

**All who care about future generations
need to invest time, including discharge time,
and resources in developing good thinking
and encouraging a rational solution
to the climate crisis.**

Marcie Rendon

Co-Counselors are acting on the climate emergency, sharing RC in creative ways, and furthering the liberation of a wide variety of groups. You can see examples of this, and much more, in this *Present Time*.

For the January issue, we will need your articles and poems by November 18, and changes to the back-pages lists by November 25.

Lisa Kauffman and Katie Kauffman, editors

719 2nd Avenue North, Seattle, Washington 98109, USA • publications@rc.org



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An Emergency, and New Opportunities

From a talk by Tim Jackins* at the West Coast
Regional Reference Persons' Workshop, June 2019

People have figured out how to live together in many different ways. And it has turned out [happened]—probably due to the division of labor and some other things—that more people have survived when larger groups have lived together. So we have tended to clump up and form societies.

Once we clump up, distress patterns and their contagious nature get played out [acted out] more fully. We run into [encounter] the same people and the same patterns over and over again. At some point, oppressive societies develop; the distresses become part of the way we are together.

There have always been oppressive societies ever since some critical mass of people got together. We will never know exactly how it happened, but it's clear that it did, because it happened over and over again in different places (with different versions in different places). And even with the oppression, more people survived in the societies than they did when they were out on their own [alone].

So societies bumble on, because they work to let more people live. They are not intelligent. They have many rigidities in them, which cause them to develop in the direction of exploitation.

The distressed irrationality in societies drives changes, and at some point things change so irrationally that a society's structures are not workable. Then people form a new society amid the collapse of the old one. But the distresses, the rigidities, are still there, and the society ends

up with a different form of oppression and exploitation. We've gone through this a number of times in a number of places around the world.



DEATH VALLEY, CALIFORNIA, USA • © STAN EICHNER

In the history of each society, people have tried to reform it—make it not so hard, not so oppressive, not so likely to collapse. Social Security came into existence in an effort to prolong the U.S. system. It's been a godsend [blessing] for a lot of people, but it's not a real solution to the problems of the system. We here grew up under the U.S. system, and our minds have been used to hunting for solutions that don't challenge it.

It looks like we are now at the place where, to use the old phrase, the "internal contradictions" of the society have pushed us to a crisis. The rigid patterns have pushed us into a corner, and things are so destructive that we may not survive. Not only will the societal structures not survive; we ourselves and many other life forms may not be able to survive. Because of the rigidities, we haven't paid attention to how our actions have affected the world.

SOMETHING NEW

A new thing about the current situation is that it affects everybody in the world simultaneously. We have never had that before. People have attempted to guide big changes in different places at different times, but the attempts have all been separate, and each place has had separate and distinct problems. Now, though there are still separate and distinct problems, there is one big problem. We have made the earth more and more difficult for complex life to survive on.

In a way this is a new opportunity—because, for the first time, in a very visible way, everybody's interests are aligned. This doesn't mean that the problem is universally recognized. Every time something big has to change, a good percentage of people can't think about it. It's too scary, it's too restimulating, so they try not to let it change. This doesn't affect the objective conditions; there just isn't quick, universal recognition of the conditions. So there is a lot of contention about the climate emergency. We no longer hear many people saying that it doesn't exist, but people are not looking back and saying, "I was wrong." The battle with distress is still there.

Something is going to happen. Can we get enough rationality involved in it that something useful and less exploitive and destructive can develop? It seems to me that the changes required to stop the destruction of the environment will have to happen faster than society can change. (I am, of course, guessing this at the beginning of chaos. Things can change so rapidly when they have to change that we will have to think afresh very quickly.)

continued . . .

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

WIDE WORLD CHANGING

... continued

A ROLE FOR US

As RCers we are one of the best sources of flexible thinking and new, good solutions. We have a process that allows our minds to function better, anytime we remember to use it. Day by day, we can figure out new things. We also know how to help other people use this process and find new things. There is a really interesting role for us to play.

With the climate emergency, everyone's interest is aligned. One of our jobs is to make people aware of their common interest when they are confused by distress—when they have the illusion that there is a way for “me” or “my” family to survive; that “we” have built up enough resource for “us.” The illusion is based partly on hopelessness—on a feeling that there isn't a solution, that there isn't a way to unite and fight against the current conditions. The survivalist position is based on it being “the best I can do.” It isn't inherently “anti” other people. It is just desperate and hopeless and alone.

We know very useful things. And we've done enough work to know them in practice. They're not just theoretical for us. But we are still shy, so a lot of us try to communicate what we know on a theoretical basis. Of course, the best proof of RC is us. We have done the work. We have used the ideas. The more we can let people see us, the more they will get a glimpse of what they could do and what they could have. They will get to see RC in practice. They will get to see a mind that has used the process—that can engage with them, look right at them, clearly like communicating with them—and that wants them to know something. I think that's what communicates RC better than anything else.



DAVÍD GABRIEL MOLINA ORELLANA

THE IMPORTANCE OF DISCHARGE

We can also use the opportunity of this crisis to play a role with people who are already committed to moving the world, who are already trying. They need what we know now. They are trying to function now, and they need some perspective and an understanding of why it is difficult. They need the example of someone who can move against the confusion, against the powerlessness and aloneness they always have to go against. They have taken a big step in trying to change something. But after enough hard things, or simply enough time, they can't stay out there. The restimulation wears them down. Having people with you all trying to be hopeful, all trying to lean forward, is a good contradiction [to distress]. But contradiction without discharge lasts only a certain length of time. We understand this. We can communicate about it. And we can set things up so that people can start to use the discharge process.

Some climate organizations include RC principles and perspectives, because some people who knew some RC were involved in them early on. Perspectives were established, and people could follow them enough to see the difference in the functioning of the group. That is useful and important. However, if the battle goes on too long, it won't be enough. There have been big, hopeful, friendly efforts before, and they have got-

ten worn down and corroded. People can't stand against their distresses forever if they don't get to discharge. Our job is to create the conditions in which discharge can happen. For example, people often get to talk about things, they get debriefings, and there will be openings when we can allow and encourage discharge.

POSSIBILITIES FOR OURSELVES

Playing a role in making the necessary changes will also be good for us as individuals. We'll be going against our distresses of feeling alone and small and helpless and being proving to ourselves in practice that there is something we can do. There are so many opportunities here for us to challenge ourselves where things have made our lives small.

We have battled against our distresses and built good lives, but it's been a big struggle, and there are things that we haven't quite been able to get over [recover from] and things that we still can't do (which we often mistakenly blame ourselves for). Now there are ways to challenge the distress recordings—ways that didn't exist when the recordings were installed. We have new possibilities that are to our benefit.

POSSIBILITIES FOR THE RC COMMUNITY

Also, the RC Community needs to grow differently than it has so far. We have struggled a bit to grow. We have generally offered RC as a way for people to have better individual lives, and we've done that without realizing the depth of everyone's early isolation and defeats. The climate emergency lets us present what we know in a much larger context and with a perspective that challenges people's recordings of isolation and defeat from the beginning.

Climate Change, and Who We Are

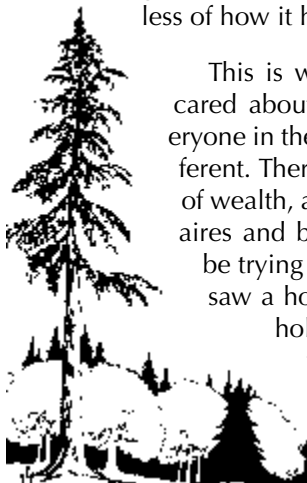
The following is from a talk I gave to my RC class:

In Re-evaluation Counseling we have a one-point program that we ask every Co-Counselor to agree to, and it's to reclaim our intelligence and assist others to do the same. This means discharging and finding our thinking. When we have feelings, we get to discharge and think rather than just feel and react. Many people don't have our understanding and can't decide to notice emotions and release them in sessions by crying, laughing, shaking, and so on.

We re-evaluate when we get to discharge. That's an important thing to know as we think about climate change.

Because of oppression, the groups most affected by the damage to the environment are groups that have been targeted with racism and genocide, usually people of color. It's been that way for a long time. It's not new. But the situation is getting pretty [quite] dire. It is also hopeful, because we can keep thinking freshly about solutions.

The climate emergency is out there not because "it just so happens" to be out there. It is out there because humans have not been able to think well because they have been hurt. Due to their hurts, many humans have lost a sense of connection to themselves and to the environment. They have targeted other humans and been thoughtless and uncaring toward groups of people. They have stolen land, mistreated and killed the people, and taken over—the opposite of caring about humans. Because of their hurts and lack of human connection, they have moved their personal agenda forward and wreaked havoc, regardless of how it has affected others.



This is where we are. If we had all cared about each other and about everyone in the world, things would be different. There wouldn't be the amassing of wealth, and a small group of millionaires and billionaires. Everyone would be trying to help other people. If they saw a homeless person on the street holding a sign saying, "I've got four children, I have no job, and we need some food," they wouldn't just walk by. Today I saw a little

child, sitting with her mom on the sidewalk, holding a sign saying, "We need to stay in a motel. Can you help us please?" People hurried by without looking at them.

Some groups do think well about the people around them. They take them in; they figure things out. But by and large [mostly], that isn't true in the larger society, particularly in the societies that call themselves "developed." Racism, attempted genocide, and classism are also worse in these societies. There is a lack of caring about other humans.

I think the basic work we can do is to notice who our neighbors are—and also who is out there beyond our backyard, who's out in the world—and look at what is really happening, not just at what we see on the popular news channels. It's a lot to think about, but it's not hopeless.

We can also notice what our ancestors did on behalf of themselves, others, and the environment. I grew up in a Black community established by a group of formerly enslaved Africans in rural Georgia (USA), and our people understood something about the environment (as do Indigenous peoples). Our community helped each other. There was a way that people thought about each other and the environment in which we lived.

Our parents, grandparents, and great grandparents knew something and did wonders [did very good things], and our people often thrived. I want us to think about that. For example, when I was a child, I got a three-inch cut on my hand, and it healed without ever going to a doctor. My grandmother applied snuff and spider webs, and it knitted together without a stitch in it. Another time she ground nettles and applied them to a big burn on my other hand.

When you grow up poor, you don't have the luxury of discarding stuff. We reused things. We would wash aluminum foil and reuse it until it was done. We were the original savers or recyclers.

I want us to remember who we are—a people connected to other humans and the environment in which we live. I want us to approach what we do from a sense of being in charge. Our ancestors knew something, and we do too.

Marion Ouphouet
Seattle, Washington, USA

Kia Ora (Greetings)

Dear Tim and Diane [Tim Jackins and Diane Shisk],

Koa koa mo te Matariki ki a korua (A joyful New Year to you both). In my tradition we are now in our New Year. It started with the first new moon in July, which marks the appearance of *Matariki* (the Pleiades star system) rising on our eastern horizon. There have been many ceremonies across Aotearoa [New Zealand] to mark the occasion, including among the peoples living on the numerous islands in the South Pacific Ocean.



because of colonization. We are still trying to get out from under that oppression. The reality is that most Maori are just working day to day to put food on the table.

All New Zealanders, both Maori and *Pakeha* (white New Zealanders), are up against a sense of apathy because of being a small country (although our Prime Minister, Jacinda Ardern, did manage to make headlines across the globe).

Here in Aotearoa we are living in such beauty. Every day I drive to work with the ocean and Kapiti and Mana Island to my right and the Tararua Ranges to my left. It is one of many natural vistas that we New Zealanders take for granted. It also belies the truth of the environment: our weather has no idea what season it will be from one day to the next.

We are in winter in the Southern Hemisphere, and here along the Kapiti coast where I live we are experiencing a very warm winter. Local edible fruit is available out of season, and trees are blooming continuously. Some *whanau* I have listened to think that the warmer weather is a treat, and I remind

them that actually it is not; it is a sign that we humans have speeded up global warming. Being in a “far-away” country in the South Pacific doesn’t alter the fact that we are part of the human race. The effects of climate change globally will be our experience, too, and burst our bubble of denial, numbness, and fear. I say this in a calm, clear voice. Sometimes my *whanau* want to argue with me, which is great because they are un-numbing and coming to a realisation.

I have been watching the United Kingdom activist group Extinction Rebellion and have been pleased to hear some RC thinking—about taking time to listen to each other, and cry if we need to, and how we should learn from Indigenous people and People of the Global Majority and follow their leadership. It makes me hopeful. I’m thinking about how to make Extinction Rebellion attractive to Maori. The history and people of this country would need to be central. (Extinction Rebellion in Australia and New Zealand is very white and middle class—good people.) I am going to try some things this spring.

Hemaima Wiremu
Otaki, Aotearoa
(New Zealand)

I continue to enjoy working at the Maori university teaching *Rongoa Maori* (Maori philosophies and customary medical practices). I like sharing a big office with both Maori people and people from South Pacific nations. They keep things real about climate change and the submergence of their homelands.

I have been giving a number of talks about climate change for classes at the *wananga* (university) and writing about it from a Maori perspective. I witness an interesting phenomenon with Maori—a numbness. I know it is fear and grief. Ordinary people I talk to are afraid of the science describing where humanity is heading. Many of my extended *whanau* (family) are doing great work locally on environmental issues, but I cannot get them to factor climate change into their thinking. I think they are feeling overwhelmed—and I know they can discharge this.

When I think about the situation in Maori communities, my thoughts turn to the economic disadvantages that Maori have endured from losing natural resources



BIG BEND NATIONAL PARK, TEXAS, USA • MARSHA HUNTER

We Must Discharge, Then Decide to Act

Once again, we find ourselves having to face a relentless onslaught of racism and reactionary hatred. We find ourselves having to defend our families and communities against the societal propaganda, reactionary rhetoric, and tolerated acts of violence.

Even though we are from many national identities and have common threads of Indigenous roots, we are all targeted as Mexicans by the vitriolic rhetoric.

This has been prompted and encouraged by many—some of whom are in positions of pseudo leadership and are acting out of misinformation and pseudo self-interest, fueled by hatred and chronic fear.

The racism is intended to paralyze us—to restimulate us and force us into confusion and chronic silence.

We find ourselves in the middle of a collapsing economic and social order that serves the interests of the lost few who profit from the patterned, calculated semi-organized misery.

We are in a position that is not unfamiliar to any of us. So we must ask ourselves the reoccurring question, “What do we do now?” or, “What can I or should I do?” The answer is a deeply personal one, as it reflects our birthright as members of the human family.

Our first challenge is to quickly set up Co-Counseling sessions in two parts: First, we must grieve, rage, and intentionally discharge our fears. For some of us, numbness is like a scab on our mind. Second, we must decide to act.

The oppression relies on our conditioning from several hundred years of oppression and the patterns we were forced into as a matter of survival. Chronic assimilation is no longer an option. Chronic silence will not provide any sanctuary.

We must reclaim our individual and collective indignation and also our ability to act—individually and, when the opportunities present themselves, collectively—as we decide to move ourselves and our humanity forward.

I believe we must organize. This for me means developing a keen sense of where there is leverage to get people to work together. We can reach out to others, ask what they are thinking about what’s happening, and listen. Then we can speak out about the current situation and talk directly about where our common interests may be.

There are more opportunities than we can individually address. That simply reflects the reality of our current circumstances.

Respectfully,

Lorenzo Garcia

International Liberation

Reference Person for Chicanos/as

Albuquerque, New Mexico, USA

Reprinted from the RC e-mail discussion list for leaders of Latinos/as and Chicanos/as



THREE CAPES WALK, TASMANIA • LYNDA KATZ

A New Rational Island Publishers Website!

After resolving numerous technical challenges, we now have a new Rational Island Publishers website officially up and running!

On it you can do everything you could on the old website (along with some added features)—all made easier with a clean, updated, and more user-friendly interface.

You can find all of this at <www.rationalisland.com>. We’d love for you to give it a try!

Rational Island Publishers



An Update: Sustaining All Life and United to End Racism

Sustaining All Life and United to End Racism (SAL and UER) have a full schedule this fall.

The 2018 and 2019 reports from the IPCC (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change—the science arm of the United Nations) have emphasized the need for immediate action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and to capture and store them by rapidly restoring our ecosystem. SAL and UER are increasing their activity and creating ever-clearer publications about what can be done and the role Re-evaluation Counseling can play in addressing the climate emergency.

THE UNITED NATIONS CLIMATE ACTION SUMMIT

SAL and UER are bringing a large delegation (more than a hundred people from the East Coast of the United States) to the September 20 to 27 United Nations Climate Action Summit in New York (USA). [The summit will have finished by the time this *Present Time* is printed.] Barbara Love, Teresa Enrico, and Diane Shisk will be leading the delegation. Azi Khalili, Randy Karr, and Diane Shisk are organizing it. The organizing began in May, and we have built important relationships and made good allies.

An interesting discussion has begun on this question: Can our going-public projects, like SAL, endorse actions not led by us that we have been organizing toward; or groups whose goals are aligned with ours, who oppose oppression and violence, and with whom we have good working relationships? We are discharging about the broader implications for RC and hope that many people will discharge and share their thinking.

Art is playing a bigger and bigger role in our work. We've spent a lot of time on the visual presentation of our materials and the SAL website, and they are eye-catching. We'll be holding several "art builds" in New York City and Philadelphia (USA) to make signs for the Climate Strike March and for our events.

At the United Nations Climate Action Summit, SAL and UER will hold scheduled workshops and forums as well as unplanned "pop-up events" (mini-workshops, forums, and caucuses in conjunction with demonstrations, like the School Strike for Climate, that we'll be participating in and supporting).

We will offer the following workshops for the first time:

- Building United, Resilient Movements to End the Climate Emergency
- Mental Health and Climate Justice
- Supporting Young People of Color in the Climate Movement
- Backing Women and Girls to Lead in Sustainable Agriculture
- Expressing Climate Grief
- U.S. Back in Paris: Ending U.S. Greed and Isolationism
- Supporting Indigenous Leadership
- Pakikinigang Magkapwa: Sharing Our Stories to Build, Unite, and Sustain Our Communities toward Climate Resiliency and Justice
- Climate Emergency: Capitalism's Failure
- Migration Is a Climate Issue

We will offer a first-time event for families—Making a Climate for Families—that will take place in Central Park on a Saturday afternoon. It will bring in families and young people with art, music, storytelling, listening circles, and more.

We will present the following workshops we have led in the past (some of them multiple times in different venues):

- Eliminating the Effects of Racism on Our Work to Sustain All Life
- Sustaining Indigenous Life

• Bringing Labor and Climate Justice Movements Together for a Sustainable Future

• Young People at the Forefront of the Climate Movement

- War and Climate Change
- Sustaining Ourselves as Activists and Organizers
- Parents Take Action for Climate Justice
- Jews and Climate Justice: Building a United Front
- Women and Climate Justice

And we've scheduled the following forums at which people from key constituencies will speak about their experiences:

• The Impact of Climate Change on Frontline Communities

- The Impact of Climate Change on Puerto Rico
- Voices of Hope and Courage
- Young People Leading on Climate Change
- The Impact of Climate Change on New York

In preparation, we've created a flyer for each event and twenty-one handouts. You can see and download the flyers and handouts at <www.rc.org/newyorksummit> or at <www.sustainingalllife.org/nycs2019>. Some of our events will be livestreamed on the Sustaining All Life Facebook page. We have also posted a public version of our short draft program for climate change: Climate Change: What Can We Do?

COP25 IN SANTIAGO, CHILE

We are bringing a delegation of thirty people (primarily Latinoamericanos/as, with some Spanish-speaking allies from the United States and England) to COP25 [the twenty-fifth session of the Conference of the Parties—an international United Nations climate conference] in Santiago, Chile. The conference will be held from December 2 to 13 of this year. Iliria Unzueta and Diane Shisk will lead the delegation. Ellen Tait, Dulce Cisneros, and Diane Shisk are organizing it. We'll present some of the workshops listed above as well as workshops on the following:

- Catholics and Climate Justice
- The Climate Emergency and Our Health

• Violence, War, and Climate Change

For more information, go to <www.rc.org/cop25>. A Spanish webpage and Facebook page should be ready by the time this article is printed.

At both the United Nations Summit and COP25, our delegations will also conduct listening projects, distribute our materials, and talk with interested people.

Diane Shisk

*Acting International Commonality Reference Person for the Care of the Environment
Seattle, Washington, USA*



MAURA FALLON

Everywhere People Are Trying to Do This

In the wide world changing efforts outside of Co-Counseling, we will have to teach people who may never give a damn for counseling, who may never (openly at least) change their opinion that “You’re all sitting around like a bunch of stupid introspectors, picking lint out of each other’s navels—none of that!!”

They may never say any kinder words about RC than that, but they will use the tools if we will show them how they work. They don’t have to thank us for them, or bless us, or agree that that’s a fine tool. If they use it, it will do the job, and that’s what we’re after [what we’re trying for]—to get the fear off of each other. Everywhere people are trying to do this.

*Harvey Jackins**

From pages 53 to 54 of “Unsolved Questions,” in *Logical Thinking about a Future Society*

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

SAL Handouts for the United Nations Climate Action Summit

Below are the first pages of each of the twenty-one handouts given out by Sustaining All Life (SAL) at the United Nations Climate Action Summit in New York (USA) in September.

To see and download the full handouts, go to <www.rc.org/newyorksummit> or <www.sustainingalllife.org/nycs2019>. You can also scan the QR code to the right.



Sustaining Ourselves as Activists and Organizers

I have chosen to change the world using my full intelligence.

The future needs me well-rested, well-nourished, and well-exercised. My health is important.

The part is a useful source of information, but never a substitute for my thinking now.

If I am not enjoying what I am doing, then there is something wrong with how I am doing it and I will correct it.

We environmental activists and organizers care deeply about the Earth, its inhabitants, and have made important gains. We have much to be proud of. But we can easily forget our accomplishments in the daily struggles of organizing.

Many of us feel discouraged when in the face of powerful opposition our efforts to

make change are unsuccessful. We may also feel powerless, exhausted, not smart enough, alone, and overwhelmed by what we need to do. When we feel these ways, it can be hard to stay motivated to make change.

We often try to ignore the feelings and keep working for change, but without stability of feelings we may sacrifice our own health and well-being; not be able to identify with and connect with others, or even listen, let alone act, or undermine each other. We may be unable to think of solutions and give up being activists, organizers, and leaders. We may no longer have the energy to do the work we care to deeply about.

We all struggle with living in an oppressive society. We are oppressed by and witness racism, classism, sexism, the oppression of Indigenous peoples, and many other oppressions. We can't



Catholics and Climate Change

We Catholics, observant and cultural, live throughout the world. We cherish our common home, this magnificent Earth, as well as all its peoples. We reassess all creation. The urgent challenge to protect our common home includes a concern to bring the whole human family together to seek a sustainable and integral development, for we know that things can change." Pope Francis (Encyclical, Laudato Si')

A third of us live in Canada, Europe, and the United States. Two thirds of us live in the global South—including Central and South America, Mexico, the Caribbean, Africa, Asia, and the Middle East. Those in the global South are facing the worst impacts of climate change. Severe weather (such as flooding and drought) and water and air pollution are destroying the land and people's health and economic survival. Similarly, in the dominant nations of the North the impact of the climate emergency is falling most heavily on Indigenous people and people of color.

We matter how much we may have suffered from oppression, climate destruction requires us to prioritize the needs and interests of those who are currently the most severely impacted by its effects: women, young people, Indigenous people, people of color, and people of the global South.

We must listen to those who have wisdom about the land—people whose voices have been deliberately marginalized. We need to



Addressing Classism in the Environmental Movement

Oppression and exploitation have become embedded and institutionalized in our societies. Classism plays a pivotal role in all oppressions. Our efforts to address climate change are a result of the vast majority of our people's people going to work every day to sustain the planet. This system allows the owning class to amass great wealth from the labor of the working class and from resources extracted from the land.

Some studies estimate that the richest 1% of adults own 45% of the world's net worth, and that the richest 10% of adults own 88%. The bottom half of the world's adult population owns 1% of global wealth. The owning class oppresses the resources and makes decisions that favor them financially and that perpetuate capitalism.

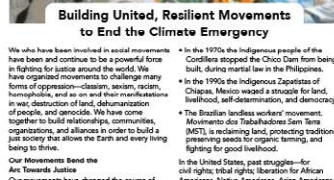
The above is also true of nations. A few countries dominate the globe's resources and amass wealth at the expense of the majority of the world's people—classism on the international level.

Classism, as manifested in capitalism, is the root cause of environmental degradation—profit is pursued no matter the cost to the earth and its inhabitants. Extractive industries have done great damage to the land and to those working in these industries. They have failed to use measures that safeguard the well-being of

workers and those living nearby. (2) minimize contamination from extractive and industrial processes, (3) restore the land after extraction, and (4) ensure that the full range of environmental consequences are revealed. Instead, in order to maximize profits, the industries cover up information about hazardous practices and risks to hold them accountable.

Capitalism also fosters certain assumptions that have led to environmental destruction. Among these are (1) that continued economic growth is essential, (2) that capitalism is the best and only possible way, and (3) that all problems, including the climate crisis, can be solved by making the "holistic" profitable for corporations and the owning class. These are so thoroughly ingrained in many cultures, including ours, that they are an important part of the work we have to do.

Fast attempts by nations or peoples to organize to reform a system different from the capitalist model have been severely attacked or corrupted from within by classism. Existing economies that reject capitalism are strongly discredited and undermined by the dominant class society. As a result, there is no broad understanding of class oppression. This absence has left our



Building United, Resilient Movements to End the Climate Emergency

We who have been involved in social movements have been and continue to be a powerful force in nations around the world. We have organized movements to challenge many forms of oppression—classism, sexism, homophobia, and so on—and their manifestations in war, destruction of land, dehumanization of people, and genocide. We have come together to build relationships, communities, organizations, and alliances in order to build a just society that ends the earth and every living being to thrive.

Our Movements Beyond the Art Towards Justice

Our movements have changed the course of human history and improved conditions for humanity and the world we live in. We have worked together to transform societies. We can draw inspiration from many movements, including the following:

- Beginning in the early 1900s the women of Bangladesh fought for freedom from colonial domination while at the same time improving the status of women.
- In 1973 the people of Guinea-Bissau united the Indigenous tribes to win self-governance and end a legacy of slavery and colonial rule.



Climate Change: What Can We Do?

Well supported facts show that the planet is warming because of human activities, causing our climate to change—already harming large numbers of people. We can limit the increase in global temperature, restore the environment, and reduce further damage—but this means making some big changes right now. Worldwide, by 2030 we must reduce by half the release of greenhouse gases, especially CO2, and other pollutants that cause climate change. We must eliminate them by 2050 in order to prevent the most catastrophic effects of climate change. This is a huge challenge—but we already have the technology, resources, and imagination to do this.

Efforts by government and industry have fallen short. People throughout the world must together and demand the needed changes. Only an inclusive, powerful, global movement based on our common interests, can make government, corporations, industries, and others based on common interests to create a just transition to sustainable economies, equitable societies, and a livable planet.

The global climate crisis is one of several alarming consequences of the oppressive and exploitative system in which we live. We cannot solve this crisis without also addressing other phenomena connected to the economic system, such as oppression (including racism, sexism, and the exploitation of people and the land), capitalism, and war. This means ending profit as the driving force in our economic system. It

also means ending the divisions among people and nations and agreeing that we are all in this together. We must solve solutions that are in everyone's interests, solutions that do not harm any group for the benefit of others. Ending oppression and exploitation benefits everyone. We can reduce inequalities and create a national economy that gives everyone everywhere good lives and a livable, flourishing planet.

The nations and people most vulnerable to climate extremes (bordering populations) are those that have been targeted with oppression, exploitation, war, and genocide. Solutions to climate change depend on the fighting, perspectives, and leadership of the bordering populations. The broader population also needs to be educated about climate change, its causes, and its possible solutions, in ways that overcome the effects of climate change, its causes, and its possible solutions. We can play a significant role. Below is our summary of key actions that we can take to create a sustainable, safer future.

ENERGY USE AND POLICY

- Rapidly transition from fossil fuel energy to energy from renewable sources such as wind,



The Climate Crisis and War

Climate change has played a role in many recent armed conflicts and is projected to be an even more serious driving force of future conflicts. The world's source of carbon emissions is the world's largest source of carbon emissions in the world.

