counselors—would fight for me where I couldn't fight for myself. I have a strong feeling that, under fat oppression, everyone would just shrug their shoulders and say, “Yeah . . . I mean . . . she was fat.”

“OBESITY”

I voraciously consume the news because I work in public service and because I am terrified to not know what is going on [happening] right now, moment to moment. When reading and listening to news, I hear over and over again that being “obese” makes me more vulnerable during the pandemic. In particular, it is always part of a list of illnesses—heart disease, high blood pressure, diabetes, and obesity.

I have discharged for about thirty years on fat oppression and being a large woman and have counseled with hundreds of large women from all over the world. Based on that work, I think that being fat, or large, or “obese” is a physical state. Large women (“obese” people) may have illnesses or physical difficulties, but they vary quite a bit across the population. I have one chronic condition for which I take medication, and, interestingly, my thin mother has the same chronic illness and has responded best to the exact same medication in a higher dose. It appears that even as a large woman, my genetics and the specific constellation of distresses accumulated within my family play a large role in my health.

“PRE-EXISTING CONDITIONS”

Watching the coronavirus disproportionately impact Black and brown people has been a wake-up call for many on the severity of racism. It gets talked about a lot in terms of racism in health care, but folks are also starting to realize how the experience of racism wears Black and brown people down and impacts our health, making us more vulnerable to illness. An extreme version of this emerged in the news recently: the attorneys for the police officer who suffocated George

Floyd to death are now officially claiming as a murder defense that but for Mr. Floyd’s pre-existing conditions, he would not have died from a knee on his neck.

This language of pre-existing conditions is also being used to blame people in the United States for dying from COVID. It’s become a buzz phrase that scares me. I worry about the role “pre-existing conditions” will play in people’s economic lives and opportunities after the pandemic. For example, when nearly everyone returns to my office in person, will it be obvious who has a pre-existing condition because they will still be working from home? Will they miss opportunities for advancement, relationship building, and other subtle things used to get opportunities under capitalism? Will they be marked as “sick” and not invested in as people? And what would all of that mean for large women if “obesity” is cemented in society as a pre-existing condition?

SUGGESTIONS FOR ALLIES

I have many close allies, and almost none of them can yet take a stand in their minds against fat oppression. It’s still a struggle for most large women to take this stand. But society’s use of “obesity”—an aspect of fat oppression already used to blame people, particularly poor people and People of the Global Majority, for illness and mistreatment—offers us all an opportunity to fight harder in our minds and in the world against fat oppression.

The following are some ways allies can work on fat oppression:

- Ask large women what it is like being large right now and listen deeply.
- Say the word “obesity” and discharge.
- Discharge on feeling relieved that you are not “obese” and/or do not have chronic illnesses.

continued . . .



BOROBUDUR, JAVA, INDONESIA • MARC GOLDRING

LIBERATION

... continued

- Talk openly about your chronic illnesses. Ask about or know what chronic illnesses the large women in your life do or don't have and don't make assumptions. (For example, I have a Co-Counselor who is always asking me if certain seating works for my knees, but I have no knee problems—just an arthritic ankle from a childhood injury.)

- Work on your food addictions, issues with exercise, early abuse, and so on, and don't assume large women have the same struggles.

- Work on any irrational activities you participate in to stay thin or to get thinner.

- Work on any feelings of blame toward large women.

- Decide that you will fight for the survival of large women you love if they get sick from coronavirus.

- Consider that being large is not a death sentence.

- Stand against policies that reopen society only for "healthy" and young people—policies that are being openly pushed in the United States at this time.

Finally, I would like allies to consider that fat oppression is central in the racism directed at African-heritage women in the United States. It is not clear how

much of being large is genetic. It is not clear how much of it is a result of pre-slavery sexism that valued fattened women. It is not clear how much is a physiological response to food scarcity in many of our early lives (including food deserts in Black communities). It's not clear how much is from the physical effects of oppression (for example, exhaustion) and present-time choices about eating and exercise.

At minimum, it would be correct to assume that a large woman is not large due to gluttony and laziness, a core message of fat oppression. It would also be correct to remember that large women and our bodies are good right now, that we are smart, and that our minds and Co-Counseling work for our re-emergence.

HEALTH AND FLOURISHING

A couple of weeks ago I had a "tele-visit" with my doctor. She immediately exclaimed, "You look really good." She said I looked happy. I can only imagine what she has been seeing with people over the last period as the head of internal medicine at one of the city's largest hospitals. I told her, "I'm having a pretty [quite] good pandemic." And that's true.

My work is too demanding, but it is good work that I feel good

about. I have been able to keep my mother safe and secure and help her manage any needs she may have (like her trash being taken out). I text and Zoom with my extended family, so we talk more than we have in years. I have organic groceries delivered, cook all of my food, and do virtual workouts with my pre-pandemic personal trainer three times per week. I got back on my condominium board to help manage things, as many of my neighbors, mostly single Black women, face economic instability during the pandemic. It's been wonderful to spend so much time in the joyful space that I designed. And with easier access to Co-Counseling via Zoom, I have been going to more workshops and will start a Regional large women's support group over Zoom next week.

My mother and I have joked a lot about how being raised poor has been an asset for us during the pandemic. We don't miss going out to restaurants, going on vacations, or engaging in other middle-class leisure activities. We have a fundamental sense that we are in reality about what is going on and have excellent, creative survival skills. And while there is fat oppression and ageism in our relationship (I'm fat, and she is old), there is an unspoken solidarity in both of us being targeted. We understand that being targeted differently is not worth fighting about during the pandemic. We have an unwavering sense that we would fight to the end for each other.

Nikki Stewart

Washington, D.C., USA

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



ILANA STREIT

The Female Artists' Workshop

I recently attended my first Female Artists' Workshop, led by Emily Feinstein (International Liberation Reference Person for Visual Artists). There were twenty-seven attendees in all, and fourteen of us were Indigenous, Black, or People of the Global Majority. Emily met on Friday with our Indigenous, Black, and People of the Global Majority group. It was amazing to be with female artists of colour and be reminded that I am not alone with the many challenges I come up against as I reach for reclaiming being an artist.

Emily told us that racism wipes out [destroys] our stories and sexism tells us that it doesn't matter. We are marginalized because being a female artist and having a voice is not aligned with the oppressive society. Internalized artists' oppression and internalized sexism set us up [predispose us] to feeling like we've failed and need to go away and have the fight alone. We need to stay with each other and not get confused as we each show our most vulnerable places. We need to build resources around each other. Emily suggested that we reach out to other female artists and form a small group that meets periodically to support and discharge with each other.

She encouraged us to tell our stories, to celebrate our voices, to claim "living out loud," and to stay connected while doing it. She also said that female intelligence in action and taking stands is a great form of agitation—so go out and agitate! We can discharge so we know that every piece of our mind we reclaim, and where we put our mind, matters.

I spent the early years of my life surrounded by white people, so my attention has been

taken up with racism and internalized racism. I have not put a lot of attention on sexism, so to put "female" in front of everything—"female artist," "female musician"—is not easy, but I can see that it is necessary for my re-emergence.

I recently retired from teaching and decided to put my attention on being an artist. I started a collective with two other women, and we did two projects together—one a video art installation and the other an eight-part web series. I learned a lot and am now doing a solo project. I am collecting audio recordings of Black Canadians sharing the history of their ancestors' journeys to Canada and what they themselves have experienced living and growing up in Canada. I am also looking at how Black Canadians' experiences are part of the fabric of Canadian history and need to be included and documented in our history books. I recently received a grant from the Canadian Arts Council to use toward my project.

Even though I have done these projects, it is still hard for me to claim being an artist. In my mind I've had a narrow definition of "artist": only certain people could be artists, and only certain activities could be considered art. Being at the workshop helped me rethink this and see that what I do is art. I am a collector of stories, a storyteller, and a writer. I am a female artist. Fully female in everything I do!

Donna Paris

Toronto, Ontario, Canada

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

Reclaiming My Creative Mind

One of my regular Co-Counselors, an artist, encouraged me to participate in the Reclaiming Creativity Zoom series with Emily Feinstein (International Liberation Reference Person for Visual Artists). That was a good idea and good encouragement for me.

As an adult woman of African heritage, I've always had the idea that I can do a lot except for being creative. I'm an admirer of other people's artworks but not a creator myself. That's what I thought.

It was a huge challenge and contradiction [to distress] for me to participate in the creativity meetings led by Emily. What was I supposed to do there? I began discharging about being creative even before the workshop began and could understand a bit more about my early hurts and my belief that I'm not creative.

Because of Emily's honest, warm, powerful, and joyful way of leading, I immediately felt at home in the group. I could feel that she had no

doubt about our goodness. I could decide not to hold back.

As a Black child born in a colonized country, it was difficult for my parents, who were working hard to survive, to give me enough attention. They had no time to play with me. They were making sure their children would have enough food and could go to school. Playing was not an option for them. As a Catholic child I was expected to take care of the adults. I did not understand this and withdrew more and more into myself.

Expressions of playfulness, looseness, and open-mindedness were less and less appreciated. This was painful, and I felt alone. Gradually I believed that my life was only good when I was serving and caring for others. It felt like I was losing myself and with that the creative child in me.

In the Reclaiming Creativity series, I discharged deep hurts about not feeling good about myself and feeling alone and separated from others. I reached for that disappointed child

and more and more got an image of how she was before she gave up. I could feel her goodness, the fun she had, and her expectations. I could feel her unconditional love.

When I was counseled in a leaders' class, I could reach out loosely and playfully to my little one [the young me]. I could feel the lightness, the enthusiasm, and the joy in myself as I reclaimed my mind. My counselor and the others danced with me while I was client. Wow, it was quite a healing process, and it still is.

Thinking I'm not creative is a discharge issue. I decided to never again say that I am not creative. I will keep healing the pain of feeling insignificant. I want to continue to dance with that little child in me. I now have a bigger picture of what creativity means for me: trusting my mind, being open, loving that little girl in me, and feeling that I'm connected.

Marlène Melfor

Arnhem, the Netherlands

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



DEN BOSCH, THE NETHERLANDS • TIM JACKINS

Being a Female Artist Is Powerful

Something important shifted for almost all of us at the Female Artists' Workshop. (See article on page 29.) I would say that we came to a deeper understanding of the importance of female art, of our creativity as a revolutionary tool, and of ourselves as female artists. The following are some of my insights:

- Being a female artist in whatever way we choose is a powerful act. It heads us toward our unique voice, our "real person," and powerful leadership.

- Artists are specialists in thinking about what does not yet exist and finding new solutions because of that.

- Being a female artist contradicts how we were limited as girls and the whole "soup" of sexism, racism, and classism. How courageous we are to take this on! How strong we are! How important it is that we never underestimate our importance as female artists.

- We need to think big. We can set goals for achieving everything that matters to us, including ourselves. We can find the resources to help us stick with what we want to do. We can decide where we want to spend our time, attention, money, and effort, instead of reacting to what happens and making things go well for everyone according to sexism.

- We can build a strong and diverse network of women artists so we can prioritize our artwork and handle all that divides us as women artist leaders. As old unbearable feelings from early defeats show up, we can have each other to remind us of what matters and to help us discharge and move forward in making art and fighting against all the ways capitalism has taken away our joy in making and thinking about art.

- We female artists work hard. We are skilled. We are solution finders. We use our intuition and good thinking to make art but also to negotiate prices, write, publish, exhibit, find materials, and study the work of other artists. There is joy and play in our work—but it is work. (A message of artists' oppression is that artists' work is not "real work.")

- Authentic art is revolutionary. We can decide to use our voice against social injustice, the climate crisis, and other challenges. At the same time, all art is valuable and important.

- Sharing our art is a powerful way to have a session. Our art reveals something precious about ourselves.



PROVENCE, FRANCE • PAMELA PERROTT

When we showed ourselves when we were young, we were often ridiculed and criticized. Some of us were pressured to be the artist our parents wanted us to become. Our art and our minds were under attack from the strict judgments of class oppression and from "mental health" oppression. At the workshop it was special to show my art to women who had discharged enough to be able to listen to my fear connected with female artists and "mental health" oppression.

I'm reaching for more of my authentic self while painting. What will come out of me when I dig deeper? Will I be shocked about what I discover about myself? Do I dare to let myself go deep without the usual control? When I show what I make, will it prove that I am not okay? Old feelings can still feel so true.

Showing my art and myself helps me be a more authentic, decisive, and courageous female leader in general. That helps me, as a middle-class and white female, to more easily support those who are leading on stopping the climate crisis and its threat to human existence.

Monnie Paashuis

Doetinchem, the Netherlands

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

Women Artists' Liberation

I recently participated in a workshop for women artists with about thirty other women. It was led by Emily Feinstein, International Liberation Reference Person for Visual Artists. (See also articles on pages 29 and 31.)

On Friday, Indigenous and Global Majority women met for several hours. We were also able to have all our mini-sessions with each other and stay connected during the day-long workshop on Saturday. That made a big difference. Having a full day to focus on being women artists and noticing what a big contradiction [to distress] that was made it clear that we've all become used to having way too little support.

It is shocking to me that after thirty-six years in RC, and being an artist always being central to my life, this was the first time I had gotten to be at a workshop for women artists. Artists' oppression, male domination, and capitalism work together in powerful ways to limit and suppress women's work as artists, and this has an immense impact on the world.

WHY ART MATTERS

Art making is a basic and universal human activity, a way of expressing our intelligence, our hopes and struggles, our histories and cultural identities, our connections to the earth and each other. It is so powerful that it is one of the first things dictatorships try to suppress and invading armies try to destroy. For example, slaveholders outlawed drumming and dancing by enslaved Africans; the English burned the harps of Ireland; the Spanish burned the

Mayan codices (illustrated books with Mayan history and beliefs); the Chilean dictatorship outlawed the *charango*, an Indigenous musical instrument.

But oppressed people have always found ways to keep using art to insist on their freedom, to insist that they are human when the oppression says they are not. Art is one of the most powerful organizing tools we have. All organizing is about changing the story we have about reality. Art can often reach past the rigid distresses that keep us believing lies, because it touches us on many levels at once. People who would never read an article about a political issue will respond to songs, poetry, and visual art. People who avoid learning about the oppression of other groups can be changed by a personal story told through art.

Art making and artists need to be taken far more seriously and be given far more support. Women artists have a key role to play in women's liberation and in all liberation work. When we make art, we are acting against every form of oppression we are targeted with. By showing and celebrating our intelligence and creativity, we are taking a "no limits" stand for ourselves, all women, and all people.

ARTISTS' OPPRESSION

Capitalism uses art to support the oppressive society. It treats art as a product to be sold for profit. It tries to control and suppress art making that undermines oppression.

All art that portrays human intelligence undermines the oppressive society, whether or not it speaks directly about liberation. So we're told that making art is unimportant and selfish and not a serious job. Resources for

artists are limited in the United States, and artists are encouraged to compete with each other for every opportunity to make a living. Art by women, Indigenous people, People of the Global Majority, and working-class people is often classified as a "craft" or "folk art" and seen as much less important than "real art" produced by and for elites. Even within our movements, artists are often treated as less important than people who organize marches or make speeches, although our ability to express a shared vision of liberation is often what moves people to take action.

Artists are targeted with "mental health" oppression—told we are unstable, too emotional, and not objective. Some of these same things are said about women, Indigenous people, and People of the Global Majority. When an artist is also female, the pressure to be silent is much stronger, and when you add being Indigenous or a Person of the Global Majority, it's stronger still. Many years ago, I read a book by science-fiction writer Joanna Russ called *How to Suppress Women's Writing*. It listed all the many ways that women writers are invalidated. For me it was useful in resisting internalized sexism around my writing. It's a great tool for discharge.

MY WOMAN ARTIST STORY

I have always been an artist. When I was five, my mother taught me to read, and I thought the alphabet was magical. I could write the word *cat* on a piece of paper and send it to someone far away, and they would think about cats! I was fortunate to have parents who supported my brothers and me to make art. My mother was a feminist visual artist and writer, and my father was a scientist who also wrote poetry and stories. I attended

a small rural school in Puerto Rico where we were rarely asked to write, so I didn't experience criticism for speaking my mind or speaking it in my own way.

We moved to the United States in 1967 when I was thirteen. I was again extremely fortunate—I arrived just as the women's liberation movement was becoming large and powerful. There was an explosion of art making by women who were just learning that their own lives were worthy subjects for art. Women were forming collectives to make posters, starting small presses, and forming musical bands and theater and dance groups. So I got a lot of support from women a few years older than I was to write poetry about what mattered to me and to trust that it would matter to the world.

It was as a young adult that I began to really experience the multiple oppressions of being a woman of color artist. In spite of many new small feminist presses, all of the following—publishing as a whole, the business of book reviewing, the judging of contests and giving of awards, the production of poetry festivals, the university departments that invite writers to speak—were controlled by white men. The few women in decision-making positions were also white and didn't always fight for other women in general or Global Majority women in particular. Small presses and journals that focused on publishing writers of color were controlled by men who favored male writers. Although Latino (male) artists still had to fight racism, they received much more support than Latinas (females).

In 1981 I was a contributor to a book called *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color* that had a big impact. It was

the first full-length book by Global Majority and Indigenous women who were writing about sexism and racism at the same time. It caused me to be taken seriously by universities, which began inviting me and the other women in the book to speak. It was published by a small white feminist press and then reissued by a Global Majority women's press that was formed by the editors and some of the contributors.

It was because of the women's liberation movement, the organizing of women of color within it, and the wave of Black women writers who had led the way a few years earlier that I began to have my work published, and it was because of women's studies courses that it began to be taught.

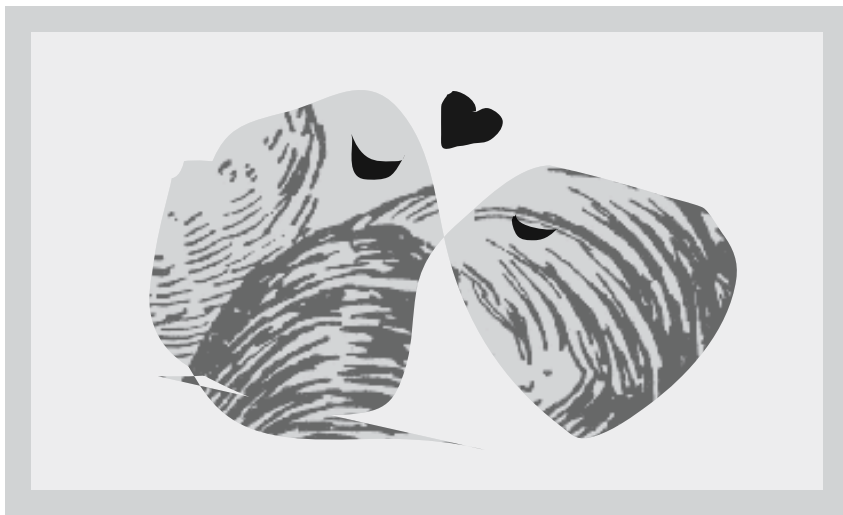
I was in two long relationships with men, both of whom said they supported my work but who also actively undermined it. One of them would go into my private writing space and "organize it" by throwing out papers I needed. The other secretly applied for grants for himself from the same funders I had applied to for joint grants for us both. I often had to write a few minutes at a time when my

daughter was napping because her father wouldn't treat my writing as being as important as his work and didn't support me with childcare.

What I realized this weekend was that although I fought hard and well for myself as a woman of color artist, sometimes found sisters with whom to resist, and became a well-known writer (though still badly underpaid), I paid a high price for having to fight so hard to do the work I love. I spent many years exhausted, struggling against discouragement, and making little money, and I am sure that contributed to my health problems. I have written much less than I would have if I hadn't had to spend so much energy fighting with sexist partners for the time to write and with sexist and racist editors and administrators for a public space in which to be heard. Because I got so used to fighting alone, I haven't had a writers' group in years. Because of this workshop, I will be organizing a writing group of Indigenous and Global Majority women.

Aurora Levins Morales
Maricao, Puerto Rico

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



KK/AR

A World with Art at the Center

About two years ago, I decided that I wanted a world with art at the center, woven into how we meet all our basic human needs—from food, shelter, and clothing to problem solving, healing, care of the environment, and togetherness. I decided to work toward creating that world. I didn't know how to begin, so I decided to start by putting art in the center of my own life.

As a first step, I challenged myself to complete a small artwork each day for a year without purchasing any new materials, and to share my daily creations online.

I chose this structure because of the following:

- Without time for fuss or doubt, I suspected it would help free me from distresses interfering with the joy of making art.
- Depleting my supplies and having to innovate by making art from trash seemed fun and liberating.
- I liked the idea that my creativity could have a positive environmental impact and that I might inspire others in the same direction.

WHAT HAPPENED

Within a few days, I was struggling. I kept making art and took the struggle to Co-Counseling sessions.

I made an average of one artwork each day for fifteen months. Some pieces took ten minutes, some two hours.

I did not use up my art supplies, but I started making art from trash anyway.

When I posted my art online, I also shared captions, short essays, and poems reflecting my insights. In this way, one daily artwork became two daily artworks.

My audience grew and engaged with each other and my posts in re-emergent ways, including by sharing their discharge and re-evaluations, their own art, and stories of bonding with family members young and old. (One friend told me that sharing my daily art with his mother every day as she neared the end of her life was a bright point of their visits and inspired her to tell stories about her life that he had never heard.)

WHAT I HAD TO DISCHARGE

When I started, I wanted my art to be impressive, tackling important topics with great skill. This approach left me bored and overwhelmed.

In sessions, I looked at the belief that my art had to be significant or else I should be doing more important things with my time (like chores, earning money, or helping others). I discharged on putting not just art but myself in the center of my life and on the hurts that had led me to give up on that. It took courage (and yet more discharge) to decide to make things just for fun.

Soon I was eagerly making pasted paper collages of clothing, and women's bodies in clothing. I was embarrassed and confused by this fascination, and I worried about indulging it. In sessions, the feelings gave way to discharge about how unworthy I'd felt as a girl looking at fashion magazines, and how avoiding scrutiny of my female body and pressures to dress in restrictive, "feminine," always-new-looking clothing had limited my life.

I researched textiles and fashion and soon was discharging about environmental degradation, exploitation of garment workers, racism, and sexism in the fashion industry, and also about humanity figuring out so many beautiful and ingenious ways to make, shape, and repair cloth.

I cried about individual women who had inspired my art, and their brave and creative choices in how they had dressed.

When a friend who liked my project gave me a swatch of wrapping paper printed to look like fur, I hesitated to use it until I brought this "fur" to a session and discharged about animals being killed to decorate human bodies. I cried about women of my mother's and grandmothers' generations for whom wearing a fur coat purchased for them by a man was one of the few ways available to publicly declare that they mattered.

After about six months of this, my daily art (and the sessions I had as a result) turned to other topics.

I've since gathered my images and writings into a book called *Sustainable Fashion: Scrap Paper Stylings for Strong Women and a Healthy Planet* that I'm sharing as an electronic book and also a printed book produced in small batches. Half of the proceeds are a fundraiser for organizations fighting for an end to unsustainable, exploitative practices in the fashion industry. The other half I'm keeping, to encourage and enable me to make more art.

WHAT I LEARNED

Here is some of what I learned:

Art making is both a form of play and (like all forms of play) an arena for wrestling with big ideas.

You don't always have to know which big ideas you'll tackle. All you need is the intention to move toward joy, healing, and connection and to follow and trust your own mind.