War Fuels Climate Change and Amplifies its Effects

Of all the institutional sources of climate change, none are bigger than the militaries of the world. For example, the US military is the single biggest institutional source of carbon emissions in the world—with its massive reliance on fossil fuels to power its aircraft, ships, and land vehicles, and to power its thousands of facilities. The US military emits more carbon than most nations on earth, including Portugal and Denmark.

The global military industrial complex consumes many billions of dollars yearly that could be used for potential solutions to the climate crisis. Global military spending is now \$1.8 billion per year, with the US and China together accounting

for more than that amount. By allocating even half of this to addressing climate change, we would resolve the crisis quickly.

The enormous amount of carbon emitted by the military equates the effects of climate change. Military conflict intensifies dehumanization, classism, sexism, homophobia, and the poisoning of the soil. War prevents many communities from adapting to and recovering from climate change. It destroys infrastructure—and replacing infrastructure will eventually require very high carbon intensive industrial production and construction.

We create internally displaced populations and refugees, as does climate change. These populations are then highly vulnerable to the effects of climate change. As large numbers of climate refugees move to new locations, they often come into conflict with other vulnerable populations as natural resources become scarce—the cycle of climate change and violence and war is perpetuated.



Including Disabled People in the Environmental Movement

Sustaining All Life wants and needs everyone, in particular, disabled people. This is not about doing a favor—it's about perspectives and voices are needed as we work to sustain all life.

People with disabilities comprise ten to fifteen percent of the global population. Members of this group are found in all sub-populations. It is likely that there will be more and more disabled people with the increasing effects of climate change. Disabled people are a resilient bunch. They are creative—they have often had to do things a bit differently. They have much to offer. They are excluded primarily because of discriminatory attitudes, not because of their health conditions or physical or intellectual limitations. Those who suffer with disability sometimes fear disabled people, a reaction often based in ancient superstitions and irrational fears of contagion.

The United Nations, Red Cross, and other organizations often use the term "people with special needs." This generalization does not acknowledge and address people's specific circumstances—for example, their vision, hearing, mobility, developmental disability, possible chronic illness, or gender and sexuality. There can be an attitude of "they need too much," with trust as the result. Another alarming myth is "the professionals know best." The disabled community's slogan is "nothing about us without us!"

Disabled people have organized and fought for progressive policies. For example, the United Nations Convention



Tools for Ending Racism in the Environmental Movement

Racism damages everyone and separates all of us from each other. It shapes and perpetuates the inequalities of our societies and has become a part of our societal institutions. It limits the access of the majority of the world's population to the resources of society. Racism is maintained by violence, threats of violence, misinformation, lies, isolation, and greed. In the form of slavery, apartheid, and racial discrimination of many kinds, it has damaged or destroyed the lives of hundreds of millions of people.

Because of European-centric racism, the human-caused climate emergency and environmental destruction disproportionately impact Africans or African descendants, Indigenous people, Asians or Asian descendants,

Pacific Islanders, Latin/Latinas, Chicanas/Chicanos, Mestizas/Mestizos, Arabics or Arab descendants, and people of our societies and has become a part of our societal institutions. It limits the access of the majority of the world's population to the resources of society. Racism is maintained by violence, threats of violence, misinformation, lies, isolation, and greed. In the form of slavery, apartheid, and racial discrimination of many kinds, it has damaged or destroyed the lives of hundreds of millions of people.

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Although racism is aimed at particular sections of the population, it corrodes and corrupts the entire society—severely limiting the society's progress, and the progress of every individual within the society, toward a full and meaningful life. Racism also limits the effectiveness of the environmental movement by limiting its focus and vision, and keeping it from being serious, diverse, and united.



Healing Our "Climate Grief"

Climate change has caused gross damage to the Earth and its living beings. As we become more and more aware of this damage, and the inadequate responses to it, we are left with a range of feelings. We may feel discouraged by our national governments' limited responses in the face of the magnitude of climate change. We may feel powerless and subaltern because the vast majority of people appear uninvolved or even unconcerned about the climate crisis. We may feel overwhelmed by how much we have to do, and how rapidly melting ice—and by means of catastrophic weather events. Many young people are losing hope for their future, wondering if it makes sense to start families and bring babies into a world on the brink of disaster, no matter how we feel, despair, and deep grief.

Noticing the Feelings

Experts are noticing how the increasing visibility of climate change affects mental health. It is being called "climate grief"—depression, anxiety, and mourning over climate change. The American Psychological Association issued a

2017 report on emotional trauma from climate change. The report said that most people are feeling "a number of different emotions, including despair, feelings of powerlessness, or exhaustion." Julie Gerga, award winning Australian scientist, describes the "volcanic rage" that she experiences in the face of climate change. She says that "I catch myself occasionally crying... what surface is part grief." Gerga acknowledges that she needs to "have the emotional from parts" of herself to affectively address climate change.

Consequences of failure to heal the emotional damage

Unhealed, pent-up feelings of despair damage humans in many ways. Unhealed grief, fear, and frustration tend to interrupt our intuitive and dim our hope for the future. Unhealed painful feelings can drain our energy and interfere with our ability to bring our full intelligence to bear on the world around us. Emotional damage interferes with thinking well about what is to be done and acting appropriately and effectively—in this case, to end environmental degradation.



The Impact of the Climate Emergency on Women

Women are primary caregivers. Our work makes it possible for humans to survive and flourish. We build networks of supportive relationships. We build communities.

The climate emergency and other environmental destruction directly and disproportionately impact us and the essential work that we do. They threaten sources of food and water. They throw our supportive networks into chaos.

As women we are lower in socioeconomic status and have less power than men. Sanitation and the rigid roles that impede women's access to the resources and experiences that can better prepare them to handle disasters and adapt to climate change. Women who face multiple oppressions—indigenous women, women of color, poor women, women with disabilities, young women—are hit the hardest.

Climate change creates societal instability. Rape and other forms of sexual violence increase. In North America, the construction of new fossil fuel pipelines for example, the Keystone XL and Dakota Access pipelines (creates large settlements in geographically isolated areas that are primarily populated by men. This leads to human trafficking and sexual violence. Many of those targeted are Native women who live in the territories through which the pipelines are built.

Many women in the Global South engage in subsistence farming. They produce between 50% and 80% of the food, as well as collect fuel and water. (Women and girls are responsible for collecting water in almost two-thirds of households in developing countries.) With increasing droughts, floods, and other erratic weather events, the burden on women increases. It is more difficult



Indigenous People and the Environment

Indigenous people lead the world as Defenders of Mother Earth and Water Protectors. We have always been on the front lines stopping the damming of our rivers, standing up to the mining of our sacred lands, fighting pipelines. We are clear about what we are for: clean air, clean water, clean soil, respectful relationships with all of life, and a good future for the generations to come.

By standing up to protect greed, over-exploitation, and destruction of the land and water we resist people everywhere to step into thoughtful, prayerful, powerful action on behalf of the environment and sustainable energy. Because our connection to the land and to our traditional knowledge is mostly intact, we have a great deal to share with the world about a gentler way of living on this earth. We know how to do it. We know how to grow food in ways that do not deplete the soil. We know our forests and our medicine plants. We know how to live in a way that does not contribute to climate chaos. We are not easily confused about what really matters.

Our long histories of living respectfully in balance with the natural world have been guided by our "original instructions," which reminded us to be generous, reciprocal, and respectful in all our relationships. We have honored the water that takes an entire life. Many of us live on our original homelands, as our ancestors did for many, many generations. Our use of land and our languages and traditions have remained intact, protecting us from consumerism and greed. In human relationships, we have always known of the power of listening and sharing. Our traditions of sharing our stories in community have helped us to heal our hurts.



Jews and the Climate Emergency: Building a United Front

The climate emergency affects everyone. It threatens our world and our future. Turning climate change around can only be accomplished through broad-based coalitions that cross all lines of division including: racism, classism, sexism, antisemitism, Islamophobia, ageism, LGBTQ+ oppression. Jews can and need to be an integral part of this coalition.

The origins of the Jewish people are inextricably connected to the natural world, including a commitment to ethical relationships with the land, animals, and all people. However, in the different lands and time periods in which Jews have lived, we have been targets of genocide, prohibited from owning land, and exiled from our countries. As part of the climate justice movement, Jews can reclaim our relationship to land in cooperation with all the world's peoples. As a people now spread over all of the earth, Jews are of all races and

ethnicities. Jews are Mizrah, Sephardi, Ashkenazi; we are religious and secular. Jews are white, people of color and indigenous, young and old, of all classes. We are Jews and carry intergenerational trauma. Jews can heal from this trauma and build greater unity amongst our own people. As we build unity, we will be better able to support and follow the leadership of frontlines communities, including poor people, people of color, indigenous and tribal peoples within the climate justice movement.

Anti-Semitism is the institutionalized mistreatment of Jews and the shaming of any amongst our own people. As we build unity, we will be better able to support and follow the leadership of frontlines communities, including poor people, people of color, indigenous and tribal peoples within the climate justice movement. While the term anti-Semitism is not precise there are also Semitic peoples who are not Jewish. The term that has been widely used to refer to the specific oppression directed against the Jewish people.



Working Together for Unity Among Unions, the Environmental Movements, and All People

Our goal is to broaden and strengthen both labor and environmental organizations in our efforts to ensure a sustainable future.

As union activists we know that workers, labor leaders, and climate justice activists share common goals and face common obstacles to achieving them. We want to work together with climate justice activists to overcome the obstacles and understand and improve the connections between workers' issues and stopping climate change.

To build the broadest possible unity, the work on climate change must not exclude or be at the expense of workers in the impacted industries. We have to support and engage workers and communities whose

income depends on the extraction of fossil fuels. A tiered system to divide our movements is to tell workers to "choose" between good jobs and a healthy environment. In reality we all need meaningful and life-supporting work as well as a sustainable planet for ourselves and future generations.

Unions around the world are using the concept of "just transition" to organize, educate, and form alliances to create systemic change for a sustainable future. To make a "just transition," workers will have to participate in all decisions that affect their ability to provide for themselves and their families. Many environmental groups are backing union efforts to support workers during the transition from fossil fuels.



The Climate Crisis and Mental Health Oppression

An Oppression that Makes People Fearful and Conforming

We are in the midst of a climate crisis. It is easy to be so numb, or assume we are all going to die and not try to take charge of the situation. Because of mental health oppression (MHO) most people don't get to release their painful emotions. Instead we get stuck. MHO keeps us afraid of our emotions and separated from other people, and therefore less effective in organizing to make big change.

Effects of Mental Health Oppression Mental health oppression affects everyone—and hardly anyone realizes it. It holds people back, partly because they don't realize they're being held back, or that there's such a thing as mental health oppression. It makes people doubt their own thinking, which explains why they will submit to a society that prioritizes profit, not people. It sets people up to be timid and afraid, unable to take action, and to fear change. It convinces

people that they need to be "normal" in order to be successful, and that being "normal" means supporting the status quo. To go against the status quo is to be "crazy." People who organize to end the climate crisis, who are opposing the status quo, can be regarded as "crazy" and can therefore be easily dismissed and not taken seriously. Even having our lives destroyed by the climate crisis can be regarded as "normal," as just the "very things are."

To make the necessary changes, to end the climate crisis, we need to form connections with people who are very different from us, celebrate our differences, and work closely together. As we release the emotions that have held our distress in place, we will more easily connect with people. Then it will be easier to organize large movements—and we need very large movements to successfully challenge the status quo.



The Role of the United States in the Global Climate Emergency

For the people of the world to have the best chance at handling the climate emergency, the United States government must do the following:

- Remain a signer of the 2015 Paris Agreement and increase its commitment to it.
- Carry out its financial commitments to the United Nations and other international climate financing entities, such as the Green Climate Fund.
- Commit to policies and legislation that will reduce industries and other sectors of the economy to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions, as laid out in the October 2018 IPCC report (reduce emissions by at least 45% by 2030 and reach net zero by 2050).
- Stop all support for the exploration, development, and production of fossil fuels.
- Commit large financial resources to exploring and carrying out natural carbon solutions.
- Support a "conflict of interest policy" to ban fossil fuel industries from the UN climate talks.

For the people of the world to have the best chance at handling the climate emergency, U.S. industries must do the following:

- Convert from fossil fuel to renewable energy as rapidly as possible, without loss of jobs.
- Begin planning for an economy that is not based on unlimited growth (unending and unlimited growth has brought us to the current situation).
- For the people of the world to have the best chance at handling the climate emergency, the people of the United States must do the following:
- Organize to accomplish the actions above.
- Overcome the conditioning that drives us to acquire and consume more than we need. (There are enough resources available for everyone to have a good life.)
- Decide to use resources rationally without wasting for governments and industries on give up their destructive policies. (Official leaders have so far failed to act and must take leadership.)



South, Central, and West Asians and Climate Change

Climate change has had a devastating impact on South, Central, and West Asia—from the rise in sea level, to heat waves in Iraq and India, to droughts in Central Asia, to floods in Pakistan and Bangladesh. The greatest impact has been and will be on the poorer countries and communities in these regions, those least able to protect themselves. People in these regions are already suffering from widespread disease and a decline in agricultural production.

Climate change is being felt in the context of an already prolonged environmental crisis that is largely the result of the wars in Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Syria, and Yemen. These wars have already seriously degraded the natural environments of these countries. They have ruined agricultural lands, contaminated soil, increased desertification, polluted water, destroyed wildlife habitat, and, of course, caused

millions of civilian deaths as well as mass migrations. It is a cycle of destruction. War accelerates climate change by degrading the environment. Climate change causes drought and famine. Then, under these conditions, violence, war, Islamophobia, and racism targeting Arabs and Muslims are easily incited. All of this makes it more difficult to unite and end war and its impact on the environment.

Despite all the above, the situation is hopeful. It is possible to limit the effects of climate change and completely restore the environment. Big problems require big solutions. The people of South, Central, and West Asia play a key role in finding solutions that leave no human behind; that do not pit one group against another; that do not allow one group of people to benefit



Parents and Climate Change: Building Support and Unleashing Our Power

Our love and caring for our children is powerful. It inspires us to take action for climate justice. We are deeply aware of what growing, young humans need. We know they need clean, healthy air and water. We know the climate crisis must be solved to meet their needs and future needs. At the same time, the demands of parenting and the worries about our children's future can feel overwhelming and make it hard for us to be clear-headed about the steps we need to take as climate activists and as parents. We are up against so much as parents. We need each other for support.

We are engaging against economic oppression. Parents are not paid for the work of raising children, work that is most important to the well-being of society. On top of that, in our paid jobs, we have to work increasingly long hours

for less pay, making it difficult to support our families. We have less and less time for our children, our partners, or our extended families. Then we feel bad about ourselves because we can't parent the way we would like to. Nevertheless, we have solved to meet their needs and future needs. At the same time, the demands of parenting and the worries about our children's future can feel overwhelming and make it hard for us to be clear-headed about the steps we need to take as climate activists and as parents. We are up against so much as parents. We need each other for support.

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Supporting Indigenous Leadership

Our Perspective We will back Indigenous existence and leadership. Peoples throughout the world need to do whatever is necessary to heal the effects of all past and current genocidal policies that have been inflicted on Indigenous peoples. We stand against and are committed to ending all policies of genocide in the present. We will remove any barriers to learning from, supporting, and following the leadership of Indigenous peoples, whose lands we all occupy and use resources from.

Caring for the Earth, Tradition, and Indigenous Sovereignty Caring for the earth, honoring treaties with Indigenous peoples, and Native Sovereignty are deeply intertwined. Native peoples do not compartmentalize these things. They are seen as the same issue. Challenging Our Cultural Worldviews Most of us have been raised in cultures that condition us to view the world through the lens of constant battles for dominance and exploitation. If we are not dominating the situation in which we find ourselves, we may feel like we are being dominated or forced to submit to someone else's dominance.

We may feel that ownership of "private property" gives us the right to exploit "our" land. We do not believe that Mother Earth can be owned. The land is held in common by the Tribe and used for its survival, harvest, and habitat for current and future generations.

Many non-Indigenous peoples are accustomed to see much of its as a battle between good and bad. This worldview has often been used to justify punishment or threats of punishment—in this worldview, what is degraded or destroyed is seen as a gift from the gods. We are philosophically opposed to this worldview and these institutions, they may still affect us on an unchosen level, for example, the way we are conditioned to see the world through the lens of punishment or threats of punishment. We are philosophically opposed to this worldview and these institutions, they may still affect us on an unchosen level, for example, the way we are conditioned to see the world through the lens of punishment or threats of punishment. We are philosophically opposed to this worldview and these institutions, they may still affect us on an unchosen level, for example, the way we are conditioned to see the world through the lens of punishment or threats of punishment.



Young People and the Climate Emergency

Young People are a revolutionary force and have been at the forefront of many important social movements. Youth are playing a vital role in the climate movement today. Ending the oppression of younger people is crucial to creating the massive, broad-based movement we need to stop the degradation of our environment and end the climate emergency.

The oppression of young people and young adults stops adults from taking the leadership of our people's struggle. Unchallenged, it leaves many younger people with the incorrect idea that we are not smart or powerful. You can see the oppression in many school systems, where young people are told what to do at all times and given little space to take leadership or explore their own interests. Despite the oppression, young people and young adults have led

many environmental and social-justice movements. Many older people have accumulated feelings of discouragement about making the world, sweeping discouraged feelings and can often remain "man-baiting" in their connection to nature and to other humans. One can see this with young children—they are curious about the natural world and the people in it and they want to take action when they see something that is not right.

Every person in the world either is a young person or was once a young person. This means that all of us have felt the effects of young people's oppression. We can heal from the hurts, take our ideas seriously, and leave behind any discouragement or hopelessness about the climate



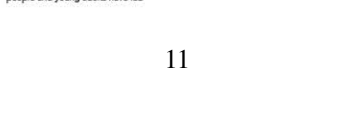
Supporting Young People's Activism in the Climate Emergency

Key takeaways

- Young people are powerful agents of social change. Most revolutions have been led by young people.
- Young people need accurate information about the reality of the climate crisis. They need our support to remember that they are powerful and capable of making a difference.
- Young people need to be confident in their own power. Adults can stand against this oppression by being an encouraging young people to think and take action. They can take young people's leadership seriously.
- It is particularly important that adults don't "speak on" young people, the discouragement and fear we have seen in young people's lives. We need young people to be free to try any action they can to help address the climate crisis. We need to support our own "improvements" to their ideas.
- Adults can best support young people when we build personal relationships with them. That means reaching out to young people of every background. It means understanding the oppressive system that keeps us divided. It means challenging racism, classism, sexism, and more. Young people are going through when they hear bad information, when they are going through the

challenges of the climate crisis and will face it throughout their lives. Adults can be effective allies to young activists by supporting them in what they need and ask for. They can be effective allies to young people who are not fully intelligent or capable of making a difference. Young people's oppression leaves many of our young people with a sense of powerlessness and fear. Adults can stand against this oppression by being an encouraging young people to think and take action. They can take young people's leadership seriously.

It is particularly important that adults don't "speak on" young people, the discouragement and fear we have seen in young people's lives. We need young people to be free to try any action they can to help address the climate crisis. We need to support our own "improvements" to their ideas. Adults can best support young people when we build personal relationships with them. That means reaching out to young people of every background. It means understanding the oppressive system that keeps us divided. It means challenging racism, classism, sexism, and more. Young people are going through when they hear bad information, when they are going through the



Working on Climate Change in Togo and Ivory Coast

I recently led two RC climate change workshops—one in Lome, Togo, and the other in Abidjan, Ivory Coast. The Lome workshop, organized by Mimi Alice and her team, had twenty-five participants from Togo and five from Benin. The Abidjan workshop, organized by Cyrille Zounon, had nineteen participants from Abidjan and two from Guinea.

I started by saying that we are good but that we get hurt and that the hurts interfere with our relationships with each other and with our environment.

We had a session on pleasant childhood memories of the environment. After that I talked about our ancestors' traditions and cultures and their intelligence in interacting with the environment. They knew how to use nature to survive and heal without harming the planet. Colonization and the hurts from it took all of that away. Our ways of life were called primitive. Using herbs for medicine was called witchcraft. Our lives were not considered as valuable as those of the people who were benefitting from the colonization. And capitalism has continued the destruction.

Togo and Ivory Coast are both rich in minerals, and the mining industry has left behind destruction and a sense of defeat. Several young adults talked about how scared they are. I said how unfair it is that young adults could inherit a destroyed planet and also be expected to do most of the work to repair it.

The participants from Guinea talked about the bauxite mining done by international companies and its destruction of people's livelihoods and houses and the

rivers they have relied on for water. Farmers have had to stop farming and flee. They also spoke about their activism and how there is hope in action.

I talked about the science of climate change and the effects we are already experiencing. I also talked about Sustaining All Life, the RC Communities, and all the hopeful things that are happening around the world.

We looked at the fires in the Amazon and had sessions on discouragement. Then we met in support groups and worked on what we can do. The groups were organized according to where people lived so that people could take action both individually and as a group.



LIAM GEARY-BAULCH

The following are some of my thoughts about what we can do:

- We can discharge, including on discouragement and powerlessness, so that we can think clearly about the situation and take our own actions.

- We can end how profit is the basis of our economies and create an economy based on meeting people's basic needs without harming people or the earth.

- We can support the development of renewable energy—solar, wind, geothermal.

- We can reduce consumption, food waste, and our purchases.

- We can join and work with organizations that focus on climate change.

- We can stay connected to each other as we do the work.

- We can reclaim our connection with and love for the earth.

- We can advocate for good environmental policies where we are and by whatever means we have.

- We can talk openly with the people around us about climate change and give information in thoughtful amounts.

- When possible, we can openly protest the current situation and insist that the needed changes take place rapidly.

Thank you for the opportunity to be part of this work.

*Janet Kabue
Area Reference Person for the
Nairobi, Kenya, RC Community
Thika, Kenya*



WYTSKE VISSER

"עכשיו הזמן לשלב ידיים ולפעול"

בבחירות האחרונות הייתי מעורבת בקמפיין של מפלגה חדשה וקטנה. זה שהייתי פעילה, ובסביבת פעילים אחרים לא מיואשים, השפיע עלי לטובה הרבה יותר ממה שציפיתי. למרות תוצאות הבחירות (המפלגה הזו הכי לא עברה את אחוז החסימה, ומחנה השמאל שאני משתייכת אליו לא ניצח בבחירות) לא הייתי כל כך מיואשת.

ארבעה דברים שאנחנו יכולות לעשות:

1. להיות פעילות! הרי אופוזיציה – גם בכנסת וגם ברחוב, ממלאת תפקיד חשוב מאוד בדמוקרטיה וצריך לקחת אותו ברצינות. המשחק הוא לא "או קואליציה או כלום", יש הרבה מה לעשות. בכנסת האופוזיציה שותפה ביוזמות חקיקה חשובות ופעילה בפיקוח על הממשלה. מסיבות מובנות אנחנו פחות שומעים על זה, אבל זה לא אומר שזה לא קורה. בשטח צריך להתארגן כדי להשמיע את דעתנו בקול רם וברור, כל הזמן, ולבנות שותפויות נגד ההסתה והמאמצים לפלג אותנו. אנחנו טובות בזה.

2. ללמוד על המציאות הפוליטית והיומיומית במדינות אחרות בעולם. החדשות המקומיות – וגם תשומת הלב שלנו – ממוקדת בפוליטיקה המקומית ובפוליטיקה בארצות הברית. הידיעות לגבי שאר העולם מובאות לידיעתנו (אם בכלל) בצורה מוגבלת מאוד. זה מבלבל אותנו לחשוב שהבעיה היא אישית או לאומית, בשעה שלמעשה מה שקורה כאן הוא חלק מתהליכים גלובליים ומההתמוטטות של החברה הדכאנית. הרחבת הפרספקטיבה היא סתירה טובה גם להקלטות של דיכוי מופנם וקורבנות, שגורמות לנו לחשוב שזה המקום הנוראי ביותר והאנשים הקשים ביותר, וגם להקלטות של חומרי מדכא, שמשאירות אותנו בורים ומרוכזים בעצמנו. אנחנו גם יכולות ללמוד מנצחונות שהושגו או דרכי פעולה במקומות אחרים, זה מעורר תקווה ויקדם אותנו לעבר אחדות.

3. לבנות בריתות, חברויות וקשרים עם אנשים מרקע אחר משלנו ועם דעה פוליטית שונה. בלהט הבחירות, הרבה מאמץ מושקע ב"שכנוע" וזה לא בסיס טוב לקשר. עכשיו הזמן להתפנות לזה ולחבור לאחרים בבניית הקשרים האלו. צריך להציע את עצמנו – במקום וככל שמתאים לחיים שלנו, בייעוץ ובחוף. כשאנחנו מציעים את עצמנו, נוכל להציע את הכלים והשקפת העולם שלנו.

4. לפרוק, לפרוק, לפרוק (כמו שאומרת ברברה לאב). לאתגר את עצמנו בסשן לא לברוח מהדברים הקשים, לשבור את הגבולות שהושמו על הידע שלנו, ולאתגר את דפוסי המדכא שלנו. שמת לי לב שאני צריכה שוב ושוב להחליט ולפרוק כדי ללמוד ולזכור ידע בנוגע לכסף, פוליטיקה, כלכלה, סקסיזם, מציאות החיים של אנשים אחרים, בעיקר בעלי צבע, שינויי האקלים ובגדול כל דבר שעלול לשבור את לבי או לגרום לי להרגיש אשמה. זה קורה לאט אבל התוצאות מצדיקות את המאמץ!

נכון שדברים קורסים, אבל אחרים צומחים ועולים במקומם. בואו נשלב ידיים ונפעל.

באהבה,

"א"

פורסם ברשימה האלקטרונית למנהיגות יהודיות בייעוץ הדדי

(See next page for the English translation of this Hebrew article.)

English translation of the preceding Hebrew article:

“Let’s Get Together and Act”

In the last elections I was involved in the campaign of a new, small political party. Being active, and around other people who were active and hopeful, had a tremendous, positive effect on me. Although we (this party and the entire political left) did not win, I was not discouraged.

Here are four things we can do:

1. *Be active.* Claim the important role of opposition, both in parliament and on the streets, and get to work. Not winning the elections does not equal having no influence on the political game. In parliament, the opposition plays a significant role in the legislation process and in supervising the government. The “people” can organize to make sure that our opinions and goals are heard loud and clear and can build partnerships against the efforts to divide us. We are good at that.

2. *Become aware of the realities (of politics and daily lives) in other countries.* Local news is focused on local politics and the politics of the United States. The rest of the world is brought to us, if at all, through a very limited perspective. This confuses us into feeling like the loss of the elections is a personal or local failure, while it’s actually a part of global processes and the collapse of society. Expanding the perspective contradicts internalized oppression and victim distress (“this is the worst place, with the hardest people”) and oppressor distress (being ignorant and self-centered). Learning about modes of action and victories achieved elsewhere provides knowledge and hope and pushes us toward unity.

3. *Build alliances, friendships, and connections with people who do not share our background or political opinion.* In the heat of the elections, things are much about “winning people over” [getting people to agree with us], which is not a solid base for connection. Now is the time to build connections and engage others in doing it. Offering ourselves—inside and outside of Co-Counseling, in any way and as much as is sensible in our life circumstances—will enable us to offer our tools and perspectives.

4. *Discharge, discharge, discharge* (a quote from Barbara Love, the International Liberation Reference Person for African Heritage People). Challenge ourselves in sessions to look at the hard stuff, to break the limits that were placed on our knowledge, to challenge our own oppressor patterns. I’ve noticed that I need to decide over and over again, and discharge, to be able to gather and remember information about money, politics, the economy, the environment, sexism, and the realities of other people (mostly people of color)—basically anything that might break my heart or make me feel guilty. It is a slow process, but so worth the effort!

As things are falling apart, new things are emerging.
Let’s get together and act.

“X”

Translated by the author

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



SUE EDWARDS

“Throwing My Life into the Air”

I attended the West Coast USA Care of the Environment Workshop led by Diane Shisk, Irene Hong Ping Shen, and Alma Soongj Beck.

Since the workshop, I can envision more profoundly a world in which we don't use fossil fuels and aren't organized around greed and profit. This has been helpful, and clearly attributable to the work we did.