While the professional artist's vision is limited, edited, and exploited by capitalism, the rest of us who also feel a rational need for creative expression are pushed and hurt into trying to fill that need in the role of consumer.

In the marketplace, classism, racism, sexism, size-ism, age oppression, "mental health" oppression, and other oppressions are reinforced, while artistry—richness, complexity, specificity, diversity—is removed in the name of higher profit margins.

Because of the exploitative system, our personal preferences, practical needs, and deepest values may not be represented. Those who try to meet human needs without destroying the planet in the process—professional artists, workers, and consumers alike—

struggle to do so. The fashion industry is a perfect example of this.

In a world where art replaces exploitation—art as play; as celebration; as tribute to the inherent beauty, complexity, and interconnectedness of all life; as exploration of possibilities; as invitation to emotional expression; and as contradiction to distress recordings—there will be room for everyone to express themselves creatively and to explore, savor, and embrace diversity.

Patterns of greed and consumerism can't possibly withstand the contradiction of real access to and support for creative expression, connection, and care for all life.

A world without art impoverishes us all.

A world with art at its center challenges exploitation and oppressions of all kinds.

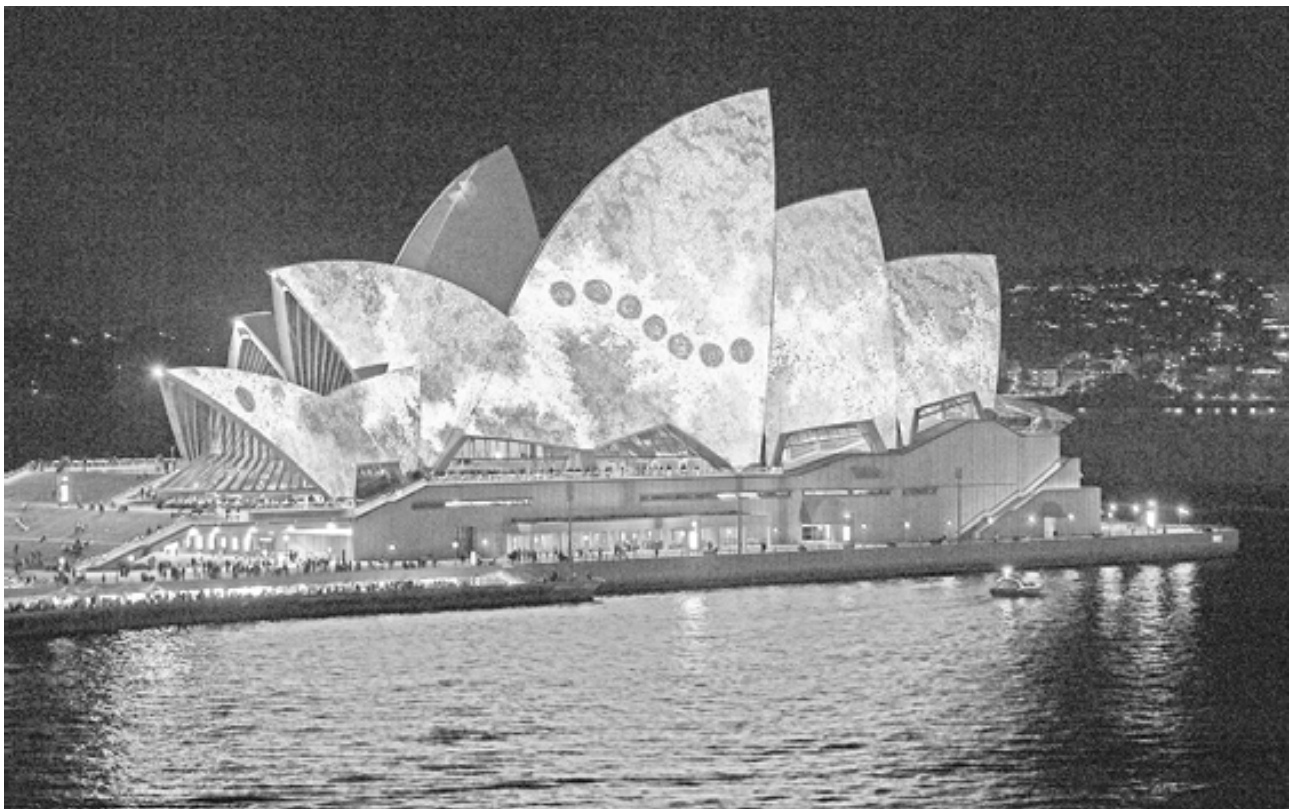
A life with art at its center helps heal the damages of past hurts.

Art is activism. (It makes a world with more art.)

Amy Kalisher

Chaplin, Connecticut, USA

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



SYDNEY OPERA HOUSE, SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA • NICOLA OSSHER

Giving Away My Money: A Ten-Year Project

I am a thirty-year-old mixed-heritage Jewish female. My maternal grandfather brought our family into the owning class by starting an electronics company in the 1960s. The company is privately held, and the profits continue to be shared within our family even though my grandfather has passed [died]. My uncle and cousin (both first-born sons) continue to run the company. Some of their biggest contracts are with the U.S. Department of Defense and Raytheon, a weapons manufacturer, which means a significant amount of the company profits are derived from war.

Investments were made in the names of each of us grandchildren when we were born in the 1980s and early 1990s. These investments grew exponentially over the last thirty years because of the extractive and exploitative economic policies of the United States. This is the money I gave away this year. It was a culminating moment in a long-term project toward regaining connection and rebuilding integrity.

Since I joined RC ten years ago, I have been discharging on my owning-class identity. It is harder to work on than other identities because I feel relatively more stupid and unable to think well in the area. I guess this is how it is with oppressor identities! Below are the directions that have been useful to me.

DIRECTION ONE: WORKING FOR A LIVING

During the last ten years I have built a middle-class life and career, separate from inherited wealth, as a classroom teacher. My spouse works for our city government. Together we have purchased a

small home, with a mortgage, in a neighborhood where we now have lots of friends and where there's a strong RC Community.

Having a "regular" job puts me in contact with working people of all class backgrounds. It is a contradiction to the material [distress] that says as an owning-class person I am special or better than anyone else. I still work to resist the recording that says I need to be impressive! I struggle alongside all my fellow teachers and am proud to be a building representative for our union, which also represents working-class district employees. I have changed jobs over the years to position myself in a school district that pays decently well and has reasonable expectations for us.

Neither of my parents worked for a living, instead pursuing "passion projects." From what I can tell [perceive], there is a relationship between not working for a living, being secretive about money, and being more isolated from other people. I saw on my parents the impact of the isolation and the way they could avoid facing their material through leisure, spending, and addiction. My job, though difficult, is a source of pride, integrity, and connection. It would be hard to continue facing the demands of working if I had a "way out" with inherited money and less accountability.

At a gather-in a few years ago with owning-class young adults, Jo Saunders [International Liberation Reference Person for Owing-Class People] said that inherited money comes with inherited powerlessness. To turn that around, I have found that giving away

inherited money gives me access to bigger sessions about putting myself at the center and figuring out what I want to go after [pursue] in my life.

DIRECTION TWO: TAKING CHARGE AS A YOUNGER FEMALE

A surprising amount of discharge and connection was required at each step of giving away my inheritance—learning about my inherited money, getting control of it, and deciding how to give it away. It was essential to have regular sessions with owning-class Co-Counselors who were familiar with and had attention for the project, who could back [support] me and reflect that I was thinking well.

A big part of the project was deciding when it would be useful to share my thinking with my family and when it wouldn't. At first I felt powerless and discouraged because they "wouldn't listen to me" and "didn't get it" [didn't understand it]. Through discharge, I realized that I didn't need to wait for my family's permission to take charge. I could keep reaching toward them and offering perspective when it seemed useful, but the decision to give away my money could and should be made separately from what was possible on their timeline.

Young adults' oppression, sexism, and "mental health" oppression made me feel like deciding to give away my inheritance was an "irresponsible," "stupid," and "crazy" decision that I would later regret. I worried that giving it away would get in the way of my relationships with my brothers. I now believe that taking up space in my relationships with them (like



MARION OUPHOUET

asking that we have affordable family activities) is essential for us to have the possibility of closeness.

DIRECTION THREE: NOT DOING IT ALONE

Once I decided to give the money away, I faced a lot of discouragement about how to do it and felt sure I would “do it wrong.” After a few weeks of regular sessions with owning-class Co-Counselors, I was able to remember that, unlike in the past, I did not need to figure this out alone. Several people (in RC and in the wide world) helped me think it through. Three groups were especially significant:

- A crew of younger female owning-class Co-Counselors I’ve been close to since entering Co-Counseling and with whom I get to have big, embarrassing sessions about being “filthy rich”

- Beloved older owning-class allies who show they love me and trust my thinking (it was my RC teacher and Area Reference Person who encouraged me to share my thinking with this e-mail list)

- Resource Generation, a wide-world owning-class young adult organization that encourages giving boldly and organizes their constituency to be part of justice movements

My partner, raised middle class, also became an ally as we thought together about how to give away the money. Ultimately, we decided to give forty percent to national organizations (including Re-evaluation Counseling Community Resources) and sixty percent to local organizations, including several re-granting organizations [organizations that would give funds to intermediary organizations that would then give out and manage smaller sub-grants].

THE DECISION TO GIVE IT AWAY

My plan was to give away ten percent of my money each year until it was gone. I used the “decide, act, discharge” process and each time noticed that I was still safe and financially stable. Oftentimes, because of fluctuations in the stock

market, I could barely tell that the money was gone! On the flip side, the organizations that received the money were greatly impacted. It felt good to send it to where it was felt and invested in real people as opposed to letting it continue to enrich myself, investors, and massive corporations.

Hoarding the money had been depriving organizations of much needed funds to operate, as well as standing in the way of my re-emergence. At a certain point (having given away about twenty percent of the money), I felt comfortable enough to decide to give it all away. The decision and (more important) the action of giving it away created a feeling of empowerment as a woman and worker, the ability to notice more closely my relationships and interdependence with others, and relief from the burden of secrecy.

SUMMARY

Not being dependent on inherited wealth, deciding to be in charge as a younger female, and doing it all in connection with others have been at the core of my re-emergence throughout my ten years in RC. Believe it or not, I now enjoy my owning-class Co-Counseling sessions and support group! I still have lots of areas in which I need more discharge, but I can focus more attentively now on my potential impact as a world changer rather than feeling fraught and stuck about what to do with the money.

Jules M.
USA

Reprinted from the RC e-mail discussion list for leaders of owning-class people

Coming Back from Exile

*From a talk by Tim Jackins at the Asian and Pacific Islanders
Leaders' Workshop, on Zoom, in August 2020*

We exist at a very interesting time. The irrationalities of our societies are about to destroy the societies. And the destructive policies are being carried out by people who are governed by their restimulations.

It's very understandable that people get hurt and act out their distresses. We all do. There's little sense in blaming people for the ways they were hurt. Our goal has to be removing the hurts from every human mind. We all have the chance to take part [participate] in that.

It does mean challenging our own distresses. For example, there are a lot of people I'd rather not talk to. I feel like "it's their fault," but really it's that I'm restimulated by them. I don't always think well about them. I don't always decide that they are worth reaching for. That's throwing away someone because they got hurt. I need to make better, more rational decisions than that; and I need to work on the things that are in my way.

If you're here [at this workshop], you probably realize that ours is a very long project. *(laughter)* But every step taken in it benefits you as well as other people. Everything we know, we want to make available to everybody. I think it's in each of our interest to take steps in that direction.

Our societies have tried to keep us small. It may have started with our parents' behavior toward us as children. Someone expected us to be quiet. We got messages that we didn't know enough, that none of our ideas were any good. If we didn't understand quickly, they got quite upset. Each of us had years of this. Those distresses still affect us.

Oppressive societies exist until there's opposition. They manipulate the material [distress] that was installed in our childhoods. This keeps us small, separate, and feeling like we don't know enough to change things.



JOANNA REDFIELD VAUGHN

But we have human minds. The characteristic we value most of human minds is that they come up with [think of] new ideas and solutions. We can all do that. We have all done that. However, too much of the time we stay alone, small, and quiet about our ideas. The distresses that make us do that are costly, and especially costly in this time of societal collapse.

WE CAN SHOW A FULLER VERSION OF OURSELVES

Let's do a mini-session on how difficult it has been to go against the conditioning to not fully show our mind and ideas, and what made it that way.

(Mini-session)

We've been hurt in many ways, and we've had to hide many of the

ways we've been hurt. As children we had to hide most of ourselves. We hid much of our intelligence. Why? Because no one could respond intelligently so we gave up. Then we had to hide much of how we got hurt. People would get restimulated if we showed much of it, and they would add to the hurt instead of helping.

In RC we've slowly learned to show our Co-Counselors some of how we got hurt. It's often a very cleaned-up version. We try not to lose control of it. We had to learn to control it when we were children. It feels dangerous to feel and show how hard things were for us. None of us want to show how helpless and hurt we sometimes felt. We still feel vulnerable in those places. Why? Because we never had the chance to discharge enough.

Each of us seems to have three different models of ourselves:

- Our public model (we control how much of ourselves we show)
- Our RC model (we loosen up and show a little more)
- Our internal model (the way things actually run in our minds)

There are significant differences in these models. Ideally, as we discharge, they will coalesce. We will get to be who we are.

Our current task is showing our Co-Counselors a fuller version of ourselves. This means taking chances—chances that our Co-Counselors will still be able to think about us even after we tell them something we've hidden for

continued . . .

COUNSELING PRACTICE

... continued

decades. (I suspect you've got a long list of such things to choose from.) We want to know each other completely, and we can't wait until we are free of distress for this to happen. We need to know where each of us gets confused.

There is no reason to think less of anyone because they got hurt and have not yet had the resource to discharge and recover. That does not change anyone's inherent worth or intelligence.

One of our jobs as leaders is to be the first to take steps that we want everyone in the Community to take. It is good to do this by our own initiative, to not wait until circumstances restimulate us enough that we have to do it.

So sometime today, in some little piece of some session or group, try telling someone one little thing you've not said about yourself and your life. Just as a starting place. We need to break down the isolation that was pushed on all of us. We have lots of discharging to do, in addition to challenging the effect of distress in the present.

Do you think there's something in your life that I would not understand? Using me as an example, do you think my knowing that thing would make me think less of you? We know better than that—if we think about it. To challenge these tendencies, we have to think about them. I think we can do that now and not wait.

WE CAN CHOOSE TO THINK AND DO HARD THINGS

We are engaged in a very big undertaking. Our goal is to see that rationality becomes the basis of policy everywhere. This clearly has never yet happened anywhere for very long. To achieve the goal will require many minds, and we're starting with our minds.



Another goal is to always have our minds, to never lose them to restimulation. We don't have to be right all the time, but we need to be able to think all the time. None of us is likely to be without restimulation (perhaps that will happen in four or five generations), but we can practice thinking in spite of restimulation. It appears that the human mind always has a choice. The more undischarged distress there is, the harder the choice, but it appears that the possibility of thinking is always there.

We don't always remember that we have a choice to think. I think some of this is from childhood. We were not allowed to have many choices. It didn't matter how good our thinking was. The adults chose *their* ideas. That makes it hard to remember that we have a choice. But we can choose to think in spite of the way we feel, in spite of restimulation. We can choose to do things we don't feel like doing. There's probably no limit to how hard a choice we can make, but we all feel there are limits. We all have times when we feel "I can't do that"—not for any objective reason in the present but simply because our distresses make it feel like too much. Anytime something feels like "too much to bear," we should be suspicious.

For us to fully develop this project, for us to get RC tools into everyone's hands, we will probably all need to do things that feel "too hard," that

feel like "it's asking too much of us." There is so much restimulation about the unfair ways we were treated and the ways people did not think about us. We need to look more closely at those things. And we need practice choosing to do "unbearable" things.

We want the world to be different, and we will have to face many old distress recordings to not be confused and make that happen. We need to practice. One place we get to practice is in RC, by going back to face the early times and hurts that separated us from everyone else. As near as I can tell, no human separated easily. No human separated until it was impossible to stay. But being a newborn among unthinking adults is an impossibly difficult situation. We were all left with unbearable feelings connected to that time. Those feelings can change, and our understanding of what happened can change as we discharge on the early hurts. But we need to decide to take on [undertake] that struggle, to go back and see how bad it was and begin discharging.

WE CAN COME BACK

I want us all to come back. We are all lovely, intelligent, wonderful people. But I know there's so much of each of us that none of the rest of us get. It's as if all of us were sent off into exile, and they didn't even notice they'd done it. They didn't notice we were gone. We've finally noticed. And it's time to call us back from exile so that we can see what humans can really be.

We've wandered around and done the best we could but never quite in common effort. Maybe this is our first chance. Hopefully it's the only chance we need. Each of us has to decide for ourselves that we want to come back, that it's possible to come back, that it's worth anything, any struggle, to come back. I think it is.

On Being Counselor

I was part of the just concluded Black Liberation and Community Development Workshop (BLCD) led on Zoom by Barbara Love (International Liberation Reference Person for African Heritage People). Sharing my language and culture with so many people felt good. I also met amazing people and learned a lot.

I have lots of highlights but wanted to quickly share one of them before everyone gets to their next session, just as a reminder. I remember Barbara saying the following:

COUNSELOR DOS AND DON'TS

- Listen, listen, listen.
- Give your natural loving attention to the client.
- Do not let your voice take over [dominate] the session.
- Limit directions.
- Allow the client to listen to their own mind.
- Trust the mind of the client to know what they need to do.
- Do not tell the client what to work on.
- Pay close attention to your client.
- Do not give advice.
- Do not try to fix or solve their problem.
- Do not mention your problem that sounds like theirs and talk about how you handled it.
- Preserve and protect your relationship (confidentiality).
- Do show the client that you trust their thinking. Encourage the client to listen to their own mind and thinking.
- Do not spend time worrying if you are enough or if you should say more, because you're enough. If you worry about whether you have the right direction or contradiction [to distress] for the client, it means your attention is on you.
- Don't try to be the best counselor they ever had; just be the counselor they need right now.
- Be comfortable with silence; don't worry that you have to do something or fill up the space.
- Always listen, listen, listen.

Sharpening your skills as a Co-Counselor also depends on you yourself having lots and lots of discharge.

Hauwa Musa
Bauchi City, Bauchi State, Nigeria

Not a Guide to the Present and Future

All of our chronic patterns began as brilliant solutions to impossible situations. We must respect them in their historical roles. As history, that was a good way of staying alive, because it worked. As a guide to the present and future, no matter how impressive it sounds, it's nonsense.

Harvey Jackins
From page 142 of "Advanced
Re-emergence" in *A Better World*

Discharging on Contagion and Health

The following are thoughts from my work with bodies, disability, and health. I'm taking advantage of the COVID-19 situation to encourage us all to discharge more about our health. Let this global pandemic be our wake-up call!

Discharge and re-evaluation help us act rationally and effectively. It is important to keep thinking rigorously. Even typically trusted information sources put out "facts" that end up being refuted, as we saw with AIDS/HIV and many other diseases. There is still so much we don't know about COVID-19.

CONTAGION

In my generation, polio spread around the United States and world. It was greatly reduced with the vaccine, but it still exists in many places. I remember as a child waiting in a huge line at a shopping mall for the vaccine, delivered with a sugar cube. Friends of mine who had polio in the 1940s and '50s told of children running away from them in the streets, long after they'd fully recovered from the virus. My uncle was one of two children in his family to survive the "Spanish Flu" epidemic of 1918. My mother told me about "Typhoid Mary," a carrier of that dreaded disease, who lived for twenty-six years in isolation until she died—an early example of "social distancing." Further back, we had plagues.

We all have contagion in our histories, whether or not we can remember it, and we likely have related fears and grief that we may not be aware of. This makes it harder for us to think flexibly, accurately, and lovingly about handling contagion. Meanwhile, we are now living with COVID-19, as well as SARS,

Ebola, Zika, AIDS/HIV, hepatitis, and many other epidemic diseases. We face a real crisis of contagion.



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Each of us has gotten sick from contagious diseases—chicken pox, measles, colds, flu, skin rashes, and so forth. We felt miserable and scared, and the memories are lurking inside, waiting to be restimulated. Genetic diseases can restimulate distress about the "contagion" that happens by means of procreation. We need to recognize how deeply hurt we are in the area of illness. We cannot assume that our attitudes toward it are rational and based in present time.

DISABILITY OPPRESSION

Fear of (the assumption of) contagion is a central factor in disability discrimination, causing people to stay away from a disabled person. People are also afraid to ask questions of and connect with disabled people. (Note: Questions can be intrusive if asked thoughtlessly, but many people with disabilities are willing to share a bit about disability. Just don't start a conversa-

tion with some version of "What's wrong with you?" or other comments that prioritize your curiosity over friendly human connection. Also, don't expect a disabled person to be your educator about disability. It is your job to learn about it—from sources that don't objectify or exploit disabled individuals.)

We have inherited ancient superstitions about disability—for example, that a condition is caused by "the fates," or is punishment from the gods, or is due to unseen forces. Parents shush young ones' legitimate questions with "Don't ask, don't stare." We tend to deny that disability could happen to us or to our family.

Disabled elders, particularly those in nursing homes or congregate housing, along with incarcerated people, are among those with the highest death rates from COVID-19. Disabled people who live independently with home-care assistance are also caught in a bind—there is not enough personal protection equipment for themselves or their home-care workers. The result is unmet needs and neglect.

DIFFERENT IMPACTS

As with disasters like tornadoes, hurricanes, earthquakes, wildfires, and so on, the people hardest hit by contagion, including now with COVID-19, are those already marginalized by racism, disability oppression, and other oppressions. In the disaster field, these constituencies are called "vulnerable," which of course is no coincidence. Our oppressive societies privilege the few with wealth and resource and devalue targeted groups. The standard equation is that privilege equals a higher likelihood of survival.

“Remote” employment is now possible for some, but people working in service, production, and other “essential” jobs cannot work remotely. Parents, frontline workers, low-income people, people of color, and others who must keep working to survive have been hit the hardest by contagion and quarantine. In addition, some ethnicities are said to be the source of an illness and are targeted for that reason.

Contagious illness hits people in different communities and constituencies differently. Social rules and cultural values about bodies can make thinking and communicating about illness and contagion seem rude or taboo. Ostracizing or quarantining people who are sick can restimulate distress recordings of rejection, abandonment, blame, and fear. Dying alone in a hospital can be terrifying and hard to fathom.

Internalized oppression from our class backgrounds, and cultural influences, can confuse us. We are advised to stay “at least two meters from others.” Being separate physically is perhaps more familiar to those of us with “middle-class isolation patterns,” but we need connection—to discharge, to be able to think together, to generate solutions. Many of us raised in Western cultures were born in hospitals and placed in isolettes away from our mothers. Then we went on through childhood lacking the connection we longed for. We must keep finding ways to connect.

THE NEED TO DISCHARGE

Personal, local, and world economies have been hit hard worldwide by COVID-19. The threats of lost income, illness, and death are a difficult combination—even when they are abstract and not immediate. They can bring up insecurity experienced during birth and infancy, feelings from experiences

of abandonment, and memories of later struggles that restimulate the earliest hurts.

We need the facts in order to find solutions and good practices—for example, regarding masks, hand-washing, distancing, and so on. At the same time, we need to discharge our earliest confusions so that our actions are rational.