I've also found it easier to move forward.

I started an RC support group for reading all the information about climate change on the RC website (see <<https://www.rc.org/climatechange>>). Eight members of our small Community plan to meet weekly. We met today for the first time, and it went well.

In the wide world I initiated and organized a town hall meeting on the Green New Deal. The people who attended were mostly community leaders and activists of the Global

Majority who hadn't previously worked together. I had been willing to lead the meeting as an ally, but a young Black woman agreed to do it, so I happily supported her.

I am counseling on “throwing my current life into the air and going all-in [focusing fully] on climate change.” I'm discharging well so far.

Paul Trudeau

Sacramento, California, USA

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



Climate Games and Mini-sessions for Scientists

I just led a successful (non-RC) workshop for scientists. It was called Communicating Information and Releasing Initiative on the Climate Crisis.

I am not a scientist. Organizers of the conference had wanted proposals for a workshop, so I sent them a workshop idea, and they accepted it!

We played games that let people try communicating science facts in different ways, show their discouragement, and laugh together at outrageous solutions.

I taught them to do mini-sessions. I explained that exchanging equal listening on a regular basis would assist them to overcome challenges, build community, and sustain themselves in doing their meaningful and challenging work.

People came away energized and connected. They had new ideas of what to try and, perhaps more important, *new ways* of trying things. It was *fun*! I'm going to keep trying things like this.

Tresa Elguera

Brooklyn, New York, USA

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

Ask Public Leaders to Mention the Climate Emergency

I asked the new mayor of Watsonville, California, USA, to use his platform (his position, which gives him many opportunities to speak in public) to mention something about the climate emergency at every possible opportunity. He agreed right away. I will be sending him suggestions.

We can ask public leaders around us—on school boards, city councils, boards of directors, planning commissions, and so on—to include something about the climate emergency (for example, its connection to homelessness, tribal rights, work conditions, education) in every report they make and every speech they prepare.

We can also include it ourselves whenever we have the opportunity to speak—in public, at meetings, with individuals.

Nancy Faulstich

Watsonville, California, USA

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

‘Οι αυτοματισμοί μου δεν μπόρεσαν να με σταματήσουν από το να δω’

Μία μέρα που συζητούσα με τον άντρα της αδελφής μου για το περιβάλλον και την κλιματική κρίση, μου έκανε την απλή ερώτηση: «Εγώ τι άλλο μπορώ να κάνω για το περιβάλλον;». Αυτό με οδήγησε στο να ερευνήσω περισσότερο και να επιβεβαιώσω ότι μία αλλαγή στις διατροφικές μας συνήθειες μπορεί να έχει ουσιαστικό αντίκτυπο στην κρίση.

Μέσα από κουβέντες γεννήθηκε η ιδέα του πράσινου φεστιβάλ γαστρονομίας. Η λαϊκή αγορά είναι ένας θαυμάσιος χώρος συνεύρεσης όλων των ανθρώπων ανεξάρτητα από ηλικία και κοινωνικοοικονομικό στρώμα.

Η ομάδα μας ήθελε να επικοινωνήσει με τον κόσμο στο φεστιβάλ ενθαρρύνοντάς τους να έρθουν να μας μιλήσουν.

Τυπώσαμε μπροστά σε άσπρα μπλουζάκια μία ερώτηση που επέλεξε ο καθένας όπως:

‘Τι θα κάνεις τώρα για να φροντίσεις τη γη;’

‘Γνωρίζεις τι είναι τα τροφοχιλιόμετρα;’

‘Γνωρίζεις πόσο καιρό παίρνει για να διαλυθούν στη θάλασσα;’ (στο πίσω μέρος υπήρχε μία εικόνα του πόσο χρόνο παίρνει στο πλαστικό, στο γυαλί κ.ά. για να διαλυθεί).

Στο περίπερό μας απλώσαμε τη ‘μπουγάδα’ μας από τυπωμένα χαρτιά με πληροφορίες σε σχέση με το θέμα διατροφή-υγεία και περιβάλλον. Δεν δώσαμε έντυπες πληροφορίες ώστε να μη δημιουργήσουμε σκουπίδια.

Παράλληλα υπήρχε μία προβολή από διάφορα βίντεο και διαφάνειες που αναφερόντουσαν στη σημασία της εντοπιότητας, της εποχικότητας και της ορθολογικής αγοράς τροφίμων.

Συμμετείχε μαζί μας μία ομάδα νέων εμπνευσμένη από την Γκρέτα Θάνμπεργκ [μία δεκαεξάχρονη ακτιβίστρια για το περιβάλλον από τη Σουηδία] που έστησαν το πανό τους ‘Act as if the house is on fire’ [‘Κάνε κάτι, το σπίτι σου καίγεται’].

Βεβαιωθήκαμε ότι θα ακουστεί η φωνή των νέων σε όσες ευκαιρίες δόθηκαν για προβολή στα ΜΜΕ. Το έκαναν τόσο ωραία, αυθόρμητα και ουσιαστικά!

Προσπαθήσαμε να διασφαλίσουμε ότι οι επιχειρήσεις που προσέφεραν φαγητό δεν θα χρησιμοποιούσαν είδη μίας χρήσης και αυτό επιτεύχθηκε σε μεγάλο βαθμό. Επίσης παροτρύναμε το κόσμο να φέρει τα δικά του πιάτα και μαχαιροπήρουνα.

Στήσαμε μία ομάδα συνομιλίας στο whatsapp για την επικοινωνία μας και κάναμε μερικές συναντήσεις για να οργανωθούμε. Σε μία συνάντηση ξεκινήσαμε λέγοντας τι μας συνδέει με το περιβάλλον.

Μετά την εκδήλωση όλοι θέλουμε να συνεχίσουμε αυτή τη δουλειά και σκεφτήκαμε καινούργιους τρόπους να είμαστε ενεργοί.

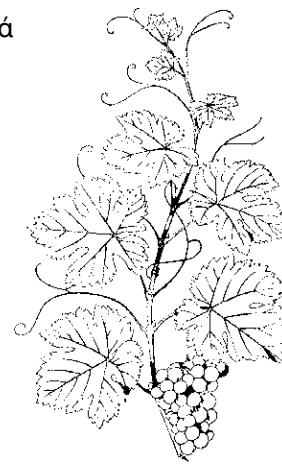
Για μένα ήταν σημαντικό να σπάσω την απομόνωση κάνοντας πράγματα μαζί με άλλες και άλλους. Ήταν σημαντικό να ζητήσω υποστήριξη, να συμμετέχω σε ομάδα υποστήριξης για το περιβάλλον και να κάνω συναντήσεις. Παρόλο που οι αυτοματισμοί μου λένε «ό,τι και να κάνεις δεν είναι αρκετό»,

δεν μπόρεσαν να με σταματήσουν από το να δω.

Λουκία Πική

Ζάκυνθος

Μεταφράστηκε στα αγγλικά από την Μάρτζυ Ντόιλ Παπαδοπούλου



English translation of the preceding Greek article:

“My Patterns Could Not Stop Me from Acting”

One day I was talking to my sister’s husband about the environment and the climate crisis, and he asked me the simple question, “What else can I do about the environment?” That led me to investigate more fully, and to confirm that a change in our eating habits can have a substantial impact on the crisis.

After a series of conversations, the idea of a “green gastronomy food festival” at the local farmers’ market was born. The farmers’ market is an open-air market to which farmers come and sell their products, mainly fruits and vegetables. It is a wonderful place to meet all kinds of people of all ages and socioeconomic situations.

Our team wanted to encourage people to talk to us, so on the front of white t-shirts we printed questions that each of us had chosen for ourselves, such as, “What are you going to do now to care for the earth?” “Do you know what food miles are?” “Do you know how long it takes to dissolve in the sea?” (The back of that one had a picture of how much time it takes for plastic, glass, and so on, to dissolve.)

At our booth we spread out our environmentally friendly “laundry” of printed material about nutrition, health, and the environment. (We didn’t provide printed handouts, to avoid creating trash.) Displayed on a screen were videos and slides about the importance of locality, seasonality, and rational food shopping.

A team of young people inspired by Greta Thunberg [a sixteen-year-old Swedish climate activist] joined

us and set up a banner that read, “Act as if the house is on fire.” We made sure that their voices were heard during all the opportunities for media coverage. They spoke beautifully, spontaneously, and to the point [with a clear focus on the most important things].



We tried to ensure that the companies that offered food at the festival didn’t use disposable items, and we achieved that to a large extent. We also invited people to bring their own cutlery.

Our team had a WhatsApp group for communicating, and we held a few meetings to get organized. At one of the meetings we started by saying what connected us to the environment.

After the event, everyone wanted to continue the work, and we thought of new ways to be active.

For me it was important to break through isolation by doing things together with others. It was important to ask for support, participate in an environmental support team, and have Co-Counseling sessions. Even though my patterns tell me, “Whatever you do isn’t enough,” they could not stop me from acting.

Loukia Pikis

Zakynthos, Greece

Translated by Margie Doyle Papadopoulou

A New Sustaining All Life T-shirt!

Help support Sustaining All Life by buying and wearing the attractive 2019 Santiago, Chile, COP25 t-shirt shown on the right.

The Sustaining All Life logo consists of images of hands placed in a flowering pattern. Above the logo are the words “Compromiso con todas las formas de vida” (the Spanish translation of Sustaining All Life).



Available in XS, S, M, L, XL, 2XL, and 3XL

\$20.00, plus postage and handling (no quantity discount)

To order, go to page 111 or to <www.rationalisland.com>.

Negative Feelings about the Environmental Movement

Many people in the United States have negative feelings about the environmental movement, and they don't want to be associated with it because of these feelings. They don't want to be identified as an environmental activist, as one of "those." Yet climate change is an environmental issue, and it's important that we engage with climate change.

The history of racism and classism in the environmental movement is a main source of people's negative feelings. The U.S. environmental movement has its roots in the conservation movement, which was founded by owning-class white men who wanted to preserve beautiful places and species for their own benefit. They wanted to vacation and hunt in what are now some of our national parks. And they created national parks without considering the sovereign land rights of Native peoples, without thinking about making these beautiful places accessible to working-class people and People of the Global Majority, and without giving thought to the rights of the people who had long lived there.

Owning-class white men dominated conservation groups for many years, and what are known as environmental organizations developed out of that. Patterns of racism and classism persisted, and the organizations continued to focus on issues that were mostly of interest to white owning-class people.

In the meantime, sources of pollution were located in communities that lacked political power—communities of People of the Global Majority and of poor and working-class white people. Extraction industries were often put on Native lands and in other places where corporations could get away with not taking precautions against pollution. Grassroots organizing against

what came to be termed "environmental racism" was not supported by the mainstream (predominantly white middle-class) environmental movement, which did not see it as their issue.

It was a long and difficult history of racism and classism. The mainstream environmental movement worked to preserve beautiful spaces and species without considering the impact on working people's jobs, on Native lands, and on communities of the Global Majority. It came to be seen as caring more about wild spaces and species than about poor people. Sexism was prevalent, especially in leadership, although women are now well represented in the movement.

Over time the movement has been "called out" on [criticized for] its racism and classism, and huge efforts have been made to address the oppressor patterns within it. But racism and classism persist, and trust has been slow to build.

Another reason for people's discomfort with the movement has been that many of the activists in it have distresses that make them more comfortable with nature and wildlife than with people.

We don't all have to join the environmental movement to take action on climate change, but some of us should. We can work within it to strengthen it, including by introducing our theory and tools to work on racism and classism. And none of us should stay away from it because of undischarged distress. We can discharge on our restimulations.



Diane Shisk
Acting International Commonality Reference
Person for the Care of the Environment
Seattle, Washington, USA

Enormous Support for Our Efforts

When we become effective in wide world changing, when we are actually enlisting large numbers of people into helping undo this society and reknitting its components into a truly human relationship, the work currently being done by the various liberation groups in RC (Black liberation, women's liberation, and so on; these are much broader groups than the wide world changing forces) will be of enormous support and strength to our efforts. Many groups in RC are developing clear-cut liberation programs.



Harvey Jackins
From page 90 of "Cherish the RC Community,"
in *Logical Thinking about a Future Society*

The Significance of Music

In May 2018 I led a Musicians' Liberation Workshop for the Northeast Regions of the United States and Canada. I emphasized the significance of music. I said that music can be a powerful and revolutionary liberation tool and that we can take music and musicians' work seriously.

Yo-Yo Ma, a well-known cellist, played in the "Place-des-Arts" subway station in Montreal, Canada, as part of his year-long "Bach Project" of playing Bach's cello suites in various places around the world. The following is from his website: "I share this music, which has helped shape the evolution of my life, with the hope that it might spark a conversation about how culture can be a source of the solutions we need. It is one more experiment, this time a search for answers to the question, 'What can we do together, that we cannot do alone?'"

How have you used your music (or other art form) to build connection, make change, and bring liberation? What has intrigued you? What have you tried? How has your connection with other musicians or artists assisted you? I particularly encourage young people, young adults, People of the Global Majority, and people living outside the United States to share their thoughts.



CYNTHIA JOHNSTON

Heather Hay
International Liberation
Reference Person for Musicians
 Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada
 Reprinted from the RC e-mail
 discussion list for leaders of artists



YUKO HIBINO

Recycling, as a Drummer

I am a musician, primarily a drummer, living on the far north coast of New South Wales, Australia. I moved here from Sydney (Australia) with my partner and child about two years ago. Having moved away from the network of musicians I'd been playing with, and wanting to pursue a career in music, I had to get creative.

I have always been passionate about recycling and the environment, so I decided to start a small business called EcoBeats. I spent a few months going around to local cafes, fish-and-chips shops, and other eateries asking if they had any fifteen- to twenty-kilogram plastic buckets in their kitchens. (These buckets often hold mayonnaise

and other bulk food items.) I also contacted some labourers and got a lot of buckets from a plasterer. Then I contacted some drummers in Sydney and collected over a hundred unused drumsticks. With that, my collection was complete, and I have been using it at the drumming workshops I've been leading at festivals. I am also working on running the workshops in schools.

At the time I moved, I was a new mum surrounded by other parents and bubs [babies]. That led me to start a sub-sect, EcoBabyBeats. I began to make drums and other percussion instruments out of infant-formula tins, old vitamin bottles, toilet rolls, and other items and started running baby and toddler music classes.

I am passionate about the unbelievable number of plastic items, especially toys, that are purchased for children and about using the EcoBabyBeats platform to encourage more parents to recycle them.

I need to discharge so I can talk more about the environment and recycling as part of my workshops, and not be afraid that it's not the right platform or that people are there solely to learn to drum.

Nicola Ossher
 Tweed Heads West, New
 South Wales, Australia
 Reprinted from the RC e-mail
 discussion list for leaders of artists



LOBO, BATANGAS, PHILIPPINES • AL CABALLES

BLCD¹ COE² Rock

This world in on FIRE
Our home is burning up
While we procrastinate
Reaching for another cup

Of coffee, cappuccino
Or yerba mate tea
Worried and brokenhearted
Unable to see

What it is that we can do
To stop the further damage
To get us moving forward
Is more than we can manage

From the final precipice
Of 2.0 global warming
Knowing that at 1.5
Already some are burning

Underwater, out of land
Homes gone forever
Cultures to be known and loved
By our children—never

What was once our fertile lands
Now turned into desert
Gross pollution of bounteous lakes
We must find our effort

Inertia, numbness, and inaction
Caused by fear and pain
Through no fault of our own
Our early lives sustained

What was once our growing season
Now lies still as dust
The rains they say will not come
And yet we know we must

Feed our children and our elders
Find a way to live
In a world that does not respond
A world that does not give

A damn about the water
That laps across our shores
With wind that's pushed and slammed
By tsunami-powered force

Our people die beneath the mud
That slides down off the hills
Because the trees that held it fast
Were sold to fill the tills

Of the corporate giants of the Western world
Fossil fuel and big pharma
The billionaires and the zillionaires
Want to keep us in denial

¹Black Liberation and Community Development

²Care of the Environment

That 60 minutes of gas-powered mowing
Equals 3,000 miles of emissions
To keep fossil-fuel-powered cars going
They fill the airwaves with fiction

That climate change is just a hoax
They dismiss climate science
They leave us to repair this earth
To on each other find reliance

Come on sisters, come on brothers
This world is our world too
Ensuring a future for all of us
Is something we can do

Come on sisters, come on brothers
This world is our world too
Ensuring a future for all of us
Is something we can do

Come on sisters, come on brothers
This world is our world too
Ensuring a future for all of us
Is something we can do

Barbara Love
International Liberation Reference
Person for African Heritage People
Amherst, Massachusetts, USA

New pamphlet!

Tools for Climate Organizing

For you and your climate activist and organizer friends — to help with organizing in the climate emergency

Includes information on

- Ending oppression as we work to end the climate emergency
- Sustaining ourselves as activists and organizers
 - Basic RC theory
- RC tools for organizing (including “news and goods,” appreciations, speaking order, sessions, think-and-listens, support groups, discussion formats, panels)

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A Call to Unity: Standing Together for Climate Action



As Sustaining All Life and United to End Racism prepared for our presence at the United Nations Climate Action Summit, we learned about some criticisms and attacks starting within the climate movement. Our leadership team came together to think and discharge about it and decided that a clear statement was needed—both to guide our own thinking and actions and to share with others who are struggling with these issues. Here is what we wrote:

Many individuals and groups are calling on world governments to take immediate action to address the climate emergency. Together we're preparing for a major action to draw attention to the United Nations Climate Action Summit on September 23. Many efforts have been made to bring everyone to the table. We have done well together and accomplished so much.

As the climate emergency escalates, our movement is growing rapidly—and the speed of growth is outpacing our capacity to fully address the longstanding oppressions in society that show up within and between constituent groups. It is easy for misunderstandings to

arise and mistakes to be made as we work together.

Systems of oppression use a divide-and-conquer strategy. They try to turn us against each other in order to maintain power and weaken movements for change. We cannot allow this to continue to happen. We need to stand together.

Let us commit ourselves to doing the following:

- Remembering our large common goal to end the climate emergency—a goal that requires us to work together
- Standing together as we face our mistakes and misunderstandings and work to resolve our differences
- Not allowing the differences to divide us and weaken our efforts
- Working to resolve the differences both now and in the future

Addressing the ways we have been set against each other can take much listening, discussion,

and time on everyone's part. Let us commit to doing this work. It is possible to oppose all oppression and seek everyone's liberation and at the same time build unity and connections.

Let us commit to staying united as we resolve any differences. Let us continue to work after the Climate Action Summit on any differences that cannot be resolved quickly. Let us commit to solidifying our connections, strengthening our movement, and ensuring that mistakes are not repeated. We have much to learn from one another.

After the march and summit, how can we best come together to do this work, while moving forward together?

*Diane Shisk
Acting International Commonality
Reference Person for the
Care of the Environment
Seattle, Washington, USA*

*Barbara Love
International Liberation Reference
Person for African Heritage People
Amherst, Massachusetts, USA*



IRELAND • © STAN EICHNER

A Time for Connection and Solidarity

Years ago, at the end of a leaders' workshop, Tim Jackins said to the group in closing, "Treat each other well. Move toward each other. Push each other forward."

I was impressed with the importance of his remarks and decided to quote him on three large banners up front at Catholic workshops. His directions seemed significant for any group in which external or internalized oppression has resulted in mistreatment, hatred, blame, and separation.

As society continues to collapse in increasingly harsh and violent ways, I'd like to bring these directions forward again. I'd like to offer them as contradictions [to distress] for all people. I think they could be useful in our efforts to join forces, connect, and heal our world at a critical time for connection and solidarity.

Treating people well will mean doing so with the people we "like" and with those who restimulate or confuse us. It will mean treating people in the way we would like to be treated: with kindness, compassion, and awareness of our humanity. It will mean holding out the best of who a person is, with reminders of reality. It may mean connecting with humor or replacing marginalization with inclusion. It will mean remembering what we know in theory and increasingly in practice: "I am a good guy, I am one of the good guys, and the bad guys are good guys too." (A quote from Harvey Jackins)

Most of us have a circle of individuals whom we can move toward easily. They are the ones who are "like" us. They often "agree" with us and "understand" us. And most of us have individuals who remind us of our early hurts, including internalized oppression and oppressor distress. We stay away from these people. We are scared or angry or resentful when we are around them. We feel victimized and stay at a distance. From

experience I can say that this is a mistake. We want to move toward people (having worked on our early hurts). This includes moving toward those who are in an oppressor role in relation to us.

*"Treat each other well.
Move toward each other.
Push each other forward."*

Some of the best RC lessons I have learned have come from moving in the direction of someone I felt that I wanted to keep a distance from, or someone who'd communicated to me that I should stay at a distance. In each case, it didn't make sense to stay back. In some cases, it took years to move things forward. But I can say with confidence that we want connections with as many human beings as we can manage. Connecting outside of oppressed and oppressor identities can be particularly moving and empowering.

Finally, it is deeply human to make a difference for other people. As humans we love to make a difference in someone's life. It involves thinking. It involves acting. It involves making mistakes, learning from mistakes, and moving forward smarter and clearer than before. We want our connections to move the other person forward and, in the process, to move us forward.

While Tim's directions may seem simple, I hope you will use them to push beyond the boundaries you have had so far in your relationships. I hope you will reach for all other humans, treat them well, and have your encounters be part of moving the whole world forward. It is the right time to do it. Today.

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

The Benign Reality, a book by Harvey Jackins, will not be reprinted for a while. Because it is not available from Rational Island Publishers, we are printing parts of it in the next few issues of Present Time. The following is the first chapter of the book.

The Totally Benign Reality

To free human minds to be themselves seems to me the most satisfying activity one can do. We now know how to lift the weight off the pinned victim or, in the words of the song, to “free the spirit from the cell.” So, I challenge or invite each of you to liberate humanity from its only really serious handicap: its vulnerability to irrationality, its susceptibility to the imposition of the distress pattern. It is now possible to free humanity from the existing distress, to stop the systematic imposition of additional distress, and to finally achieve such liberation of our awareness as will prevent any distress from being reimposed except temporarily by accidents.

In the future, any accidental distresses will be removed the next hour by the immediate converging of fellow humans to achieve the discharge necessary for prompt re-emergence. I challenge each of you individually to do this, enjoying and glorying in the parallel activity of the others who will be doing it, using the resource of mutual aid and mutual discussion, but not depending on it, not making it the precondition for your own full initiative.

At leaders’ meetings at workshop breakfasts I have posed the question, “If a peculiar virus suddenly attacked the world that was fatal only to people in RC but you happened to be immune, and so, in a period of a day, all other RCers were dead and you alone escaped to tell the story, would you start RC over again worldwide, and if you would, how would you go about it [do it]?” Pulled outside their usual ruts to think, almost everyone

concludes they would do this, and they come up with [think of] a great variety of the most brilliant and sensible plans for getting started. I suppose at least half the people said, “I would immediately put a guard on



DAVID WALLACE

the present stock of RC literature and use it to the fullest.” A large majority of people at these meetings proposed good, sensible, brilliant plans.

If they can plan this way now to start the International Community over again, why aren’t they doing it while we are all still alive?

SAMPLES OF REALITY

We have sampled reality a number of places by the insights that we have gotten and expanded, starting out with the realization that crying didn’t hurt people and possibly helped. Step by step, we’ve gotten a better picture of reality through holes we have poked in the pseudo-reality that has been spread over reality and has hidden reality from us. I speak of the great grey gloppy gucky blanket of pseudo-reality that obscures the nature of reality. The building blocks of

pseudo-reality are the false pictures that we get when a pattern plays, when a past distress experience gets between us and the present.

This operates much of the time for many people. Chronic patterns continually unreel a distorted picture of events that happened a long time ago. The distress occludes reality. Lack of information binds the distress patterns together. Misinformation adds to them. We are just beginning to understand how thoroughly the oppressive society uses misinformation to oppress people. The oppressive society imposes tremendous amounts of misinformation upon people in order to socialize them to fit its own workings. If working people were not told that they are stupid, that they can’t initiate or plan things, that they are lucky to have a job, that they are worthless and should be grateful for the chance to contribute their surplus labor value to their employers; if they were not made, in large numbers, to believe these things, the economic system could not work. No intelligent people with confidence in themselves would carry out [do] the routine production labor under today’s conditions, so the society has found it necessary to misinform systematically. The schools have been thoroughly enlisted to assist in this distortion. Our Educational Change people have done a valiant job of revealing the enormous depravity of the educational process, which does everything except educate; which conditions, stultifies, discourages and numbs and dehumanizes under the pretext of furnishing information.

Well, this great sheet of gobby, gooey guck that we have accepted as reality has been pierced in a few places. Outside RC and before RC, people have continually questioned it. "It doesn't seem to me that Mom and Dad should have to fight so much," thinks the little child. "I wonder why people can't get along [can't have good relationships with each other]." "I am willing to work, why can't I have a job?" Questions like these come up repeatedly. In RC, we have poked little holes in this grey, nasty crud that crawls over every floor and up every wall and across every ceiling where human beings live, and we have gotten little bright glimpses of what's back of it. When we poked tentatively and the stuff yielded, we were encouraged to poke a little more.

When we thought about each individual taking more responsibility and it worked well, we poked harder until, finally, closing our eyes and with great daring, we stabbed all the way through and said, "Each person is completely in charge of the whole universe," and sunlight streamed through the gap. It turned out to be [was revealed to be] true, even though it seemed wildly improbable the time we first said it.

When we tried validation and self-validation and self-appreciation a little and it had positive effects, we tried it a little bit more and finally we tried COMPLETE APPRECIATION OF ONESELF WITHOUT ANY RESERVATIONS, and brilliant and beautiful color showed through the great, gloppy guck. The reality was there.

It turned out that all people can learn well if they are allowed to remain curious and are helped to feel good about themselves. The grey guck had

said, "Praise them if they do what they are supposed to," but we asked, "How about [why not try] praising them all the time? How about letting them decide what they want to learn?" We tried poke after poke. Finally the biggest poke took place in Palo Alto [California, USA] with the pre-school there, when a couple of adults systematically, day after day, tried to listen to the children decide what *they* wanted. Within two years the children had planned and run the school and given directions to the adults, and bright beautiful colors streamed through the gaps in the grey blanket that enshrouded us.

I think it is time to go all the way on the question of reality, to conclude that all reality is good.

(Even, in a certain context, the great, grey, gloppy blanket is understandable, is good. I'll put it this way: it is good that we have this challenge.)

Our descendants will look back to our time with two kinds of wonder. (They will come and ask us about it, if we solve the immortality question fast enough.) First, they will wonder that we could endure the difficulty of our lives. They will be amazed at our heroism, that we managed to function so well under the tremendous burden of our distress, that we

managed to get re-emergence going against this waterfall of restimulated distress that had rained upon us all our lives.

The other wonder will be kind of an envious one. They will look back wistfully and think, "Oh, to have been Great Grandma, who lived in that period when the sun finally came up, when humanity finally found itself." They will think of us as the most fortunate of beings in that sense, that we got to be there when things changed. They will enjoy all the goodness, but they will, I'm sure, think that they miss a certain vividness from the contrast. They will think back to us with honor and respect, but also with envy.

This is our opportunity. We get to be here during the big change. We get to take part [participate] in it. Our descendants will tell their grandchildren with great pride, "Your ancestors did something." Pride in family is not a negative thing. It's been misused, but it is not a negative thing.

Reality is good. The fact that the distress happened, that the great, grey blanket covered us for these two or three million years or whatever time we have been human, apparently was inevitable. Our best thinking so far is that the past was inevitable. It is the same as saying that it happened. We've understood that. So it will turn out to have had some purpose, some usefulness, in spite of the destruction of life that it seems we could mourn forever if we look at it now, while it is taking place.

Mourning the death of people is partly a viewpoint question, too. I offer another viewpoint.

continued . . .



LANCE CABLK

COUNSELING PRACTICE

... continued

This comes up when you start to deal with fears. When we scorn fears, we repeatedly come up against the fear of death; and we have many practical examples of people who have faced death many times who no longer fear it. They may still feel some patterns pull at them, for example, patterns inviting them to death, but we only need to help each other a little bit to get rid of those recordings of long-ago times when death seemed like a way out from distress.