FEAR AND TERROR

Our societies manipulate fear; and fear itself is contagious. The media are a culprit. The news scares us. We need to discharge the fear. Can you bring your favorite news source to a session? What do you notice in yourself as you watch, listen, or read? Does it help you be informed—or feel more scared, shut down, or panicked?

Movies are another case in point [example]. Are you scared by horror movies? Disaster movies? Do you like them? Hollywood sells us fear as entertainment. Scary movies restimulate our early fears. Their plots and special effects resemble themes from our early struggles and lure us into hoping we can discharge on those struggles. The huge monsters (in other words, grown-ups)! The horrible violence (early abuse)! Creepy ghosts and goblins (our fears of death)! Aliens landing and taking over (the unknown)! People left behind, abandoned, to fend for themselves! The scary stories that most appeal to us are generally a clue to our chronic undischarged fear.

Some movies terrify us by presenting invisible forces. Contagion, too, is unseen and can restimulate how our loved ones’ distresses were generally unseen but could leap out at unexpected moments, shocking and terrifying our young selves. We also have memories of “catching” an illness from close loved ones.

SESSIONS ON OUR BODIES AND HEALTH

A few years ago, Tim Jackins wrote an article about men’s health. I was impressed with his what-seemed-to-be-joking phrase, “Discharge or die!” I’m usually “nicer” than that when I admonish people to “bring your bodies to session,” but we do need to be bolder and perhaps remind people of the consequences of not discharging on their health.

My impression is that too few RCers are having sessions on their bodies and health. Some of us are. But many are not. We forget to include our bodies’ struggles in our broader sense of ourselves. We may think that we just have “health problems to take to the doctor.”

continued . . .



PAM ROBY



MAURA FALLON

... continued

I think we need to include our bodies in everything about us! We can aim to revere and honor our bodies and discharge about them. We need to bring our health challenges—getting good nutrition, exercise, rest, and sleep, and fighting addictions—to the light of discharge. Discharge itself is a health-promoting physical activity. I'm hoping it enhances our immune function—our best friend in fighting viruses. In addition, our personal survival and well-being make it possible for us to enjoy our lives. They also support our work. They are a huge resource and should be our highest priority!

People often ask me, "How do I counsel on X condition?" I reply, "Have you read the RC journal *Well-Being* and our other publications about health? They are full of wonderful examples of how to discharge on X condition. Have you brought your health concerns to your sessions?" The most common answer is no. Also, many of our RC Community members are activist minded, which is good, but it sometimes means they make their individual well-being a lower priority. Discharge and re-evaluation are our first line of defense. They should be a priority. They allow us to think creatively about solutions.

MAKING THE MOST OF OUR SESSIONS

We need to have big, heavy sessions on our early experiences and the resulting fears. We need to scan our early memories of "contagion" of all kinds. We also need to have lighter sessions, with laughter, which for many of us is the best way to discharge fear. Thankfully, laughter is also contagious. (Whew! A good contagion!) And we need sessions in which we appreciate the goodness of our families and cultures—of humans reaching for humanness.

We can try having a session in which our counselor puts on a scary "virus face" and chases us down (virtually), or the virus spiders come up through the pipes or through the windows, or the virus aliens land on our street. We can alternate these with early memories of discouragement and defeats. We can also bring "conspiracy theories" to sessions, while being thoughtful whom we choose as our counselor (probably not our neighbor or coworker who doesn't have a way to systematically discharge).

We can ask ourselves how we are spending our sessions. Are we using this valuable time to reach for our highest standard of clienting? I and some of my Co-Counselors spend precious minutes just repeating the confusing and conflicting "facts" we've heard from the media. I'm trying to stop myself from talking about scary news, and rehearsing the voices of fear in my head, and instead spend the most time on early discouragement, terror, sadness, and rage. I tell myself that I must discharge heavily. This takes some discipline. Our counselors can help, of course, and we can remind them to be rigorous when they are the client.

PERSPECTIVE

Perspective can help us contradict panic about disease and contagion. One of my counselors made a good point: some societal conditions cause as much or more death and destruction as COVID-19, but addressing them is not a high priority for our societies. For example, road traffic accidents cause 1.35 million deaths a year worldwide [World Health Organization, <<https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/road-traffic-injuries>>]. While this is not a happy fact, it helps me put our virus crisis in perspective and see that it's likely distorted by the particular early distress being restimulated. The climate crisis is another example of something not to panic about but to decisively and quickly address.

This moment in history seems extra hard. We are experiencing increasingly polarized politics, ongoing wars, persistent and worsening oppression, and a climate crisis that threatens all of our existence. (I long to get my attention out!) My late brother was a history buff [someone whose hobby was history]. I sometimes tried to convince him that the world was becoming more humane—with more human rights, increased awareness across differences, interconnection offered by global media, and better policies and services to address needs and counteract mistreatment from oppression and scarcity. His perspective was that survival on planet earth has always been very challenging for the majority of humans. Certain time periods have likely been "better" overall, while others have been more fraught with difficulty (for example, the Ice Ages, when most of the human population perished).

Perhaps we are living in one of the worst times—but I doubt it. This also happens to be our moment. I’ve come to find my brother’s view useful. I like to remember that the earliest homo sapiens from two hundred thousand years ago and our other early ancestors, such as the Neanderthals, had brains similar to ours and used their intelligence, creativity, and resilience to face huge challenges. This helps

me feel more deeply connected to beings throughout our long history.

GETTING MY ATTENTION OUT

I recently found and framed a photo of a female gorilla in Kenya. She was photographed engaging with a fluttering mass of butterflies. The photographer wrote that the other gorillas had ignored or waved away the butterflies. But this lovely

gorilla appears to be smiling and enjoying a moment of connection and fascination with this other species. Perhaps she is reaching forward in evolution toward us with connection, joy, and appreciation of other beings. Perhaps she is a good role model for us humans.

*Marsha Saxton
International Liberation Reference
Person for People with Disabilities
El Cerrito, California, USA*

Looking at My Relationship to Money

When I was growing up, my mother and her friend would go every Saturday and scour discount stores for goods. We had a closet in the basement filled with stacks of cases of soap, shelves of dented canned goods, boxes of pasta, and so on.

My father got paid once a month, and it was up to [the responsibility of] my mother to make the money last until the next pay. I remember grocery day and our house feeling so full of food. But by the end of the month there was little left after feeding seven people.

My mom would become increasingly upset the closer we got to the end of the month. The sentiment was always, “There is not going to be enough.” We were made to feel bad about wanting. My mother actually used the word “greedy” to describe me whenever I asked for something that they could not afford. Christmas and birthdays were always hard because I wanted so much more than I was given and always felt bad about wanting more. I knew we didn’t have the money, and I was supposed to remember that I had four siblings and two parents who also had wants. However, I cried many tears over things I didn’t get and then got in trouble for doing that.

When I first started RC, I was a single parent of two children and had a limited income. For a while I was also in school. My line to my own children was, “We don’t have the money,” even though sometimes I did. It just always felt like I didn’t or like if I spent it, we’d be in trouble. That was my version of “There’s not going to be enough.”

I often asked for Outreach funds to make it possible for me to attend RC workshops. At one point I had lots



WERGEA, THE NETHERLANDS • ROB VENDERBOS

of debt and went to credit counselling, which helped me get a handle on [get more in charge of] my debt and figure out how to not incur more. After attending an RC workshop on money, I started discharging and looking at my relationship to money. I began to realize that it had become a habit to ask for Outreach and that perhaps I needed to figure out what I needed as opposed to what I wanted or thought I deserved and work my way to not asking for Outreach. It’s been a long time since I’ve asked for it, and it’s been good for me to have a more rational relationship with money.

There is more to work on. Every time I go to Costco [a very large chain store], I buy another thirty-roll pack of toilet paper and if available another six-pack of large-container Lysol Wipes [disinfectant wipes], despite the fact that I already have enough. I’ve also been pulled to do the same when the grocery store (even pre-COVID) has had a sale and an amount limit. I buy the amount allowed, put it in my car, and go back and buy more. I also have a compulsion to eat more than I need. I might be full, but I feel a strong pull to eat more, sometimes until it is all gone. There is so much more to discharge!

*Donna Paris
Toronto, Ontario, Canada
Reprinted from the e-mail discussion
list for RC Community members*

Counseling My White Son on Oppressor Distress

I am a mixed-heritage mom with white skin, and I've had to handle my older son's oppressor distress.

I find myself thinking (oppressively) that he should understand things he doesn't, talk less and listen more (like me), and be better at "reading" people and sensing what would make things go well.

My children were raised in RC and have benefited from its resources. They don't seem to feel compelled to make everything go well the way I did or to alter who they are to please other parents or fit in with a different culture.

I have had to discharge a lot on their distresses. I also try to give them a hand [help them]. When I do this, my older son often feels criticized. He feels that I am irritating and that I don't like him.

Today he was complaining about how our dearest friends (who are People of the Global Majority) get uptight [tense] when our dog plays with their cat. He told them that if they did some research, they would understand what was okay in a dog-and-cat relationship. Our friends do sometimes get scared when our pets are together and respond with a stubbornness that they also show at other times.

My son (and this must be related to my lack of patience with his distress) tries to push people in ways that can leave them feeling irritated. Today as he was complaining, I said, "But it's their cat," and repeated it a few times in a relaxed way. I didn't feel desperate to make him understand; I just wanted him to know that he had missed something.

He screamed at me and stalked away as I fought to stay close. Then

he yelled about how annoying I was and went into his room and slammed the door. I used my body weight against the door to open it, which made it possible for him to slam it on me over and over again. At one point, he asked me to explain my thinking. I said that the way he'd expressed his opinion about our friends' cat would probably feel racist to them. Then he shouted that their stubbornness felt to him like young people's oppression and screamed and screamed about that.

I acknowledged that when other people insist on their opinions, it can come in as young people's oppression. But I reminded him that *it was their cat* and that insisting on the correctness of his point of view could feel like racism to them. He yelled about what a stupid world we live in where you can't just say what you think and not worry about how it will sound or feel to other people. I apologized for the world and acknowledged that it can be hard to be a white boy. I said it several times, as he screamed about not being able to organize our friends around his thinking and how much that felt like young people's oppression.

Then he asked me how I get people to see things differently when I disagree with them. I had to be careful, because I thought he was still trying to get things to go his way. I explained that I ask questions to help them consider things they haven't thought about before and that I have to be liking them and willing to consider that they may know things I don't. I said that people making choices that differ from his is not, in itself, young people's oppression.

He got mad again and said that he felt like I thought he was stupid.

I continued to like and be pleased with him while he yelled at me. We talked about knowing people and considering how something will impact them rather than just saying what we feel like saying. At one point I had to remind him not to hit me, as he would lose his counselor.

He cried hard about the complexity of the world and how challenging it is to be with people. He asked me who invented racism and why we had to contend with it. He kept crying while I kept acknowledging that it was hard to be who he is and navigate racism, sexism, and so on.

Later on he had lovely attention. At one point he was making jokes about his uncle, and I mentioned that he had a tendency to zero in [focus] on places where people had lots of feelings and push. He asked me if I was complimenting or criticizing him. I suggested that he be careful not to push people in hard places and then be hurt or surprised when they got angry with him. That seemed to make sense to him.

It was clear that the earlier session had given him some space to consider, in a new way, how others might feel.

T—

Brooklyn, New York, USA
Reprinted from the RC e-mail discussion lists for parents and for RC Community members



HAWAII, USA • DIANE SHISK



ARTHUR RIVER, TASMANIA, AUSTRALIA • LYNDALE KATZ

Enraged and Taking Action

In response to the killing of George Floyd, I have access to anger in a way that I haven't had since I was very young. My material [distress] (white, female, Protestant, Catholic) is to second-guess [doubt] my mind and think that there's something wrong with me for being angry, I should stop being so irrational, and should be punished for being angry. But I am so angry that for several days I felt like throwing rocks and lighting fires. It is clearer to me than ever how important it is to get the tools of RC into the hands of more people.

I feel like I will never again be as numb about racism as I used to be. I hope this is happening for other white people, too. In my case, it probably helped that I had already created the conditions to have big, unbearable feelings—close relationships with friends and Co-Counselors, regular discharge, and practice looking

at hard things and then getting my attention out. If your heart hasn't been cracked open yet, I encourage you to create the conditions so that you can face this. It is worth it.

Among other things, I am reading RC and wide world articles about racism toward African-heritage people, learning about and supporting the current campaigns of Black community organizations in Minnesota, and calling and e-mailing local and state officials here.

Marian Michaels

Somerville, Massachusetts, USA
(formerly Minneapolis, Minnesota, USA)

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

Regaining Our Intelligence and Awareness

Our abilities to be intelligent and aware have many times in the past been interfered with, hidden from us, and their existence and reality denied to us, but we can get these abilities back to functioning . . . to the point where they will be functioning all the time if we're willing to do some work. The information as to how to do this work is now available.

Harvey Jackins

From page 198 of *The List*

All print subscriptions to *Present Time* begin with the next issue published. (Digital subscriptions begin with the current issue.) 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 105 and 111 or go to <www.rationalisland.com>).

Parents Talking to White Children about Racism

Hi anonymous mom,

Thanks for writing with these important questions. I'll begin by reminding you that you are a good parent and your children are good, too.

I think all parents are thinking about how to talk with their children about racism at this time. In this e-mail I will focus on white parents talking to white children about racism, although some of what I say will apply to all children. I'm not just talking to you who wrote this but to all white parents.

I consulted with Fela Barclift, Regional Reference Person for North Brooklyn, New York, USA; an African American parent leader; and a wise woman. She gave me additional perspectives that I integrated into what I wrote. I invite parents of the Global Majority to write to the list about how to talk to their children about racism.

In order to be effective in communicating with our children about oppression and horrible things happening in the world, we first have to have sessions ourselves. We need to have sessions on racism. Many of us are horrified and full of rage about what is going on [happening]. We need space to unload that. We need to gather other white people around us so that we don't go numb. We need to discharge our fears, discouragement, and grief. As white people we need to remember where and when racism got into our minds and where we couldn't talk about it with our parents. We had to witness it and accept it as "the way the world is," and accept being alone with it. We had to accept our parents' powerlessness to change it. But now we get to go back and fight for our minds while not being alone with it. We can be powerful.

I do think it's important for white parents to initiate talking about racism with their white children, to not necessarily wait for them to bring it up. We can talk with them about oppression when they are very young because they are exposed to it early in their lives. Our children need to know that as white parents we are

aware of racism and that we think it's wrong and are going to work hard to undo it in our own lives and in the world. We do not have to worry about them being "uncomfortable." White people need to feel uncomfortable. But we do need to follow their lead in how much they can hear at any time, and they do get to set the pace. We can listen more than talk. We can be caring and loving and connected as we speak.

We can have short conversations with our children. Not lectures. We can follow their lead. If they don't want to talk about it, we can try another time.

When talking to our children, we can emphasize how good it is that people all across the world are standing up right now. People are angry, and that's very good. We can celebrate and support the People of the Global Majority who are speaking out and marching and making their voices heard. Many white people are standing together with People of the Global Majority and being their allies. This is also hopeful.

We have to have in our minds the reality that white people are good. Some white people do bad things, but we are all good humans. It's good to tell our children this during the discussion.

When starting a conversation with our children about racism, it's best to ask questions and then listen. We can follow their cues. We can ask questions such as, "Have you ever been treated badly as a young person?" "A girl?" "A boy?" "Have you seen other young people treated badly?" "Have you seen Black children being treated badly?" "Latinx or Asian people?" "Native people?" "Muslims?" "Has anyone in your classroom been treated badly?" Then we can listen to their answer to each question for as long as they are interested in talking. (But we shouldn't pepper them with questions. This is a slow process. We can ask the questions over time, not usually in the same conversation.)

We can figure out what information it makes sense to give our children at their age. I think it's better



PAMELA PERROTT

not to expose very young people (probably younger than eight) to the horrible details of what is going on [happening] in our society. What information we give them will also depend on our children and how much it restimulates their harder stuff [distress]. With some young people, we will want to wait until they are older. However, as children grow, they will hear about things in school or from their friends, so it's good if we talk to them about them first, if we can. At the same time, I would not show them, at any age, videos of people hurting or killing another person. That would be a very big hurt.

Younger young people should not be exposed to the news. The news scares young people (and adults as well) and gives them a distorted and distressed picture of the world. We can keep them away from places on television, radio, the Internet, and newspapers in which they might get exposed to frightening things. At the same time, watching thousands of people standing up against oppression is hopeful. We can find video clips of that on the Internet and watch them with them.

We can give our children a picture of how oppression divides people and how all people want to like each other and be close friends. We can tell them that a lot of people are working to make a world in which people can show caring, stand up for each other, and understand that any differences among humans are insignificant.

We can also tell them that we are at an interesting time in the history of humans, a time when some crummy [bad] things are falling apart and we can build a better world based on what's good for all people rather than continuing with one in which a few people have a lot of money. Depending on their age, we can give them a picture of the system of capitalism and how we are looking for a plan that is better—a plan that focuses on all people having good lives and being connected rather than some people making a lot of money and having control over other people who have very little money. We can talk about how People of the Global Majority often have less money and access to resources than white people and that that's part of racism.

Young people often ask why people would do bad, hurtful things. We can explain that people hurt other people because they themselves have been hurt. We can tell them that people come into the world wanting to help people and care about and love each other but that they get hurt. And that if they get hurt badly enough and don't have an opportunity to talk or cry about it and heal from the hurts, they act out the hurts on other people.

We can tell them that we shouldn't let people hurt other people. We can say something like, "Just as I don't let you hurt your siblings when you feel bad, we should stop grown-ups from hurting other people."

Our children will watch us and the actions we take and learn from watching. They will notice if we have friends of the Global Majority, go to protests, organize the neighborhood, speak out, or participate in civil disobedience and then go to jail. We can talk with them about why we do these things and why it's important to us. They will ask us lots of questions, and that's a good thing. If we build a diverse community around ourselves, our children will benefit from that.

We can also get our children's thinking about what our families could do to make things better and what to do about racism. We can ask them what they would like to do and follow their lead. Whether we write a letter, go to a vigil or protest, volunteer, or sign a petition with them, it will give them a hopeful perspective and contradict discouragement and helplessness.

If they don't want to do any of that, it's okay. We get to follow their lead. We shouldn't pressure our children to go to protests if they don't want to. They are young people; following their lead supports their liberation.

continued . . .



HAINES, ALASKA, USA • DEBORAH RUBIEN



HOLLY JORGENSEN

... continued

Whatever age they are, we can teach our children basic RC theory. We can do it as an everyday, ongoing process, in addition to talking about it when something tragic happens. As they get older and ask more questions, we can give them a more detailed picture of reality. We can share our picture of the world as benign. Even though very hard things happen, many more acts of love, caring, and courage are taking place all over the world all the time. We can explain about human goodness and patterns of distress, how people heal from distresses, how distress recordings operate when people don't have opportunities to heal, and about liberation and oppression.

We can reassure our children that many adults in the world are trying to figure things out so that no person, group of people, or country gets hurt. Each person and every culture is precious and lovely. Our societies are evolving over time, and we can take charge with our intelligence to guide this process.

Our children will use what we say and their own experience to build their own picture of reality. We get to support them in that.

If our children (at any age) hear about something they are not ready for, we can listen to them. We can reassure them that we will protect them and fight for all people.

When children hear, or pick up on [become aware of] people's feelings, about tragic events in the world, we can do more "special time" with them so they can feel our caring and closeness. They need that in order to discharge. Active, wild play with lots of contact will help them laugh. And laughter lays the foundation for discharging heavier feelings as they come up.

We shouldn't be surprised if they have a big session over a little thing (most likely not during special time).

The little thing can be a pretext for working on a tragic event. But we shouldn't bring up anything about the event when they're having the session. Rather, we should listen to what they are saying and follow their minds.

To you, anonymous mom, in particular:

My guess is that you might carry some urgency, especially as a Jewish mom, to act and have your children act. Speaking as someone who is Jewish and also carries feelings of urgency, it's really okay if your children don't want to be activists. They are absorbing your values. They will figure all this out as they grow into adults.

You also said that your child is the only white young person in his class. I would encourage you to reconsider that. It is generally not good for young people to be the only person of any background or race in a classroom or school. We shouldn't put the burden of correcting systemic oppression on our children—they get to choose. Of course, you can listen to your son and get his input on this.

It's great that your children have Black people in their lives. That will give them a more benign and accurate picture of the world. They will have much better lives with the benefit of having People of the Global Majority in them.

And just in case you forget: You are a good parent, and your children are good children.

Marya Axner
International Liberation
Reference Person for Parents
Somerville, Massachusetts, USA
Reprinted from the e-mail discussion
list for RC Community members

Online Meetings in East Africa

More people are expressing interest in joining our East African online meetings. Participants are appreciating the opportunity to discharge as well as learn how to use Zoom. People are taking turns initiating Zoom meetings in different parts of the Region, which shows and encourages good leadership. We are still increasing our ability to use the technology. We are better able to control background noises and are ready ahead of time to move to where there is a network or to improve our system.

The number of infected people keeps going up, but people are willing to sacrifice their lives to provide for their families. Poverty is increasing. The crime rate is going up. Young people are going into the streets and robbing people. Underage girls are becoming pregnant in large numbers. There are also protests. There is so much chaos in the world. We appreciate the opportunity to discharge—it is all the peace we can get at this time.

Below are comments from some of the participants in the online meetings:

- Greetings to everyone. I hope you're keeping yourself well and getting more and more chances to discharge. I would like to encourage everyone to discharge and take extra precautions because the number of infected people is increasing rapidly. Do everything possible to take care of yourself and the people around you. (Kenya)

- What a moment it was to have so much to say to those who'd never before had a chance to attend. (Rwanda)

- I am so glad I had the chance to discharge as a family with people that I know appreciate me, regard me as their own, and are able to listen to me and understand my distress. Seeing your delighted faces encouraged me. (Kenya)

- Thank you for the efforts you made to be there listening to me. As I spoke all alone in the darkness, I felt we were in the same room. (Tanzania)

- As participants from different countries were sharing, I felt I was there with them in their country. I felt I was in Tanzania, then Rwanda, then Congo, as participants shared. (Kenya)

- You have cleared all my worry. Knowing that I have a family to hear me out is very encouraging at this point when everything is difficult. I always look forward to, and keep asking the organizers when we will have, the next meeting. This is my new home. (Somalia)

- I was so happy to see you. It was difficult leaving the meeting at the end. At the beginning, I felt sick. I discharged about it and felt relieved after a lot of sweating. Now I know that medicine for a human being is another human being. All I needed for healing was a caring human face. (Kenya)

- For me, the takeaway was hearing about the upcoming culture share on Zoom that G— said he would organize. I loved how we connected after the meeting. (Rwanda)

*All I needed for healing
was a caring human face.*

*Wanjiku Kironyo
Regional Reference
Person for East Africa
Nairobi, Kenya*

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



KATIE KAUFFMAN

The articles on the following four pages are about the July 2020 International Black Liberation and Community Development Workshop (BLCD) led by Barbara Love, International Liberation Reference Person for African Heritage People; and Tim Jackins, International Reference Person for the RC Communities.



Community Building and Confidentiality

My name is Bafana Matsebula. I greet you with words of peace. I write from the beautiful mountainous kingdom of Eswatini.

We have just completed the International Black Liberation and Community Development Workshop (BLCD) led by Barbara Love and Tim Jackins. It was on Zoom, and more than three hundred people attended.

Tim reminded us that our goal is to help each other liberate our minds, the minds of people we care for, and eventually other people's minds so we can have a better world. We do this by using our discharge process.