From a better point of view, what's so terrible about death? I felt I was plunging into it just two or three years ago, as you know. I made earnest efforts to try to shore up [get into good condition] my theoretical legacy so it wouldn't be all dissipated by patterns disturbing it after I was gone. Yet I wasn't very afraid of death. I was afraid of patterns taking over [taking control of] my work, of my work being made somewhat meaningless, and of humanity as a whole not making it [not surviving and succeeding] because I hadn't accomplished enough, because I hadn't hung my hook high enough on the wall. That was my fear at the time.

We've learned that people who have faced death, who have never heard anything about counseling, nevertheless manage to discharge the fear of death. They never learn to like it (liking death is always a patterned thing), but they don't fear or respect it. They could look it in the eye with fairly relaxed confidence.



AMANDA MARTINEZ

WINNER OF A GREAT PRIZE

If I were to die suddenly, would that be a terrible tragedy? From the old, patterned viewpoint, one could always choose to mourn forever. The reality of the situation is that IT'S SUPERLATIVELY WONDERFUL THAT I HAVE HAD A CHANCE TO BE ALIVE.

I am a complex of matter, energy, space, and time. I am a chunk of the universe. Now, there are a very large number of different chunks of the universe, untold trillions of trillions of umptillions. You and I and all other living creatures (including that carpenter ant that is running across the floor in front of us), among the countless more numerous other chunks of the universe, won in a great lottery. We won the great prize: we got the chance to be alive. The odds are enormously against any particular chunk of the universe ever getting to be alive, enormously against it.

The chances are just incalculably large against any particular chunk of the universe ever getting a chance to be alive, but we did. We won that big lottery. Nothing that ever could happen after that could really dim that tremendous good fortune. Think of the wealth that came our way. We are fortunate beyond belief. If we had been alive for only one instant, and that instant spent in agony, it would be far better than never to have been alive at all.

There have been other lotteries. Certainly one could be content to rest on that first good fortune, but there have been other lotteries in which the prizes were incredibly rich.

Among all the living things that won the prizes that admitted them to that first great plateau of being alive, only a relatively small number ever won the second sweepstakes,

won the chance to think, got the chance to be intelligent. Who won those prizes? Good morning, Grand Prize Winners. We won the chance to think. That can never be taken away from us. We have thought. If a meteor in this next instant squashes me into a bloody, downward-trend mess, piled here on the asphalt tile, what tragedy is that? *I have been alive. I have thought.* This is the real viewpoint.

AWARENESS

There are even more advanced prizes. Among those of us living things who got a chance to be human, to be intelligent, vast numbers have been so hungry and mistreated from the very beginning, so much in pain from poor environments, that they have never had the slack to be aware, to enjoy this higher function that buds off from our intelligence. Most humans to date have never had the chance of noticing what is really going on [happening], of thinking about thinking while thinking. They never got a chance to do that.

We did. Every one of us in this room, for sure, has had at least one moment of being aware of the nature of the universe. Perhaps we looked into the heart of a flower and began to shake, but we got that glimpse before the fear closed in on us again. Perhaps we had a brilliant thought and went skipping for joy for a few minutes at realizing we had thoughts. All of us here actually have increasingly frequent moments and increasingly larger stretches of awareness. What could possibly justify any discouragement when viewed against this tremendous series of good fortunes?

MEANINGFULNESS

There is another kind of opportunity that has occurred infrequently. A few people, among all the people who have ever lived, got a chance to

play a meaningful role in relation to their existence and to the existence of other humans. Perhaps, like Horatius, they stood at the bridge and held off the Etruscans. A little corporal from Corsica managed to move armies all over Europe like chess pieces. A Newton managed to be a great scientist. All these endeavors were great achievements, and the people who did them have intuitively been esteemed by all humans. We know whom we honor when we choose to esteem a Buddha, a Mohammed, a Christ, a Newton, a Marie Curie. We say, "That one made a difference." (Sometimes we ask, "How did he or she do it?" out of the depths of our acquired discouragement.)

Well, we've already won to that position. Each person in this room has around her or around him a group of people who feel, correctly, that her or his existence and activities have been meaningful to them in a deep, human way. Another big prize already won.

Another viewpoint, another choice. If you had a choice of how you were going to be meaningful, would you choose to determine the laws of planetary motion or choose to lead humanity out of its distress? Would you choose to lead armies across Europe or choose to help people regain a glimpse of their inherent greatness and of the possibilities still before them and put the tools in their hands to achieve those possibilities?

I don't think there is much question which you would choose. I don't think there is much question which Napoleon or Newton would choose. If they had our chance, and if they could see past whatever patterns they were saddled with (and they both had a lot of them), I don't think there is any question that they would opt for our opportunity as being far more glorious, far more significant,



LIAM GEARY-BAULCH

far more meaningful than what they had a chance to do.

INCREDIBLY FORTUNATE

We are already there. We have successfully won the grand prizes in five successive lotteries, at least. Nothing can take that away from us. We have it.

Can we lose sight of it? Yes, we can still allow the great grey, gloomy curtain to be pulled down over our eyes. I have allowed it, and recently. Yet more and more of the time, including right now, I remember and remind you. Can you remember and remind each other and other people? I think so.

The nature of reality is beautiful. We know by now "with complete confidence" (I'll use that phrase instead of "scientifically-proven" because that is so cluttered with patterns that one can't tell [perceive] what it means), we know now with complete confidence that human beings are good; that they do no evil, destructive deeds except in the grip of distress patterns that were put on them from outside. We know by now, from glimpses and from logic, that human beings are powerful, that each human being has full power to remake the whole "sorry scheme of

things entire," because other humans will come to that one's support the minute that one makes the correct, powerful move. We know by now that human beings are intelligent, that the brightest intelligences that we have seen operate were only samplings of the intelligence that each one of us and each other human possesses, were only holes poked in the grey blanket covering individuals.

We know by now that humans are cooperative, that the competition and the conflict are all imposed patterns. We know this is true of us.

We see that all other forms of life that have any safe opportunity to become acquainted with us lean toward us and seek us out in some intuitive way, sensing that we are the inherently benign, wiser, and better-equipped older brothers and sisters.

(Some of you may have been at the workshop near Poughkeepsie [New York, USA] when a woman told us how she had remembered in her session that morning that, when she was a little girl, she used to go out in the woods and hold out her hands and wait, and birds would come and perch on her hand. She had forgotten this for all those years, but it came back to her in her session, and in her free time that afternoon she went out in the woods. She reported that she had held out her hand and tried to think about the birds in the old way. She said, "I must have still been making some of the wrong signals, because he didn't dare perch, but he came up within a foot of my hand, and you could tell that he wanted to perch.")

We have many indications of this. Any animal that we are not playing a destructive pattern at seeks us out and regards us benignly (within the limits of the predator or self-defense heritage, or the stinging and biting in the case of insects).

continued . . .



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OLYMPIC PENINSULA, WASHINGTON, USA • DIANE SHISK

Is this Universe safe? It operates on certain laws that have been operating for a long time. Does this Universe suit us? Are we strangers in a strange land, trying frantically to survive in a hostile alien environment? Nonsense. Three billion years at least have gone by since the first appearance of life; and that first blob of protoplasm, divided now into the thirty trillion blobs of protoplasm that comprise our cellular structure, has been continuously alive or we wouldn't be alive now at all.

We've had at least three billion years of the finest tuning and sanding and polishing and adjusting and honing for us to fit this exact Universe exquisitely. The processes of the Universe, whether they are mainly natural selection or random selection, have been operating on us, evolving us to be exactly the benign, loving, comfortable, delighted, excited caretakers of this Universe. The Universe has been prepared; and we have been prepared in it to be the gardeners of this Eden, to be the shepherds of this great flock of life.

This has to be the reality, even though when caught in distress we may be able only to see the ugly pseudo-reality. Behind the grey, globby guck is bright reality.

The pseudo-reality, which has covered everything so thickly, only exists because of patterns. Only the distress patterns of human beings maintain it. It does evolve a super-structure. Destructive wars, racism, oppression of all sorts, pollution, misuse of the environment are carried on by this grey globby superstructure, but it is

nourished only by patterns; it arises only out of human distress patterns.

Is it still dangerous once we understand this? Yes. Most human beings die from patterns. They never get a chance to die naturally even at the present rate of natural mortality, if there is such a thing, and there may well be. The patterns knock them off [kill them] first. It's dangerous, it's destructive, but its only source is the distress that we have the tools to do away with [eliminate].

It must be dealt with. Attempts that have intuitively been made before to deal with it by pretense, or by retiring to the mountaintop to meditate and think good thoughts so all will be well, didn't work so well. The approach of proclaiming that all is truth and error doesn't exist was reaching for the reality behind the grey guck, but reaching for it by pretense hasn't worked.

Short-term, we must look at the structure of the grey, globby pseudo-reality and treat it as a threat that has to be dealt with skillfully. There is no question of ignoring it. Long-range, do we need to respect it? No. Mao [Mao Zedong] said, "You must respect the enemy tactically even if the enemy is a paper tiger. Short-term, the enemy is dangerous. Don't be foolish. Strategically, the enemy deserves nothing but your contempt. Long-range, the enemy has no future."

We must look underneath the crust of pseudo-reality: deep reality is everlasting and pure and shining and nourishing and beneficent and

benign. The temporarily dangerous crust covering it, composed of patterns and oppression and misinformation, is shallow.

Could pseudo-reality knock us all the way back to the level of bacteria? Yes, it is possible for patterns to set off enough missiles that the planet will be nearly sterilized and only bacteria, or about that level of life, will survive.

Is this very discouraging? I don't think so. At the very least we will have had this glorious million years of existence as humans. The earth has already been refilled several times with beautiful forms of life. The bacteria will start mutating, will agglutinate into little clusters of cells that will learn to cooperate with each other, and the upward trend will begin again. The upward trend will not be defeated even if we goof [make a mistake]. The conveyor belt under our feet is sure. This is what I think religions have tried to say when they have said, "The Kingdom of God is sure."

If life gets set back to the bacteria level and we've lost this opportunity to become functionally fully human, the upward trend will continue and brighter intelligences will one day arise again. Learning from the traces of our mistakes, they undoubtedly won't make those mistakes the next time.

Of course, it would be nice not to have to do all that over again. Let's grasp our present splendid opportunity to eliminate distress entirely and become fully ourselves.

Facts about Psychiatric Drugs

The following are five facts about psychiatric drugs:

1) Psychiatric drugs damage the body. They make people numb, passive, and disconnected from their emotions as well as from other people. This is especially true of the drugs given to people in mental hospitals.

2) Psychiatric drugs block access to the inherent healing process (crying, laughing, trembling, and raging)—our natural way of recovering from emotional and physical hurts. And because they keep people from paying attention to and connecting with others, they keep them from the resource they need to use the healing process.

3) Psychiatric drugs don't help people even if they seem to. There is no biologically based "mental illness." People naturally recover from hurts by using the natural healing processes described above. When they don't get to do this, hurt feelings pile up. Then people end up saying and doing things that are based on past distresses, that don't fit the present circumstances. That is why they are often labeled "mentally ill." When people take psychiatric drugs, they can appear to be fine and may seem to function—for example, at work. However, they haven't resolved the difficulties they were facing when they started taking the drugs. Their original confusing distress is still there, covered over by the drugs. They become numb to whatever problems were bothering them—problems that will likely resurface. They may look better but have difficulty thinking deeply or well.

4) Psychiatric drugs are invalidating. They disconnect people from their own power. Taking them, especially for a long time, makes people feel that they need them to function, that they have no natural way to help themselves.

5) A lot of money is made from selling psychiatric drugs. Drug corporations are some of the wealthiest corporations in existence. They make people believe that they need the drugs in order to function when in fact the drugs make them less and less functional. Then people feel like they need more and more drugs.

Janet Foner
International Liberation Reference Person
for "Mental Health" Liberation
New Cumberland, Pennsylvania, USA
(Janet died on July 24, 2019)

Looking

I am looking
I am doing it
Again

Looking for evidence
That I am good

That you are good

That I am smart
That I am loved
That I am likable
That I am connected
That my love is effective
That my caring is noticed
That my thinking is sharp
That my humor is clever
because it makes you laugh

That we are the same

What I do and say sometimes
Confuses me
What you do and say sometimes
Confuses me
But even so
I know better
I know
I bear hurt
And so
I must cry
Cry all my days
The truth flows to me
On the stream of tears

Oh

Of course
I am good
Of course
We are the same
Silly me

Gregg Wagner
Sunnyside, New York, USA



Facing the Challenge of Play



This July I attended the South, Central, and West Asian and North African Liberation Workshop. On Saturday afternoon we took time for play.

I have not been about play [been interested in play] since I was eight years old. Up to then, play was easy, with one pal or another. We would let go and permit anything and everything to happen. I would be present and relaxed.

Free play disappeared from my life when sports entered in. Then everything was about rules and doing things right. I was not skilled at sports, but if I put in time and practiced, I could manage okay and keep the other boys from being harsh in my direction. Society had given me an assignment and shown me the consequences if I shirked it. I set to [embarked on] the task and became competent at sports.

On occasion I felt exhilaration, but that was a matter of success—either my own or, especially, my team's. Play was now competition and dead serious [completely serious].

At the workshop we played a game from India, a version of chase. We were eleven people, including two men: Bishu and me. I seemed unable to learn the rules. And it appeared to me that Bishu, too, had trouble learning them.

A panic set in [developed] in me, and perhaps in Bishu too. The game meant competition, and the stakes were high. As males we were on the spot [under pressure]. We had better acquire skill, and fast. Oh—one more thing (which I'd learned in adulthood): we had better not be overbearing.

Meanwhile, Bishu and I did not know what we were doing. I, at least, could not think. I went through the motions and was pulled to appear skilled—and also nonchalant about it all (“cool”).

It felt as if things would go wrong, and more wrong, the longer we failed to understand the rules. So we did speak up, in some moments anyhow, about not knowing what we were doing. We swallowed our pride and asked. But all the while I felt that we were not catching on [understanding] and could not catch on. How could we, if we could not think?

I can't say I was having fun.

Yet some contradiction [to distress] was available. I got hints that play need not be a matter of life-or-death seriousness. No one disgraced me or banished me from the game, or Bishu either. The females who were playing seemed engaged and in the moment—an inspiration that this was possible.

As I continue to try to play—rather, as I continue to play—I'll regain my young pre-sports self. It's all toward my re-emergence.

Meanwhile, fun awaits.



Michael Hatem

Falmouth, Maine, USA

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

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Talking to a Young Person about Sex and Pornography

ILANA JOY STREIT

I am writing this with help from my son. He is sitting right next to me. He is eleven. This is a little about what we have done together on the topic of sex and pornography.

We do a lot of things about bodies. We always have. One year at Thanksgiving (my mother, step-father, brother, and sister are all in RC), my son and his cousins got all of us laughing and doing the “butt dance,” right at the dinner table. We did it for an hour and a half. It was brilliant leadership on their part, and a great session for all.

I had been shy about talking to my son about sex. Finally I did enough discharging that I thought I could get my tone right. He and I ended up having three different conversations. We went slowly together through the best book on sex we could find and laughed, and he asked questions.

He told me that boys in his class for the last year and a half had been joking more and more about sex and penises and sometimes girls’ bodies. He said that he thought it was stupid but had also laughed with them. Mostly the tone hadn’t been harsh when they’d talked about women and girls, yet.

He was starting to use the computer a little more on his own, so I did an Internet search. I typed the word “sex” and was astonished at what came up. His dad and I quickly put parental settings on everything. I have an iPhone, and we had to take the built-in application for YouTube off of it. The way the application was set up, you could only choose a medium-security setting. (I am sure that was intentional.) So we had to take it off all the way. It was not easy.

I decided to talk to my son about the images before he found them. I said that they were meant to trick people into things and make money off of people’s loneliness and that they were particularly aimed at men and boys. He and I often talk about how boys are separated from each other, and from everyone, and are “supposed to” not show they care about anything. When we put pornography in that context, it all made sense. He understands how capitalism functions. We talked about how pornography is all about making profit. Having the bigger picture was helpful to him.

I also told him that sex is good and nice and fun and that he is go-

ing to enjoy it and use it as a way to be very connected to another person. I also said that he will enjoy it even more if these images are not in his mind. I told him how much I love him and don’t want anything to get in the way of his being connected to any person, especially a woman.

We talked through different scenarios—like what if he accidentally saw some pornography, or some friends wanted to show him some and he didn’t understand that that was what they were doing. We agreed that we would stay really close, and talk about this a lot.

I haven’t told him any details of the harshness of the images, and I won’t. I have told him that they are scary and that I know of a young person in RC who has been discharging for years about some images she saw by accident.

He may never see them, but that is unlikely. At the moment he is not drawn to them, but that may change. I just want him to be prepared. We talk about everything—why not this?

Anonymous
USA

Reclaiming Creativity

Below are some comments about a Reclaiming Creativity Gather-in led by Cynthia Johnston in Melbourne, Victoria, Australia:

Cynthia said many great things about childhood hurts, like isolation and ridicule, that shape artists' oppression. I approached a "safe harbor" in which I could recall how I had been ridiculed and humiliated when I said something an authority figure didn't care for [like].

I am not alone. I have fellow artists in RC. I have allies on the journey to re-emergence.

Luise Zanthyr
Coburg, Victoria, Australia

What Cynthia said about all of us being born with the ability to come up with [think of] fresh, new ideas and to make things, on our own [alone] or with others, resonated with me. I love creating with others. It's my most fun way of being together—whether it be with songs or skits, an RC workshop, culinary delights, or being with my clients at work.

Yehudit Koadlow
Caulfield, Victoria, Australia

I see a strong parallel between reclaiming creativity and doing RC family work. All of us, especially creators, benefit from relaxed attention from counselors and allies who can be with us not only when we show our brilliance but also when we are hesitant, unsure, undecided, and at risk of acting on feeling discouraged. The same "special time" skills that young people need are just what artists need for themselves.

You who play that splendid chord
who wield that patient brush
who dance that daring dance
who try a "perfect" page
who mould a close-curved clay
who hurl your caution in the air
& risk a crushing crashing
below a netless swing

You lift us up
You make us whole
You soothe our souls
You prod our too-proud
consciences covered all
in certainty and reasons.

You trip the light exquisite
and leave nothing for yourself
except redemption.

Rowan White
North Fitzroy, Victoria, Australia
Reprinted from the newsletter of the
Melbourne, Victoria, Australia, RC Community



CHEESE, IN THE NETHERLANDS • DIANE SHISK

From a Heterosexual Husband of Asian Heritage

I made a mistake in my marriage that I have been struggling to clean up. I have also been trying to be there for my wife, who's been struggling with her own feelings about my mistake.

GROUPS FOR ASIAN-HERITAGE HUSBANDS

I've been convening topic groups at workshops for Asian-heritage (or Global Majority) husbands. I start off the groups with, "I am struggling in my marriage, made a big mistake, and don't know what to do."

The following questions have built safety and helped us to think about each other: Why did you decide to get married? Why did you choose your partner? What's going well in your marriage? What's hard in your marriage?

When there is time and safety has been established, some more advanced questions have also been useful: Where does your and your wife's early material [distress] get hooked and make it hard for both of you to think? What are your class, race, and religious backgrounds, and how do they affect your marriage? How often do you have sex? Who initiates sex, and what gets in the way of talking about what you want?

Here's what I have noticed as I've done this work:

- Asian husbands are so good! I am falling in love with us. With each story I hear, it only becomes clearer how good and wonderful we are.
- Many of us who were born outside the United States, or are first-generation to the United States, were subjected as young

boys to violence at the hands of our parents, more often our fathers. Some of us witnessed violence or other overt harshness between our parents.

- In some of the families I knew in Asia or that immigrated to the United States, there was little or no pretense about sexism. In my family, my father often called my mother "stupid" and "small-minded." He got mad at her for making mistakes and humiliated her in front of us and others. As a boy I hated him for that.

- Being a "model minority" and "doing as expected" (from Asian internalized oppression) can keep me trying to be a "good husband"—especially trying to avoid doing what I witnessed between my parents. Without discharge, this means that I try to not let my material show, which keeps me separate from my wife and from other husbands.

RE-EVALUATIONS

Here are some of my re-evaluations:

The Closeness Laboratory

The expectations for and safety in a committed relationship open up many opportunities for my wife and me to get close and undo our hurts. Whether we're aware of it or not, our minds are constantly trying to find ways to get closer and receive attention for where in the past we didn't get enough or we gave up after being defeated. Even when we are "going away" in our minds, we are trying to figure out something that will bring us closer and hoping that someone will finally come after us [lovingly pursue us] no matter what [whatever happens].

As I discharge, I am gaining more slack and experimenting with ways to shift our relationship and get closer. It's like a laboratory in which I keep trying things, inside and outside of Co-Counseling sessions. The expectation that my wife won't give up on me easily if I make a mistake, and the recognition that she is who I have chosen to spend the most hours of my life with, encourages me to invest my mind and time in trying to get closer.

The Contradiction of Marriage

The many oppressive and constricting parts of marriage—sexism, men's oppression, isolation (including heterosexual couples being left alone), parents' oppression, expectations related to sex, and so on—are hard on our relationship. And as a heterosexual man I have the early isolation that tells me that my only true connection can be with a female who is or will become my lifelong partner—a set-up for disappointment and even blame.

I have found it useful in a Co-Counseling session to go back with my wife to my young self and tell the little one, "I am sorry it is so hard and lonely. One day she will come and love you so much that she will commit to spending the rest of her life with you, even though it is hard for her at times." I find it useful to discharge on the contradiction [to distress] that my wife provides, as it has been easy not to notice, even after twenty-two years of marriage, that I actually have someone!

Being My Wife's Counselor

We men want nothing less than for our wives to get out from under all the sexism, early and current,

continued . . .

COUNSELING PRACTICE

... continued

that they have experienced. Yet because I feel close to and safe with my wife, I make my biggest mistakes in her direction. This hurts her in the present, and it also restimulates her earlier hurts from sexism. While I need to clean up, reduce, and eliminate my mistakes, I can also work to be my wife's best counselor on sexism.

It's taken me a long time to stop trying to be "good" so as not to upset her. I have tried to be good partly in an effort to make up for [compensate for] my father's treatment of my mother, but mainly because my mother would leave, or threaten to leave, whenever she felt hurt by my father's sexism. My wife has wanted to have huge raging sessions about what happened to her as a young female and hasn't been able to do that with me as long as I have been so scared of losing her. To help her move forward in her re-emergence, I have had to work on how I feared losing my mother when my mother was upset.

Also, it's been hard for me to be my wife's counselor when she is talking about my sexism. My twin sister died in the womb, and my mother almost died when I was born. These things happened long before I ever heard of sexism, but later feelings about sexism got attached to them. "You killed your twin sister and almost killed your mom" is what I've felt when my wife or other women have talked about my sexism. No wonder I haven't been able to listen! It has taken a lot of deep discharge to untangle my feeling that it was my sexism that caused the females around me to get hurt—that I was to blame because I was male.

It has been hopeful to develop more attention in this area and to watch my wife use it. A few weeks ago she lightly punched me in the stomach because I had stood very

near to her when she'd been upset about something having to do with me. It was the first time I had been able to do that, and the first time I had seen her land a punch [hit someone] in the twenty-five years I had known her. We've gone on to have more physical sessions in which I hold firm when she's angry and she uses my attention and strength to rage more.



SUE YOSHIWARA

Vulnerability versus Domination

Given my early conditioning as a boy, it's scary for me to feel or show vulnerability. I act this out in my marriage by not noticing or calling attention to where I feel hurt. The distress recording is "I am fine." But every so often I suddenly act mean to my wife. I start feeling resentful of and victimized by her, and to avoid feeling vulnerable or wronged, I act out my domination patterns and try to "squash" her—again following my training as a male.

I have found it useful to discharge on how I was targeted early in my

life for showing my hurts. And when I feel hurt, I am learning to notice it and clumsily say to my wife, "That hurts my feelings." It's a lot easier for her to hear and understand than my trying to squash her! And in response, she has been able to show kindness and understanding.

Complete Adoration

A useful policy for me has been to decide that—no matter what my wife is doing, even if it is based in distress—if I am not completely adoring her, it is because of my own distresses. This policy has given me many opportunities to reach for mini-sessions, discharge, and re-evaluate! It has also made my time with my wife much more enjoyable. And it's a strong foundation from which I can take firm positions against her distresses in a way in which she knows I am on her side. It seems to give her a good base from which to work.

Sex

We all receive many messages and have many expectations about sex and marriage. How much or how little sex are married couples supposed to have at different stages? How much should sex matter? What's exciting, and what's not? And so on. As a male I've found it interesting to think and discharge about how to balance who initiates sex, what is going on [happening] with my wife when she doesn't show any interest in it for long periods, and how to be more present during sex. Doing this has led to a big change in our sex life. I am also more able to resist the pull to masturbate, look at pornography, or think about other women in sexual ways.

"Nikola Tesla"
USA

Reprinted from the RC e-mail discussion lists for leaders of men and for leaders of East and Southeast Asian- and Pacific Islander-heritage people

Pakikinigang Magkapwa Listening Together to Build RC

Building RC in the Islands of the Pacific continues! Two of us returned to the Philippines in May of this year—following up on last year’s trip, when six of us went. (See July 2018 *Present Time*.)

We want to get the theory, practice, and tools of RC to as many people as possible in as deep a way as possible. This time we stayed in the Philippines for two weeks and met with ten organizations and more than a hundred individuals—in their homes, in their communities, and on the streets of Metro Manila. What an eye-opening, fulfilling, and challenging trip it was!

BUILDING AN RC COMMUNITY

One of our goals is to build an RC Community in the Philippines. There is already a group of committed Co-Counselors with whom we’ve had contact via an online class. Our trip was a milestone for them. They stretched themselves to take on organizing and leadership roles and worked closely with each other to share RC with people they knew.

They also joined us at our Sustaining All Life and United to End Racism events and got to see that RC is about building relationships with everybody, including the masses of urban poor and working-class people.

Given the harsh, critical parts of the culture and the fears of “doing it wrong” (all effects of colonization and racism), it was a new idea to them that they could be pleased with themselves and that we were pleased with them. Also, that there was no punishment. (For a mostly Catholic population, that is quite a contradiction [to distress]!)

REACHING BROADLY

Another of our goals is to bring RC to people who may not yet be ready to be in a Co-Counseling Community. We want to support people who are leading in their communities (including those who may not yet see themselves as leaders).

This trip was different from our previous ones. We wanted to get a bigger picture of the economic, political, and social landscape. We arrived at an opportune time—two days before International Workers’ Day (an annual celebration that includes thousands of people marching in the streets) and two weeks before the national elections.

We immersed ourselves in people’s day-to-day lives and learned a lot in one-on-one meetings; in small groups (that sometimes turned into impromptu support groups); and in larger groups, like Sustaining All Life workshops and some rallies at the People Power Monument in Manila. We wanted to get the biggest picture possible of what was happening in the Philippines—and we got it!

OUR INTENT AND APPROACH

Both of us have roots in the Philippines. AL was born there, and Teresa’s father was born and raised there. AL’s first language is Tagalog, and we both are fluent English speakers. We are aware that as USers we are from one of the many countries that have colonized the Islands.

Our intent was to have two-way exchanges with people. We wanted to learn from them as well as share about ourselves. We wanted to reclaim our connection with our people, with awareness of how we had been separated by different experiences and conditions.

We also came ready to listen, listen, listen. In our two- to three-hour meetings, we listened ninety percent of the time. We shared RC theory simply and mostly tried to give people the experience of it. We offered mini-sessions and group counseling whenever possible. People seemed to learn the most when we showed them what we were talking about.

Many people in the Philippines carry a deep sense of insignificance because of the oppression and internalized oppression from living in a colonized country.

continued . . .



KENDALL KATWALK, WASHINGTON, USA • KATIE KAUFFMAN

... continued

They feel like they don't matter and like they are not smart. But in every interaction, we saw our people's intelligence, power, and ability to cooperate.

TWO IDEAS WE SHARED

In addition to basic RC theory, we consistently shared two key ideas:

1. There is a connection between the impacts of oppression (in particular colonization, racism, genocide, and sexism) and the climate crisis. The Philippines is a frontline nation. It has been ravaged and forced into being one of the nations that is most vulnerable to the climate crisis. We have to take on [undertake] ending oppression at the same time that we tackle the degradation of the environment. People understood this right away.