We were reminded that RC has been an ongoing project for the past seventy years. "We've learned a lot, tried a lot of things, made a lot of headway, and reached a lot of people. And we are still learning how to get the discharge process back under our command." For the process to work well, we need an RC Community. As we build our Communities, we want to make use of the lessons learned over the past seventy years to avoid making the same mistakes.

We must remember that it takes a very long time to build trust and safety in a Community. They are our currency. We value them. And it is all of our responsibility to guard them and remind one another to do so when we forget.

A key element in building trust and safety is maintaining confidentiality. How do we know when somebody has forgotten about confidentiality, and what should we do when that happens? The minute somebody talks about a session they had or what somebody said in session, we stop them. The minute somebody is having a session and names other members of the Community, we stop them. The key is to discharge our need to hear the story. We must focus

on the feelings that are restimulated and discharge them. This works every time.

It is often easy for us to be bound by and preoccupied with the distresses of the present. We were reminded at the workshop that "to liberate each of our minds, we need to discharge on what happened to us." This is not just what happened to us today or yesterday or even last year. The discharge process works much more quickly if we challenge the ways we got hurt early in our lives. Also, when we focus on discharging our early hurts, we feel less pulled to rehearse what is currently happening in our life or our Community and are therefore less likely to break confidentiality.

Barbara said the following about being a client: Remember to go back to the early memories. It is often tempting to focus on what is happening right now. However, as often as you can, go back to early memories. Whatever is happening right now has roots in your early life. You can tell your life story. Start with "I was born"—that is not speculation—and then go to what happened after that. You get to tell the story over and over. The point is to notice what happened and how it affected your mind, and how it's affecting the way you think about your life right now—and discharge that. It is efficient to work this way as clients. Also, we are less likely to break confidentiality and therefore better able to build strong Communities.

Barbara promised us that the International Black Liberation and Community Development Workshop in 2024 will be in Africa. She challenged us to go out and build our Communities.

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

The RC Community Doesn't Create Itself

More than three hundred Black people from all over the world converged for the Black Liberation and Community Development Workshop (BLCD) via Zoom. It was my first time attending BLCD, and it was a memorable and mind-blowing [amazing] event.

In talking about the RC Community, Barbara Love asked, "How do we put our vision out in the world so that the universe can organize itself in our direction?" She reminded us that we are at the workshop because someone shared information about RC with us. Someone gave us the theory and the practice. Somebody gave us their loving attention. Somebody who cared about us, who cared about the world, wanted to make sure that we had RC.

She said that the RC Community doesn't create itself; it doesn't come into existence on its own [without assistance]. Those of us who know RC theory can use it and make it available to others, thereby building our Communities. RC leaders can lead by example. Being a leader need not be a weight on our shoulders. It can be enjoyable.

I did lots of discharging and am more liberated. I appreciate the organizing team, the tech team, and the International RC Community.

Maryjane Ugwu
Lagos, Lagos State, Nigeria
Reprinted from the RC e-mail
discussion list for leaders of women



MOSI-OA-TUNYA ("THE SMOKE WHICH THUNDERS"), ZAMBIA • WILLIAM M. LOVING

I Grew Up in the House That Barbara Built

A week ago, I turned sixty-five. I woke up full of zest, excited about the new challenges I am taking on, and pleased that I have the life I do. It has not always been that way.

I am Black, female, raised poor and working class, raised Catholic, an oldest girl, and a child of an alcoholic. None of these constituencies gave me the messages that I mattered or that I could be big in the world.

But I grew up in The House That Barbara (Love) Built. Two Jewish women—who loved me enough to want my life and the lives of my family to go well—invited me there. I will be forever grateful to them for introducing me to RC and taking me to my first workshop over twenty-five years ago—Blacks and Jews, led by Barbara Love and Cherie Brown (International Liberation Reference Person for Jews).

Once I met Barbara, I knew I wanted to be wherever she was. The next workshop I attended was Black Women. Then I went to the Black Liberation and Community Development Workshop, and I have not missed one year of that since.

The House That Barbara Built doesn't have any doors or windows or walls. But it is filled with the unshakable truth that I and all who enter there are completely

good, lovable, connected, brilliant, capable, loving, and everything else that makes up our inherent nature.

It's a place where you are told with complete certainty, despite any hurts you carry, that you can fly and that you get to put out your vision and expect the world to organize itself around that vision.



Whenever we feel stuck or restimulated, there are three things we need to remember to do—discharge, discharge, discharge.



In Barbara's House, you are also reminded to not let anyone steal your joy and that you don't need to wait "until"—until you lose weight, until you have more money, until you're older. You get to decide, act, discharge, and then go about [proceed with] having the biggest life you didn't even know you wanted, or thought was possible to have.

Barbara says that as we move through the world, there are some things to always hold in our minds:

- It's important to recognize the difference between action issues and discharge issues.

- Whenever we feel stuck or restimulated, there are three things we need to remember to do—discharge, discharge, discharge.

- We are all responsible for seeing that everything goes well.

- Each of us gets to be completely in the centre of our own lives and the world.

Because I grew up in Barbara's House, I've taken on many challenges. I've repaired my relationship with my mother, learned to swim, learned to drive, gotten two university degrees, become a teacher, bought a house, learned to play the saxophone, reclaimed my creativity, and become an artist—just to name a few.

Pretty [quite] good for a little Black girl from Nova Scotia who had wished upon the stars that her future life could be so much more than the present one she was living. Now the present and the future are brighter than any star, thanks to my time in Barbara's House.

Thank you, Barbara Love, and all the other occupants of Barbara's House who have loved and held me all these years. It's been great growing up with you.

Donna Paris

Toronto, Ontario, Canada

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



SUE EDWARDS

➔➔➔➔➔➔ How COVID Has Affected RC in China ➔➔➔➔➔➔

RC activities in my Region were affected by the coronavirus as early as the beginning of February, when they were planned to start again after the week-long Chinese New Year holiday. Two days before the Chinese New Year's Day, the city of Wuhan in central China was ordered to be under a strict lockdown due to the rapid spread of the virus. As the situation became more and more serious in the following days, people across the country were asked to stay home and not go to any gatherings, big or small.

I felt frustrated because our plan for RC activities for the whole year would be greatly affected and the local Community leaders and I had put great effort into that plan. Fortunately, the frustration did not hold me too long. After thinking together with another RC leader, I figured out that the first thing we needed to do was offer weekly online gatherings for our leaders and teachers, which we had been doing once a month before.

GATHERINGS FOR LEADERS AND TEACHERS

Some leaders and teachers attended our first one-hour online gathering on the evening of February 6. Others attended their first gathering on February 8 in the afternoon. The weekly gatherings continued for about two months. We focused on our connections, "news and goods," and self-appreciation. We had mini-sessions and shared thoughts about what we could do as Community leaders. I encouraged people to lead similar online gatherings (support groups) for their own Communities. Most of them tried it and enjoyed their experiences

very much. For the very new Communities, another leader and I led the first gathering so the new leaders would be confident and familiar with how to lead such a gathering and able to do it by themselves.

Some people have wished the gatherings could be longer. However, many of our RCers are mothers with young children and cannot afford a longer time, so we plan for the gatherings to be no longer than an hour, even though they often end half an hour later. (We check if any people need to leave after an hour, and if so, they can leave then.)

IMPROVING OUR FUNDAMENTALS CLASS OUTLINE

Most RC teachers have a flexible schedule due to working from home or having to stay home with their children because schools and preschools are closed. So we used this opportunity to invite all the teachers (some did not come) to discuss and improve the outline for our eight-week fundamentals class. It took five weeks to finish the job, meeting for an hour once a week. Both new and more experienced teachers found it helpful. They could better understand the outline. They became much clearer about not only what and how but also why. I am pleased to have had that chance to retrain our teachers. I believe they will now be better qualified.

FAMILY WORK

Over the past twenty years, family work has been the focus for our Communities. Most people who have learned RC in the past few years are parents of young

people. Being with their children twenty-four hours a day, because they have to stay home, is a big challenge. Yet it can also be an opportunity to learn online how to listen to children using special time.

I had taught my first four-week special-time class late last year, and I started our first two four-week online special-time classes in late February. Two experienced RC teachers taught them with me so they could teach their own special time classes after gaining experience. We were happy with our first try.

We continue to offer the classes but with some improvement. For the first two classes we did not mind [take into account] the children's ages. After that, we thought it might be better to have one class for children ages three to ten and another for children ten to eighteen. We did the following classes that way, and it turned out [happened] that we were right.

The classes all have no more than six parents, so each parent can get enough attention. I think we may continue to do these online special-time classes. They can be a good beginning for Communities that don't yet have any teachers experienced enough to do playdays and family workshops.

ONLINE FUNDAMENTALS CLASSES

Fears kept most people from social life even after the situation became rather relaxed on the mainland in late March. Also, according to some new information, the virus may not ever disappear. Therefore, people need to consider the social distance policy as being long-term. All this pushed me to discuss the situation

I am pleased with myself that I've survived all the challenges so far, with the support and company of Community leaders, teachers, and other RCers as well as support from our RC family worldwide.

with the leaders, and we decided to prepare to move our fundamental classes online.

We invited our most experienced teachers, and those who wanted to try online classes, to think together about how to move the classes online so they would have similar effects to those taught face-to-face. Our five one-hour meetings started on April 6 and ended on April 15.

The first online fundamentals class began on May 17 and the next one on May 27. Both of the teachers were in the planning group. Their assistants are teachers who were not in the group but would like to gain experience so they can be more confident in teaching online classes later. Now two more teachers have planned their online fundamentals classes, to take place in June.

In general, the virus seems to have changed everything. It has forced us to learn to do things in ways very different from what we'd been familiar with, so I have been kept much busier than I had expected. I am pleased with myself that I've survived all the challenges so far, with the support and company of Community leaders, teachers, and other RCers as well as support from our RC family worldwide.

C—
China

Reprinted from the RC e-mail discussion list for Regional Reference Persons



The First International Arab Unity Call

I recently led the first international Arab unity call. Twenty-one Arabs attended. The organizer did a wonderful job of organizing it.

While the people in this group identify as Arab, and have experienced colonization, genocide, and war, they come from diverse backgrounds. They live in Morocco, Israel, Egypt, parts of Europe, and in Canada and the United States. Their heritages are Egyptian, Lebanese, Iraqi, Moroccan, Palestinian, Syrian, and Yemenite. There were Jews, Christians, and Muslims on the call. Whether they are immigrants or live on their native lands, all have been targeted by Arab oppression and racism.

I have loved being an ally to Arabs and playing a role in their liberation.

Azi Khalili

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

Reprinted from the RC e-mail discussion list for leaders of South, Central, and West Asian-heritage people

Now available

The Revised and Updated

Fundamentals Teaching Guide and Class Outline (Part I)

The 2020 edition of the *Fundamentals Teaching Guide and Class Outline (Part I)* includes three new chapters: "Internalized Oppression," "Recovering from Physical Hurts," and "Counseling on Sex and Closeness."

References to the *Guidelines for the Re-evaluation Counseling Communities* have been updated, and additional readings for teachers and students have been added.

Readings are all referenced online instead of being included in the publication, so we have reduced the price to \$15 (U.S.).

To order, go to page 111 or to the Rational Island Publishers website: <www.rationalisland.com>.

..... **A Unifying Iranian Call**

**A Sense of Belonging
and Home**

It was a big contradiction [to distress] for me, and I think many others, to be on the recent RC International Iranian call led by Azi Khalili (International Liberation Reference Person for South, Central, and West Asian-Heritage People). Some of us were living in Iran, some in the United States, and others in Europe. Some were mixed heritage. We ranged in age from young adults to elders.

The Iranian diaspora has left many of us disconnected from our country, our land, and each other. Just being together, sharing aspects of ourselves, was such a joy. Whenever I get to connect with other Iranians, I feel a sense of belonging and home that was lost to me when I left Iran at eight years old. That was a huge heartbreak that I've often lived on top of. Getting to notice it, and notice that it can be healed by reconnecting with my people in the present, gives me great hope.

I am excited about building and nurturing relationships with Iranians in Iran. I now understand better how U.S. imperialism and sanctions continue to wage war on our people. As someone who has not had to live through the last thirty years in Iran, I sometimes feel guilty for escaping the hardship. But building relationships in the present helps me move through these feelings and feel connected to what people are experiencing there.

R—
USA

Reprinted from the RC e-mail discussion list for leaders of South, Central, and West Asian-heritage people

**United and Closer
than Ever**

Thank you, Azi, for the International Iranian call that brought back hope and light to our Iranian diaspora. Our togetherness and sense of belonging were a great contradiction [to distress]. The call unified the Iranian RCers in Iran, Turkey, Europe, and the United States.

About thirty years ago, I began introducing RC in Iran and to Iranian immigrants and refugees wherever possible. The RCers in Iran haven't had much of a chance to be with and tell their stories to other RCers. This call allowed us to feel and see ourselves as part of the RC Community—the Community I have tried to introduce to Iranian RCers with my translations and words.

The call was alive. It was hopeful, even at this time of the pandemic. It connected us all. It brought back a smile! N—'s delightful Farsi song brought back memories. We were excited to finally belong to the RC Community. I cried hard, as did many others. We left feeling united and closer than ever.

V—
USA

Reprinted from the RC e-mail discussion list for leaders of South, Central, and West Asian-heritage people

**Building Relationships
Globally**

Azi Khalili's call for Iranian-heritage Co-Counselors was conducted in Farsi and English. The participants were from many places, including Iran, the United States, and Europe. Azi talked about how the pandemic has been affecting us and our countries. A good thing is that the whole world has to come together to solve the problem.

We had lots of time to discharge and connect with each other. I loved seeing people I hadn't seen in a long time. It felt good to be together.

Azi will be helping us set up Co-Counseling sessions for the next four months leading up to our next meeting. Even if we don't speak the same language, we can still have sessions in our own language. We can be connected, build relationships with each other, and discharge. It is wonderful to build relationships with people who live far away from us. Being connected globally is so important in these times.

Leyla Modirzadeh

San Jose, California, USA

Reprinted from the RC e-mail discussion list for leaders of South, Central, and West Asian-heritage people

It is wonderful to build relationships with people who live far away from us. Being connected globally is so important in these times.

The Many Effects of “Mental Health” Oppression

“Mental health” oppression has made us afraid of or embarrassed about feeling deeply. It has made us afraid to have new thoughts, to stand up for ourselves, to be creative, to express unpopular viewpoints, to connect closely with people different from ourselves, and more.

Janet Foner

*Former International Liberation Reference
Person for “Mental Health” Liberation*

(Janet died in July 2019)

*Reprinted from the Sustaining All Life handout
The Climate Crisis and Mental Health Oppression*



An Inherent Love of Learning

A large proportion of clients will come to a counseling situation with blocking patterns already installed on the processes of reading, writing, and speaking to audiences. On handling these, it is well to remember that the job of the counselor is not to “teach” the client to do these things but to help the client discharge the blocks that interfere with his or her learning to do them. . . .

. . . A motivation that exists in every person toward learning, and which has almost systematically been

turned off and blocked in most school procedures, is an inherent joy of learning or love of learning. The human mind inherently loves to learn new things. All that is inherently required for this attitude to operate, for the joy of learning to turn on fully, is some new information to be learned and some existing information already known to which it can be related.

Harvey Jackins

From page 115 of The List



KATIE KAUFFMAN

A Support Group of Men of Arab and Indigenous North African Heritage



In May 2020 the first meeting was held of an online RC support group of six men of Arab and Indigenous North African heritage. Four were Moroccans living in Morocco, and two were Lebanese living in the United States. Five spoke fluent Arabic. The Moroccans all had Indigenous North African (Amazigh) heritage. One was mixed heritage—Arab and Amazigh. All were Muslim. The Lebanese both had Christian heritage: Maronite Catholic and Melkite. Four were young adults.

After introductions, theory was shared and the time was divided for discharge. We were all happy with this rare opportunity to see and be with each other as a group. Here is an outline of my theory talk:

Ahlan ["Welcome" in Arabic]! Welcome to the first meeting of the Arab and Indigenous Men's Support Group.

This is a Re-evaluation Counseling support group. In RC there are many kinds of support groups: for women, working-class people, parents, young people, and so on. Being in a group of people with similar experiences can help create safety for discharge.

The main thing we do in a support group is divide the time for discharge.

We are all counselors giving our best attention to the client. We also have a primary counselor. I will be happy to be your primary counselor, or you can choose another experienced counselor.

Re-evaluation Counseling has not been easy for us men. Society oppresses us and makes it difficult for us to show our feelings and discharge them, especially in the presence of other men.

Instead of supporting human relationships and safety, society tries to separate men by training us to hurt each other, compete with each other, show that we are better than another man, exploit each other economically, and sometimes violently attack each other. This is part of the divide-and-conquer strategy of oppressive societies in many places around the world.

One thing that will help us in our healing process is for us to make close, caring connections with each other. We need to be good to each other and create a safe place with each other as men so that we can take the risk of showing our hurts and discharging with each other.

Re-evaluation Counseling theory assumes that we are all good men who sometimes do things that are not so good because we have been hurt many times throughout our lives. It started when we were young and not allowed to heal the hurt. We are all intelligent, and that becomes clear as we discharge distress. We have big hearts. We have courage. We are cooperative and powerful and enjoy life and other people.

We start with respect, and part of respect is taking equal turns to be listened to and discharge in this group.

Here are some comments from the men:

- Brother, thank you for this initiative. It was an amazing session.
- A huge thanks for hosting this support group! I was so glad to see new faces, and I'm looking forward to our future meetings.
- Salam dear brother, my *Gouma* ["Brother" in Amazigh]. I am very happy to have participated in this first support group of men online, which was so successful. I am glad to have met new people with the same interest in building a united Community. I like the way you conducted this group. Thank you to all the participants, especially to Sustaining All Life for the efforts made to help us work on our feelings. The listening sessions working on our memories are a great help in freeing ourselves from emotional distress.

Amin Khoury
(Victor Nicassio)
Los Angeles, California, USA



YUKO HIBINO

The First-Ever Palestinian Workshop

Azi Khalili (the International Liberation Reference Person for South, Central, and West Asian-Heritage People) led our first-ever Palestinian workshop on August 1, 2020. I am deeply grateful for her loving support of us Palestinians.

It was sweet to be together and to be in the center of RC, to hear that we Palestinian people are good and valuable and deserve to live and flourish, just as Palestinian people.

It felt overwhelming to hear confirmation that there is a policy of genocide against Palestinian people and to acknowledge my “paranoia” as a Palestinian living in fear every day: “Is this the day that I or a member of my family will get killed?” It was good to discharge on that.

*H—, a grateful and empowered Palestinian woman
USA*

Reprinted from the RC e-mail discussion list for leaders
of South, Central, and West Asian-heritage people

Celebrating Our Heritage and Beautiful Land

At the Palestinian Workshop [see previous article], we came together from Palestine/Israel, Sweden, and the USA.

It was a great contradiction [to distress] to come together and celebrate our wonderful heritage and beautiful land. I felt at ease knowing that I didn’t have to say much to be fully understood.

Azi focused on

- reclaiming our Palestinian identity and knowing that being Palestinian has nothing to do with the Palestine/Israel conflict; and
- healing the “occupation” of our minds.

She reminded us that we are good, good, good! We come from a beautiful land! We have a rich culture and heritage. We are not defined by the conflict or the occupation. This resonated with me. Simply stating, “I’m Palestinian,” feels like a political statement. I’m very conscious about whom I announce it to. I often keep it hidden to “protect” myself from a person’s reaction.

Azi described how occupation and colonization have affected both our lands and our minds. We Palestinians have distress recordings from attempted genocide that can seem to erase our heritage, culture, writing, thinking, language, and so on. Feelings of despair, hopelessness, fear, and terror can take over.

The good news is that we can discharge and heal from the hurts. Azi reminded us that Arabs—and Palestinians, in particular—are good, smart, kind, and fully human. We have always stood up against occupation. We have never given up. We need to get to where Palestine is not an occupied land and our people have access to food, water, our own language, and education.

As hard as that sounds, I can’t wait to continue working on Palestinian liberation, including finding great allies to help along the way.

Fatima Maarouf

Winthrop, Massachusetts, USA

Reprinted from the RC e-mail discussion list for leaders
of South, Central, and West Asian-heritage people

Games That Work on Zoom

The following are some games that work on Zoom. You may share them in any way that you wish.

FOR SMALLER GROUPS

Here are some games that work for smaller groups:

Poking game: (Gallery view) Everyone stretches out of their screen to poke or pat each other, lean on each other, and react.

Freezing: (Gallery view) People pretend that their picture freezes, preferably in the middle of making a funny face.

Computer roller coaster: (Speaker view) The leader steps a little away from the camera and takes people for a ride on a virtual roller coaster—making sure not to go too fast, so that things don't get blurry. This works nicely with sound effects and a moment of suspense before going down a slope.

Bella banana: (Speaker view) The leader starts by saying their own name and something beginning with the first letter of their name (for example, an animal or a fruit). At the same time, they make a movement. Everyone then together repeats the person's name and word and does the movement. Then the leader passes it on to someone, and you go around until everyone has said their name. If you're in a smaller group in which you want people to really learn each other's names, you can have the second person first repeat the leader's name, word, and movement before adding their own. The third person will repeat the two before them, and so on, until the last person, who repeats everyone's before adding their own. (The group only repeats each new addition.)

Sending an imaginary object: (Speaker view) The first person starts playing with an imaginary object. After a while they give it to someone in the group: "I have a present for you! Here you go!" The person receiving the object decides what the



KIRSTEN JOHNSON

object is and says thank you and, for example, "A tiny broken chair—my favorite!" Real and wild guesses of what the first person was trying to show are both fun. The second person then transforms the object into something new and sends it on, until everyone has gotten a gift.

What's different? (Speaker view) The leader arranges a number of objects in front of the camera. Everyone has a few minutes to memorize them. Then the leader turns the camera off and changes one or a few of them. When the camera is on again, everyone has to guess what has changed—either verbally or using the chat.

FOR BIGGER GROUPS (AS WELL AS SMALLER ONES)

Here are some games that work for bigger groups—and smaller ones, too:

(When you have a bigger group, and if people will be joining when the game has already started, it's good to write the instructions in the chat as well as say them at the beginning. It's also nice to have one

person lead the game and another write in the chat.)

Send a face, or laugh, or make a sound: (Speaker view) Someone makes a funny face or laughs or makes some sound, and everyone repeats it. Then the person sends it on to someone else, who does something new that everyone copies.

Guess what this is! (Speaker view) Someone places an ordinary object right in front of the camera. Then, very slowly, they pull it back until it is in focus, while people try to guess what it is.

Follow the leader: (Can be done with music or without.) The designated leader makes some movements that everyone else copies. Then someone new leads some movements.

Music and dancing: This works well when people send in their favorite songs beforehand and you can have a playlist ready. It is especially fun if there are participants from different countries who can share their songs. You can sometimes stop the music and have everyone freeze in the middle of a dance move. Please think about inclusion when choosing the music. For example, if there are people with hearing loss, it can be good to have music that is not "screaming."

Stretching: (Speaker view) Someone leads stretching and then chooses others to lead it.

Touch X! Someone challenges people to touch things that match a description, for example, something of a specific color or shape or that has another attribute.

Recreating funny pictures: Prepare a set of funny pictures, preferably of

one person doing something funny with one or two objects. (You can find good royalty-free pictures at <<https://www.pexels.com>>.) Open a picture on your computer and share your screen with everyone (you need to be host or co-host of the meeting to do this). Give people a short time to try to recreate the picture with objects around them. Then stop screen-sharing so that everyone can see one another.

Color wave: Show an object of a certain color to the camera. Then have people try to find something of the same color to show to everyone. Or you can show an object, and people can try to find a similar object as quickly as possible.

Everyone who: The leader invites everyone who fits a certain description (for example, everyone who is terrible at being on time) to respond. It's most fun if the leader chooses something that is true of themselves. You can also play a climate version—for example, the leader could ask everyone who doesn't recycle sticky plastic packaging to respond. It's a good way to get people laughing about the environment.

*Aurora Palm
Vaxholm, Sweden*

*And the whole play team at the
2020 European Leaders' Workshop*

Non-geographic Online Fundamentals Classes

We are having a lot of fun doing non-geographic online fundamentals classes.

Our Area has almost doubled since the pandemic started. We now have four experienced teachers and close to ten folks in each of their classes. We have brought in family and friends because our relationships with them were already in place and it's easy to include them via Zoom. Some don't live in our state but are in the same time zone. None would be learning to Co-Counsel without our Zoom classes.

Some participants are new to Co-Counseling; others had left and have returned. One of the classes is made up entirely of Black men, and the rest of the new people are People of the Global Majority. We ask for a three-week commitment; all have stayed and are working their way through fundamentals. At this rate, I won't have enough teachers for more than another handful of folks and will have to get one of the assistants ready to teach.

We are excited to have the opportunity to do something we like and are pretty [quite] good at, which is teaching Co-Counseling.

When the dust settles [as time goes by], we'll try to transplant the new Co-Counselors into their geographic Communities. We understand that some, if not many, will leave Co-Counseling. However, they will have the tool of RC, and that's good enough for now.

*B—
USA*

Reprinted from the RC e-mail discussion
list for Area Reference Persons

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More Than One Dimension

For thinking about the group to be effective, it has to operate in at least three dimensions. First, one must think about the group as an entity. A group of people is a different entity than the individuals. It's made up of the humans in it, but it functions under different laws than individuals do. We've learned something about this; we've learned how to run a good meeting, how to have a good discussion, how to see that everybody talks. We've learned to use working consensus instead of parliamentary law. There is more to learn, of course. The group as a group needs to be thought about.

Second, the individual people in the group need to be thought about. In an RC group, in particular, but probably in any group, each individual member needs to be seen individually for who that person is, where they are battling to re-emerge, what assistance is needed.

Third, both the group and the individuals need to be thought about not just now, at this moment, but in a time sense—where they're coming from, what point they're at, the next move they need to make, how they need to be assisted to move in the desired direction.

Good leaders sometimes function this way intuitively, but it helps to be clearly aware of the need. If one uses a checklist of these principles to guide one's thinking as a leader, one can practically guarantee that a group can function well.

Harvey Jackins

From pages 271 to 272 of "The Nature of Leadership" in *The Benign Reality*



JAMAICA POND, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS, USA • MARC GOLDRING

More “Sound Bites” from Marcie Rendon

Starting in 2019, I was asked by a local radio station, KRSM 98.9 FM, if I would be willing to record one-minute sound bites for the station to air. I think I am one of five other Native people/people of color who do what is called the “Southside 60.” I have chosen to use my minute to talk about the climate crisis and hold out action and hope for people. Here are six of the “sound bites.” I would encourage everyone to search out opportunities like this to make our viewpoint heard. [We published two others of Marcie’s sound bites on page 60 of the April 2020 Present Time.]

1. This is Marcie Rendon, and this is my Southside 60: *Boozhoo* [“Hello” in Ojibway]. It is a beautiful day here in Minneapolis [Minnesota, USA]. I think it is important that we always try to remember the beauty that is around us. If we can notice the sun shining, or the shape of the clouds, or the child trying to make eye contact with us from her parent’s grocery cart—if we can notice these good things, our day will go better. So often we forget to notice that everything around us is connected, and in truth the universe wants our lives and the lives of everyone around us to go well. If we let it. We are in times that tend to make people fearful. Climate change, the current state of politics in the United States, and now the threat of the coronavirus—these are real concerns. And it does no good to pretend that these concerns aren’t real. The bigger question is, how do we prepare ourselves, our families, and our community to address the concerns in ways that are beneficial for all? We can build relationships with people who work for real change and real good.

2. This is Marcie Rendon, and this is my Southside 60: We are seeing a lot of changes occurring at a rapid pace. We need flexible, adaptable thinking and behaviors to address these new and different situations. The coronavirus is changing how the world thinks about personal space, medical care, work environments, and the necessity, or lack of necessity, for large groups of people to gather. One place of hope is the drastic

change in the atmosphere over China as it shut down production, travel, and commerce in response



SHEILA CREED

to the virus. NASA satellite photos show a drastic reduction in nitrogen dioxide pollution across China. I can imagine a world of commerce run with full consciousness of its impact on the environment. What if the Twin Cities [Minnesota, USA] proactively designated, at a minimum, one day a month as a “shut-down” day during which travel, factories, and workplaces would all shut down voluntarily to clear the air? If we could continue reducing air pollution without the threat of death from a virus it would be wonderful for the climate and the human race.

3. This is Marcie Rendon, and this is my Southside 60: What if we lived in a world where no one was expendable? Where Black lives mattered? And where there were not five thousand or more missing or murdered Native women? What if there was no need for a child protection system, and domestic violence ceased to be an issue? What if the incarceration rate of

Native women dropped to zero? It seems to me that many people’s attitude during the coronavirus is indicative of their attitude toward vulnerable people, including elders. I have heard people say, “I am not worried about this virus; it’s only the old people dying.” Or, “I’m not worried about the virus; I am healthy.” This is a careless attitude when anyone who carries the virus can then infect others, including the elders of our community and those with fragile immune systems. It is the elders who carry the knowledge of the generations. I know this is true for Native communities. I believe it to be true for Southeast Asians, Muslim communities, and the African American community. We value our young as precious beings moving to the future. We value elders as keepers of sacred knowledge. In my viewpoint, no one is expendable.

4. This is Marcie Rendon, and this is my Southside 60: In this time of the pandemic, social media is my daily, sometimes minute-by-minute, connection to the outside world. I see “extroverts,” who thrive on human contact, struggling with loss of freedom to make contact. I see young adults whose need for friends is as great as their need for food and water. Others are mourning jobs that were the mirror that reflected back to them their identity and worth. There are folks who are struggling mightily to make ends meet [to survive financially]. On top of it all is the fear of severe illness or death from this virus that is silently stalking

continued . . .

... continued

us all. As an Anishinaabe woman, I feel this is the time we have been preparing for. I am not talking about an apocalypse or an “end of the world” scenario. I am talking about ancient prophecies that told us there would be a time when humans would need to choose between two paths—the path of greed and industrialization or a way of life that is in balance with all living beings on the planet.

5. This is Marcie Rendon, and this is my Southside 60: This virus, which is causing so much grief, has also put into motion a healing of the earth. As countries, cities, industrial production, and international travel have ground to a halt; as gas-powered vehicles of all kinds and rush-hour traffic jams have stopped, the atmosphere has cleared, waters have cleansed themselves, and people are commenting in surprise, “I heard all kinds of birds today.” This virus is giving humankind a gift. It is showing us exactly what is required to save the planet. To end the degradation of the environment. To give Mother Earth the time and space to heal and regenerate so that human life can continue. It is a hard gift. It is a gift given with tough love. We, individually and collectively, are the ones who can decide to pay attention to what we are being shown and insist that we never again go back to life as it was—to lives fueled by unnecessary wants instead of real human needs.

6. This is Marcie Rendon, and this is my Southside 60: In isolation, I have found time to have many moments of fun. I love the Indian humor on Facebook and in memes. Many are joking, honestly, that this isn’t our first pandemic. Indians jumped on Facebook and created the Social Distance Pow Wow. 182,000 folks are currently on that site—singing, dancing, sharing artwork and stories. Some of the best-known Native comedians have shown up [appeared] to do standup [comedy]. My granddaughter and I recreated a painting of Anishinaabe artist Karen Savage (the Getty Museum requested that people recreate famous paintings using

what they find in their homes). I am looking under and beyond the heartache of so many lies, deaths, and collapse, confident that there is an upwelling of hope waiting to emerge and take charge. A friend said, “It isn’t enough that we vision or dream a new way of being. In order for real change to occur that can continue the environmental cleansing that is occurring, in order for the visions to become the new reality, people need to organize and take action.”

*Marcie Rendon
International Liberation Reference
Person for Native Americans
Minneapolis, Minnesota, USA*

Inspired to Action by an RC Workshop and Class

On the day following the European Leaders’ Workshop, three RCers in Bern (Switzerland) and their friends called a spontaneous George Floyd solidarity action. Five hundred people showed up at short notice!

We had a great ongoing class about eliminating racism with speak-outs from People of the Global Majority (PGM). Afterward I found myself taking many actions—reaching out to family and friends who are PGM, intervening at the school where I teach on behalf of students who are PGM, and writing on my network about solidarity actions in Europe that people in the United States might not be aware of.

*Gwen Pollack
Zofingen, Switzerland*

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 literature. 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. You can e-mail address changes to <litsales@rc.org>. Thank you!

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—■ The Current Situation and the Challenges We Face ■—

Our current situation is more and more extreme, but we always have options for leverage. We get to organize our minds toward a massive non-cooperation, non-collaboration campaign—a campaign to actually win.

There are patterns that keep pushing us into accepting and justifying the more and more outwardly desperate and oppressive system of governance. Clearly, we must all work to prevent more erosion of what is left of our U.S. democracy. We can't remain silent. We must say what we observe as well as express our disdain for this kind of governance.

In sessions we can practice saying “no” as we scan all the times when we “gave in” [succumbed] or fell into the trap of remaining silent. I suspect we will all have to face the bullies in our young lives. We will have to face how we gave in and rationalized certain circumstances and institutions, including our educational systems.

What has been allowed to pass as education has been for the most part a massive co-optation and indoctrination of students. They are the passive recipients of the lies of the dying economic and social order that is our current system. Teachers do make valiant attempts to help students learn important skills and retain their inherent ability to think critically. But we have all been told so many lies about our country and its history and now about the challenges we face.

When opportunities present themselves for us to be catalysts for “good trouble,” I suspect we can be relaxed as we express our true sentiments and indignation.

Today's world is heavily laden with distractions and pretexts that pull us back from one another, from modeling empathy, and from showing caring and concern. It's easy to be overcome by the newsfeeds and distractions. However, we can turn off the devices. We can set a personal goal to limit our vulnerability to the distractions.

We are often tempted to hunker down and huddle amongst those who seem to be like minded. I think that is a mistake. There are many people we can reach out to in our families, our neighborhoods, and, if we're lucky, in our workplaces.

Our hope lies in our individual decisions to not cooperate and to build collective agitation and conscience on many fronts. Working one-to-one is slow and tedious—and can succeed.

Lorenzo Garcia

International Liberation

Reference Person for Chicanos/as

Albuquerque, New Mexico, USA

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



RC and Wide World Change

There were about a hundred and sixty of us at Wide World Changing One. We arrived in the middle of a blizzard. Some people spent fourteen hours with their cars stuck in snowbanks on the way. We had a great variety of people there who worked in various “left” and “revolutionary” organizations. The key issue was, were these people going to continue to try to bring the programs of those groups into the RC Community (where their efforts were causing considerable disruption) or were they instead going to take RC techniques and knowledge into their wide-world-changing, activist, or “revolutionary” organizations?

Amazingly, in one weekend, the issue was thoroughly settled. We reached complete agreement that the RC Community must work out its *own* program and that an activist's job was to take RC knowledge and skills into the wide-world-changing organizations to improve *their* functioning, rather than the reverse.

Harvey Jackins

From page 612 of “Working Effectively in the Wide World” in *The Benign Reality*



JAMAICA POND, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS, USA
• MARC GOLDRING

»»»»»»»»»» A West Africa Zoom Gather-in »»»»»»»»»»

An RC West Africa Webinar Zoom Gather-in was held in June. Thirty-five participants from different West African countries attended. It was great having interpretation into French as well as scribing to ensure that everyone was carried along as much as possible.

“Mummy Chioma” [Chioma Okonkwo, the Apprentice Regional Reference Person for Nigeria and West Africa] gave us the direction to notice how our usual way of life has been affected by the recent social disruptions and maladies. We cannot afford to be indifferent about what is going on. The world is dealing with three major pandemics: COVID-19 (the newest), racism (the oldest), and climate change (the most drastic). This is a time to notice the early distresses that are being restimulated due to current events, and discharge on them. These distresses could be related to sexism, inequality in economic life, loneliness, boredom, powerlessness, discouragement about one’s nation or government, and so on.

If capitalism, nationalism, sexism, classism, and ethnic and religious intolerance are allowed to continue disrupting genuine development, society as we know it will soon be unworkable. In RC we sum this up as the “collapsing society.” The situation calls for a new world order in which justice, fair play, equity, and empathy will rule.

Mummy Chioma urged us to keep having sessions because with our re-emerged and intelligent minds, each of us could play a decisive role in creating a more rational and humane society. We RCers are few in number compared to the world population, but our understanding of discharge as the way to heal from hurts, our theory on liberation, and our ability to organize are invaluable resources for creating wide world change.

We heard a talk on how COVID-19 has affected the environment positively and negatively and things we can do to care for our environment. The floor was then open for group sessions. Topics included the following: the international Black Lives Matter movement sparked by the police murder of George Floyd; police brutality in Nigeria; ethnic and religious polarisation due to the repeated attacks by fanatic militia; ethno-religious massacres in Southern Kaduna [Nigeria]; the epidemic of rape and kidnapping, amongst other violent crimes; discouragement with government’s handling of security issues; the COVID-19 scare in the family; amongst others.

My highlight was getting to discharge on police brutality and the countless unremarked-on traumas and deaths caused by this in Nigeria. It broke my heart

to hear George Floyd calling out for his late mother in his dying minutes. It reminded me of my little boy who thinks his mom is a superhero who can save him from any and every danger in the world. It reminded me of myself and how when I’m sad or confused I often cry for my mom who passed on last year. It reminded me that no matter how tough we look, inside each of us is a little boy or girl that just needs to be loved, to be heard.

We ended on a positive note by affirming the benign reality that being African is a privilege, that our lives matter, that our natural resources fuel the Western economies, so *they* need *us* and not the other way around. It was a lively and inspiring meeting.

Nez Ibekwe
Awka, Anambra State, Nigeria

More on the West Africa Zoom Gather-in

It was a privilege being part of the recent West Africa Zoom Gather-in led by our Regional Reference Person, Chioma Okonkwo. The following are my highlights:

- Our response to the health crisis will shape how we deal with climate change.
- COVID-19 offers lessons and opportunities that lead to environmental action. For example, there is now a new baseline for what can be achieved digitally. This includes remote work, remote education, remote shopping, and so on—from the comfort of our homes.
- This time of change can lead to long-lasting sustainable habits that benefit the environment.
- There is less travelling, less consumption, less food waste, and less production.

While I wish and pray that the pandemic will end soon, I have resolved to encourage the sustainable habits afterward.

Chijioke Agbaeze
Enugu East LGA, Enugu State, Nigeria

A Wide World Panel on White Racism and Being an Ally

Three Co-Counselors from the Houston (Texas, USA) Community were on a panel at a wide world event, held online, in response to the killing of George Floyd. More than sixty people (African heritage, Latino/a, and white) attended the program. It was a great opportunity to introduce a diverse group of highly engaged people to Co-Counseling and how we work to eliminate white racism.

The three of us were to answer the following questions, each in under three minutes:

1. What is Re-evaluation Counseling?
2. In your work, what does allyship mean to you?
3. What does it mean to “eliminate white racism”?
4. How does a person who is interested begin this work?

I wrote up my answers to the second and third questions in advance, to make sure they would not go over three minutes, and I’ve included them below.

The following questions and comments written in the chat indicated a high level of interest in and engagement with the topic:

- How do you help people move beyond thinking that a robust discussion about racism should happen just for a moment? I have heard some good white friends say that they are tired of talking about this. They feel there are so many other important things to focus on.

- I am concerned about white people mistaking allyship for “white savior” behavior. Does true

allyship require a deep belief that our Black colleagues are equal to us and don’t need “saving”?

- Speak more to the concept of “good white people.” It is tempting to let our (white) selves off the hook [not be responsible] because at least we aren’t *those* (white) people who behave badly. And what are the best exercises and terminology to avoid paralyzing shame and accept that there is no “good,” there is only “growing”?

- *From one of the panelists:* Many white people who want to work on racism can’t believe that white people are good. It can be hard to believe, especially when you get close to the history of race relations in this country. We need to face how brutal racism is. But we are more than our racism. And working on it does renew hope, clarity, and strength.

MY ANSWER TO THE THIRD QUESTION

Here is my answer to question number three: What does it mean to “eliminate white racism”?

There are two kinds of racism: systemic racism as it exists in the institutions of society, and racism as it lives in the minds of white people. To eliminate the first requires societal change. To eliminate the second requires a mental transformation. Neither is easy. But both are doable.

Racism not only divides white people from people of African heritage. Much less obviously but very important, it also divides white people from each other. To heal from the effects of racism is to heal both these divisions. To start the process of healing, we first address the divisions between white people caused by the racism that has been installed in their minds.

continued . . .



WASHINGTON, USA • DIANE SHISK



ORANGES • © STAN EICHNER

... continued

We begin with two shocking premises—namely, that all white people are good and that all white people have been deeply hurt by racism in the area of human connection. If we put racism off on [assign racism to] “those other white people” who act it out most blatantly, then we don’t have to look at where racism has affected us.

The “good white people” versus “bad white people” division is key to keeping racism in place. The white people acting out racism are our people. We get to claim them because all white people carry this stuff, even the polite ones of us.

Racism is a core distress of our society that permeates everything. It came in at us from our first breath on. Racism starts so early that we typically wind up [end up] numb, disconnected, and clueless about the devastation that it causes. And, in most cases, we end up living in a white “bubble.”

To begin removing the contagion from our minds, we get white people together in a safe place. We remind them that they are good, as are their openly racist family members, ancestors, and neighbors. Then we give them a chance to

show, in strict confidence, how racism sits in their minds, including the message that they are better than people of African heritage.

Racism separates us from other people. We never asked for it or wanted it. It is a huge heartbreak for every human. Healing from it—that is, eliminating its effects on our minds—makes it possible for us to have rich connections with all humans we come in contact with. It is hard work that can be done only with support, in groups of people who notice their connection with each other, but it is immensely rewarding.

MY ANSWER TO THE SECOND QUESTION

Here is my answer to question number two: In your work, what does allyship mean to you?

Eliminating white racism necessarily means being an ally to people of African heritage. Allyship is intentional, just as intentional as the friendships we make. There is a point at which we decide that we are connected with and want to back [support] a person whom we want to be a friend or an ally to, if they will have us.

Describing allyship is not so much describing what to do but rather how to think about the relationship and therefore how to be with the person we are allying with. Allyship is real and effective when it is first of all based on straight human connection and not on lofty ideals, as useful as these may be otherwise.

The person we are allying with is not a project we are taking on [engaging in]. When we decide to become an ally to someone, we are taking on a two-way relationship, just like any true friendship. We see the person and their humanity. We believe in them and have decided to be on their side as they take on the challenges they have because the system is stacked against them.

We don’t need to “fix” them. We get to do what every good friend does—be confident they have what it takes to figure out how to overcome the obstacles and challenges in their way. We get to hang in there [stay close and engaged] as they struggle to figure things out, or simply be with them as they realize they are smart enough to figure things out and accomplish their goals.

We do not swoop in and “save” them but instead show up [be present] when they call for us because they need us or want our company as someone who cares about and believes in them. We get to show up at important events in their lives and be someone they know they can count on [rely on].

Allyship is a personal human relationship based on connection, caring, and mutual respect. Most of us can use an ally or two in one or more areas of our lives.

Bob Romero
Houston, Texas, USA
Reprinted from the RC e-mail
discussion list for white
allies ending racism



Sustaining All Life and United to End Racism at Climate Week 2020



Sustaining All Life and United to End Racism will present eleven workshops, six forums, and two introductory classes at Climate Week this year.

When COP26 [the twenty-sixth United Nations conference on climate change] was postponed from November 2020 to November 2021, Climate Week—in New York City, USA—was announced for September 21 to 27 of this year. Climate Week had accepted all our events last year, and we didn't want to miss an opportunity to do our events again, online this time.

It has taken a tremendous amount of work to change our events from in-person at a big conference to online for the world. We are holding some practice sessions for the RC Community to see how best to use Zoom for communicating RC to new people.

Thank you to the several hundred climate warriors (leaders, organizers, interpreters, tech people, typists, and others) who worked together to make our participation possible.

Below are our events for Climate Week (which will have happened just before this *Present Time* goes to press):

- African Voices
- Building Resilient Movements to End the Climate Emergency
- Eliminating the Effects of Racism in Climate Activism
- Ending Racism and Classism in the Climate Movement
- Expressing Climate Grief
- How to Lead Listening Circles
- Indigenous Voices
- Introduction to the Tools of Sustaining All Life
- Jews and Climate Justice: Building a United Front
- Latin American Voices
- Pacific Island Voices
- Personal Stories of Activism to Communicate Hope and Courage
- Subversive Catwalk: Women, Fast Fashion, and Climate Justice
- Sustaining Ourselves as Activists and Organizers
- War and Climate Change
- Women, Girls, and Climate Justice
- Youth at the Forefront of the Climate Movement
- Youth Leading on the Climate Emergency



Diane Shisk
International Commonality Reference
Person for the Care of the Environment
 Shoreline, Washington, USA

A “Climate Listening Circle”

I facilitate the meetings for our Extinction Rebellion chapter and have been bringing RC to the group. We are opening meetings with “news and goods,” playing improv [improvised] games to get people discharging, doing “listening partnerships,” getting leaders to appreciate each other, and closing with what we liked and something we are looking forward to.

We hosted a series of “Climate Listening Circles” for our community. (The best part—it wasn’t my idea!) The circles were two hours long and open to anyone from the community. We used the basic guidelines for listening partnerships and shared in trios and small groups. We came back together for a closing. It was beautiful to see people discharging.

Adrie Rose

Northampton, Massachusetts, USA

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



KATIE KAUFFMAN

Noticing

I have been moving around the United States a lot these last couple of years.

I spent most my life in Seattle, Washington, USA. I was raised poor by a father who was also raised poor. He had a deep love of the environment and raised me with that same love. We spent most of my young life together in the outdoors.

My first career was as an outdoor educator and recreation ecologist (a scientist who studies the impact of outdoor recreation on the environment). I became intimately familiar with the birds, animals, trees, plants, terrain, and weather of Washington State.

After a long time in the U.S. Pacific Northwest, I moved to Michigan in the Midwest. Everything was different. Some things were familiar—plants and trees I knew from visiting my grandmother as a young one—but mostly I needed to notice and learn about being in a new place, about the weather, the trees and animals, and so on.

I am social a worker now, but being able to notice the world is important. I discovered groundhogs for the first time and realized they are in the same family as my favorite alpine animal, the marmot. This made me feel more connected to my new place.

Now we have moved again and are living in Austin, Texas, USA. I keep noticing everything that is similar and everything that is different. I am learning and discharging about what I might have to change in how I engage with the environment here and what can stay the same. I have already heard mourning doves outside my window.