2. The big challenges we face require building a worldwide movement of people who are working together. This means first building a united movement in the Philippines—an idea most people don't talk about.

We held out that the people of the Philippines could work together across longstanding lines of division. We heard about people's personal experiences—with movements that had splintered and how the harshness of colonization, war, racism, and other oppressions had played itself out [been acted out]. People had been brutalized by people they had once worked closely with. Some had even been killed.

We said that it is possible to heal from the hurts and that doing so is essential if we are to move forward. People's discouragement and hopelessness showed. It was a radical idea to them that unity is possible and there's no such thing as a human enemy. Talking about the healing work between people and organizations that we ourselves had done provided an opening.

HEARING FROM THE FRONTLINES

Things have moved rapidly in the Islands since our previous trip, and we gained an intimate and detailed understanding of how the climate crisis and economic and political hardship have impacted people's lives. We got a deeper sense of their ability (and inability) to think under oppressive conditions, and how they are acting to change them.

We met with eight leaders of a national women's organization that organizes in poor urban communities in Metro Manila. They talked about not having a stable place to live and barely surviving extreme flooding during Typhoon Ondoy, in 2009. They face daily harassment from the police, who threaten to bulldoze their homes as part of the administration's "reclamation" program. Under the guise of cleaning up Manila Bay as part of a climate change initiative, the administration is forcing poor urban communities to relocate, so it can build malls and internationally themed villages to draw in tourists. This "clean up" is an attack on poor communities. If it keeps moving forward, it will affect over 270,000 people. We listened to the women for two hours and set up a support group in which we introduced mini-sessions and counseled each woman in front of the group.

We had a meeting with the director of a national coalition of a hundred and fifty climate justice organizations. The coalition organizes Indigenous people, women, workers, farmers, fisherfolk, youth, urban poor people, Catholics, and Protestants throughout the country. The need for a coalition had become clear with the increasing frequency of super typhoons and the thousands of people being killed or displaced by the climate crisis. Also, the government has been contracting with foreign investors to build dams on Indigenous lands. If the government can't pay back the loans, it will give the investors ownership of entire Philippine islands. We shared our theory, tools,



AL CABALLES

and vision with the director. He had been a leader in the progressive movement since the 1970s and witnessed many conflicts within organizations and movements. He supported our vision of unity and encouraged us.



We also returned for a second year to Lobo, Batangas (AL's hometown), and organized a Sustaining All Life forum for twenty poor rural farmers and fisherfolk who live and work in nearby *mga barangay* (neighborhoods). We sang songs and played games and then asked them about their living conditions, livelihoods, and what changes they had noticed in their environment.

They opened up a little about the harshness and grind of rural life, including their difficulties in obtaining food and work. They shared how changing wind directions, rising sea levels, and hotter weather during odd times of the year have impacted their families. They also shared hopeful stories—like how the local government is implementing environmental programs, such as building artificial coral reefs that are bringing back fish and helping to supplement people's incomes and food. As the forum went on, we noticed how coming together was a contradiction to the participants' feelings of insignificance. We cared about them and were interested in their stories. That meant a lot to them, and to us.

It was good to be in our homeland listening to frontline communities. We saw in people's eyes the impact of genocide, colonization, imperialism, racism, militarization, sexism, and the climate crisis. We had to discharge multiple times every day to be able to think and to hold on to our vision of full liberation for our people. But at night we slept well—exhausted and pleased that we had shared our love and caring and remembered our people's significance in the midst of oppressive conditions. In spite of the harshness, they are still fighting, still persisting. They are not defeated.

SUPPORT, AND FUTURE PLANS

Much encouragement and support has come from many local RC Communities in both Asia and the United States. Co-Counselors have been able to tell [see] that it benefits their re-emergence to back [support] efforts like ours.

Our plan is to extend our project throughout the Pacific Islands. We know that it's a long-term effort, and from what we've learned of the changing condi-

tions, we know that we need to move forward as quickly as we can.

We'll have many opportunities to stay in touch with our contacts. One of them comes to the United States for meetings at the United Nations. Another has invited us to do workshops with women leaders in her national organization when we return to the Philippines. We'll also see people at climate change conferences—for example, the New York (USA) Climate Action Summit and the yearly United Nations conferences on climate change. And we'll return to the Islands as regularly as we can.

OUR OWN RE-EMERGENCE

This trip was also about our personal re-emergence. We did things that transformed us. And with two weeks of traveling, meeting, thinking, organizing, counseling, and living together, it was remarkable that we managed not to kill each other! The trip brought out the best in us. We were thoughtful of each other, laughed until our bellies ached, and enjoyed being in good company. Reflecting on it, it looks like our big vision for our people might also apply to ourselves.

Teresa Enrico

*International Liberation Reference Person for
Pacific Islander and Pilipino/a-Heritage People
Seattle, Washington, USA*

*and Ana Liza (AL) Caballes
Elmhurst, Queens, New York, USA*

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

You can send corrections to
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Thanks very much!

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● ● ● ● ● Parents Leading Parents Outside of RC ● ● ● ● ●

Recently Marya Axner, the International Liberation Reference Person for Parents, led a workshop Parents Leading Parents Outside of RC.

We were thirty-three parents—from Israel, Wales, England, Canada, and the United States. We were immigrant parents, parents of the Global Majority, Indigenous parents, Jewish parents, LGBTQ parents, working-class parents.

Groups that met during the workshop included parents eliminating white racism, parent allies to Jews, dads, parents who work in the “mental health” field, parents of children with special needs, parents of adopted children, parents of teens, parents leading parents on climate change, parents leading parents in their children’s schools, parents bringing family work to the wide world.

We looked at how parents’ oppression intersects with racism, anti-immigrant oppression, and anti-Jewish oppression. And Marya kept holding out that we must not let anything divide us.

She talked about Israel and did a demonstration with an Israeli parent that showed the effects of war and isolation on parents raising their children in Israel.

We looked at the climate crisis. We thought about how and at what age we should share information about it with our children and how to follow their minds and let them stay in charge as they take action. Marya held out that the future of the world

rests on each of us being able to tell [see] how significant we are.

Regarding leading parents outside of RC, Marya talked about holding out policy. When we bring RC to the world, we bring (1) ourselves, our love and caring, and our ability to build good relationships; (2) our understanding of listening and the discharge process; and (3) good policy. She said that at this stage in the collapse of society, people need policy and guidelines. They need a new framework for understanding the world—because the current frameworks aren’t working, and they are hungry for what will work.

She talked about how as parents we hold out policy, guidelines,

and limits for our children all the time. When we do this, they have something to bump up against and discharge off of to find their thinking. And we figure out how to stay and listen to them. We need to do something similar in the wide world. We need to put forward our thinking and policy and then stay when people don’t agree with us.

Marya talked about the resilience we’ve acquired in dealing with attacks. Our children get mad at us and take sessions at us all the time—in the places where we feel the worst about ourselves—and we take our feelings about that to sessions. It is the best possible training for dealing with attacks in the wide world.

Marya reminded us that we are big and make a huge difference. We need to get our voices as parents, and what we know as parents, out into the world.

At the workshop I battled with feeling insignificant. But for the first time I could connect the feeling with parents’ oppression and the ways we’ve been invisible and not valued in society. Knowing our significance will move everything forward.

Leaving the workshop, I saw more clearly than ever how important it is to see ourselves as big and significant, as agents of communication and change—particularly now.

Rachel Landsberg
New York, New York, USA
Reprinted from the RC
e-mail discussion list
for leaders of parents



HAWAII, USA • TIM JACKINS

The 2019 Ghana Teachers' and Leaders' Workshop

The 2019 Ghana Teachers' and Leaders' Workshop, led by Chioma Okonkwo, was indeed a great workshop. The leader took me through the process of re-emergence in a way that I hadn't experienced before. Other high points were the classes on climate change and on healing from war.

I've resolved to plant a tree in my locality and to help clean up the environment around me. I would like to give a talk on climate change for my church youth ministry. I'd also like to build an RC Community in my area and pass on what I have learnt in my seven years in RC.



Gare Lawson
Accra, Ghana

Chioma talked about how we get hurt and that no matter how long the pain has been there, we need to let it go by discharging it. Some of her other topics included benign reality, the difference between real and frozen needs, and confidentiality.

Erick Holmes, the Accra (Ghana) Alternate Area Reference Person, talked about war. He said that no one hurts another person unless he or she has first been hurt. Some root causes of war are profiting, greed, fear, and capitalism. War in Africa is incited by bigger nations to get us to fight with each other (with guns we purchase from them). Then they steal our resources.

Urbain Bamana, the Area Reference Person for Accra, spoke about climate change. He advised us all to do what we can to save our environment. Since the workshop I have reduced my use of nylon and plastics. I have gone back to using my water bottle.

Ekua Forson
Accra, Ghana



PERSIMMONS • MARTHA HAYMAKER

At the workshop I realized that most of the insects, weeds, and grasses I used to see when I was growing up are no more in the environment. Also, we would play football in the street gutters, but I don't think people will do that anymore. I don't think parents will allow their children to play there because the gutters are filthy now.

I'm going to use my position in the community to influence people. I will talk to them about the environment. It's going to start with me.

Richard Nunoo
Accra, Ghana



Contradicting Fear

A very useful contradiction [to distress] that I did not recognize until about a year ago is to express the fear or terror cheerfully and enthusiastically (as always, words may not be enough; it may require cheerful facial expressions and a cheerful tone of voice).

Just as deliberately exhibiting embarrassment brings laughter discharge because it contradicts the almost universal pseudo-dignity concealment that we have attached to our embarrassment patterns, so acting cheerful and enthusiastic about the feelings that horrify us leads to a short fuse of laughter and then easy continual shaking as long as the contradiction is continued.

As always, of course, the counselor will do far more modeling of the tone of voice, the facial expression, and the enthusiastic, cheerful words than the client will be able to do; but the client will be discharging while the counselor models this over and over again with the apparent confident expectation each time that the client will do it also.

Harvey Jackins

From page 50 of "The Successful Contradiction and Discharge of Heavy Fear," in *The Longer View*

Your Birth Day

This is a hop-scotching,
Skipping hand-in-hand
Kind of day

This is a daisies and larkspurs
Bouquet gathering
Kind of day

This is the sun showering
Thousands of sparkles
Over the ocean waves
Kind of day

This is a climbing
The old oak tree
Together way up high
Kind of day

This is a chasing
Barefoot in the grass
Hand springing over and over
Kind of day

This is a rainbow kite
Flying higher and higher and higher
Kind of day

This is the most exquisite day,
This day,
Your birth day.

Sojourner Truth
Seattle, Washington, USA



KINGSTON, NEW HAMPSHIRE, USA • PAM ROBY

How I Got My Community to Read

I led four three-hour evening classes. Each was an intensive [several one-way counseling sessions] for a different person. Nine Community members participated.

The person receiving the intensive sent everyone information about a current goal or pattern they were working on, what had been useful in contradicting the pattern, and parts of their life story that were related to the pattern. I sent everyone a list that included the constituencies the person belonged to, what we'd been led to think about people in those constituencies, and what was actually true about them.

I also suggested a few articles people could read on the RC website (<www.rc.org>) related to the person's identities or to challenges she or he was facing.

Because the articles I recommended were related to a person they were close to, people read! I think everyone was surprised about that—and pleased.

Marilyn McEnery

Danville, Vermont, USA

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

Disability as a Class Theme

In the past few months I've been working with my RC class on disability.

As a woman with cerebral palsy, which is very visible, I've wanted to move disability liberation forward and figure out why disability oppression is often not addressed when RC teachers and leaders speak about the various oppressions. It is often the etcetera at the end of a sentence (racism, sexism, classism, LGBTQTF oppression, etc.). This also seems true in the field of science, in which I work, even though many students and scientists with disabilities have been celebrated for the innovation and creativity they have brought to their fields. One of my wide world tasks is to encourage people, especially in science, to address disability in conversations about diversity and inclusion.

Disability must be addressed as an important piece of liberation theory. It is present in every identity—of race, gender, class, sexual preference, age, and so on—but it is the part that is left out, because no one wants to think that it matters, and everyone is afraid it could happen to them.

The bias against people with disabilities, sometimes called ableism, is often based on assumptions of inferiority. Even professionals who understand disability issues may be reluctant to personally engage with people whose conditions make them uncomfortable. It can be hard for people to imagine that someone who uses a wheelchair or a walking device, has slow speech, is blind or visually impaired, is deaf or hard of hearing, has a learning disability, or struggles with a health or other condition has the skills to

contribute to an educational, social, or professional environment.

Things are not so different in many Co-Counseling settings. Although there is always a well-meaning attempt to include us in classes and workshops, people with disabilities are still sometimes (not always!) marginalized. We may be chosen last for a session, not be invited to join in walks or play, not be given a job, just not be considered equal or as counseling-competent as everyone else. The fact that we may need an accessible counseling location or assistance with getting around or getting our meals should not exclude us from big connections with others or from just having fun!

WHAT WE DID IN MY CLASS

Disability is tough to look at. I wanted to create a safe space in which folks could look honestly at their feelings and admit to all the terrible images and fears they had associated with disability. Our class had been together for about a year, and we really liked each other and counseled each other well, so I

thought the time was right to take a crack at [attempt to address] this large issue.

I asked people to work on their early experiences—what they had heard, what they had seen, what they had personally experienced, and what they had felt they could not deal with. People's early experiences get recorded in their minds and make them vulnerable to acting out patterned behavior when they encounter a person with a disability. But big discharge begins to change perspectives. Stereotypes can begin to fade away.

Counselors can help clients get to the core of their feelings. I have used the direction "Be glad you're not like me." It is hard on me but has often brought immense discharge for a non-disabled client. In the class we just tried different things.

In addition to what people have experienced regarding those who are different, many people have feelings about their own bodies that affect how they feel and act around

continued . . .



CAROL FONTEIN

... continued

disabled people. Maybe they've had a disability themselves and never acknowledged it. Or maybe they need to say all the terrible phrases they've ever heard or laugh about being scared. But everything attaches to their early distress.

The more we addressed disability in the class and people discharged, the more people began to work on their connections to family, partners, and friends. As young people we expect closeness and a sense of belonging. When we don't get what we need, our yearnings become frozen and we can spend our whole life trying to fulfill them with an assortment of friends, lovers, and family members. When we encounter someone with a perspective, lifestyle, or appearance that is not like ours, we tend to emotionally run away. We don't like disruption when we have worked so hard to find our "tribes" (groups of people who are "just like us"). The yearning for a perfect relationship can feed into a bias toward people with disabilities, who are often assumed to be less valuable than those who fit the unrealistic description of "normal."

Folks also fear being dependent. I asked my class about any difficulties they'd had in accepting that it could happen to them and what images had come to mind.

The harder it was for me to hear the negative things, the more support and discharge I went after

[pursued] and the more excited I became by people's non-pretentious responses. I could face their responses because of the relationships I had built with everyone. I knew that my class respected me enough to work hard. Perhaps disability was not such a horrible thing after all.

DISABILITY AND CLIMATE CHANGE

We will also be looking at how climate change affects people with disabilities, the most vulnerable population. Marsha Saxton, the International Liberation Reference Person for People with Disabilities, has thought a lot about this. Here are some things to consider:

- Extreme heat will harm people with spinal cord injuries. They will need cooling areas, because they are unable to perspire.
- If there's a lack of communication technologies, people who are deaf or hard-of-hearing will not be able to make their needs known.
- Ramps into shelters, accessible bathrooms, and feasible evacuation transportation are essential for people with mobility impairments, including those who use respirators and anyone who is unable to use regular buses, cars, or trains.
- Toxic waste dumps and rising sea levels affect the health and well-being of people with disabilities, many of whom live in poor or low-income areas, and can force them to migrate.

People need to include disabled folks in conversations about disaster prevention and safe evacuation.

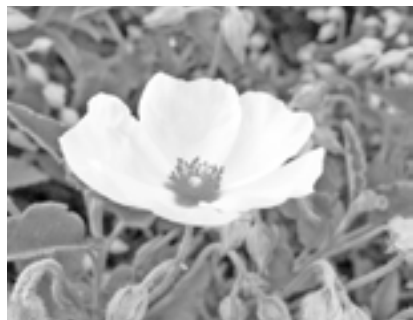
Confronting my own assumptions has shown me that many people with disabilities, if given proper encouragement and support, will persist and develop the tools

and creativity they need to cope with their disability and succeed in education or a social path or career. Those of us with disabilities continue to test new technologies and other accommodations in our homes, jobs, and social environments. Because of our life experience, we know what does or doesn't work. We can contribute unique perspectives to any community, especially when there's a commitment to innovation and new thinking. We must be welcomed.

There are so many reasons to have big sessions on disability and to make people with disabilities a part of any life or "tribe."

Conquering feelings about disability takes a long time. My class and I have made a good start.

Laurie Summers
Silver Spring, Maryland, USA



YUKO HIBINO

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!
Rational Island Publishers

Many Highlights at the Chicano/a Workshop

I want to share my experience at the Chicano/a Workshop that happened this July in Albuquerque, New Mexico, USA.

Lorenzo Garcia, the International Liberation Reference Person for Chicanos and Chicanas, led about forty of us completely as himself. He met us where we were and gave us the space and example to be ourselves, show our chronic material [distress], and work. The workshop was organized by Maria Franco and Sparky Griego, but unfortunately Maria was unable to attend because of illness. A big thank you to the three of them.

The last time we had been together in this configuration was in 2015, and I'd forgotten how powerful it is for me and my re-emergence when we come together. I can work on my material in a group that looks and feels like my family and community.

There were many highlights and sweet moments at the workshop. I will share two:

I was part of a team of women, led by Sparky Griego, that offered physical counseling sessions to the other females. I am a new mom and hadn't used my body in that way since before I'd been pregnant. And getting to be a counselor for females fighting on their own behalf was a big contradiction [to distress].

I was also in a topic group on the climate crisis that was called by Lorenzo and led by Andres Mares Muro. It was amazing to work on that topic with all Chicanos/as. I could see familiar material on everyone and how working on it will free our minds to think about the crisis more sharply.

Lorenzo encouraged us to show ourselves and our struggles and to push past our defenses to be with each other. I think we did well. I appreciate all of us for our ability to be hilarious and fierce. I'm excited that our constituency will be meeting together more frequently in the coming years to continue to strengthen our relationships. It will make a difference to me.

Vivi Santana Pacheco
Oakland, California, USA

Reprinted from the RC e-mail discussion list
for leaders of Latinos/as and Chicanos/as



BESS HERBERT

Selling RC Literature

I attended the recent Southwest (North America) Men's Workshop led by Lorenzo Garcia. I brought a few boxes of literature, and someone else brought a lot of literature he had decided to donate.

The meeting room had seven long tables, so we could spread everything out—for example, every issue of *Recovery and Re-emergence*. It felt like a luxury.

I had brought a selection of journals, a number of the "classic" books by Harvey Jackins, both basic and recently published items for people teaching RC, and some audio and video materials.

A man from Canada who was fairly new to RC came back to the table a number of times, carefully looking at items and purchasing some.

After the workshop Lorenzo led an evening on being allies to men. We took literature there, too. At the end of the evening I called everyone's attention to the pamphlet *The Human Male*, saying that it listed the various ways that society oppresses men.

Bob Lenk had donated some Spanish-language literature from a previous men's workshop, and I had purchased and brought some of the RC books in Spanish. The men from Mexico City were happy to find this literature, and I was happy to let them take whatever they wanted on Sunday night without charge.

We sold \$84 worth of literature at the men's workshop and \$26 worth on Sunday evening. Although it is enjoyable to sell a lot of literature, what's important to me is that people are actually reading it, not just buying it.

Steve Brown
Colorado, USA

“A Refreshing Moment, an Awakening Call”

This summer we had a teachers’ and leaders’ workshop for the Northern Nigeria Community. It was led by Mrs. Chioma Okonkwo. Various other teachers handled some of the topics, which helped them grow in their RC teaching.

From the introductions I could see that people’s expectations were high, and I felt the zeal to learn more. After introductions, knowing the difficulties, challenges, stress, and discouragements we face every day in our country, we thought it wise to validate ourselves and remind ourselves of the benign reality.

Mrs. Chioma emphasized the one-point program of RC: helping each other re-emerge. Re-emergence requires constantly telling our stories—not minding how many times we do it, often repeating the same story over and over again. When she talked about how intelligence is the ability to solve problems, I

could see myself as very intelligent, because I solve many problems every day.

The topics the other teachers covered included colonialism, women’s liberation, climate change, the RC no-socializing policy, and healing from war.

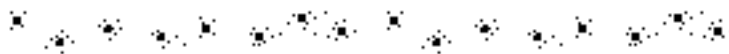
All the classes were participatory and interactive. The workshop was one of the best I have ever attended. It was a refreshing moment, an awakening call. A highlight for me was stepping up to teach. I found that a privilege and a challenge to do more.

Long live RC in the Northern Community!

Long live RC Nigeria!

Long live International RC!

Igwe Benjamin
Abuja, Federal Capital Territory, Nigeria



Leaders within Each Group

It is essential that each group be able to put forward its own leaders. Women can have excellent male allies, but women must lead women. Whites cannot be the leaders of Blacks, although they can be excellent allies to them. To develop enough leadership to preserve the world safely will require developing leaders in every group of the oppressed.

This will not always be easy. The heavier the oppression, the more layers of oppression any one individual has suffered from and internalized, the more these patterns will interfere with the person’s confidence to take leadership and the harder it will be for her or him to respond to the challenge.

If one is counseling someone who has endured multi-layered oppression, for example, one must furnish a great deal of confidence and expectation that the person will become a leader, as well as furnish the other contradictions [to distress] that will allow the person to discharge the fears and discouragements.

(In the past, some individuals have spontaneously *decided* to lead, in spite of the heaviest oppression, and have done so. We have much to learn from this of the power of decision. Yet, in three thousand years of such spontaneous process, China produced *one* Mao Tse-Tung. With the use of our counseling knowledge and skills we should be able to produce *thousands* of such capable leaders.)

Harvey Jackins
From page 25 of *The Enjoyment of Leadership*

✦ Tips for Leading an Introduction to RC ✦

Dear Barbara [Barbara Love, the International Liberation Reference Person for African Heritage People],

I'm a certified RC teacher living in Bangkok, Thailand. Next week I'm going to lead a two-hour workshop in Solo, Indonesia, introducing RC. The workshop will be called Listening Partnerships for Living Fully and Leading with Integrity in a Time of Crisis. It will be part of a broader and very interesting conference called Civic Engagement 4.0—Justice, Dignity, Sustainability.

I feel confident leading the workshop as I've had a lot of experience leading classes, doing workshops, and offering introductory lectures in the region. Yet it would be great to know of any lessons you've learned about leading RC workshops (such as with United to End Racism and Sustaining All Life) within a larger event—as I haven't done that before.

A young Indonesian and a young Kayah woman from Myanmar will be assisting me. They have gone through basic RC fundamentals, though in a naturalized form.

I would appreciate any thoughts you could share.

Ted Mayer
Bangpakok, Ratburana, Thailand

Dear Ted,

Congratulations on having the opportunity to lead a workshop introducing RC in Indonesia. I will share a few thoughts. Some will be obvious; hopefully some will be helpful.

1. Do use what we have learned in RC about language liberation.

Arrange for interpretation into the languages of the people present if those languages differ from

the language in which you will be presenting.

Plan time out and attention for the interpreters every twenty minutes.



KIRSTEN JOHNSON

Plan time out (one minute every twenty minutes) for all the participants—so that they can rest their brains and absorb what they have been listening to.

Speak loudly.

Speak slowly.

Speak clearly.

Use everyday language.

Avoid RC jargon.

Explain everything. Do not take for granted that the listeners will understand any shortcut language.

Avoid cultural references that may not be familiar to an audience that does not share your cultural background.

Find examples and references from the background of the group to whom you are presenting.

2. Highlight Indigenous faces and voices.

It's great that you will have an Indonesian and a Kayah woman

assisting you. Prepare an outline of your presentation in advance. Also have the two of them prepare their presentations in advance. That will increase the probability that their presentations will be experienced as important parts of the overall presentation and not as a gratuitous show. Advance preparation can also help them feel confident about what they are presenting.

3. KISS: Keep it simple and straightforward.

4. Provide lots of opportunities for people to practice—lots of mini-sessions. I find it totally worthwhile to spend the extra time explaining the guidelines for mini-sessions and setting them up, making sure everyone has a partner, and so on.

5. Explain discharge early on, along with its benefits.

6. Don't try to do too much. You can't give them the whole thing. Don't try to. Aim to leave them feeling like they got something worthwhile and wanting more. Be sure to prepare instructions in advance that tell them how to get more.

7. Find a way to connect the workshop to their topic: Civic Engagement 4.0—Justice, Dignity, Sustainability.

Look at the workshops we've been doing on climate change (see the RC website, <www.rc.org>) for ideas on how to relate the theory and practice of RC to various topics. Make it clear to people that using RC will help them do better what they want to do.

Have fun. I would love to hear how it goes.

Barbara Love
International Liberation Reference
Person for African Heritage People
Amherst, Massachusetts, USA

◀ Working to End Classism, as a Workshop Organizer ▶

I was raised working class and am currently owning class, and I recently organized a large RC workshop. It was a wonderful opportunity to grow personally and to use the class privilege of time I now have to support some very important work.

In addition to thinking about the constituency of the workshop and the topic (which was not classism), I was *very* interested in learning more about increasing the number and visibility of direct production workers at workshops—as one step toward the goal on ending classism adopted at the 2017 World Conference of the RC Communities.*

I am delighted to say that as a result of the thinking, work, and discharging we did, direct production

* The Goal for Ending Classism:

That the members of the RC Community, in order to move toward a rational society free of exploitation, commit ourselves to do the following:

- Build connections with and learn from members of economic classes that are underrepresented in our Community yet who represent the majority of the world's people—the sector of the working class engaged in the direct production of goods and services, and poor people.
- Get the theory and practice of RC into their hands and encourage, support, and follow their leadership.
- Face, discharge on, and challenge any distress that causes us to believe that some lives are more important than others, to seek economic advantage over one another, or to be preoccupied with irrationally seeking comfort and security.
- Discharge toward a full understanding of the class society and its inherently destructive nature and communicate this understanding to others in our own way.



BLACK-WINGED STILTS, IN MELBOURNE, VICTORIA, AUSTRALIA • DAMIEN COOK

workers ended up being twenty-five percent of the workshop. They were still underrepresented compared to their presence in the world, but their numbers were much higher than they would've been otherwise.

Here's what we did and learned:

1. I studied what had worked to increase the presence and visibility of other groups underrepresented in RC, such as People of the Global Majority and young people.

2. The leader of the workshop and I talked early on about how to get a good representation of direct production workers.

3. On the application we asked, "What is your class background?" and "What is your current class status?" That helped us to be aware of which applicants were direct production workers and to prioritize outreach to more.

Most of us in RC who identify as working class were, like me, *raised* working class then became upwardly mobile. We have played an important role in RC; our participation and perspectives have been important. Still, I think our role in class work could more closely resemble what Native people raised white are doing with regard to Native liberation. As we discharge on the class oppression we experienced earlier in our lives and the roles we play in society now, we can become more powerful in getting RC into the hands of direct production workers.

4. I sought thinking from Dan Nickerson, the International Liberation Reference Person for Working-Class People, about what I was doing and asked him whom he'd like to see invited to the workshop.

5. During the two years before the workshop, I strengthened my relationships with direct production workers in RC. I prioritized going to working-class and raised-poor workshops, where I built my relationships with direct production workers who were in the constituency of the upcoming workshop and told them how much I hoped they would join me there.

6. I and others called, left messages for, e-mailed, and texted direct production workers to encourage them to apply and to work through any obstacles to attending. I also asked people who were close to them to reach out to them.



ZANZIBAR, TANZANIA • CHRIS HEIDENRICH

Sometimes I felt like I was bothering people, but in each case they told me how important it was that I had persisted in their direction.