Chris Pearson

Austin, Texas, USA

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

Young People Taking Charge of the U.S. Election

A while ago Diane Shisk (International Commonality Reference Person for the Care of the Environment) said that based on her reading and research, getting the current U.S. administration out of office is crucial for the survival of our planet.

I run a nonprofit organization in Boston, Massachusetts, USA, that is youth-led and adult-supported. It consists primarily of young People of the Global Majority.

I brought Diane's words to the young people a year and a half ago. We started doing research. We started talking to people who do strategy. We learned about how important governments are in the big changes that are needed in climate policy.

We learned how the most important and necessary changes will not happen without getting rid of capitalism (which is currently crumbling), classism, and racism. That is the ultimate goal. In the meantime, it does matter whom we elect to public office.

We attended trainings with the Environmental Voter Project and Vote Left and many other amazing U.S. efforts. We worked with our Youth on Board's "Listening Works" project and created a "deep canvassing" strategy. Deep canvassing means going door-to-door and having conversations with people and listening to them—not just asking them to vote for a particular candidate or support a particular issue. It's about reaching people's minds.

Then the pandemic hit. We had to completely change our in-person strategy to a virtual one. But this made it possible to reach out much farther geographically than we

had planned. The young people have now created two different PowerPoint trainings and lots of amazing systems.

Because we are a nonprofit and constrained by U.S. laws, we cannot endorse a specific candidate. But we can talk to people about how important the Green New Deal is (the Green New Deal seeks to change the fossil-fuel-based economy to a green economy, with workers' rights and People of Global Majority at the center). We also talk about how important ending the climate crisis is and how important it is to follow young people in this effort.

We've worked with various voting projects and accessed lists of people in "swing states"—states that could vote Republican or Democrat in any election and specifically in the presidential election in November 2020. These are states like Florida, Wisconsin, Michigan, Pennsylvania, New Hampshire, and Ohio.

We make phone calls to people in communities that have been traditionally repressed in the U.S. voting process, people who, if they did get out to vote, would likely vote in favor of progressive climate policies.

The following are some of the ways we do our work:

- Thirty-five young people make phone calls and send text messages twice a week.
- We work with other youth organizations and train them to make effective phone calls and to set up their own systems for making regular, deep canvassing calls. Ten to 150 people have participated in the trainings.

- We do "listening partnerships" (mini-sessions) as part of our training. People get to discharge about having been hung up on [on the phone], racist things said to them, or just basic discouragement.

- We have three drop-in sessions a week for people who have been through the training and the phone calling and want to continue the work.

- We have a social media presence and encourage people to participate in our drop-in sessions and trainings.

- We give people information about upcoming local elections and tell them where their voting stations are and details about registering to vote in their state.

- We give people information about voting by mail if they are not comfortable with going out to vote during the pandemic.

We are taking these steps because we want to see real change in U.S. climate policy. Young people are our leaders.

Jenny Szama

*International Liberation Reference
Person for Allies to Young People
Jamaica Plain, Massachusetts, USA*

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



LONDON, ENGLAND • BESS HERBERT

The Effects of Young People's Oppression on a Wide World Changer

I was raised in a Catholic working-class immigrant family in Canada. I was the eldest daughter of three. From an early age I was supposed to be a role model for my younger siblings and my parents' helper in a foreign language [English]. I was supposed to work hard to make my parents proud and fulfill their dream of "a better life." My life was about duty, obligation, and "being good." I did my best to please my parents. There was no place for me or what I wanted in my life.

I was always told, "Be good! Be good!" That message started in my family and was heavily reinforced at school, in church, by cultural conditioning dating back many generations, and in capitalist mainstream society.

As a young person, "being good" meant the following:

- *Be obedient.* Do what you're told. *Do not* think for yourself. Your thinking cannot be trusted. You don't know enough.

- *Be silent.* Don't make a fuss. Don't bring attention to yourself. *Do not* ask for what you need. *Do not* ask for help. *Do not* question or challenge authority. You will risk getting into trouble and inviting more problems.

- *Follow the rules and fit in.* *Do not* question the rules even if they don't make sense. *Do not* try to change the rules because that would be hopeless. You are powerless to do anything.

- *Be liked* by pleasing the people around you. Do what others expect of you—even if it means compromising or giving up on your values or who you are.

- *Work hard* and work some more! Be useful and achieve measurable results quickly and efficiently, even if it means forcing yourself to go beyond your physical limits. You must give more than a hundred percent effort in everything you do. The work is more important than anything else, including your health and mental and spiritual well-being. There is no room to make mistakes.

AS A WIDE WORLD CHANGER

As wide world changers, what does it mean to be "good" in an oppressive society? What does it mean to be "good" when we are trying to transform society on a systems level? It can put many of us up against our early conditioning and what it meant to be good in our parents' eyes.

To be a wide world changer, I must do the things I was told *not* to do as a young person. It is a hundred-and-eighty-degree turning upside down of unquestioned assumptions that have underlain everything I've done. As a world changer, I need to do the following:

- Trust my thinking
- Speak up
- Ask for help
- Take charge
- Organize with others to make change



JOANNA REDFIELD VAUGHN

- Have integrity, courage, and compassion
- Try things I've never done before
- Take on things I was never good at
- Risk making mistakes, failing, not being liked, upsetting people, and making messes
- Have balance in my life (do the work but also take breaks and have fun!)
- Relax and be myself; know that I matter and that I'm enough

In other words, to be a world changer I had to give up being the "good" child. That felt dangerous! Not being (or not being perceived as) good was risking being misunderstood, isolated, humiliated, criticized, or attacked. But that was the discharge work! When I'd been functioning inside the chronic distress of having to be "good," I'd been driven by an irrational need to prove my goodness and competence, to be

hypervigilant and defensive. I'd been desperately trying to make this other person like me, in the same way that I'd tried to please my parents. That had actually made things worse because I couldn't relax and just be myself. And being fully myself is the most powerful way to be as a world changer!

I remember the first time I read Mary Oliver's poem "Wild Geese." I instantly sobbed in the store aisle when I read the first line: "You do not have to be good." No one had ever told me that. It felt like a valve had been released from a pressure cooker that had reached its limit.

My direction has been to remember the reality of my goodness as my inherent birth right. That has allowed me to embrace being labelled a "troublemaker" by some people sometimes. The fact is, not everyone will

like me or agree with me all the time, and that's okay. My goodness is not on trial. I refuse to be confused by other people's confusions and irrationalities. In order to check my own confusions, I put everything under the light of discharge. My activism with my close supporters helps me remember who I am. Life doesn't have to be hard. We can actually feel more alive by taking on big challenges!

How have your experiences as a young person affected your wide world change work? What have you had to discharge to start, or to keep going?

Bo-Young Lim

Brampton, Ontario, Canada

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



Supporting Teachers in South Africa



I am writing from Johannesburg, South Africa. I work as a school psychologist. As schools closed, I reached out to the school community where I work and managed to get some groups of teachers together using the structures already in place.

I suggested guidelines for the groups: sharing the time equally (everyone has something to say, and every person's voice needs to be heard), not interrupting or giving advice, and not judging or blaming. I said that if they had feelings, the groups were a good place to share them and that what they said would be kept confidential.

As the groups progressed, I added RC theory, including the importance of discharge. For every round of turns the teachers had, I took my two minutes, sometimes saying, "I may be the school psychologist, but I am just like you. I am going through similar things and need to be listened to." My vulnerability seemed to build

safety and give people permission to laugh, cry, and shake.

After only a short time of being listened to (sometimes only eight minutes), the teachers said they felt relieved, uplifted, energised, and heard by each other. Being together was a highlight of their week. They said the teachers understood their situation in a way their partners or friends could not. They realised they were not alone and were not the only ones struggling. "I thought my situation was hard, but someone else always seems to have more challenges." They felt inspired by the others' stories, and the people's highlights gave them ideas for what they could do—like study a course, do some exercise, or be creative.

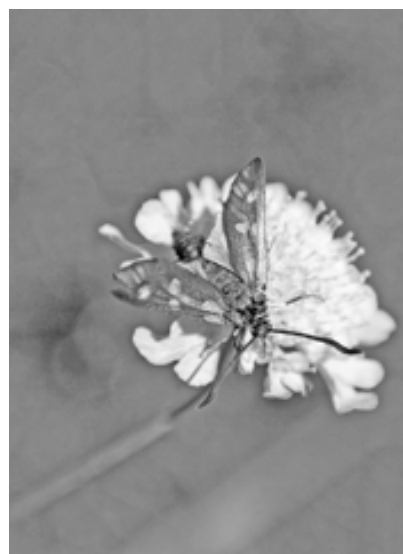
They are overwhelmed, exhausted, and stressed by having to do everything online, working double shifts, and having to figure out things they were not trained for—whilst also being mothers and wives. Still, many of

them said that they also felt a sense of joy from being home with family and having time to play and cook and so on.

T—

Johannesburg, South Africa

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



ROB VENDERBOS

..... “Ripple Effects” from a Parent Listening Group

I am a teacher and director in a small preschool. About five years ago I offered a “Parent Listening Group” for parents from my school. Five parents joined. We met during the school day, so they didn’t have to find additional childcare. We took turns listening to each other, and I gave theory about parents’ oppression and the value of having a delighted listener who has confidence in us as parents. We met for eight weeks, and had turns in front of the group and did mini-sessions. At the end, the parents wanted to continue meeting, so we met over the summer.

A few months ago I ran into [encountered] one of the moms from that group. She told me that they were still meeting once a month and that it had been great ongoing support for them. She and I met about a month after that, and she asked if together we could run a similar group in the wider community, to reach more parents. We made plans to start that in the fall. Then when our state issued a stay-at-home order due to COVID-19, I reached out to her to see how she was doing. She said that the group had started meeting via Zoom. I had no idea when I started the group that it would put RC tools into the hands of these parents for so long a time!

My school has been shut down physically during the stay-at-home order, and the other teachers and I have been reaching out to families and staying connected to our students online. I decided this was a good time to offer another Parent Listening Group, and seven parents have been participating. We are meeting via Zoom.

Initially we met twice a week, once in the evening and once in the afternoon. Now we are meeting only

in the evening due to other commitments. We are doing the same things as the group did five years ago, but this time everyone is discharging immediately and there is no pretense that parenting isn’t a hard job! Parenting in these times has made parents’ oppression very obvious.

Last week I got a little discouraged and thought that maybe we should stop meeting because attendance was dropping. I wondered if they needed to “learn” more theory and were tired of “just listening to each other.” So I asked for their feedback. They all said they wanted to continue. They told me that because of the parenting conditions at this time (no childcare, parents working from home, and so on), it was sometimes hard for them to attend the meeting.

At the end of the meeting on Monday, I asked what they liked about the group. One mom said she had started another Zoom call for single moms and was using the format of “taking turns” that she’d learned from our group. She said it was making a huge difference for her and those other moms. I had no idea she was passing the ideas on to others.

I have learned from these two experiences how powerful listening is, that many parents haven’t learned about it in other places, and that sharing RC tools has ripple effects I don’t always know about.

Susan Lindsay
Greensboro, North Carolina, USA
Reprinted from the RC e-mail
discussion list for leaders of parents



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The Most Effective Thing We Can Offer

I’m convinced that even as we take on big projects in the world, the biggest and most effective thing we as Co-Counselors can offer is our listening and our understanding of oppression.

Julie Longden
Bradford, West Yorkshire, England

Leading a Naturalized Parents' Support Group during the Pandemic

We (Jen and Adrie) had been friends in the wide world before getting into RC. Since we already had the two relationships, it felt natural to offer a naturalized RC support group to parents via Zoom when the COVID lockdown started in our area in March. We intended it to be a resource for us as well as for the group members, as that was a contradiction to our distresses about caregiving and leading.

We invited parents we knew and whom we thought would be able to use the attention of the group. Many of them had heard us talk about RC or RC theory before.

Since March, we have been meeting every other Sunday, for ninety minutes, usually with four to six people. We begin the group with “news and goods.” In our first times together, we explained the basic guidelines for turns. Everyone would have a timed turn. We would all listen to each person lovingly and remember how smart they were. Everything would be confidential. Jen has reminded us that as parents we don't usually get to show what it's really like and that this is a space in which we get to do that. And we try to remind us all each time that while we feel alone as parents, we are actually in it together.

At first we gave prompts that were general, for example, what is good right now and what is challenging. It was wonderful to see people discharge right away. After a couple of months, we told people they could choose a counselor if they wanted to (we briefly explained what a counselor was and demonstrated it during our own turns). Since then, everyone has chosen to have one of us counsel them.

We have asked questions to get people's attention out when it has seemed useful. We have also left fifteen minutes at the end for everyone to just talk—to ask questions of the group or say something that they're thinking about that wasn't part of their session. We have closed the meetings with everyone sharing what they liked about being there and what they are looking forward to.

The two of us, like so many parents, have struggled to think and make decisions about school and other issues in regard to our children. Last week, Jen talked about capitalism and the pull to make a quick decision or find an easy fix so that we don't have to feel uncomfortable. Adrie suggested that we have sessions on giving birth. (Our group has so far been all women who have given birth, but the sessions could also be about bringing a child home for the first time.) Like encountering the current worldwide situation, becoming a parent was more challenging than we had ever imagined. We faced huge decisions that we didn't feel qualified to make, while feeling isolated and afraid (just like we feel now).

Leading this parents' group has been a wonderful experience. Adrie says, “I find it one of the best places for me to discharge. It changes my whole week.”

Jen Malcolm-Brown
Shutesbury, Massachusetts, USA
and Adrie Rose
Northampton, Massachusetts, USA
Reprinted from the RC e-mail
discussion list for leaders of parents

Teachers Need Allies

The world situation continues to change daily. It is hard to make rational decisions about our lives and what we can and cannot do. This is especially true for our educators. To open or not to open schools? To turn to blended, online, or remote learning? To experiment with teaching face to face?

Teachers need to discharge about what it will look like if everything is online. What are teachers' key responsibilities? How

do they maintain connections with students? How do they continue to provide emotional support for students and each other?

Now is the time for classroom teachers around the world to form deep connections, to not be isolated, to not have to manage feelings of hopelessness, despair, overwork, and being oppressed on their own [by themselves]. Now, more than ever, teachers need allies.

I'm setting up a network for teacher support. It is important that classroom teachers and their allies join forces and stand strong in this time.

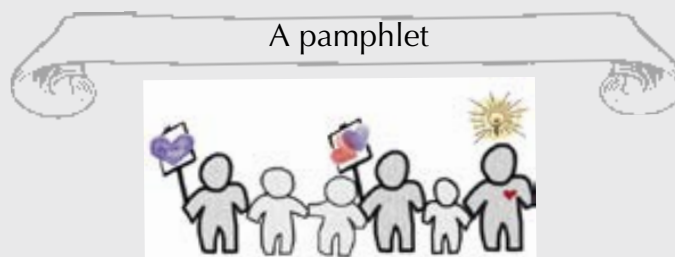
Marilyn Robb

*International Commonality Reference
Person for Educational Change
St. Augustine, Trinidad and Tobago*

Reprinted from the RC e-mail
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מלאכות עתיקות והקפיטליזם

שמי מרצי' ואני גרה במקום קטן בישראל. אני קרמיקאית ומתפרנסת מעבודת כפיים. נולדתי בישראל וגדלתי במשפחה ממעמד הפועלים. הורי עלו נולדו וגדלו במרוקו והיגרו לישראל בגיל העשרה שלהם.

זה כמה שנים שאני עוסקת, חושבת ועושה כל מיני מלאכות כפיים עתיקות, כמו קליעת סלים, סריגה, קרמיקה ועוד. תמיד הייתה לי נטיה ואהבה לעסוק במלאכות יד.

אני רואה קשר ישיר בין הקפיטליזם והייצור התעשייתי לבין העלמות של המיומנויות והידע הרב שישנו אצל האנשים שעסקו במלאכות יד הללו. פחות ופחות אנשים יודעים איך לקלוע סל או להכין כלים מחימר או מעץ. רוב הידע בנוגע למלאכות הללו משתמר היום בעולם במדינות פחות מפותחות תעשייתית, ולא במקרה. הסיבה העיקרית לכך שידע זה נשמר היום היא תיירותית, כמו למשל במרוקו, שם מוכרים לתיירים מוצרים כמו סלים, כלי חרס וקרמיקה, מוצרי עץ מגולפים, עיבוד עורות וכיוצא בזה.

ניתן לראות בבירור שלידע של המלאכות העתיקות יש קשר ישיר עם הסביבה והאדמה. מלאכות יד עשויות לרוב מחומרים טבעיים ומקומיים שפוגעים פחות בכדור הארץ ובסביבה בגלל היכולת שלהם להתכלות. ידיעת המלאכות האלו התפתחה וצמחה מהסביבה הקרובה בה התגוררו וחיו האנשים, ועברה מדור לדור. הקשר והחיבור של האנשים האלה לסביבת החיים שלהם הוא נדיר וייחודי. הניתוק שלנו מהטבע ומעונות השנה הוא תוצאה ישירה של העולם המודרני והמתועש. הקפיטליזם והעולם המודרני ניתקו את בנות האדם מהסובב אותם. הדיכוי גרם לאנשים לחשוב בטעות שהם מעל הטבע, לא קשורים אליו ויכולים לנהל ולתמרן אותו ככל שירצו.

לבד מהערך של שימור הידע העצום שנמצא אצל בעלי המלאכה האלו, ושנחנו יכולות ללמוד ממנו הרבה, אנחנו יכולות ללמוד מהאנשים האלה גם על החיבור שלהם לטבע וההשתלבות שלהם בסביבה בה הם חיים. ניתן לראות בבירור את הפגיעה החמורה שנגרמת כיום להרבה מאוד אנשים שעוסקים במלאכות האלה ומתפרנסות מהן. אנשים שהתבססו על תיירות ומכירה של העבודות שלהם לתיירים כמו במרוקו, נותרו נטולי פרנסה בימים של המגיפה העולמית. אין ספק שסגירת הגבולות בין מדינות פגעה פגיעה גדולה מאוד באנשים האלה.

מלאכות יד קדומות הן חלק מתרבות ומסורת של אנשים ומקומות בעולם. אלו מסורות ארוכות שנים של עבודה איטית וקפדנית על פרטים, תוך חיבור מלא למקום. הן נכללות בהגדרה של אמנות שימושית, כי המוצרים שיוצרו היו בשימוש יומיומי של האנשים וצורת החיים שלהם לפני שהייצור התעשייתי המאסיבי השתלט לנו על העולם. השוק בעולם כיום מוצף מוצרים וחפצים ממוכנים, שלפעמים מיוצרים ללא מגע יד אדם, במחירים זולים ובאיכויות נמוכות מאוד עם אורך חיים קצר, כך שקשה מאוד לעבודות היד להתחרות בזה.

יש לי שתי אחיות, וזה כמה שנים טובות אנחנו נפגשות כל שבת. בתקופת הקורונה התחלנו להיפגש בסביבה הפתוחה בפארק קרוב למקום מגורינו. לאחרונה לימדתי אותן את מלאכת הקליעה וכל שבת שאנחנו נפגשות אנחנו קולעות יחד. מבחינתי זה סוג של סגירת מעגל כי הסבתא רבתא שלי היתה קולעת סלים במרוקו. אנחנו זוכרות אותה מילדותנו, כשהיתה מגיעה לכל ביקור עם סל שהכינה. זו הרגשה נפלאה ומחברת לקלוע יחד עם האחיות שלי, תחושה של משהו שהוא מוכר לנו ורשום בידיים שלנו.

מלאכות אלו היו חלק בלתי נפרד מהחיים של בנות אדם בעבר. הסבתא רבתא שלי ידעה לקלוע סלים. זו הייתה אחת מתוך מיומנויות חיים רבות שהיו לה. היא לא היתה קולעת סלים במובן הקפיטליסטי של היום: זה לא היה העיסוק העיקרי שלה, לא המקצוע שלה ולא חלק מהזהות או הפרנסה שלה. זו היתה פשוט אחת מהמיומנויות שהיו אז לאנשים, משהו שהם ידעו לעשות. אם היה צריך סל אז ידעו לקלוע אחד כזה או ביקשו מהשכן להכין להם, לא הלכו לסופר לבחור אחד.

יש ערך רב לעסוק במלאכות האיטיות האלה שמאפשרות ליצור חיבור כנה ופשוט בין בנות אדם בנוסף לשימור הידע התרבותי והמסורתי. חשוב לשמר את הידע ולא לתת לו ללכת לאיבוד כי הוא אוגד בתוכו את החיבור הפשוט והקשר שהיה לבנות אדם עם המקום והסביבה שלהם.



מרצי' שוקרון ליאור

תובל, ישראל

שפות ראשונות ספרדית ועברית

תורגם על ידי עופר ליאור

נדפס מתוך רשימת הדיון האלקטרונית למנהיגים בתחום איכות הסביבה

English translation of the preceding article in Hebrew:

Traditional Crafts and Capitalism

My name is Merchi. I live in a small village in Israel. I am a ceramicist and make my living by doing manual labor. I was born in Israel and grew up in a working-class family. My parents were both born and raised in Morocco and immigrated to Israel in their teen years.

For several years I have been engaged in thinking about and doing all kinds of traditional crafts, like basket weaving, knitting, and ceramics. I have always had an inclination and love for making all kinds of crafts.

There is a direct connection between capitalism's mass industrial production and the disappearance of the expertise and knowledge of people who make traditional crafts. Fewer and fewer people know how to weave a basket or make utensils out of clay or wood.

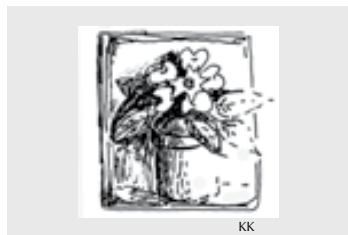
It is not a coincidence that most knowledge of these crafts has been preserved in the less industrially developed countries. The main reason for this is tourism. In Morocco you can find many tourist products for sale, including baskets, ceramics, wood carvings, leather objects, and more.

Ancient traditional crafts have a direct connection with the environment. They are usually made from local and natural raw materials that are less harmful to the Earth because of their ability to decompose. The knowledge of them has been developed from the immediate environment and passed down from one generation to another. The people who engage in them have a connection to their environment that is unique and rare. Most of us live disconnected from our environment. Our lack

of connection—to nature, the seasons—is a direct product of the modern industrialized world. Capitalism and the modern world have disconnected us from our surroundings. Oppression makes us mistakenly think that we are “above” nature, that we are separate from it, and that we can manage and manipulate it however we wish.

There is great value in preserving the knowledge of traditional craft makers. We can learn from their connection to nature and how they are integrated into the environment in which they live. We can also notice the harm being done to many people who are making their living from crafts. In the global pandemic, with limited travel between countries, people who earn their living from selling their products to tourists (as in Morocco) have been left without income.

Traditional crafts are part of the cultures and traditions of people around the globe. There are long-standing traditions of slow, meticulous, detailed work, done while the workers are fully connected to the environment. And the crafts are practical arts; the products were in daily use before massive industrial production took over our world. Today's markets are full of products that have been made by machines, at times with no human contact, and that are cheap. It is hard for traditional crafts to compete.



I have two sisters, and for the last few years we have been meeting every Saturday. Since Coronavirus we have been meeting in open spaces in a park near to where we live. I have been teaching them weaving, so every Saturday we weave together. For me it is closing the circle, because my great-grandmother used to weave baskets in Morocco. We remember her from our childhood when she would come to visit us with a new basket she had made. It's a wonderful and connected feeling to weave together with my sisters, a sense of something that is familiar and recorded in our hands.

Crafts were an integral part of human life in the past. My great-grandmother knew how to weave baskets along with many other life skills she had. She did not weave in the modern capitalist sense. It was not her main job or profession, or identity, or source of income. It was just one of the life skills that people had back then, something that they knew how to do. If they needed a basket, they knew how to weave one, or they asked a neighbor to make one. They did not have to go to the supermarket to choose one.

There is great value in engaging in slow traditional crafts. They allow us to have honest and simple connections and to preserve cultural and traditional knowledge and skills. It is important to preserve them and not let them get lost. They unite us in the simple connection we human beings have with our place and environment.

Merchi Shukroon Lior
Tuval, Israel

Translated by Ofer Lior
Reprinted from the RC e-mail
discussion list for leaders in
the care of the environment

Reclaim Logic as Progressive

Logic is “our kind of people” [consistent with who we are]. Logic has been slandered . . . and misused and abused by the oppressive society, but logic is not “cold.” Logic is warm, human, and loving, and we must not allow logical thinking to appear to be monopolized by the oppressors. We must make it our own.

Especially as liberation fighters, we must never assume that logical communication is left to the oppressors while we make emotional appeals in order to rally people for liberation. That has never really worked. When it appeared to work for a few days at a time, it created additional problems later.

Logic belongs to us. We, the liberation forces, are the human ones, and logic is a warm, essential human characteristic. It is part of our elegant functioning.

Harvey Jackins

From page 33 of “Thinking All the Time” in *The Benign Reality*



Five Types of Anti-Semitism

The targeting of Jews must end. Anti-Semitism also needs to be seen as part of a broader global phenomenon. Many vulnerable groups are now under attack, including People of the Global Majority, Muslims, immigrants, women, LGBTQ people, and climate activists. Anti-Semitism is a unique oppression that deserves everyone's attention. At the same time, it is helpful to recognize that it's happening in the context of worldwide systemic attacks against many groups. To end anti-Semitism, we need to unite all the groups. We need a united front.

To counter anti-Semitism, we can think of anti-Semitic incidents in five broad categories, each requiring its own tailor-made response.

WHITE SUPREMACY

White supremacists express the most readily identifiable anti-Semitism. It is familiar to many—for example, the torch-carrying throngs marching in Charlottesville (Virginia, USA) chanting, “Jews will not replace us!” A chilling recent expression of white supremacy was the shooting of Shabbat worshipers at the Tree of Life Synagogue in Pittsburgh (Pennsylvania, USA). According to the Anti-Defamation League and the FBI, white supremacist incidents targeting Jews are on the rise. White supremacists use shopworn anti-Semitic tropes that say Jews control the world order and are responsible for economic disparities that have a particularly negative impact on the white working class. Politicians aligned with the Right encourage this thinly veiled anti-Semitism, for example, by denouncing “globalism” or the Jewish philanthropist George Soros. President Trump's press office denies any connection between

Trump's actions and rising anti-Semitism in the United States, but anti-Semitic incidents rooted in white supremacy have not only become more overt, they have also become more frequent since his election.

THE POLITICAL WEAPONIZATION OF ANTI-SEMITISM

During the Trump presidency, the Right has weaponized charges of anti-Semitism to attack progressive forces to weaken and divide them. Trump's charge that the Democratic Party is anti-Semitic has this goal. The claim against Jeremy Corbyn's Labour Party in the United Kingdom had the same aim. The anti-Semitism in the Labour Party does need to be addressed, but the Right's divisive charge of anti-Semitism needs to be challenged. When the Right selectively ignores vicious anti-Semitic comments from within its own ranks and exaggerates the anti-Semitism in progressive circles, all progressive movements become weakened.

Trump's recent executive order to withhold federal funding to colleges and universities based on what the Right is defining as anti-Semitism—which includes any criticism of the policies of the Israeli government—is part of this larger agenda.

At first consideration, many Jews might welcome the executive order as a positive step to address anti-Semitism. However, it fails to address the source of anti-Semitism and settles instead for stifling free speech, labeling anyone who voices criticism of the Israeli government as anti-Semitic. It will have the effect of further isolating Jewish students from other progressive



PROVINCETOWN, MASSACHUSETTS, USA • ALAN EPSTEIN

groups on campus. The Right is systematically weaponizing charges of anti-Semitism to divide the Democratic Party and other progressive movements. The self-serving, cynical way in which the Right denounces anti-Semitism is not a positive step.

PEOPLE OF THE GLOBAL MAJORITY AND ANTI-SEMITISM

In some neighborhoods in the United States, especially where Jews and People of the Global Majority live side by side, economic disparities have sometimes led People of the Global Majority to take out their resentments on Jews, who often play visible roles such as small shopkeepers, teachers, and social workers. Instead of recognizing and taking on the larger systemic issues of economic disparity, People of the Global Majority can see Jews in their communities as interlopers, as the visible face of oppression. Historically, when poor and working-class people have been ready to stand up and resist oppressive conditions, the Jews among them have often been held up as the reason for their difficulties, becoming the target for anger and resentment.

In New York City (USA), Orthodox Jews and non-Jewish People of the Global Majority are being set up against each other. This is classic

continued . . .

WIDE WORLD CHANGING

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anti-Semitism. Jews are seen as the primary impediment to others' well-being. However, Jews and People of the Global Majority are natural allies. When they get pitted against each other, as in New York, both groups suffer, making it harder to fight effectively against either racism or anti-Semitism.

The rift between non-Jews of color and Jews is different from the anti-Semitism of white supremacists. It requires a different response and a reaching for unity between both peoples.

ANTI-SEMITISM ON THE LEFT

The Left also has a form of anti-Semitism that needs to be challenged. Many progressive movements minimize Jewish issues, not seeing them as meriting the same attention deserved by those of other oppressed groups. The Left has also been inclined to villainize Israel and assign it sole blame for all the complex issues in the Middle East conflict. The anti-Semitism is evident in the singling out of Israel as exclusively responsible for the conflict.

The challenge for progressives has been to keep a proper balance: to hold the Israeli government accountable for the Occupation and its oppressive policies toward Palestinians while supporting the right of Israel to exist and the central importance of that for Jews. In their critiques of Israel, many on the Left may not explicitly target Jews, but they implicitly hold all Jews responsible for Israel's failures and increasingly move to silence Jews for wanting to speak in support of Israel.

Those who support Israel's right to exist have not always been willing to criticize the oppressive policies of the Israeli government. And those who support Palestinian liberation have not always been willing to

acknowledge the right of Jews to a homeland. Honoring both people's liberation aspirations is a key part of the work of progressive movements to end anti-Semitism.

FAITH-BASED ANTI-SEMITISM

In many countries, particularly in Western Europe, the State has used Christianity to oppress the Jewish community. While Christianity is neither the source nor the primary cause of anti-Semitism, when it's been closely aligned with the State it's become a vehicle for the dissemination of anti-Semitism. The Church's historic teachings of contempt for Jews and Judaism have also fueled anti-Semitism in those periods when a close relationship existed between Church and State. Since the election of Trump, there

has been a strong collaboration between Christian evangelical communities and the White House. Such alliances between Church and State have historically led to an increase in anti-Semitism.

Building a united front against anti-Semitism alongside other oppressions, such as racism, Islamophobia, sexism, and LGBTQ oppression, is now key. And the more we can understand the different kinds of anti-Semitism and develop strategies for each, the easier it will be to build this united front.

Cherie Brown

International Liberation

Reference Person for Jews

Silver Spring, Maryland, USA

Reprinted from the RC e-mail

discussion list for leaders of Jews

“Mental Health” Oppression, and Submission to the Oppressive Society

“Mental health” oppression . . . makes people doubt their own thinking, which explains why they will submit to a society that prioritizes profit, not people.

Janet Foner

Former International Liberation Reference

Person for “Mental Health” Liberation

(Janet died in July 2019)

*Reprinted from the Sustaining All Life handout
The Climate Crisis and Mental Health Oppression*



LOMÉ, TOGO • ELLIE PUTNAM

Finding Common Ground with a Pro-life Voter

Many thanks to each of the 150 women from twenty-four states and the District of Columbia (USA), Canada, and Puerto Rico who participated in a recent RC gather-in about the U.S. presidential election.

A woman's right to terminate a pregnancy is a wedge issue that is used to divide Catholics from each other. Catholics who prioritize opposing legal abortions identify as pro-life voters and will not vote for a Democratic presidential candidate no matter how terrible the Republican candidate is.

I had given up on talking with pro-life voters because their position often came from a rigid place based on painful emotions and they could be quick to attack people they disagreed with. However, I decided that this year's election was too consequential to avoid talking to what was a significant block of Catholic voters. As a Catholic female, I needed to be engaged with this controversial issue.

Following the gather-in, I initiated a conversation with a male pro-life voter whom I had known for a long time. I listened to him talk about the speeches on abortion at the Republican National Convention. Then I briefly shared that abortion is a wedge issue used to divide Catholics from each other. I said that many people who are voting for Biden, including myself, would like to see abortion and the need for it become rare. I said that we work on the issue in a different way from the pro-lifers but that we have more in common with them in our concern for mothers and children than we can often tell [notice]. Much to my surprise, the man agreed that we probably had more in common than we realized. He went on to tell me all the things he disliked about Trump.

I got to Co-Counsel about this exchange afterward. Now my brain cells are processing the conversation and thinking about my next conversation with a pro-life voter. This has kept me discharging my Catholic female internalized oppression.

I'm excited to be facing my fears head on [directly] and deciding that I am smart enough and good enough to engage with voters on this controversial issue.

M—
USA

Reprinted from the RC e-mail
discussion list for USA political issues

A Goal to Reach Ten Thousand Voters

I attended the "United Front: Finding the Work You Want to Do Around the U.S. Presidential Election" RC webinar. Listening to what other women have figured out and discharging discouragement were helpful for me. I noticed feelings of being stupid—of being naive to think electoral politics matter or not knowing enough about electoral politics. I've decided to take action anyway.

My goal is to reach out to ten thousand voters.

I am a mom of a toddler, working for money, leading in RC, and co-producing a dance concert this fall—so I'm a little busy. However, I decided that the outcome of this election matters enough to me that I will put attention and energy into reaching U.S. voters. I want to make sure they are registered to vote, encourage them to vote, and encourage them to vote for Biden/Harris.

I tried to write postcards to voters who may have been taken off the register and not be able to vote unless they re-register soon, and I was failing to get it done so I enlisted some friends to help. They were grateful to have a way to take action, and I was relieved to get help.

I started thinking about the many people in my life who want change and have much more time than I have but who haven't figured out how to take action.

I thought about how sometimes people sponsor a runner who is raising money for a social cause. I decided to ask people to "sponsor" me. Instead of giving me money, they will pledge to write a certain number of postcards or call a certain number of people to encourage them to vote. My dance collective has agreed to use our social media platform to host postcard and phone banking activities and to track them, so we know how many people we are reaching.

Doing this has brought up a lot of discouragement to discharge. But it has also brought me closer to people in my life—my family, friends, coworkers, and students and the parents at my child's school.

I don't know if I can meet my goal, but I'm going to try.

Sarah Leddy

Los Angeles, California, USA

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



Parents, Their Children, and School

Hello wonderful parents,

It's always been hard to be a parent. And things are getting ever harder. Parents' oppression is becoming more obvious and unbearable. It's very hard to work at a job that pays money and at the same time do the job of parenting, a job that doesn't pay money. It's impossibly hard if you are a single parent, or being exposed to COVID at your job, or both. It's impossibly hard if you've lost your job and have no income to support your family. It's hard for every parent during COVID, no matter what. We and our children are suffering from the oppression.

I joined a group of parents in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, USA, led by Chuck Esser (the International Commonality Reference Person for Family Work), to talk about what to do in the fall with our children. Parent support groups can help parents decide whether or not to send their children back to school. They can help parents decide what to do if they don't send them back. Some parents do have choices. They might not be great choices, but they can't wait for others to decide for them.

As Chuck pointed out, "Nobody has a plan." The situation changes on a daily basis. The U.S. government is not interested in giving support or guidance. We have to think for ourselves. What makes sense for us and our children? We can think about this. We can come together with other parents and allies and discharge on it. We can each figure out the best possible solution. It won't be perfect, there's a good chance it will be inadequate, but we can discharge and decide on the best choice.

We may need to work on early times in our lives when things were unpredictable. When we were small, we had no idea what would happen moment to moment. When we were babies, someone could walk out of a room and we might not know if they would ever return. There is a lot of unpredictability now. We can discharge on our early fears that are restimulated by the current situation.

Chuck also pointed out that we don't have to feel bad about ourselves when things don't go as we'd hoped. It will be hard, no matter what. If we need to make adjustments, we can. But we still get to back [support] ourselves and be pleased with the decisions we make.

Whatever we decide, we need to be involved with the people in our schools and neighborhoods. We need to guide people so they can think about our children. Everyone is struggling. Everyone could use our thinking, our leadership, and our caring. We can listen to and help people. Things will go better for our children if we do. This is also an extraordinary time for getting out RC ideas. People are open to them.

The U.S. president is saying that schools must open in the fall and that children must attend in person, no matter how damaging that might be to both parents and children. Why is this so important to him? It is because it will allow parents to go to work, which is key to opening up the economy, which is the most important thing to capitalists. Let us pause for a moment and think about the leverage we have as parents in this situation.

If you don't have a parents' support group, I encourage you to find a few parents or allies to discharge with about these issues. I encourage you to write to this discussion list about what you have figured out. It doesn't have to be long; a few sentences will do [be enough].

Marya Axner
International Liberation
Reference Person for Parents
Somerville, Massachusetts, USA
Reprinted from the RC e-mail
discussion list for leaders of parents



ALAN EPSTEIN

Winning the Election While Building a Movement

The U.S. presidential election comes at a pivotal juncture in history. I think it could be decisive in determining the future direction of our society. Defeating Trump is critical. At the same time, the real enemy is the system of capitalism that led to Trump. If we don't address that, we will only create more Trumps.

Without a movement applying pressure on it, a Biden administration [Joe Biden is the Democratic Party candidate for U.S. president] would not resolve the many crises we face. The Democratic Party is not going to build the movement we need, so how we organize to defeat Trump is important. We need to participate in a united front with Democrats to defeat Trump while at the same time building independent organizations that can advance our longer-term goal of building a just society. Co-Counselors could play important roles in this.

To advance human liberation while also attending to the present situation we need short-term goals tied to a longer-term strategy. Some people feel like we have to beat Trump first and then worry about what comes next. That would be a big mistake. This election creates an opportunity to organize people. We can either spend our time organizing them into mainstream Democratic Party organizations that don't share our long-term goals, or we can organize them into organizations that are working to defeat Trump while also engaging in longer-term organizing for real liberation.

There are real dangers if Trump wins another term. The impact on climate change would be catastrophic. I think it is likely he would try to change the rules of our democracy to support an apartheid-like form of

white minority rule and use police and the military to weaken movements against him. We have to defeat him—but how we do it matters.

CAPITALISM IS THE ENEMY; TRUMP IS A RESULT

Many liberals and mainstream Democrats think that if we just get rid of Trump and get the Democrats in power, we can get back to normal. This is a serious mistake. First, there is no going back to normal (not that “normal” was ever good enough for most people). Capitalism is an unstable system facing a crisis. The mainstream Democrats would like to save it, but given the magnitude of the current crisis, I don't think that would work. Second, that approach ignores the fact that the failure of mainstream Democrats to create real change in working people's lives contributed to the rise of Trump.

Trump's rise to power is not some aberration but rather an outgrowth of the current stage of capitalism. The U.S. and world economy experienced a major crisis in 2008. After that, Republicans and Democrats [the two main U.S. political parties] worked together just enough to bail out the banks and keep the system functioning at the expense of working-class people. Since then, the economic situation for poor, working-, and middle-class people has continued to worsen while the leadership of both parties has focused on saving big businesses. As a result, many people have become disillusioned with traditional politicians and are looking for something new. In the midst of this crisis, Donald Trump ran for president trying to convince white people that immigrants, People of the Global Majority, and China were their real enemies and the cause of all difficul-

ties. A Trump presidency was made possible by the failure of mainstream Democrats to actually help working people or tell a coherent story about how capitalism was creating the mess.

AVOIDING CO-OPTATION IS KEY

A significant bloc of the owning class opposes Trump and wants to replace him with a more stable leader. They talk about how terrible Trump is. But their goal is to save capitalism in order to keep making profits. We can work with them on our shared goal of defeating Trump, but joining their effort without building our own organizations that advance our goals would be a mistake. Throughout history, efforts at real transformation have been blocked by attempts to change the system just enough to keep it going. These attempts have often seemed to be aligned with us, but in fact their goals are completely different. One of the most important tasks in this period is to not be co-opted by such attempts and to build organizations that are truly focused on liberation.

WITHOUT OUTSIDE PRESSURE, A BIDEN ADMINISTRATION WOULDN'T CHANGE MUCH

It is quite possible that Joe Biden could win this election. That would be a big blow to Trump and others like him. It might also buy us some time on climate change. But a Biden administration would not likely do much to address the huge crises we face without major pressure being put on it. Biden and the Democratic Party are deeply committed to capitalism, and a Biden administration would prioritize trying to patch up this system and make it work a little longer. Given the size of the crisis we

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face with COVID, climate change, and the economy, that would be unlikely to work. Most likely, conditions for most people would continue to worsen, with People of the Global Majority and working-class people being hit the hardest. The failure of a Biden administration to create real change could easily result in a return to a Trump-like leader.

WE NEED TO SUPPORT INDEPENDENT ORGANIZATIONS

So what do we do? A Trump re-election creates an existential threat, and a Biden administration is not a real solution. I think the answer is to work with Democrats to elect Biden while building independent organizations committed to more fundamental change. The good thing about a Biden administration is that it could be influenced to take more effective, progressive positions on climate change, the economy, racial justice, and more, if we build powerful enough movements. The Democrats will spend millions of dollars to mobilize people to vote in this election, but after the election they will essentially disband that organization, just as they did after Obama won. If instead of organizing with the Democratic Party we organize with independent organizations that share our long-term vision for liberation and are willing to pressure Biden once he is in office, the story could be different.

I am not suggesting we support third political parties (at least not yet). Because of our electoral system, third parties are irrelevant in most places (until we change that). I am talking about supporting candidates that are running for office as Democrats while building separate organizations that advance economic, racial, and gender justice. Across the country a host of independent political organizations are working to defeat Trump while also engaging

people in longer-term organizing for more fundamental change. Most are led by working-class people and People of the Global Majority. These organizations organize for elections but also develop leaders, participate in mass movements, and organize on issues year-round. Co-Counselors could play significant roles in supporting these organizations.

Another advantage of working with independent organizations is that they may be able to reach people the Democrats cannot. Many people don't believe the Democratic Party talking points anymore. An independent local organization that sees the election as part of a longer-term strategy may be more credible to the many voters who decided not to vote last time. A lot has been said about reaching for Trump supporters. On principle, I agree. In this election, however, I think it's more important to spend our time on the millions of people who weren't inspired to vote at all but would likely vote for Biden if they saw their vote as part of a movement for more fundamental change.

WE CAN JOIN THE COALITION AS AN INDEPENDENT FORCE

Several people have written on this e-mail discussion list about the need to build a united front to defeat Trump. I agree that it's important. But it's also important to consider some historic lessons on united fronts. Over the last century, revolutionaries in many places have formed united fronts with others to advance common goals, including to defeat fascism. But while the united fronts worked together on their common demands, each group also remained an independent force pursuing its independent long-term goals. Being part of a united front in this election means joining the coalition as an independent force. Otherwise we will have simply joined the Democrats.

WE CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE

The threat of Trump winning is scary. That can make us focus only on narrow short-term goals. But this moment requires so much more of us. We have to address the short-term threat, move a long-term strategy for liberation forward, and discharge any fear or discouragement that might stop us. Anything less will not solve the crises we face.

The good news is that it is possible to defeat Trump while building the movements we need for the long term. Movement organizations led by working-class people, People of the Global Majority, women, and LGBTQ folks have grown tremendously over the last few years. We recently saw the largest wave of protest the United States has ever seen in response to the police murders of Black people. If we get involved in the election while building these movement organizations, we could see some real change. There is so much we as RCers can bring to these organizations and so much we can learn by getting involved in this kind of organizing. I think this is a good challenge for us.

Eric Braxton

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, USA

Reprinted from the RC e-mail discussion list for USA political issues



PANAMA CANAL, PANAMA • DEBORAH RUBIEN

The Community RC Website

There is a website for the Re-evaluation Counseling (RC) Community at <www.rc.org>. At this site you will have easy access to a large amount of information about RC, including the following:

- RC theory (basic theory, including an introduction to RC, a glossary, *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 Begin RC*, which includes what to do in a session and how to lead support groups), counseling techniques and commitments, and a description of RC classes and the Community
- The *Guidelines for the Re-evaluation Counseling Communities*, 2017 edition, RC Goals, and forms
- Translations of articles into many languages, and language liberation information
- Articles from recent journals, including *Present Time*, and online publications
- Resources for workshop organizers, including online workshops
- Articles about teaching RC and outlines for teaching fundamentals classes, in Spanish
- "Today's Thought"—a short daily thought from a Re-evaluation Counseling perspective
- Recent Draft Liberation Policy Statements and Climate Change Draft Program
- Care of the Environment materials and information
- Resources for Human Liberation
- RC Webinars: Description and Schedule

Website for People New to RC

An RC website for people new to RC can be found at <www.reevaluationcounseling.org>. It contains introductory information about RC that is easy to access.



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How to Contact Us Online

- The International RC Community: ircc@rc.org
- United to End Racism: uer@rc.org
- Rational Island Publishers: litsales@rc.org, for orders and billing questions (or order on our website at <www.rationalisland.com>)
- Re-evaluation Counseling Community Resources (Intensives and office matters only): rcoffice@rc.org
- Automatic response e-mail about RC: info@rc.org
- For sending photos: photos@rc.org

We now have websites for four ongoing projects that are taking the work of RC into the broader society. They have information geared to people who are not yet a part of RC.

United to End Racism (UER) works with other groups involved in eliminating racism and shares with them the theory and practice of RC. You can find valuable resources and a description of UER's projects at <www.unitedtoendracism.org>. (UER's e-mail address is uer@rc.org.)

No Limits for Women (No Limits) is an international organization of women (and men who are allies to women) dedicated to eliminating sexism and male domination throughout the world. Its website, <www.nolimitsforwomen.net>, features the No Limits Draft Liberation Policy Statement for Women and a video of a No Limits workshop, *Women and Men in Partnership to End Sexism*.

Sustaining All Life (SAL) has been attending conferences on the climate emergency, including the United Nations Conferences of the Parties (COPs) and presenting workshops, public forums, caucuses, support groups, fundamentals classes, and listening projects as part of bringing RC tools to climate change activists. Reports on its activities and more information about it are at <www.sustainingalllife.org>. (SAL's e-mail address is sal@rc.org.)

Jews and Allies United to End Anti-Semitism is a group of people, of all ages and from many countries, working together as Jews and non-Jews to end anti-Semitism. Key parts of the project are to model that there are allies committed to ending Anti-Semitism, to stop the use of anti-Semitism to divide progressive movements, and to join with others to make sure that anti-Semitism is included in the work on all oppression issues. Reports on the project's activities along with information from the pamphlet *Anti-Semitism: Why Is It Everyone's Concern?* are at <www.Jewsandallies.org>. (The e-mail address is Info@JewsAndAllies.org.)