7. Early on, when it looked like we might receive more applications than we could accept, in consultation with the leader I did the following:

a. Made constituency lists of all the applicants so we could decide who to accept

b. Accepted immediately upon receipt of their application most people from underrepresented groups, most people who had to make flight arrangements, and key leaders

c. Sent a letter to all the other applicants explaining the situation and that they were on a waiting list and we would tell them when they were accepted

d. Held open for underrepresented groups a fourth of the spots until two weeks before the workshop, to allow us to continue doing outreach

The group that required more thought and balancing was RC leaders. The number of direct production workers leading in RC is comparatively small, and we needed many leaders to attend so the work of the workshop would go back to local Communities. After careful thought, we put a couple of direct production workers on the waiting list to make room for a couple of leaders. As it worked out, some people dropped out and *all* the direct production workers were accepted.

8. We worked with Area Reference Persons and RC funding sources to obtain scholarships for direct production workers who needed financial assistance.

9. We were able to set up a support group made up only of direct production workers, led by a strong and experienced (in RC) direct production worker—something rare, in my experience, outside of class workshops. The group was powerful for its members and increased their visibility at the workshop. I cry each time I think of it. It gives me hope!

Some direct production workers were in other support groups based on other constituencies, but no direct production worker was the only direct production worker in a group.

Having the data from the application was extremely useful in setting up the groups.

10. We gave direct production workers some of the more visible jobs at the workshop, such as doing registration, making announcements, and leading songs.

I am thankful for the opportunity to organize this workshop and for all that we achieved together.

I'd love to hear what others are doing to implement the goal on ending classism.

Jerry Ann Yoder

Yarmouth, Maine, USA

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

Thinking about Inherited Wealth

I'm a white male USer who was raised middle class. My parents and grandparents put a lot of emphasis on education as a path to achieving security and upward mobility. Although my parents were not highly concerned with building wealth, over time they accumulated (and managed by means of investments) growing financial assets.

When my remaining parent passed away and I was in line to inherit a portion of the assets, I had lots of sessions about money. I didn't think I needed to keep it all, in part because my family's needs were already being met with our current income. I had also worked in the financial investment field and seen how managing and "worrying about" money could absorb people's free attention.

I sought out referencing from leaders in the RC Community who'd done a lot of work on class and money, especially those who identified as owning class. I counseled with them on what I thought I "needed" and the feelings that would come up related to greed and scarcity.

I also had lots of sessions with some of my regular Co-Counselors. The work wasn't easy. I often felt uncomfortable doing it. And I made a special request that they observe confidentiality.

I talked with my partner about it, too, and gave a lot of thought to it myself.

In the end I decided—even before the funds had been released from the estate—that I would donate half of the money to the Re-evaluation Foundation general fund. (Giving it to the "general fund" meant that the Foundation board would have full discretion as to how to use it.)

That was two years ago, and I continue to be pleased with my decision.

One reason it was easy for me to make it was that I had seen firsthand how the Re-evaluation Foundation spends funds. I had been to Sustaining All Life events that had been made possible by fundraising. I had been to workshops that many people could attend because of Outreach funds. Some of my Co-Counselors had attended workshops thanks to those funds. I also had enormous respect for the Foundation's board members.

Why am I sharing this? Because I'm guessing that many of us who consider ourselves middle class have inherited—or will be inheriting or retiring with—a lot of wealth (which oftentimes does not *feel* like a lot of wealth).

There are so many places we could put that wealth to good use. But after discharging lots, I decided the

Re-evaluation Foundation would make very good use of it in one of the most crucial moments in human history. And I decided to give the donation now rather than later, because of the urgency of the climate crisis. The sooner we get RC to as many people as possible, the more prepared we will be to handle what's to come.

The way resources are distributed in this society is utterly irrational. Until we change the economic system, we get to think about how to share resources more equitably. We have a long way to go!

Are you among those who have earned, inherited, or acquired lots of wealth; or will be earning, inheriting, or acquiring it? If so, I encourage you to counsel on how much is enough and what you want to do with the rest. I found it challenging, re-emergent, and liberating to put my mind there.

Lastly, I'd like to extend my gratitude to members of the RC Community who helped me discharge and think about this.

Anonymous

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

The Digital Edition of *Present Time*

Rational Island Publishers is now offering subscriptions to an electronic version of *Present Time*.

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The cost for a digital subscription is \$20 USD per year (\$10 per year if purchased in addition to a print subscription).

For more information, go to <www.rc.org/publication/present_time/contents> on the RC website.

A Report from El Salvador

I've been in El Salvador for the past week, and I'm reminded of what Harvey Jackins said—that the more you know a person, the more you love them. I think that is also true of a country and its people. This is my seventh trip to this country.

I got to spend time with Lorena [María Lorena Cuéllar Barandiarán, an RC teacher in San Salvador], sitting and talking in her garden. I learn more from her all the time.

I led a five-hour men's workshop with Joel and Salvador, whom I've known for several years, and two men to whom they have taught RC one-to-one. (Last year I'd done a class on one-to-one teaching.)

Before the new men arrived, I worked with the experienced men on the role of men's oppression in a class society and how we men are trained to defend the owning class in rebellious times. We looked at how Gay oppression and homophobia reinforce men's oppression, sexism, conformity, and our agreement to be society's soldiers. We talked about how sexism is not only about inequality but also about domination. Using Harvey's article "Nationalism, Patriotism, National Pride, and National Liberation" [see pages 27 to 50 of *A Better World*], we worked on the difference between nationalism and national liberation. The men were ready to discharge.

Then the new men arrived, and they did a good job of sharing about themselves. A few of us experienced men discharged tears in our turns, which seemed to increase the safety in the group. I gave a talk on basic RC theory and the project of RC. Joel collected contact information, and the men discussed getting together again as a group.

The next day I led a four-hour class for three experienced Co-Counselors. We addressed (1) what the civil war had been like for a woman leading in the revolutionary movement, (2) what the war had been like for a mother, (3) what it's like being a father in a country with a violent history of imperialism, (4) building an RC Community when parents' oppression is heavy and resources scarce, (5) nationalism and national liberation, (6) being a Salvadoran immigrant to the United States, and (7) climate change. People told powerful stories, and discharged deeply. It helped that I had been Co-Counseling regularly on Skype with two of the participants. After my talk on climate change, Lorena counseled me on my numbness about the situation we face. What worked for me was to illogically deny that the worst-case scenario could happen. I laughed. Then I started crying about what could happen. People in the group discharged, too.



ANNE KOPLINKA-LOEHR

As I do every year, I visited my friend Rubén's family in a rural area. Little rain has fallen there, and the harvest has been small. The same seems to be true elsewhere in the country. People have to buy food from other countries at prices they can barely afford. One of Rubén's sisters talked at length about how important it is to listen to people. A priest who says mass in their village has been visiting local families and just listening—which is now recognized as a valuable addition to sermons. I said that sometime I'd like to do one-to-one listening time with everyone in the family, and no one declined.

C—has been working with young people, older people, and others in his community living in extreme poverty, to improve their quality of life. He feels it is the first step before introducing Co-Counseling. He and I did some mini-sessions in which he discharged hard distresses. We'll also be doing monthly phone time. He has accomplished many things, at a young age under difficult circumstances.

Rolando and I did many mini-sessions. He said that he learns new things whenever we talk about RC and listen to each other. He was happy to receive another *Present Time*, which included a mention of him, and said he was talking more and was less shy since we had been Co-Counseling. He is glad to be connected to everyone in the RC project. I asked him if he'd consider teaching RC at some point, and he was interested, so we did some strategizing. I encouraged him to try one-to-one teaching as a next step.

Victor Nicassio
Los Angeles, California, USA

Preventing and Handling Influenza at Workshops

Each January there is a workshop for RC teachers and leaders on the west coast of the United States. January in this region is “flu season”; it’s when the influenza virus is most prevalent in the general population. The flu is usually a short-term illness, but it can be serious for people who have additional challenges to their immune systems. For several years in succession, people would arrive at the workshop sick, become sick during the workshop, or get sick afterward.

I wanted to see what we could do to limit the impact of the flu on this workshop. So four years ago I began leading a “health committee” for the workshop. Our job has been to help people reduce contagion and handle things when someone becomes sick, or suspects they are becoming sick, at the workshop.

For the past three years we have had no active flu cases during the workshop.

WHAT OUR COMMITTEE DOES

It is challenging to reduce the transmission of viruses at RC workshops. Co-Counselors like being close together. We hold hands and hug. Our noses run when we discharge, and we often rub our faces with our hands when we cry. All these things increase the likelihood of viruses spreading from hand to eye, or hand to nose—the most common modes of transmission.

Our committee takes the following steps:

1) We establish a workshop “health committee.” This committee has six to eight members and



TAOS, NEW MEXICO, USA • SUVAN GEER

is led by someone who’s had experience handling difficult issues related to health and distress. Six to eight members are needed, to be able to handle multiple issues at once.

2) An RC physician or other health professional partners with the person leading the committee. The physician or other health professional is an advisor and a

consultant, not a committee member. This protects them from being unwarily sought out for medical advice and attention.

3) Two months before the workshop, we send a letter to the potential participants with advice about what to do if they become sick (with a fever, chills, body aches, congestion) in advance of the workshop. We ask that they not attend the workshop unless they have been free of the symptoms for forty-eight hours before they are scheduled to depart. We also recommend that people get a “flu shot” (flu vaccine) at least two weeks prior to the workshop.

We explain that these things are to protect the more vulnerable participants, and we encourage people to prioritize the health of the “herd” over individual feelings and convenience.

The letter also says what people should do if they suspect that they are becoming sick at the workshop and what will be done if they do become sick. If they suspect they are becoming sick, they should contact the head of the health committee, who, in consultation with the health professional, will assess the situation and think with them about next steps. If there’s a reasonable chance that they are sick, they’ll be quarantined at the site until they have been fever-free for twenty-four hours (meals and fluids will be delivered to them).

4) The committee purchases an abundance of scent-free hand sanitizers and repeatedly reminds the workshop participants to clean their hands with them before and after contact throughout the workshop. (A “healthy dose” of humor has been helpful here!)

5) We set aside two rooms in advance for quarantine purposes (one for men, and one for women), so if someone becomes sick, they can be moved into one of these rooms. (It’s best if there’s an adjacent or nearby bathroom that can be used exclusively by the sick person.)

6) When someone becomes sick, the committee organizes people to move that person out of their sleeping room and sanitize the room by wiping down contact surfaces with a mild bleach-and-water solution.

7) The committee reminds people not to visit anyone who is in quarantine (humor is also helpful here). People tend to feel sympathetic and want to “keep the person company.” The committee encourages them to contact the person via a web interface—which is much less likely to produce an additional sick person!

It can be hard to reach consensus on intelligent and reasonable steps for reducing contagion at workshops, but the above appear to be working.

TAKING EARLY HURTS INTO ACCOUNT

Our early hurts affect not only our ability to think about ourselves but also to notice and think about our impact on others. Having people at the workshop whose job is to put attention on this seems to help.

We all have undischarged feelings about “missing out” [not having access to something important], “being left on our own [alone],” or

“wasting people’s time” when we become sick. In the past we may have gone to or remained at workshops despite having symptoms, because we didn’t want to “miss out.” We are much less likely to do this if there are clear recommendations and a plan.

ADDITIONAL SUGGESTIONS

Here are some additional things that we have found helpful:

- Make hand sanitizers “overly available.” The more visible and close by they are, the more often people will use them. Pump dispensers are far better than squeeze bottles or sprays. Also, the sanitizer solution must be a minimum of sixty-two percent alcohol (or 0.1 percent benzalkonium) to be effective.

- There are many fun ways to help people notice and use the hand sanitizers. This past January we tried taping them to the inside of doors, handing them from person to person once people were seated, and having volunteers greet people as they came into the meeting room with big smiles and a “hello” while squirting sanitizer into their hands. People laughed and were reminded that we were trying to think about something that we hadn’t thought well about in the past.

- It’s good to remind people at the end of each class to pick up all

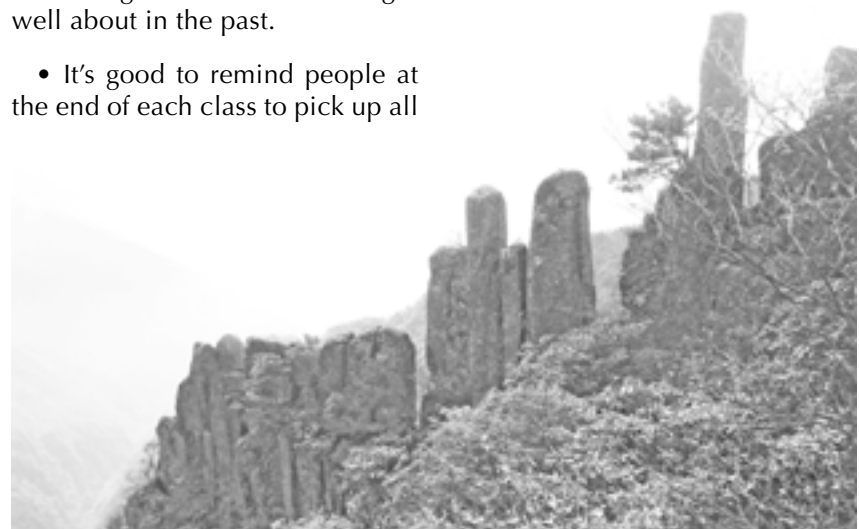
the used tissues and throw them out immediately—and then use the hand sanitizer!

- It helps to get people laughing about getting sick. (We all have undischarged feelings from past experiences.) We have used the term “contagion czar” instead of “health committee chair.”

- People need to understand that when someone is quarantined, they don’t have to worry that the person is alone. Quarantine is necessary to protect the larger group. And it won’t be the first time the person has been left alone! They will likely survive! Also, phone and Skype sessions are still possible.

- It’s useful to have a box of health committee supplies: a thermometer, and alcohol swabs for sterilizing it; (way too much) hand sanitizer—enough for many places in workshop site, including the meeting area and residence buildings; bleach wipes for cleaning contact surfaces; disposable latex or rubber gloves; and surgical masks for people who are sick and the people who are interacting with them.

Steve Thompson
Seattle, Washington, USA



CHINA • CHEN PINGJUN

Appreciating the RC Publications

PRESENT TIME and other RC publications are a lifesaver.

Maja Borkowska
Warsaw, Poland

I was very impressed by the reports in the January PRESENT TIME from the young adult workshop outside Nairobi, Kenya, led by Janet Wambui Kabue. The strength and insights in each person's notes drew me in, lifted me up. To me it sounds like one of the most important efforts in the world, inside or outside RC. I hope to hear more.

Jim Shackelford
Bloomington, Indiana, USA

I appreciate the creative, pleasing layouts.

Pam Roby
Santa Cruz, California, USA

Thanks for another great PRESENT TIME, with so many articles related to ending classism and racism.

Victor Nicassio
Los Angeles, California, USA

A while back you asked for photos to use in RC publications. I sent some to photos@rc.org. Thanks for all the work in making our publications beautiful!

Bess Herbert
London, England

I just read through half of the July 2019 PRESENT TIME. I am once again impressed with all that we RCers have done in the world, using both the perspective from our brilliant theory and the work of discharge.

Marsha Hunter
Cambridge, Massachusetts, USA



CHILE • DIANE SHISK

A Gather-in with the International Liberation and Commonality Reference Persons

Last June, in Seattle, Washington, USA, almost all the International Liberation and Commonality Reference Persons talked about their work at a gather-in for the local RC Community. Below is an introduction to that evening, by Tim Jackins.

I usually begin by giving people a six-minute-each-way mini-session. However, we are in one of those odd circumstances in which we have too much resource. In order to give you a chance to hear from each of these people and to meet with a couple of them, we have to push ourselves forward a little more than usual.

Gathered here are almost all the International Liberation and Commonality Reference Persons of the RC Communities. (*cheering*) I'm delighted to give you this opportunity to hear from them. They are people who've dedicated a large part of their time and minds to thinking about the rest of us and fighting for the liberation of their constituencies.

You probably belong to at least half the constituencies represented here, but tonight you'll get a chance to meet with only two of them. You get to pick which two. You could choose the two that are most important to you, or the two that are so far down the list that you've never gotten there.

First each Reference Person will have two minutes to give you all a picture of how they think about their work. Exposing you to them and their work is one of the best things we could do. We all get isolated by how we've been oppressed and hurt, so having a reference point, a light on the struggles we all face, is exceedingly useful.

There is no set order. The leaders will look at each other and figure out who is next. After a first set has had the chance to speak, we'll have a two-minute-each-way mini-session while the second set comes up.

Then we will meet in smaller groups. Dvora [Dvora Slavin, who organized the event] will tell us how to squeeze all the groups into the spaces we have. You will go off for twenty-five minutes to the group you choose, and after that you'll have four minutes to sprint to your second choice. The Reference Persons will stay in place, and you will move.

See the next twenty-two pages for the Reference Persons' reports.

The following twenty-two pages contain transcripts of the Reference Persons' reports at the gather-in (see article on previous page)—as well as reports from the few Reference Persons who couldn't attend.

Native Liberation Is Strong and Growing Well

Marcie Rendon, International Liberation Reference Person for Native Americans

Native liberation is strong and growing well—partly due to our hosting a series of small workshops for folks with particular Native identities—Native men, Native women, owning-class Natives, Natives with Black heritage, Cherokee people, Native Chicanas/os—and a workshop for discharging on money.

Darlene Daniels and I have led “Introducing RC” workshops for Native communities on the North American continent, and Darlene has done similar work in Australia and New Zealand.

Barbara Boring’s work with Native people raised white has had a large influence, within Native liberation and also generally in the U.S. RC Communities. It has helped

non-Native constituencies better understand the work of Native liberation. Overall, more people are discharging on backing [supporting] Indigenous leadership.

Malaina Guzman attended the RC Pre-World Conference in South America in my place and recently led a Native women’s workshop. Dan Nickerson led a men’s workshop. Our constituency is growing, and more strong leaders are needed to do the work.

I’m planning more “Introducing RC” workshops for Canadian First Nations people. I’m also doing mini-sessions with constituents who are interested in developing Native RC Communities. I would love to hear

from Natives who are striving to build a Community around them. Kate Insolia has organized phone time for Native women who live in isolated areas, and we hope to expand this.

Given the rapid acceleration of the climate emergency, I have agreed to lead workshops on climate change. All who care about our future generations need to invest time, including discharge time, and resources in developing good thinking and encouraging a rational solution to the crisis.

Migwetch (“thank you,” in the Ojibwe language).

Minneapolis, Minnesota, USA



LIAM GEARY-BAULCH

Making RC Accessible to African Heritage People

Barbara Love, International Liberation Reference Person for African Heritage People

I am the International Liberation Reference Person for African Heritage People. My job includes getting the theory and tools of RC into the hands of as many African-heritage people as possible, so that eventually every African-heritage person has the information and access to the tools. They get to decide if and how they want to use them. Our job is to see that they get access to them.

Part of my job is creating the conditions that will make it possible for more African-heritage people to stay in the RC Communities—stopping the revolving door (how you invite your friends in, they stay for a minute or two, and then they are gone). We want to make it possible for more and more of them to find a home in the RC Communities.

We want to help African-heritage people discharge about internalized racism, help white people discharge about racism, and help other People of the Global Majority discharge about internalized racism, racism, and specifically anti-Black racism.

Amherst, Massachusetts, USA

A Targeted Group

Lorenzo Garcia, International Liberation Reference Person for Chicanos/as

Hello. *Buenas tardes*. I am the International Liberation Reference Person (ILRP) for Chicanas and Chicanos in Re-evaluation Counseling. I also think about the Latinas and Latinos. I have been doing this job since—well, since I had black hair and a really beautiful *moustache* [mustache].

Chicanas and Chicanos have been referred to as Mexicanas and Mexicanos. Some of us do have a relationship with Mexico, but a number of us come from people who were there before the colonizers came, before some interesting and horrible things started to happen.

Recently someone said some terrible things about my people, my family. How did that happen? Well, he was looking for a scapegoat. Why did he choose us? Because we're probably a pretty [quite] good target. As a group, we generally keep to ourselves and keep our heads down. (We certainly don't do ILRP jobs!)

I would like us to grow up and not have to go to prison. I would like us to grow up and be able to have good families and not have to assimilate.

A big issue for us is language oppression. Spanish is the language of the colonizer. Many of us have lost our Indigenous languages.

Albuquerque, New Mexico, USA



J. EISENHEIM

RC Is What My People Need

Azi Khalili, International Liberation Reference Person for South, Central, and West Asian-Heritage People

I am the International Liberation Reference Person (ILRP) for South, Central, and West Asian-Heritage People. I was born and raised in Iran. I came to the United States when I was sixteen years old and was “undocumented” for ten years.

I have been in RC for thirty-one years and the ILRP for my constituency for the last four years. My constituency is from a big part of Asia. Some of the countries we're from include Iran, Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, the Palestinian territories, Israel, and Egypt. We are Muslims, Mizrachi Jews, Zoroastrians, Hindus, and Jains. We are a very diverse group of people.

We are deeply human. We are marvelous miracles (I heard that term today; I love it). We are beautiful, we are loving, we love our children, we love poetry. We are committed to our re-emergence and the liberation of our people.

As you are well aware, in the last period my people have been very much vilified in the United States and European countries to justify a nasty war that has been going on for the last forty years in my part of the world. This war is actually about profit.

The main problem my people are facing is distress. We need fresh, rational, revolutionary thinking to move us out of colonization, war, genocide, and climate change. RC is what my people need—to move us into a rational world that makes sense for everyone.

Brooklyn, New York, USA



STEVE BANBURY

“One of the Lightest, Happiest Groups”

*Teresa Enrico, International Liberation Reference Person
for Pacific Islander and Pilipino/a-Heritage People*

I am the International Liberation Reference Person for Pacific Islander and Pilipino/a-Heritage People. There are many, many Islands in the Pacific, including the Philippines. I also reference Korea. What an interesting grouping! The strengths and struggles of these two groups make us key allies for each other, which is part of how I think about our work together.

We are the Indigenous people of these lands. We have been there for thousands of years—living with the land and the waters, being close to the world around us. We also share histories of colonization, racism, attempted genocide, militarization, and war.

Many of you know me in my other roles, which include leading early-sexual-memories workshops. That work is important not only to my personal liberation but also to the liberation of my people. Two issues have emerged: the climate crisis and sexual exploitation (which, in fact, are connected). And both come directly out of the histories of my people. We do a lot of work on these issues. We are also one of the lightest, happiest groups you can find!

Seattle, Washington, USA

Never Again Is Now

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

We are recent immigrants and descendants of immigrants. Like all immigrants, our people have been brave and adventurous. They have chosen not to go along with the system they were living in and have had a high tolerance for not knowing exactly how things were going to turn out.

During World War II, because of racism, Japanese families in the United States, Canada, and South America were incarcerated in prison camps for four years, just for being Japanese.

I'm proud of the Japanese community and Japanese RCers. We were among the first to speak out against fearmongering and the rounding up

of Muslims. We are openly protesting the incarceration of migrant families seeking asylum in the United States. For example, there was a big Japanese American protest at Fort Sill, in Oklahoma (USA), this past weekend, and a Japanese-heritage RCer who helped to organize it spoke on *Democracy Now* [a progressive U.S. radio program].

We used to say, “Never again,” about our wartime incarceration. Now we say, “Never again is now.”

For the past ten years we have had successful United to End Racism projects at the Tule Lake Pilgrimage [a biennial pilgrimage that commemorates the over eighteen thou-

sand people of Japanese ancestry who were imprisoned at the Tule Lake Segregation Center during World War II]. There we teach RC to Japanese American activists and concentration camp survivors and their families.

We discharge on our significance, on closeness to our people, on challenging the invisibility of Japanese-heritage people, and on insisting that our people matter. We are good at fighting for others. We need to work on fighting for ourselves—and that's where you can give us a hand [some help].

Olympia, Washington, USA

“We Are Reclaiming Our Minds, Our Integrity, and Our Voices”

Francie Chew, International Liberation Reference Person for Chinese-Heritage People

I am the International Liberation Reference Person for Chinese-Heritage People. I also reference Southeast Asian people, who at present include RCers of Cambodian, Vietnamese, and Malaysian heritage.

We work on our internalized oppression connected to war and colonization. We work on immigration and being refugees. We work on language oppression and assimilation. We work on our ethnic and Indigenous heritages and on class, including sudden mobility down and up. We work on histories of starvation and greed. And we work on the oppressor material [dis-

ress] that we aim at each other and at other People of the Global Majority, especially people of African heritage.

We are reclaiming our minds, our integrity, and our voices.

I would love to connect with you—especially if you have Chinese or Southeast Asian heritage, or people with these heritages in your life. Please reach out to me.

Somerville, Massachusetts, USA

An Oppression That Divides and Confuses

Cherie Brown, International Liberation Reference Person for Jews

Jews are a people that have been on the planet for two thousand years. We belong to all races. We are brilliant, feisty, and sometimes terrified, and lead beyond our numbers in many liberation struggles.

Anti-Semitism is the oldest hatred. In part, Jews are hated for the difficulties we’ve been set up to have.

Anti-Semitism functions to keep all oppressed people confused. Imagine other oppressed people. They are ready to fight their oppressors. Then there’s a diversion: blame the Jews. In the current period that sometimes means blame Israel.

Anti-Semitism is cyclical. It is overt in some periods and not in others. The cycle has recently turned—anti-Semitism is now overt. Those on the “right” are using it to divide progressive movements and organizations (the U.S. Democratic party, the Labor party in England, and others).

What are we discharging on?

- Internalized genocide, the message that there is something so bad about Jews that we shouldn’t exist.
- Our connection to climate change. We were once a tribal people, deeply connected to the land. Then we were not allowed to own land and were kicked out of many countries. Working on climate change is key to reclaiming what we have lost as a people.

- The Israel/Palestine conflict. An important direction is being fully for both the Israeli people and the Palestinian people.

- Taking action to end anti-Semitism.

Silver Spring, Maryland, USA



MAURA FALLON

“We Are a Beautiful People”

Joanne Bray, International Liberation Reference Person for Catholics

I am the person in Co-Counseling who thinks about the Catholic peoples of the world. We are a beautiful people. We are Arab, Asian, African, Latina/o, Indigenous. We live in every country. One third of us live in Europe. Two thirds of us live in the global South. A tiny fraction of us (six percent) live in the United States.

We believe in God. We don't believe in God. Some of us are angry with God. A lot of us need to do sessions on God. We are atheists and practicing Catholics. We have all sorts of relationships to the religion. And all of this is related to the early hurts we need to discharge. Also, I can't do Catholic liberation work without talking about the impact of male domination, genocide, and slavery.

I continue to be inspired by three people: Dorothy Day was a U.S. Catholic woman who started the Catholic Workers' Movement. She said, "Our problems stem from our acceptance of this filthy, rotten system." Mary Robinson is a former president of Ireland and a practicing Catholic. At a United Nations anti-racism conference at which Jews were under attack, she said, "I am a Jew." Oscar Romero was the fourth Archbishop of San Salvador (El Salvador). His experience with imperialism led him to say, "There are many things that can only be seen through eyes that have cried."

Stamford, Connecticut, USA

**A One-Time Opportunity!
Half-Price Moving Sale**

As many of you know, we are moving our center, Re-evaluation Counseling Community Resources (RCCR), to a new site. We are also moving Rational Island Publishers, including its warehouse, to the same site.

Over the years we have published a great deal of RC material—books, pamphlets, journals, and more—and have almost always gotten enough copies to not only meet the immediate demand but also cover the orders we expect in the subsequent few years.

Because of this system, we have a good number of copies of most of our publications, and we'd like to not move all of them to the new facility. So for the last several months we've had a half-price moving sale. **And the sale ends on October 31 (2019).**

We are selling nearly every book and pamphlet and back issue of *Present Time* in the Rational Island Publishers warehouse, except *The Human Side of Human Beings*, at half its usual price.

(There are no quantity discounts, and we can't apply the fifty percent discount retroactively. *The List* has already been discounted, so this discount does not apply to that. It also does not apply to subscriptions—to *Present Time*, the *Digital Present Time*, or the *RC Teacher Update* CDs.)

To order, see page 111 or go to <www.rationalisland.com>. (Please order online if you can.)