Electronic Mailing Lists

The RC Community maintains a large number of electronic mailing lists for particular categories of RCers. They are for active members of the RC Community, and most of them are for leaders only. You can see a list of these lists at <<https://list.rc.org>> and below.

Here are the steps to subscribe to a list:

1. Make sure you have a subscription to *Present Time* if you are a fluent reader of English. (If you are a fluent reader of English, part of being an active member of the RC Community is subscribing to *Present Time*.) For the Community Members list and the United to End Racism list, you must have a recommendation from an Area or Regional Reference Person *unless you are an RC teacher*. For additional requirements, please see below.

2. Set up an account—if you don't already have one—at the server site <<https://list.rc.org>>. When you sign up for an account, you will receive an e-mail to verify your e-mail address. (If you don't see it for some time, be sure to look in your junk folder. If you can't find it anywhere, please contact the list admin at <hansen@rc.org>.) Once you verify your e-mail address, your account is created.

3. Go to the list website at <<https://list.rc.org>> and log in to your account. Then click on the list you would like to subscribe to and enter your e-mail address. You will get an e-mail from the list moderator asking for additional information, such as your full name, phone number, and mailing address. Send your answers back to the moderator, with a copy to ircc@rc.org. (It may take some days for the moderator to get back to you. Please be patient.)

When you have successfully subscribed, you will receive a confirmation e-mail. Keep this e-mail. You will need to use your account to make changes to your electronic mailing list subscriptions.

If you need help, there is a "help" list that subscribers can use to help each other. Please subscribe to that list. If you have questions, please check there first for an answer. If you find nothing useful to your issue, please post a question.

RC Community Members: <community-members@list.rc.org>

RC Community Members Involved in Eliminating Racism: <uer@list.rc.org>

Regional Reference Persons: <rrp@list.rc.org>

Area Reference Persons: <arp@list.rc.org>

International Liberation and Commonality Reference Persons: <ilrp@list.rc.org>

RC Teachers: <teachers@list.rc.org>

Editors of RC or non-RC publications:
<editors@list.rc.org>

Translators of RC Literature:
<translators@list.rc.org>

Leaders of **African Heritage People:**
<black@list.rc.org>

Leaders of **Artists:** <artists@list.rc.org>

Leaders of **Atheists:** <atheists@list.rc.org>

Leaders in the **Care of the Environment:**
<environment@list.rc.org>

Leaders of **Catholics:** <catholic@list.rc.org>

Leaders of **College and University Faculty:**
<colleagues@list.rc.org>

Leaders on **Disability, Chronic Illness, and Health:**
<health-disability@list.rc.org>

Leaders of **East and Southeast Asian- and Pacific Islander-Heritage People:**
<e-se-pac-asians@list.rc.org>

Leaders of **Educational Change:**
<education@list.rc.org>

Leaders of **Elders:** <elders@list.rc.org>

Leaders of **Family Work:** <family-work@list.rc.org>

RC Community Members Interested in **Fundraising for RC:** <fundraising@list.rc.org>

RC Community Members Interested in **Health Care Workers:** <health-care-workers@list.rc.org>

Leaders of **Irish-Heritage People:** <irish@list.rc.org>

Leaders of **Jews:** <jewish@list.rc.org>

Leaders of **Large Women:** <large-women@list.rc.org>

Leaders of **Latinos/as and Chicanos/as:** <latinos-as@list.rc.org>

Leaders of **Lawyers:** <lawyers@list.rc.org>

Leaders of **Men:** <men@list.rc.org>

Leaders of **“Mental Health” Liberation:** <mhl@list.rc.org>

Leaders of **Middle-Class People:** <middle-class@list.rc.org>

Moderators of the RC e-mail lists: <moderators@list.rc.org>

Leaders of **Native Americans:** <natives@list.rc.org>

Leaders of **Owning-Class People:** <owning-class@list.rc.org>

Leaders of **Parents:** <parents@list.rc.org>

Leaders of **Protestants:** <protestants@list.rc.org>

Leaders of **Raised-Poor People:** <raised-poor@list.rc.org>

Leaders of **South, Central, and West Asian-Heritage People:** <scw-asians@list.rc.org>

Leaders of **Union Activists:** <union-activists@list.rc.org>

USA Political Issues: <usa-issues@list.rc.org>

White Allies Ending Racism: <white-allies@list.rc.org>

Leaders of **Wide World Change:** <wwc@list.rc.org>

Leaders of **Women:** <women@list.rc.org>

Leaders of **Working-Class People:** <working-class@list.rc.org>

Leaders of **Young Adults:** <young-adults@list.rc.org>

Leaders of **Young People:** <young@list.rc.org>



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INFORMATION COORDINATORS

FOR RCers IN PARTICULAR TRADES OR OCCUPATIONS OR SHARING PARTICULAR INTERESTS OR BACKGROUNDS

Many large categories of RCers have an International Liberation Reference Person (ILRP) or an International Commonality Reference Person (ICRP). These ILRPs and ICRPs are listed in *Present Time* (see page 117). Below is a listing of “Information Coordinators” of other particular groups of Co-Counselors. The “Information Coordinator” is an RCer who has agreed to keep an up-to-date list of RCers in their category, occasionally circulate an informal newsletter (compiled and distributed via e-mail—one copy to *Present Time* always, please), and help plan any special workshops, policy statements, or classes. The informal newsletter is circulated only to the people who make a written contribution to it.

If you belong in one of these categories that has an “Information Coordinator” already, please write to them, giving your full name, address, e-mail address, and phone number and sharing yourself and your ideas.

If you would like to be an “Information Coordinator,” please write to me and tell me why (and include your full name, address, e-mail address, and phone number). Feel free to suggest new categories. If you have someone else to suggest, I would like to hear that also.

Tim Jackins

TRADES OR OCCUPATIONS

**BIRTH WORKERS (MIDWIVES, DOCTORS, NURSES, DOULAS,
LACTATION CONSULTANTS, SOCIAL WORKERS, & OTHERS
WHO WORK WITH FAMILIES DURING THE MONTHS BE-
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(ORDER FORM ON PAGE 111)

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<p>START OVER EVERY MORNING</p>	<p><i>By Harvey Jackins</i></p>	<p>Advances in counseling theory and practice, 1987-1989</p>	<p>Paper: \$13 (ISBN 0-913937-35-5) Hardcover: \$16 (ISBN 0-913937-36-3)</p>
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All prices are in U.S. dollars. We accept checks in most local currencies, and credit cards.

Postage and handling costs to be added.

Translations of some materials are also available online at <www.rc.org/translations>, at no charge. (Digital *Present Time* subscribers can access the articles in a particular language by clicking on that language heading.)

The important job of translating RC literature is done by volunteers. Truus Jansen is the Rational Island Publishers Translation Coordinator. If you are interested in volunteering your translation skills, contact Truus, c/o Re-evaluation Counseling Community Resources, 719 2nd Avenue North, Seattle, Washington 98109, USA. Tel. +1-206-284-0311, e-mail: <ircc@rc.org>.

The Translation Coordinators for each language are listed on the RC website at <www.rc.org> and on page 102 of this *Present Time*.

LITERATURE IN LANGUAGES OTHER THAN ENGLISH

(If none is noted, Harvey Jackins is the author.)

ACHOLI / LUO

Cako Kit Me Leyo Lok
(An Introduction to Co-Counseling)
by Dan Nickerson

Paper: \$1 ISBN 1-58429-062-5

Kit Me Cako Le-he Ki Lok
(How to Begin "Re-evaluation Counseling")

Paper: \$1 ISBN 1-58429-063-3

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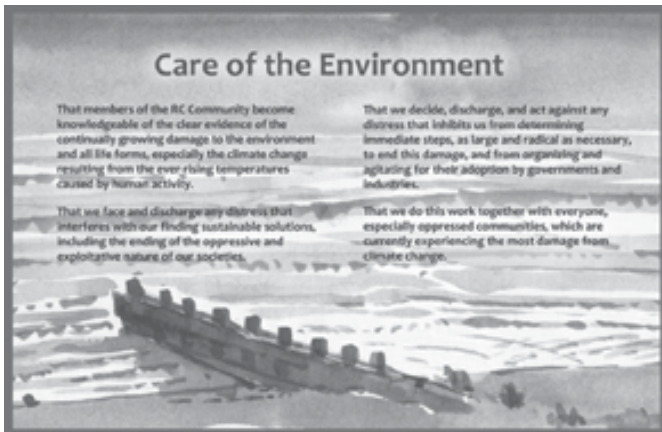
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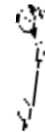
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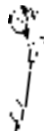


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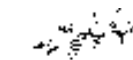
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For some places, there are also people to contact if you live in a location that's not listed. (See also the box at the top of page 113 titled "How to Find RC in a Particular Geographical Location.")

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WORKSHOPS

- wheelchair accessible ✕ not wheelchair accessible ✧ no information supplied by organizer

This list of weekend workshops includes only some of the Regional and International RC workshops being held all over the world. We list all announcements we receive from workshop organizers, workshop leaders, and local RC newsletters, to the extent we have space and are sent sufficient information. Because we do not have enough staff to solicit this information, we ask that workshop organizers e-mail workshop information (dates, place, accessibility, leader, organizer and how to contact organizer, title of workshop, and who the workshop is for) to irc@rc.org.

Attendance at any of these workshops requires the written approval of your Area or Regional Reference Person or the International Reference Person. For more information, contact the workshop organizer.

A REMINDER TO ALL WORKSHOP ORGANIZERS AND LEADERS: (1) attempt to find workshop sites that are wheelchair accessible (note: "partially accessible" means not accessible), and (2) send information about accessibility to *Present Time*, along with other workshop information.

THE NEXT TWO TO FOUR MONTHS OF WORKSHOPS MAY BE CANCELLED, RESCHEDULED, OR HELD VIA ZOOM, DEPENDING ON CONDITIONS.

DATE	PLACE & ACCESSIBILITY CODE	LEADER(S)	ORGANIZER	DESCRIPTION
October 2-4/20	ZOOM (Denmark)	Tim Jackins	Sheila Fairon. Tel. +44-28-70-823193, fairon@fastmail.fm	Taking RC Actively into the World & Climate Change, for Europe
October 9-11/20	ZOOM (Vicenza, Italy)	Emmy Rainwalker	Gianna Beltrame, giabeltrame@gmail.com	Community Building & Wide World Change, for Italians in Italy & Abroad
October 9-11/20	ZOOM (Chicago, Illinois, USA)	Seán Ruth	JeeYeun Lee. Tel. +1-773-805-4303, jeeyeun.lee@gmail.com	Ending Class Oppression, for People of the Global Majority who are Raised or Currently Middle Class, for North America
October 9-11/20	ZOOM (near Boston, Massachusetts, USA)	Dan Nickerson	Jeannine Giguere-Gagnon. Tel. +1-401-439-1673, jgigueregagnon@gmail.com	Direct Production Workers (workers doing working-class work), International
October 22-25/20	ZOOM (Washington, DC, USA)	Barbara Love & Cherie Brown	Black Gentiles: Rachel Noble. Tel. +1-971-212-5768, rocnoble@msn.com Jews: Adley Gartenstein. Tel. +1-347-464-9040, adleyrc@gmail.com	Black Gentiles & Jews, International
October 28- November 1/20	ZOOM (Lunteren, the Netherlands)	Tim Jackins	Goof Buijs, bunic@ziggo.nl	Men Leaders, for Europe
October 30- November 1/20	ZOOM	Barbara Boring	Leslie Kausch. Tel. +1-336-509-3680, singonki@gmail.com	Native Raised White, for the U.S.
October 30- November 1/20	ZOOM	Marcie Rendon	MaryRuth Gross, maryruthgross@gmail.com	Native American Perspectives on Living With the Earth, for Indigenous People & People of the Global Majority, North America
November 6-8/20	ZOOM (New York, USA)	Azi Khalili & Dvora Slavin	Barbara Deck. Tel. +1-617-312-6515, badeck1@gmail.com	Allies to Muslims
November 6-8/20	ZOOM (Albuquerque, New Mexico, USA)	Steve Bromer	Justina Trott, drj505@gmail.com	Physicians
November 13-15/20	ZOOM (Elmer, New Jersey, USA)	Jo Saunders	Hanne Weedon, hweedon67@gmail.com	Owning Class, for East Coast USA/Canada/Caribbean
November 19-22/20	ZOOM	"Jeanne D'Arc"	"Jenny Lind," jennylind171@gmail.com	LGBTQ, for Midwest USA
November 26-29/20	ZOOM (Cheshunt, Herts, England)	Dvora Slavin	Christine Sheppard. Tel. +44 (0) 1525 374378, christinemsheppard@icloud.com	Eliminating White Racism, for Cornwall, England, Scotland, & Wales
December 4-6/20	ZOOM (Maryland, USA)	Ellie Putnam	Uta Allers, uta.allers@gmail.com	Elders, for Washington, DC, Maryland, & Virginia, USA
December 4-6/20	ZOOM (Sydney, Australia)	Cherie Brown & Jo Perry	Lyndall Katz, lyndalk@gmail.com (for Jews)	Jews & Allies
December 4-6/20	ZOOM (Northern California, USA)	Emily Feinstein	Beth Krebs. Tel. +1-718-415-0017, beth.krebs@gmail.com	Artist Liberation & Reclaiming Creativity, for Northern California, USA
December 4-6/20	ZOOM (Maine or New Hampshire, USA)	Jenny Sazama	Jerry Yoder. Tel. +1-207-233-5191, jerryoder@mac.com	Allies to Young People, for Quebec & New Brunswick, Canada & Maine, New Hampshire, & Vermont, USA
December 4-6/20	ZOOM	Marya Axner	Truus Jansen, truushjansen@gmail.com	Parents, for Washington, Idaho, & Montana, USA
December 11-13/20	ZOOM East Coast USA time zone	Glenn Johnson-Mussad	Sharon Campbell. Tel. +1-313-657-2914, iknowsharon@gmail.com	Ex-Psychiatric Inmates, for East Coast USA
January 7-10/21	To be announced	✧ "Jeanne D'Arc"	"Aya Ansar." Tel. +1-215-680-7871, aya.ansar.rc@gmail.com	LGBTQ Raised Female
January 7-10/21	To be announced	✧ "David Nijinsky"	"JS Chardin." Tel. +1-314-249-5089, gmandi7614@gmail.com	GBTQ Men
January 15-17/21	ZOOM	Tim Jackins	Dvora Slavin, dvoraslavin@gmail.com	Teachers & Leaders, for West Coast North America
January 22-24/21	Washington, DC, USA	✧ Cherie Brown & Diane Shisk	Alan Epstein. Tel. +1-617-966-7674, ade26g@gmail.com	Jews & the Climate Emergency, for East Coast North America
February 5-7/21	ZOOM	Jo Saunders & Seán Ruth	Leslie Kausch. Tel. +1-336-509-3680, singonki@gmail.com	User Identity, for USA
February 12-13/21	ZOOM 24 hour	Tim Jackins	Lyndall Katz, lyndalk@gmail.com	Conference for Australia/New Zealand
February 19-20/21	ZOOM 24 hour	Tim Jackins		Conference for East Asia

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WORKSHOPS

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DATE	PLACE & ACCESSIBILITY CODE	LEADER(S)	ORGANIZER	DESCRIPTION
March 11-14/21	near Boston, Massachusetts, USA	◇ "Jeanne D'Arc" assisted by "David Nijinsky" & "Nina Bird"	"Rivkah Odeda," rivkah.odeda@gmail.com	LGBTQ for 35 & Under
March 12-14/21	New York City, New York, USA	◇ Cherie Brown	Millie Waldman, millieaw@aol.com	Jewish Liberation, for the Regions of K Webster & Mike Ishii
March 18-21/21	East Coast USA	◇ Chuck Esser & Fela Barclift	Tamara Damon, tkdameron@me.com	Family Workers Conference, for East Coast North America
March 18-21/21	Denmark	◇ Joan Karp	Contact Joan Karp, j-karp@comcast.net	Leading Early Sexual Memories Work, International
March 18-21/21	West Coast USA	◇ Marya Axner	Judi Soloway, jchazanow@yahoo.com	Parents & Climate Change, for West Coast North America
March 19-20/21	ZOOM 24 hour	Tim Jackins	Iliria Hernandez Unzueta, i_unzueta@hotmail.com	Conference for Latin America
March 19-21/21	ZOOM (San Francisco/Bay Area, California, USA)	◇ Jo Saunders	Jennifer Berry, jenniferberry1@me.com	Owning Class, for West Coast USA/Canada
April 2-3/21	ZOOM 24 hour	Tim Jackins	Niti Dandekar, dandekarniti@gmail.com	Conference for South Asia
April 2-4/21	West Coast North America	◇ Heather Hay	Flip Breskin. Tel. +1-360-671-4511, flip@breskin.com	Musicians, for West Coast North America
April 8-11/21	East Coast USA (maybe Silver Spring, Maryland)	◇ Diane Balsler	Beth Edmonds, bethedmonds@gmail.com	Contemporary Women's Issues, for East Coast North America
April 9-10/21	ZOOM 24 hour	Tim Jackins	Wanjiku Kironyo, rc@sedsmmc.org	Conference for Africa
April 15-18/21	West Coast North America	◇ Diane Balsler assisted by Micaela Morse	MaryRuth Gross. Tel. +1-510-333-3347, maryruthgross@gmail.com	Contemporary Women's Issues, for West Coast North America
April 16-18/21	near Boston, Massachusetts, USA	• Eric Toensmeier, Irene Shen, & Diane Shisk	Russ Vernon-Jones. Tel. +1-413-687-4080, russvj@gmail.com	Climate Science & Policy, for North America
April 23-24/21	ZOOM 24 hour	Tim Jackins	Alysia Tate, alytate@gmail.com	Conference for Central/Midwest/South North America
April 30- May 2/21	Los Angeles, California, USA	◇ "Jeanne D'Arc"	"Emma Goldman," emmagoldmanrc@gmail.com	LGBTQ Open, for West Coast North America
May 7-8/21	ZOOM 24 hour	Tim Jackins	Soren Holm, soren@sorenholm.se	Conference for Northern/Western Europe
May 14-15/21	ZOOM 24 hour	Tim Jackins	Iwona Odrowaz-Pieniazek, ywoodr@gmail.com	Conference for Eastern/Southern/ Central Europe & the Middle East
May 14-16/21	East Coast USA	◇ Marya Axner	Jerry Yoder. Tel. +1-207-233-5191, jerryyoder@mac.com	Parents & Climate Change, for East Coast North America
May 14-16/21	ZOOM or location to be announced	◇ Marcie Rendon	Shelley Macy. Tel. +1-360-961-6170, shelley@macy-brandt.com	Cherokee Liberation, for North America
June 4-6/21	near Seattle, Washington, USA	◇ Seán Ruth	Sarah Christensen, schristensen60@hotmail.com	Ending Classism for Middle-Class People, for people currently & raised middle class, for Northwest USA & Western Canada
June 11-12/21	ZOOM 24 hour	Tim Jackins	Beth Edmonds, bethedmonds@gmail.com	Conference for East Coast North America
June 17-20/21	Midwest/South North America	◇ Alysia Tate	LG Shanklin-Flowers. Tel. +1-414-933-0465, lginreachrc@aol.com	Black Liberation & Community Development (BLCD) for Midwest/South North America
July 15-18/21	East Coast North America	◇ Fela Barclift		BLCD, for East Coast North America
July 16-18/21	East Coast North America	◇ Teresa Enrico & Dvora Slavin	Tresa Elguera. Tel. +1-718-857-9193, tresatres@gmail.com	Jewish Family Workshop, for East Coast North America
July 22-25/21	West Coast North America	◇ Cliff Jones		BLCD, for West Coast North America
September 24-26/21	The Netherlands	◇ Seán Ruth	Monnie Paashuis, monniepaashuis@gmail.com	Middle Class, for Europe
October 7-10/21	Caribbean	◇ Barbara Love	Chantal Esdelle. Tel. +1-868-620-4616, chantal.esdelle@gmail.com	BLCD, for the Caribbean
October 21-24/21	Location to be announced	◇ Olivia Vincenti	Jenny Martin. Tel. +44-121-240-0998, families52@hotmail.com	BLCD, for Europe
November 5-7/21	England	◇ Jenny Sazama	Billy Forsythe, wjforsythe@hotmail.com	Allies to Young People, for England
November 19-22/21	Nairobi, Kenya	◇ Tim Jackins	Wanjiku Kironyo, rc@sedsmmc.org	Pre-World Conference for Africa
November 25-28/21	Pune, India	◇ Tim Jackins	Niti Dandekar, dandekarniti@gmail.com	Pre-World Conference for South Asia
December 3-6/21	near Seattle, Washington, USA	◇ Marcie Rendon	Morgen Elizabethchild, moonwolfmama@aol.com	Western RC Native, for Western North, Central, & South Americas
January 13-16/22	Gresham, Oregon, USA	◇ Tim jackins	Dvora Slavin, dvoraslavin@gmail.com	Pre-World Conference for Western North America
February 11-14/22	Sydney, Australia	◇ Tim Jackins	Lyndall Katz, lyndalk@gmail.com	Pre-World Conference for Australia/New Zealand
February 17-20/22	Tokyo, Japan	◇ Tim Jackins	Wako Ono, wako569@yahoo.co.jp	Pre-World Conference for East Asia
March 4-6/22	Washington, DC, USA (tentatively)	◇ Barbara Love & a leader to be announced	Sharon Campbell. Tel. +1-313-657-2914, iknowsharon@gmail.com	African Heritage People & "Mental Health" Liberation, International
March 17-20/22	Mexico City, Mexico	◇ Tim Jackins	Iliria Hernandez Unzueta, i_unzueta@hotmail.com	Pre-World Conference for Latin America
April 8-10/22	Atlanta, Georgia, USA	◇ Barbara Love & Diane Shisk	Cornelia Cho, opt2hope@yahoo.com	U.S. Southern Liberation & Care of Our Environment, International

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Re-evaluation Counseling

Re-evaluation Counseling is a process whereby people of all ages and all backgrounds can learn how to exchange effective help with each other in order to free themselves from the effects of past distress experiences.

Re-evaluation Counseling theory provides a model of what a human being can be like in the area of their interaction with other human beings and their environment. The theory assumes that everyone is born with tremendous intellectual potential, natural zest, and lovingness but that these qualities have become blocked and obscured as the result of accumulated distress experiences (of fear, loss, pain, anger, embarrassment, and so on), which begin early in our lives.

Any young person would recover from such distress spontaneously by use of the natural process of emotional discharge (crying, trembling, raging, laughing, yawning, talking). However, this natural process is usually interfered with by well-meaning people ("Don't cry," "Be a big boy," and so on) who erroneously equate the emotional discharge (the healing of the hurt) with the hurt itself.

When adequate emotional discharge can take place, the person is freed from the rigid pattern of behavior and feeling left by the hurt. The basic loving, cooperative, intelligent, and zestful nature is then free to operate. Such a person will tend to be more effective in looking out for their own interests and the interests of others and more capable of acting successfully against injustice.

In recovering and using the natural discharge process, two people take turns counseling and being counseled. The one acting as the counselor listens, draws the other out, and permits, encourages, and assists emotional discharge. The one acting as client talks and discharges and re-evaluates. With experience and increased confidence and trust in each other, the process works better and better.

For more information, you can go to the website <www.reevaluationcounseling.org>.



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