Thank you,
Tim Jackins

Learn More about Poor People

Gwen Brown, International Liberation Reference Person for People Raised Poor

First, let's talk about capitalism. While it initially raised large numbers of people out of poverty into the middle class, global capitalism is now leaving most of the world's people in poverty, and life on this planet at risk. Making decisions solely on the basis of profit for a few rather than what works for most of the world's human beings means that today most of the world's people are poor. And most of the poor people are children of the Global Majority.

So, if we are going to get ourselves out of this crisis, it makes sense that we all—every one of us, from every class background and no matter how we are living now—make efforts to learn more about poor people. It makes sense that we all commit to working on our classism and racism and any other isms that leave us inactive and feeling superior—and reach for caring, loving relationships with poor people, teach them Co-Counseling, and bring them into our Communities. We have no other good choice at this point, which is why at the last RC World Conference we agreed on a goal to do just that.

Contrary to the myths, poor people are smart, loving, good, creative, and compassionate—just like you. In fact, they are often more generous, less competitive, more able to connect, and freer of pretense than many people from other classes. And they have fought hard in the face of harsh and persistent oppression to hold on to so much of their humanness.

But being at the bottom of the economic system means they are surrounded by subtle and overt violence and the persistent mes-

sage that their lives do not matter. The statistics are clear: among poor people infant mortality is higher and more children witness or are subjected to violence and the ravages of war and pollution.

the hardest to listen to. But listen we must. Fortunately, we now have a powerful and growing group of poor and raised-poor people in Co-Counseling. So we know it is doable.



SILVER LAKE WILDERNESS AREA, ADIRONDACK PARK, NEW YORK, USA • SUE EDWARDS

If they get to go to school, their schools are often underfunded and inferior. More of them end up homeless, in jails, and in the “mental health” system. The pollution, violence, and lack of health care cause them to die earlier. More of the mothers die in childbirth. And, as we know, poor people are more likely to be the ones who cannot escape the biggest repercussions of climate change.

Poor people are the group that nobody wants to be in. They are used to keep working-class and middle-class people scared of the consequences of organizing and getting fired. Their stories are often

We all need to discharge whatever is in our way of reaching out to poor people and sharing what we know about discharge and liberation. We need to discharge whatever is in our way of fighting for policies that end the outrageous income inequalities in our current system.

Poor people, right now, in every part of the world, are waiting for our support to become the powerful, deeply good leaders that they were born to be and that the world needs. So let's do this. Let's take our old but powerful direction “I can, and I will.”

Wilmington, Delaware, USA

The People Who Create the Wealth

Dan Nickerson, International Liberation Reference Person for Working-Class People

I was twenty-nine years old when I met Harvey Jackins. It was the first time in my life I had heard that it was good to be working class. After that I decided to make working-class liberation my life's work.

I went to work in a factory, and for thirty-one years that factory was my laboratory in which to test what we think we know in RC about class oppression. The first person I taught RC in the factory is now the first woman elected head of the AFL-CIO in Maine (USA). [The AFL-CIO (American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations) is the largest federation of unions in the United States, representing more than twelve million workers.] And this morning my friend Paul, an electrician from the factory, called me to tell me that he loved me. Everybody counts.

I've been the main leader of the leaders of "class" in RC. A key part of the new goal on ending classism is reaching out to the people I call "direct production workers." They are the people who create the wealth that all of us live on. There are fewer of them in RC than there are owning-class people, and it's our job to do something about that. I don't think we can achieve our other goals without them.

Freeport, Maine, USA



PAM ROBY

"Out There in the Jaws of the Lion"

Joanie Parker, International Liberation Reference Person for Union Activists

I am proud to be doing this work. RC union members are fighting for the rights of workers, for decent wages and working conditions. At the same time, we're figuring out how to use Co-Counseling to take charge of our lives.

How many of you are union members? Oh, my gosh! I should know all of you! So if you don't know me, please be in touch.

One of the things I'm doing is encouraging RC Communities to make more visible what's happening in unions. We should know what is happening in the unions near us. We should be tracking the people who are in unions and finding out what it is like for them. Are they reaching out to their unions? What are their unions like?

Unions are out there fighting many social injustices. They are fighting for immigration rights, decent and affordable housing, the end to climate change—so we all need to make unions central to our work. Union activists are out there in the jaws of the lion [in direct contact with the oppressive forces], trying to stand up against capitalism and feeling alone, overworked, and as if jobs don't matter.

We can back [support] those who are doing this amazing and exciting work. I often say that closeness and connection are the enemy of oppression. Getting close to a union activist is key to all of our liberation.

Jamaica Plain, Massachusetts, USA



TAIWAN'S RC LIBRARY • TSUI-LING WANG

Leaving Our Middle-Class Role

Seán Ruth, International Liberation Reference Person for Middle-Class People

Our job as middle-class people is to make sure the class system functions smoothly and efficiently. Over the last period, middle-class RCers have made great strides in understanding how we got set up to play this role, the damage that was done to our humanity, and the way we were encouraged to be preoccupied with comfort and security.

We are getting clearer about the intersection of middle-class oppression and racism, sexism, anti-Jewish oppression, and all the other oppressions.

We are doing this work at a time when the economic system is becoming increasingly unstable, unworkable, and dangerous to the planet and its people. Class work has never been more important. Middle-class work has never been more important. It's possible that we will see the collapse of this system in our lifetimes. That leaves us with different challenges.

What would happen if we middle-class people decided not to play the role assigned to us? What if we organized to get behind working-class people and people who were raised poor—got behind them as a solid group, not just as isolated individuals? What would happen if we decided to give up our preoccupation with comfort and security and instead organize our lives around liberation?

If you were raised middle class or you have a middle-class role, please do this work.

Stillorgan, County Dublin, Ireland

“Don't Stop Looking for Us”

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

Today the world is facing climate change, the rise of right-wing governments, destruction, disruption, oppression, genocide and war, and a growing disparity in wealth between the owning class and everyone else. And every single one of these things is happening because somebody is making a profit. Everything bad that is coming down the line [coming in the future] or is actually happening is due to the owning class.

Are those who cause and allow these awful things to happen good? Loving? Cooperative? Intelligent? Yes. We are just like you. But we've been deliberately and systematically hurt in particular ways. So we end up being greedy and controlling, and riding roughshod [in a forceful manner] over absolutely everything.

If we can get free of the distresses, we can be useful and effective. We can be good allies. We have many resources besides our money.

This is your business, as well as mine. If you who are working class or middle class or were raised poor make the owning class your business, as Harvey Jackins did, it will liberate and empower you as well as free up considerable resources.

We are not the enemy. Help me unlock the places where we are stuck. And we are, we really are, stuck. Harvey said that as young children we were placed under an evil spell and kidnapped, and that the working class has never stopped looking for us. Prove to me and to yourselves that when oppressed people reclaim their power, they also liberate the oppressor. Don't stop looking for us.

Winchester, Hants, England



OLIVA, SPAIN • BESS HERBERT

Liberation Work That Is Fun

*Janet Foner, International Liberation Reference
Person for "Mental Health" Liberation*

"Mental health" oppression is about cutting off the discharge process and punishing people for being who they are. A good thing is that the liberation work is fun, because it's the reclaiming of who we really are. It's getting to be ourselves and no longer going along with the oppressive society.

"Mental health" oppression is everywhere and so hidden that we usually can't see it. Because it is everywhere, we can start the liberation work everywhere. We can work on ending racism and "mental health" oppression, on ending anti-Semitism and "mental health" oppression, on ending sexism and "mental health" oppression.

"Mental health" oppression intertwines with every other oppression and holds it in place. It also supports capitalism. It keeps people scared and quiet and numb, so fighting climate change will be held back if we don't combat "mental health" oppression.

New developments in "mental health" liberation include gaining allies for ex-psychiatric inmates, looking at the realities of "mental health" system survivors, and thinking about how "mental health" oppression affects younger people.

New Cumberland, Pennsylvania, USA
(Janet died on July 24, 2019)

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Young People Are Brilliant and Powerful

Mari Piggott, International Liberation Reference Person for Young People

One of my favorite things in the last few months has been attending the youth climate strikes. They are powerful. They are connected. They are right on track for where the world needs to be. They are alive. And they are the most fun protests I have been to.

This is what's true about young people: Young people are brilliant. Young people are powerful. Young people know how the world needs to be.

Young people's oppression confuses young people about their brilliance and power. And we were all young people. We were all confused in that way. We were all told that we were small, insignificant, and

powerless. That is how oppression is first laid down. Young people's oppression is the foundation for all the other oppressions. But the climate strikes are an example of how young people are rising up, how all this is changing.

All of us have been impacted by young people's oppression, and we need to work on the early hurts. Young people's liberation theory is essentially basic RC theory.

We need to talk about young people's oppression. It's not widely acknowledged in the world and we need to change that. We need to listen to young people and teach them RC. Young people are incredible at

RC. They know it in a powerful way. It's so great to have a group of young people together.

We need to follow young people's leadership. At this time, with the climate crisis, young People of the Global Majority and Indigenous young people, in particular, are speaking up. We need to follow them and back [support] their leadership.

And we can't leave young people alone to fight the battle. Adults need to work on their discouragement and feelings of powerlessness and back young people and stand alongside them to change the world.

Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada



SEATTLE, WASHINGTON, USA • KATIE KAUFFMAN



HAWAII, USA • SHANI FLETCHER

Fighting Together for Connection

Emily Bloch, International Liberation Reference Person for Young Adults

In RC we say that a young adult is age twenty-one to thirty. I also lead a lot of workshops for people under thirty-five.

Referencing young adults is like referencing people on a high-speed train. We are all the time making all these decisions about our lives—like where we are going to live, what work we are going to do, if we are going to go to school, if we are going to have children, if we are going to have a partner, where our community is going to be.

We have to figure out how to set up our lives to make them workable for us. And then we have to make them workable enough that we can point ourselves toward the big struggles out in the world that we need to face together. That has to be a central part of our work.

We have to be able to work to end climate change; and racism, classism, and sexism—all the oppressions that need fighting right now. And the only way we can do that, as far as we want to do that, is if we also work on our early material [distress], and do that together.

A big part of young adults' oppression is the message that if we can just figure out how to have our lives "just right" and comfortable enough—with the right job, the right apartment, and the right friends—then we'll, sort of, be okay.

And a big part of our work is to recognize that it's not about individual comfort. That's one of the ways that capitalism has confused us. It's actually about figuring out how to keep the biggest picture possible and fight together for connection.

We get to set up our lives so that we get to do this work together, and reach for each other.

Brookline, Massachusetts, USA

Follow Young People's Leadership

Jenny Sazama, International Liberation Reference Person for Allies to Young People

We are living in incredibly exciting and interesting times. Not long ago, the United Nations came out with a report that said we have twelve years to turn the climate situation around or we're looking at the possible extinction of the human race.

Young people are frontline people in relation to climate change. They need to know the truth from us. They need to know the facts about

climate change. And they need to know them in a way that they can hear them.

They need to know that we can win. And *we* need to know that we can win—so we need to do the work that's necessary to know that. They need to know that every effort they make matters, and that we are also going to lose a lot. They need to know that the human race is worth fighting for.

I asked my son this morning, as I often do, what I should say to you all. He said to ask you what it would take [require] to genuinely follow young people's leadership.

Young people know and have what's needed to fix all this. They know how to fight for connection. They know how to laugh really hard. (We're going to have a lot of fun doing this.) They know how

to quickly turn racist situations around—we've seen that again and again. And they know how to hit the streets [demonstrate publicly].

When I take young people to political officials' offices, the officials can't resist telling them that they "don't understand," "that's not how things are done." Then I remind them of Greta Thunberg's words: "We can't save the world by playing by the rules because the rules have to be changed." [Greta Thunberg is a fifteen-year-old Swedish climate activist.]

What is it going to take for us to throw our lives up in the air and belovedly and delightedly follow young people's leadership?

Jamaica Plain, Massachusetts, USA



TOGO • ELLIE PUTNAM

Parents Are Precious

Marya Axner, International Liberation Reference Person for Parents

Parents are precious. We have the awesome job of raising children. The deep connection we have with our children strengthens our awareness of the magnificence of life and the loveliness of the universe. Our children remind us every moment of the nature of reality. They love with all their hearts. We get to take in their love and love them back. Their access to the discharge process demonstrates to us every day the basics of Co-Counseling. We are smart to be parents.

Parents work 24/7 [every hour, day and night] and don't get paid. This is the basis of parents' oppression. In addition to parenting, in order to survive we have to earn a living and meet other challenges. That pulls our time, energy, and attention away from our children.

Our job is as important as any job, and we don't get paid. I have observed that people who do work that's of the highest value to society often get paid little or nothing, while those who do the least important or most damaging work get paid the most.

Women are still the vast majority of primary parents. Women's oppression is one of the reasons parenting is not a paid position.

Both mothers and fathers suffer from parents' oppression, which deepens both women's and men's oppression.

Society tells us at every turn [all the time] that our work is not important or we are doing it wrong. And we are wrongly blamed for the distresses of our children. As capitalism falls, society is becoming harsher, and harsher toward families. We need to understand that this is happening and not blame ourselves.

We can use RC to discharge our hurts, so we don't pass them on to our children.

Somerville, Massachusetts, USA

Fully Including People with Disabilities

Marsha Saxton, International Liberation Reference Person for People with Disabilities

My comrades and I are working on responses to the climate crisis. When we mention our work on “the climate crisis and disability,” some people look puzzled. Then we ask, “In any disaster, guess who dies first?” The answer is people with disabilities. We are uniquely affected by the climate crisis. Can you run from a fire? Jump in a boat? See your way out of the rubble? Tolerate extreme heat or cold? Hear the warning sirens?

The term people are using for us is “people with access and functional needs.” This term also refers to “vulnerable others,” such as elders, those not in

the labor force, people below the poverty level, and people without a vehicle in their household. Most of the people in these vulnerable populations are People of the Global Majority. And the number of vulnerable populations is increasing with the climate crisis.

We need specific, accurate ways to assist people and ensure their long-range survival. I’ve chosen to work on this because I’m concerned, but also because disabled people are generally required to live creatively in order to survive and we can help everyone think “outside the box” [outside the usual ways].

The United Nations Convention on the Human Rights of People with Disabilities, which over 160 countries have signed, has brought global attention to disabled people’s needs for legal protection, increased services, and representation in government and the media. But we have to periodically fight back against government attempts to roll back human rights laws and scapegoat people with disabilities as burdensome drains on the economy. I’m particularly proud of the disabled women’s movement—which has created a strong network of relationships, done writing, held conferences, and provided services across borders.

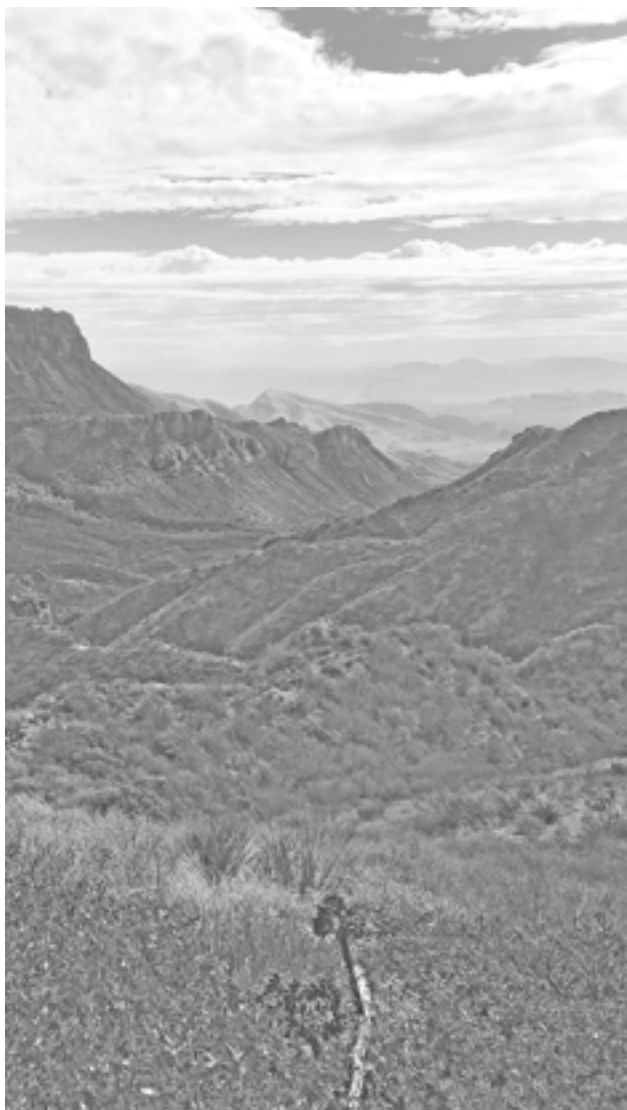
IN RC

At a recent RC workshop I led in London (England), several emerging leaders with hearing impairments spoke out about access to communication being at the center of inclusion. We must continue to improve hearing and vision assistance, wheelchair access, and all other appropriate accommodations at our workshops and in our classes.

The work of allies is essential. And it must include dismantling stereotypes, discharging on early struggles about one’s own body and feelings about “independence” and needing help, and reaching for more interdependence.

Our constituency has done good, hard work on internalized oppression, and that has increased our confidence and leadership. Yet competition from many other priorities tends to marginalize the work on disability liberation. The reality is that fully including people with disabilities benefits everyone. For example, it’s a strong contradiction to everyone’s isolation.

El Cerrito, California, USA



LOST MINE TRAIL, BIG BEND NATIONAL PARK, TEXAS, USA • MARSHA HUNTER

“My Job Is to Remind You of the Struggle”

Diane Balseer, International Liberation Reference Person for Women

I just got removed from my teaching job at Boston University (in Massachusetts, USA). One of the reasons was the extent to which I focused on sexism. It was the main thing I taught. After I left, almost all my classes were eliminated—or changed so that the word “sexism” was taken out of them. I did protest. And other people protested. I’m telling you this to get you up in arms [ready to rebel], to get you angry, as we should be.

But women are also moving more than ever before. When I came into Co-Counseling in the early 1970s, even some of the RC books used the word “men” instead of “people.” That changed with the

women’s movement. Also, look at the leadership of Re-evaluation Counseling. There are wonderful men here. But look at the women! These are Amazon women! When we get into Co-Counseling, whether we are young or old, timid or strong, we can become Amazon women.



LAKE QUINALT, WASHINGTON, USA • KATIE KAUFFMAN

In the wide world, women are the resistance to Donald Trump. We have the contradiction of women speaking up for themselves.

We have done a lot—in teaching RC and supporting magnificent women globally. And a key piece of our work is on climate change and sexism, male domination, and sexual exploitation.

But my main job is to remind you of the struggle. Shout the word “sexism” every day (*audience shouts*). Most women and most men forget the term.

Jamaica Plain, Massachusetts, USA

The Liberation of Men

Tim Jackins, International Reference Person for the Re-evaluation Counseling Communities; and Steve Thompson, Area Reference Person for part of Seattle, Washington, USA

Tim Jackins: Neither one of us is the International Liberation Reference Person for Men. We had one once. It was very hard on him. Because of the particular distresses aimed at men, we weren’t yet in shape [in a condition] to put one man out front to lead and have others support him.

So what I’ve done is try to create better conditions. I’ve gathered eight men from around the world to lead men’s work. None of them do it in the same way. And they go to each other’s workshops and learn from each other and support each other. Steve, here, is one of them.

Steve Thompson: Yeah, I do my version. You should know that the others are Lorenzo Garcia, Rudy Nickens, Gerry Pechie, Goof Buijs, Karl Lam, Joel Nogic, and Chris Austill. We have different sets of relationships and end up in different places doing different things.

My niche seems to be RC Communities that have almost no men. I’m not joking—I really like trying to solve that puzzle. A lot of Communities have some men, and many have almost no men or the number is very small and static. I’m interested in that problem. So I’ve been doing workshops for the RC Community as a whole at which we look at this aspect of Community building, along with whatever else stops us from reaching for everyone.

Seattle, Washington, USA

An Oppression That's Aimed at Everyone

*"Jeanne D'Arc," International Liberation Reference Person
for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Queer, and Transgender People*

My group is the LGBTQ [Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Queer, and Transgender] group—and apparently also our allies (that's not official, but I kind of take charge of some of you).

In this era, Gay oppression is aimed at absolutely everyone—to make everyone smaller and more careful, tucked in [restrained], and well behaved. It has affected every single one of you. And, then, of course, it's aimed at LGBTQ folks. We get targeted and scapegoated and blamed. Basically, the system says, "You don't want to act like them, because that mistreatment is going to happen to you!"

In the current period we are living with the effects of what

happened in the past. In the past, it was illegal and "immoral" and you were "sick" if you were LGBTQ. That is what happened. That is why we are weird, and you are weird. And that's why the culture is weird about us. It's what we are all climbing out of.



CLIMATE MARCH, NEW YORK CITY, USA • ALISON EHARA-BROWN

Gay oppression is alive and well, and vicious—it kills people everywhere. And the threats against us are used to distract people from the real issues. My job is to try to make that not the case. It is also to move the stuff [distress] off the allies and the LGBTQ folks, so the historical oppression doesn't continue to make us smaller; doesn't keep us from being the big, wonderful intelligences that we are.

USA

Goodness and Respect

"David Nijinsky," Assistant International Liberation Reference Person for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Queer, and Transgender People

Goodness and respect—these are the two most important things to remember about LGBTQ [Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Queer, and Transgender] people. We are good and deserving of complete respect for who we are, and for the journey and decisions we have made that have brought us to where we are today.

It is also important for allies to remember how badly we have been hurt. Gay oppression is vicious and targets anyone and everyone who steps outside of the rigid and oppressive stereotypes attached to "male" and "female." Our group has been particularly targeted and bullied, and abused physically and sexually. We have struggled with alcohol and oth-

er drug addictions, feeling suicidal, and "mental health" oppression. Gay oppression has targeted us where it can hurt the most, denying us our families, our homes, our everyday safety, and the people we love.

It is tempting to believe that Gay oppression has ended, now that Gay marriage is legal in some countries and Gay celebrities and stories abound in the mass media. Yet around the world, even in countries where there has been progress, we LGBTQ people are still targeted, oppressed, and even killed for the decisions we have made and the stands we have taken.

Gay oppression limits everyone's lives and choices. Without oppres-

sion, we are all human. The Gay identities have been bulwarks against oppression, and their importance to people should not be taken lightly, even as we view them as temporary adaptations to an oppressive society.

Everyone needs to work more on sex, closeness, frozen needs, early isolation and defeat, and identities of all kinds, including sexual and gender identities. Making this work accessible to LGBTQ people is an important contribution RC can make to Gay liberation and ending oppression and hurt for all people. But making RC accessible has to begin with remembering our goodness and respecting who we are.

USA

“It’s About Being Alive”

*Emily Feinstein, International Liberation
Reference Person for Visual Artists*

Part of what I’ve been thinking about is giving people a chance and the room to notice and feel and discharge on the effort, the care, the joy in making things—whether it be with sound or visuals or dance or words.

It’s about being alive, and it’s so inherent. About forty thousand years ago there were the cave paintings. I don’t think they were just about communication.

People need a chance—with unfettered good attention, so that all the noises of comparison and judgment and indifference get lifted a bit—to actually notice and feel what they care about and show it.

The other thing I’ll say is that this is an interesting time. We need joy, we need life, we need connection. Art, and the way we can communicate through art, allows us to see the possibility of reality and being human, while we face and take on [engage in] the struggle.

Brooklyn, New York, USA



MANHATTAN, NEW YORK CITY, USA • DEBORAH RUBIEN

Music Has Tremendous Power

*Heather Hay, International Liberation
Reference Person for Musicians*

Music. Musique. Música. It reminds us of how good it is to be alive. It’s in our bones. It’s part of everyone.

Music has tremendous power to pull us together, to inspire—across all cultures and languages. In many Indigenous cultures, it is part of everyday living. There can never be too much music. We need it everywhere—on street corners, on buses, in elevators. It can show our human intelligence in action.

Music encourages discharge. It contradicts the places where we feel alone and hopeless. We need that. We need discharge, we need thinking, we need connection.

Music has been a powerful organizing tool throughout history—in revolutions, protests, and so on. In these times we need that kind of strong voice.

So here we go. I’ll call, you respond:

You gotta put one foot in front of the other and lead with love

(You gotta put one foot in front of the other and lead with love)

Put one foot in front of the other and lead with love

(Put one foot in front of the other and lead with love)

I know you’re scared (I know you’re scared)

And I’m scared too (and I’m scared too)

But here I am (but here I am)

Right next to you (right next to you)

You gotta put one foot in front of the other and lead with love, put one foot in front of the other and lead with love

That’s a song by Melanie DeMore, an African American singer / songwriter who wrote it the night after Trump was elected.

Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada



MIRIAM SAGER

An Opportunity to Change the Class System

Ellie Brown, International Liberation Reference Person for College and University Faculty

College and university faculty are a subset of the middle class. Our job is to “train” middle- and owning-class people and produce ideas and workers that serve the class hierarchy.

We deal with the same issues everyone is facing—classism, racism, sexism, young people’s oppression, environmental degradation, war, genocide. And we are set up to oppress a group that we were once members of—students. To do this we have to become numb to the realities of young people’s oppression and compromise our integrity.

We have often been taught to imitate the thinking of others rather than to think flexibly and for ourselves.

Many colleges and universities have adopted corporate models that exploit faculty labor and train students to be workers but not flexible thinkers. Currently the owning class is attacking empirically based knowledge in order to manipulate the working class (including middle-class workers) into supporting policies that benefit only large corporations.

In spite of the above, our position gives us an opportunity to help change the class system and bring about a just and sustainable society. We can “come home to the working class,” reclaim our role as “people’s intellectuals,” and work for all people. This can include doing the following:

- We can incorporate RC theory and practice into our programs.
- We can challenge the usual ways of defining intelligence and the usual ideas about how people acquire knowledge and which and whose knowledge matters.
- We can introduce RC to activists and other leaders, teach it one-to-one and in classes, and invite campus leaders to take RC classes in our local RC Communities.
- We can remember the value of and actively support working-class people and their work.

I’m excited to be doing this with all of you!

Wilmington, Delaware, USA

Our Commitment, and Gratitude

Jean Hamilton, International Liberation Reference Person for “Mental Health” Workers

“I promise always to remember that I am no more than an assistant to the person I am seeking to help; that nothing I do that strains my survival can be of real, long-range assistance to another; that everything I do will be directed to enhance the power, the independent thinking, and the humanness of the person I am assisting; and that the factor of approval by authority will never sway my judgment in what I do to assist.”

This is the commitment for “mental health” workers. It says very clearly who we are and what we are trying to do in our work with other people.

I want to pay tribute to Harvey Jackins. In his early work with “Merle,” Harvey stumbled on something significant and radical that changed the lives of all of us here. [See the pamphlet *How “Re-*



SUE YOSHIWARA

evaluation Counseling” Began.] He was assisting Merle as a client. He saw what worked in restoring Merle’s intelligence, functioning, and humanness. He witnessed that the discharge process was fundamental to Merle’s re-emergence. That was the start of our theory and practice.

As “mental health” workers we are also deeply grateful to Janet Foner, the International Liberation Reference Person for “Mental Health” Liberation, and for RC’s understanding of the damaging effects of psychiatric drugs on human minds.

Palo Alto, California, USA

A Force for Liberation

Marsha Hunter, International Liberation Reference Person for Lawyers

For the last two and a half years in the United States, we’ve seen outstanding examples of lawyers and judges defending human rights against government attacks. For example, the minute the U.S. government issued travel bans against certain nationalities, immigration lawyers showed up at airports to protect immigrants. And judges have over and over again decided in favor of people and humanity.

This is not new in U.S. history or in the history of other peoples. Judges and lawyers have won many victories for humanity and against greed and mistreatment. Despite our role as middle agents in a class system serving the owning class, we have been a force for liberation.

However, like everyone, we’ve been hurt by early separation and isolation. And our legal training—which involves self-reliance, enduring bad working conditions, winning at any cost, and holding everyone at arm’s length [at a distance]—has nailed in [reinforced] the isolation. Still, like all humans, we want connection, we want fairness, we want things to go well for people.

Most of you aren’t lawyers. You may not even know any. And you may not have ever thought of us as fighters for equality and justice. I’d like you to remember us as a particular part of the middle class that can offer disciplined thought and organization in support of large movements, as all of us work to stop climate change and transform society.

Cambridge, Massachusetts, USA

Bultzatu Jendeak Bere Hizkuntzaz Hitz Egin Dezadan

*Patxi Xabier Odriozola Ezeitza,
Hizkuntzetarako Ahozko Itzulpenetarako
Nazioarteko Ezaugarri Komuneko
Erreferentzia Pertsona*

[Euskaraz mintzatu eta ingelerara itzulita]

Eskerrik asko Amalurra, jende honekin guztiarekin egoten uzteagatik.

Zenbat eta lotuago egon zure hizkuntzari orduan eta errazago zaizu zu zeu izatea eta gero eta sendagoa da zure adimenarekiko konexioa (ondorioz, zu nahasteko, asimilatzeke edo manipulatzeko aukerak murrizten dira).

Une historikoa bizitzen ari gara: inoiz baino gehiago sakatzen ari zaio jendarteari hizkuntza menderatzaileak erabil ditzan (eta berarena bazter dezan). Zenbat eta gutxiagotan erabili zure hizkuntza, orduan eta zailago suertatuko zaizu asaskatzea, beraz, zure lorlatetik urrundu egiten zara.

Edonon eta edonoiz aupa dezakegu jendea bere hizkuntzaz hitz egin dezan; honetaz gain bertako hizkuntzak loturan oinarrituak daude eta horrek kapitalismoaren abiada bizia geldoazten du.

Erribera Goitia, Araba, Euskal Herria

Invite People to Speak in Their Own Languages

*Patxi Xabier Odriozola Ezeitza,
International Commonality Reference
Person for Languages and Interpreting*

[Speaking in Basque, then translating into English]

Thanks, Mother Earth, for letting me be here with you all.

The more you are connected with your language, the easier it is for you to be yourself and the stronger connection you have with your intelligence (so the probabilities are fewer that you will be confused, assimilated, or manipulated).

At the same time, we live in a historical period in which more than ever people are being pulled to speak dominant languages (and to put aside their own). And the less you speak your own language, the harder it is to discharge and the farther you are from your re-emergence.

We can always and everywhere invite people to speak in their own languages—because native Indigenous languages are based in connection, and connection slows the speed of capitalism.

Erribera Goitia, Araba, Basque Country



PROTEST, IN PORTLAND, OREGON, USA • RANDALL SMITH

This Work Is for Everybody

*Marilyn Robb, International Commonality
Reference Person for Educational Change*

I am from Trinidad and Tobago in the Caribbean. I'm the face of educational change work in the Re-evaluation Counseling Communities.

The primary goal of this work is to eliminate all the oppressions in schools and make schools joyful places for everybody who has to be in them. This means teachers' liberation, students' liberation, principals' and administrators' liberation, and the liberation of everybody else, such as parents, who passes through the schools.

Because almost all the oppressions are present in schools, all work for liberation intertwines with educational change work.

An extension of the work is reclaiming our intelligence. Therefore, the work is for everybody, not just those in schools. And in these times, these crucial times, we need to reclaim our intelligence, so that we can think well and make good decisions, so that we can have the effect we want to have.

A large number of RCers are doing this work. They are waiting to welcome you, and to help you reclaim your intelligence and make schools great for everybody.

St. Augustine, Trinidad and Tobago



ALISON EHARA-BROWN

“Be Tempted to Try This”

Chuck Esser, International Commonality Reference Person for Family Work

I have two minutes to tempt you to try family work.

Family work is one of the key blocks for building RC Communities, mostly because it's a place where we can really get in touch with and work on early hurts. When we are around young people, we don't have a chance to just fall into our old ways of doing things. If we actually follow their lead, we

start thinking differently. And we have to discharge.

Some of the most revolutionary ideas in Co-Counseling show clearly in family work—for example, that people don't change and move by being punished but rather by being connected. None of us grew up that way. We were punished when we tried to show our struggles and our confusions about the stupid

society we live in. In family work we get to actually join with young people and figure this out together.

So, be tempted. Be tempted to try this. Be tempted to try it with a friend—because you will need somebody with you to be able to discharge, as the chaos of what it means to be human and zestful surrounds you.

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, USA

We Can End Capitalism

*Julian Weissglass, International Commonality
Reference Person for Wide World Change*

When Harvey Jackins appointed me to this job twenty-two years ago, I set a goal of the world's resources being shared equally and the essential resources being preserved forever. I didn't know then, in 1997, that the resource of human beings was also in danger.

When I started my tenure as Reference Person and worked with people, what came up for them was fear and terror—resulting from previous wars, political violence, and the criticism they received as young people when they spoke about the irrationalities of society.

Almost all the problems referred to at this meeting by my intelligent colleagues have been either caused or intensified by capitalism. We need to end capitalism, or it's going to

end us—through climate change or nuclear war. And that's what my work is about.

What do we need to do? We need to organize. We need to make connections. We need to take action. We cannot wait. We can end capitalism. It is possible.



JAMAICA POND, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS, USA • MARC GOLDRING

We need to counsel on early defeats, as Tim Jackins has been encouraging us to do for the last several years. We also need to counsel on the later defeats, what I call the societal defeats, that made us realize that not only our families but also the whole society was irrational. If we do that work, we will regain our hope and our courage, and we will end capitalism.

Santa Barbara,
California, USA

We Are the Ones Who Have to Make Things Happen

*Diane Shisk, Acting International Commonality Reference Person
for the Care of the Environment (Focusing on the Climate Emergency)*

My job is to think about climate change, now called "the climate emergency."

Two climate scientists are up in the Arctic studying Arctic conditions and polar bears. They spot some polar bears in the distance. They are so excited. They go toward them—taking notes, discussing their condition. They get closer and closer. They notice it's two polar bears! The momma bear smells them, turns toward them, taps her little cub, and says, "Look dear, an endangered species!"

It's hard to find a good joke about the climate emergency. I think we all know that we are in deep doo-doo [serious trouble]. The oppressive societies that have brought us racism, classism, genocide, slavery, sexism have a new feature: it's called Global Warming, the Climate Emergency. We're all scared about it.

But we do know what to do about it. There's a huge amount of intelligent thinking about how to solve it if we do it soon. But the system that

has brought us climate change is still profiting from it, and the individuals who are profiting don't want us to make the changes in society that need to be made. The distresses that have driven them to make profits don't let them think about the danger they are causing. They actually can't think and can't change. This means that we are the ones who have to think, have to change, have to stand up and make things happen.

Seattle, Washington, USA

Spreading RC as Widely as Possible

Mike Markovits, President of the Re-evaluation Foundation

We just heard an impressive group of speakers. We want you to have access to their work. We want their work to be out there for all of Co-Counseling. And we want it brought outside of Co-Counseling. We want the theory and tools, the best thinking and practices, of Re-evaluation Counseling to be spread as widely as possible. My job is to see to it that we have the financial resources to do that.

Last year the Re-evaluation Foundation funded \$640,000 worth of grants to these and other RC leaders, so they could spread RC, develop more RC leaders, and take RC into the wide world.

That was the most we'd ever funded in one year. \$304,000 of it went toward spreading RC in Africa, where the RC Communities are growing quickly. Yay! A significant amount supported projects like Sustaining All Life, No Limits for Women, and United to End Racism that are bringing RC out into the wide world.

Thank you for paying to come tonight. Thank you for paying for your classes. Thank you for paying to attend workshops. Thank you to those of you who have donated to the Re-evaluation Foundation. We need more.

Stamford, Connecticut, USA



LOUISA FLANDER

Work

The development of complexity, the enhancement of the upward trend, can be accelerated by the thoughtful intervention of human intelligence, expressed as work. . . .

It is the lack of intelligence and the overwhelming, crushing domination of greed and profit as motivations for work in the current oppressive societies that make work a burden, a hardship, and a non-survival activity for so many humans at the present time.

Harvey Jackins
From page 156 of "The Enjoyment
of Work," in *An Unbounded Future*

The First Hindu Liberation Workshop

We had our first-ever Hindu liberation workshop! Azi Khalili, the International Liberation Reference Person for South, Central, and West Asian-Heritage People, led it as our ally. The workshop was held in Massachusetts, USA, this past July, and there were twelve of us.

Azi began with a big picture. Hinduism is a very old set of practices, traditions, and beliefs that grew out of people's need for re-emergent thinking. And right now, in RC, we are at the beginning of our liberation work.

She said that RC is not a Judeo-Christian organization. Re-emergence and rationality belong to all of us, regardless of our religious heritage or culture. She said that those of us who are not Judeo-Christian often function on the periphery of the RC organization. Particularly within Christian-dominated societies, we have been forced to assimilate, and we do a lot of translating on our own to be able to use RC.

Working on our liberation allows us to contradict internalized oppression, connect more with each other, better understand the "wallpaper" of our early distress [how our early distress seems like the wallpaper on the wall], and more fully have our minds. It also provides a strong foundation for discharging on our oppressor roles as Hindus and for working toward the elimination of caste.

There are so many ways to be Hindu. Those of us at the workshop came from many different ethnicities, regions, and language backgrounds. Azi reminded us that we are all the right Hindu—regardless of how or if we practice, or where we grew up. Any message that says we are not enough of a Hindu, or the right kind of Hindu, is a message of oppression. (Even if we don't believe in Hinduism, we've internalized that message, because it's been in our family for thousands of years.) This was not a workshop on being a better Hindu!

We can put everything about Hinduism under the light of discharge—not simply accept it as rational or as part of benign reality. There are practices that speak

to benign reality and practices that are oppressive, and we get to discharge on all of them.



OREGON COAST, OREGON, USA • KIRSTEN JOHNSON

Caste liberation is a key piece of Hindu liberation. The caste system is an oppressive, irrational structure within Hinduism in India as well as in other religions and areas of South Asia. All South Asian-heritage people need to discharge on it, because it runs so deep and wide and will require all of us to eliminate it!

Azi split us into two groups: those with Brahmin caste [highest caste] heritage and those without. All of us Hindus play an oppressor role toward those with Dalit [lowest-class] heritage. Hindus with Brahmin heritage play an oppressor role toward Hindus without Brahmin heritage.

I was surprised how at home I felt at the workshop. A few of us remarked that we could see pieces of our own distresses and experiences in every person's sessions and comments. For a long time, I had rejected my Hindu heritage, because of the oppressor role Hindus play as part of the state of India. I had been scared and sad about how Hindu identity had been used to justify oppression. At the same time, because of the racism I faced growing up as a non-Christian with Indian heritage, my earliest memories of connection are intertwined with my Hindu heritage and community.

A friend told me that she doesn't identify as Hindu because she equates it with the genocide of Sikhs in Delhi (India), where she grew up in the 1980s. Her father would give rides to neighbors, pretending to be their husband or father when they were interrogated at checkpoints, because they would have been killed if they had stayed at home. Their houses had been marked with a symbol by mobs who were targeting them—mobs who proudly proclaimed being Hindu.

For me, Hinduism meant Sunday *poojas* (services) with aunts and uncles, many of whom were atheist or agnostic. We would gather and question passages in the Gita, a sacred text within Hinduism. The adults would say that humans had written the text and that

the stories were metaphors for how to live with integrity. I would be encouraged to question and critique the messages and think about how they could apply to my daily life.

In my small community, there were families of different religions—Muslim, Jain, Sikh, Christian, and Hindu. The biggest message I received was that Hinduism meant being in loving community. I know there were other messages that I received unawares—some of them thoughtful and others oppressive. It's important that I get to discharge on all of them.

Hinduism encompasses many different experiences. Getting to share all our experiences as Hindus is a step

toward understanding our liberation work. One of my greatest hopes is to build a home that can hold the reality of my friend's experience, my own experience, and the experience of all others with Hindu heritage—toward the liberation of us all. I have dedicated my life to eliminating oppression, and I will not settle for anything less!

Anu Yadav

Los Angeles, California, USA

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

বিমুক্ত হিন্দু বৈঠকের আরো খবর

More on the Hindu Liberation Workshop

আমি আজি খালিলির হিন্দু মুক্তি বিষয় নিয়ে এক বৈঠকে [আগের লেখায় বর্ণনা রয়েছে] উপস্থিত ছিলাম। নিচে আমার বাংলায় লেখা ওয়ার্কশপের উল্লেখ্য কিছু কথা ও তারও নিচে আমার ইংরিজিতে অনুবাদ। আপনাদের জানাতে চাই যে আমার বাংলায় লেখা সহজ নয় তবে মনে করি বাংলায় লেখাটা এক বিপরীত বাস্তবতা। ভারতবর্ষে ইংরেজ ঔপনিবেশিকতার প্রভাবে বাংলা ভাষা প্রায় হারিয়ে যায় এবং আমার বর্তমান দৈনন্দিন জীবনে ইংরিজি ভাষা আত্মীকরণে আমার বাংলায় লেখাটা আরো জরুরি মনে হয়।

I attended the Hindu Liberation Workshop [see previous article]. Below is my report in Bengali, and below that is my translation of it into English. I want you to know that it is not easy to write in Bengali, but it is a contradiction to my colonial history of language oppression—which I experienced growing up in India—and to my current assimilation.

ব্রিটিশ প্রবর্তিত দেশ ভাগে আমার দাদু ঠাকুমা বাবা মা নতুন উদ্বাস্তু হয়ে তখনকার পূর্ব বাংলা (এখনকার বাংলাদেশ) ছেড়ে কোলকাতায় এসে বসতি শুরু করে। একইভাবে হিন্দু সংখ্যাগুরু ভারতবর্ষ ছেড়ে বহু মুসলমানেরা বিপরীত দিকে পূর্ব ও পশ্চিম পাকিস্তানে মুসলমান সংখ্যাগুরু দেশে পাড়ি দেয়।

continued . . .



SIFNOS, GREECE • CARYN DAVIS



BESS HERBERT

... continued

নতুন উদ্বাস্তু হয়ে আমাদের অনেক দরিদ্রতা ছিল সুতরাং ছেলে বেলায় নিজেকে বিশুদ্ধ হিন্দু মনে হতো না - যেন টাকা বেশি থাকলে বাড়িতে পূজোর ঘর সাজিয়ে হিন্দুত্ব প্রমাণ করা যায়। ছর্ভাগ্যবশত এই ব্যাপারটা ক্রমশ আমাকে আমার নিজের ধর্মে অতিথি বানিয়ে দেয়।

আজি বৈঠকে আমাদের বলে যে আমরা সব ধর্মীয় পদ্ধতিগুলো জিজ্ঞাসার আলোতে সিদ্ধান্ত নিতে পারি। এই ধারায় চিন্তা করলে আমি হিন্দু কি হিন্দু না অনেক সহজ চোখে দেখা যায়। তাহলে আমি নিজে সিদ্ধান্ত নিতে পারি কোন ধর্মীয় পদ্ধতি যুক্তিসঙ্গত এবং আমার মুক্তির জন্য প্রয়োজনীয় কি না। আজি আমাদের মনে করিয়ে দেয় অযৌক্তিক রিচুয়াল পালনের থেকে (ব্রাহ্মণ ও উচ্চবর্ণের নিপীড়ন দলিতের ওপর, নারী বা মুসলমানদের ওপর হিংস্রতা ইত্যাদি) নিপীড়ন বন্ধ করা অনেক বেশি জরুরী।

এই ওয়ার্কশপ -এ অন্য হিন্দুদের সাথে এই বিষয় নিয়ে আরো গভীর ডিসচার্জ আমাকে বোঝাতে সাহায্য করে যে আমি আর আমার ধর্মের অতিথি নই এবং আমার হিন্দু ধর্মকে আমি নিজের মতো করে দাবি করতে পারি।

বিশু চট্টোপাধ্যায়

নিউ ইয়র্ক, নিউ ইয়র্ক

মার্কিন যুক্তরাষ্ট্র

এই লেখাটা পুনরায় ছাপানো হলো আর সি-র দক্ষিণ,

মধ্য ও পশ্চিম এশিয়ার অগ্রণী ই-মেইল আলোচনা থেকে

My grandparents and parents were recent Bengali Hindu refugees who fled from Muslim-dominated East Bengal (today's Bangladesh) to Kolkata during the British-initiated Partition of India. Many Muslims fled in the opposite direction, from Hindu-dominated India to then East and West Pakistan. Before partition, it was all one India.

My parents were refugees and poor. As a child I got the message that we did not look like "ideal" Hindus. It was as if Hindu credibility came only with money and stability. I felt that I was a guest in my own religion.

At the workshop, Azi told us that we get to look at all rituals under the light of discharge. Rituals were created for practical reasons and also to oppress people. We got to look at rituals or rules like the caste system, and violence against women and Muslims. It is more important to stop all oppressions than to follow irrational rituals.

All the discharge, and being connected with other Hindus, made me think not to see the Hindu religion from a distance but rather to claim it the way I want.

Bishu Chattopadhyay

New York, New York, USA

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



“Our Goodness Is Indestructible”

I would like to share two highlights from the first-ever RC Hindu Liberation Workshop [see previous two articles].

1) Azadeh asked us to share something we had gotten from being Hindu that had helped us stay connected to reality and to our own humanity.

There’s an idea in Hinduism that there is an indestructible force in the universe. That idea has kept me rooted in benign reality. There is something that cannot be destroyed.

This weekend I went back and forth between facing my earliest hurts and noticing the goodness that is permanent in me, my family, my people, and the universe. Our goodness is indestructible.

We have been harmed by oppression and by not being able to discharge. Many people have lost and are losing their lives. But still we have not been destroyed,

and relationships are permanent. Hinduism has given me the foundation for understanding this, and RC has given me the chance to discharge about it and remember it—so I can act on benign reality from a place of power.

2) We discharged in groups based on the caste identity assigned to our families within Hinduism. We asked ourselves, “What do we like about our caste?” and “What do we need to discharge to stand as humans with all other humans and *end* the caste system?” I imagined a Hinduism liberated from the oppression of caste that would let us enjoy the best perspectives of the religion.

Thank you to Anupama for organizing the workshop and bringing us all together!

Dipti Baranwal दीप्ति बरनवाल

Los Angeles, California, USA

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

Celebrating the Hindu Festival of Rakhi

Today Hindus around the world celebrate Rakhi, also called Raksha Bandhan. (We Hindus are many—1.5 billion!) This Hindu festival symbolizes the important relationship between siblings. Sister and brother get to express their tender love for each other and remember their loving memories, loyalty, closeness, trust, and friendship, which is everlasting and pure. Rakhi is celebrated every year on Shraavan Purnima (Full Moon Day of the Hindu month of Shraavan), which generally falls in the month of August.

The ritual of Raksha Bandhan includes the sister tying the sacred thread, called *Rakhi* or *Raksha Sutra*, on her brother’s wrist and offering him sweets. After the tying of Rakhi, the brother gives his sister a gift or some money and promises to be there whenever she needs

him and protect her throughout her lifetime.

When I was young, I understood by seeing my parents how important this ritual was for us Hindus. I noticed the deep love between siblings, even when they were living in different countries and continents. Oceans apart, they still got to have each other.

My sisters and I used to tie Rakhi on our male cousins (because our brother was no longer in this world). As a female I felt a bit uncomfortable that the focus was on the boys and men. It reinforced being the second gender. I wanted Rakhi to be tied on my wrist, too.

When my daughter, son, and I celebrate Rakhi, we add a part to the ritual: my son also ties Rakhi on his sister and gives her sweets,

and she gives him money or a gift and promises eternal help and protection. We are fully Hindus even though we have added this part to the ritual.

Celebrating Rakhi this year was even stronger than in previous years because in July I had attended the (first-ever) RC Hindu Liberation Workshop. It had reminded me that I can be visible as a Hindu living in a Christian-dominated country, that I don’t have to agree to hiding that important part of my life. This week I have been telling my work colleagues about Rakhi as a way to teach them about my religion and show more of myself as a Hindu female.

Sujata Maini

Stockholm, Sweden

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

“Mental Health” Oppression and Liberation

“Mental health” oppression is hidden. Most people don’t see it as an oppression and don’t talk about it.

“Mental health” oppression holds all the other oppressions in place, by making it unacceptable to step out of expected roles. People who visibly deviate from what is “normal” are often put in mental hospitals, where they serve as an example of what can happen if, for example, you are upset and cannot hide your feelings.

The oppression scares people into conforming to the roles that society expects of them. It often leaves them quiet, numb, and passive. If people were less afraid of not being “normal” or of “losing their minds,” they might more often challenge the oppressive society and fight for a rational society not based on oppression and making money but instead on human flourishing.

Mental patients have not “lost their minds,” they are generally “stuck” in heavy distress. They have been badly hurt, usually by oppression, and haven’t been helped to heal from the hurt. (Many belong to three or more oppressed groups.) If they weren’t drugged a lot (as happens in the “mental health” system) but instead listened to patiently, awfully, and long enough, they would reveal how they had been hurt. And they would be able to release their emotions and heal from the hurt. Full recovery would likely require withdrawing from psychiatric drugs, and the healing might take a long

time, but it would become clear that they are just like everyone else underneath the drugs and distress.

patients and others who use psychiatric drugs die, on average, at a much younger age than people in the general population.



TOGO • ELLIE PUTNAM

What is “mental health” liberation? It is a movement to end “mental health” oppression.

Ending “mental health” oppression would bring many positive changes. People would be freer to be their true selves, to flourish—making it easier to win them over to liberation movements and the climate justice movement. Everyone would be more alive. We would all be having more fun.

If we can understand that nothing is wrong with mental patients, we can understand that nothing is wrong with anybody—even when, for example, someone has very different opinions from other people or behaves in unusual ways.

Psychiatric drugs cannot cure anyone. They simply cover over how people have been hurt, interfere with the natural healing process, and keep people numb. They also damage people’s bodies. They can cause physical illnesses, like tardive dyskinesia. Mental

The “mental health” system would transition to a truly helpful system in which people would heal naturally by exchanging listening with each other and releasing their emotions. Mental patients and “mental health” workers would work together cooperatively to create a system that worked well for everyone.

Janet Foner
International Liberation Reference
Person for “Mental Health” Liberation
New Cumberland, Pennsylvania, USA
(Janet died on July 24, 2019)

Liberation is a lot about being connected to each other—finding the connection and deepening and cultivating it. It is already there; it just needs to be rediscovered so that we can feel loved and safe and remember what the reality is.

Maja Borkowska

Jewish Assimilation

Here are some highlights from a recent Jewish gather-in led by Karen Rosauer in Melbourne, Victoria, Australia:

Being at the gather-in helped me see in a fresh light how assimilation and being upwardly mobile were necessary for the survival of my people.



Lara Lubitz
Elsternwick, Victoria, Australia

Because I was raised middle class, I often make something into a “job that has to be done.” I’ve been using Karen’s direction to first acknowledge any feelings I have and notice that they are from early hurtful experiences. Then I can ask myself if I’m now able to consider that it’s possible to discharge the feelings by working on early memories. Taking a step back to actually let my mind consider this interrupts some of the harsh pattern.

In my family attention was placed on how others viewed us. We were told to speak nicely and not take too much food. The attention was on the more privileged status of others. Despite having many working-class friends, we were encouraged to believe that being upwardly mobile would make us safe in some way. The resulting hurts kept me separate from myself and others. Discharging them is helping me be close to many people I was never encouraged to be close to. I am getting a big part of myself back.



Anonymous

This gather-in gave me a fresh opportunity to notice the privilege I have had as a mixed-heritage Jew. I can discharge on how I’ve had a choice about whether or not I claim my Jewish heritage. I want to claim all of who I am and notice how having the choice to assimilate has contributed to my oppressor patterns.

Victoria Kemp
Thornbury, Victoria, Australia

I was able to notice and discharge on the deep loss from assimilation in my family. Then suddenly I began to also discharge, with boldness, ease, and lightness, where I am oppressive. Suddenly I did not feel ashamed of who I am, and in that moment it was easy to fully face all of myself, to be myself. Thank you, everyone. It is only possible together.



Karen Rosauer
Malvern East, Victoria, Australia
Reprinted from the newsletter of the
Melbourne, Victoria, Australia, RC Community

An Apology

I wrote in the July *Present Time* about an incident of interrupting someone in an oppressed role who was dramatising the oppressor patterns they had internalised. It was to illustrate how every one of us, whatever our identity, is pulled to behave in a victimised role and how we need to choose to avoid it.

I made the cardinal mistake of identifying the person’s oppressed identity. This is all too likely to fuel the overwhelming Islamophobia which all of us with Christian heritage carry unawarely. I am so sorry I did this, and I apologise.

Jo Saunders
International Liberation Reference
Person for Owning-Class People
Winchester, Hants, England



STINSON BEACH, CALIFORNIA, USA • JOAN OSTROVE

Racism Is Not about Individual Flaws

Dvora Slavin recently led a workshop in Maine (USA) on ending white racism.

She reminded us that there are no “good guys” or “bad guys.” Racism is not about individual flaws but about a systemic flaw. She asked, “What if every time a human committed some oppressive deed, instead of blaming the individual the newspapers said, ‘Society fails again?’”

We couldn’t avoid having racism installed on us—we grew up in a racist, oppressive society. We are good, and we come from good people.

Deepening the connections among us as white people is a direct blow to racism. We have been trained to abandon each other when we act in racist ways. We get to interrupt the racism and figure out how to give each other a hand [some help]. If we don’t do this, we’ll be leaving it to People of the Global Majority to handle our racist behaviors.

Co-Counseling is about human connections. We did mini-sessions in which we told our partner, “You want me,” and varied which of the words we emphasized. Then we pointed to different people around the room and said, “I want you.” There was voluminous discharge.

We all want our minds to be free of racist damage. We don’t want our hearts to be closed off to anyone.

Barbara Love (the International Liberation Reference Person for African Heritage People) has encouraged us to tell our life stories as white people. Our early defeats, isolation, and discouragement can be viewed and discharged through the lens of our whiteness.

We looked at our lineage, what is precious in it, and what we want to preserve and pass on to future generations. We faced that we may never know important things about our people—and how not knowing them has set us up to appropriate other people’s cultures and lands, assimilate, and go for [pursue] upward mobility.



LOUISA FLANDER

We need to prioritize our relationships with People of the Global Majority. These relationships were stolen from us. It is our birthright to have each other. And if we are lucky, our friends of the Global Majority will tell us when we act out oppressor material [distress]. Then our job is to apologize and commit to cleaning it up. And we need each other as white people to do that work.

Maine is the whitest state in the United States. This is often viewed as “bad.” There is an attitude that being white is wrong and that Maine is insignificant. Dvora has made it her life work to build a united force of white people, and she suggested that Maine could be on the cutting edge of that force.

White RCers in Maine have been finding our way to each other—across many divisions, over many years—as we’ve worked to end white racism. As our connections grow stronger, we will be stronger allies to People of the Global Majority, particularly Native people.



Jan Froehlich
Falmouth, Maine, USA
Reprinted from the e-mail discussion
list for RC Community members

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SALT MARSH, SKIERMÛNTSEACH, FRYSLÂN, THE NETHERLANDS • ROB VENDERBOS

Discharging about Abortion

Recently in my women's support group, we worked on abortion. Three of the four of us had had an abortion. One of us had had an illegal abortion before *Roe v. Wade* (a 1973 U.S. law making abortion legal). Abortion rights are being attacked in the United States. We worked on how we need the right to have an abortion, given the sexism in our society. And we have to be clear that the fight for control of our female bodies is not over and cannot be taken for granted.

I'd like to hear from others who are working on this topic.

Beth Edmonds
Freeport, Maine, USA

I led on the topic of abortion in a recent women's support group. There were nine of us, diverse in age and in how much we had thought about abortion. Because we came to the topic from several angles, I asked a simple question for discharge: "What is your relationship with abortion?"

Our experiences included being pressured to have an abortion but not having it, struggling with infertility, working as an abortion counselor, thinking about abortion as a Catholic, and intending to have an abortion but then having a miscarriage.

I said that a fetus is a human life and that abortion is a loss of that life but also that we need to defend the right to have an abortion.

Systematic oppression is the underlying cause of unwanted pregnancies. The right to abortion does not end women's oppression, but there are many reasons to defend it:

- It is sexist to take into account only the life of the fetus and not the life of the woman.
- As females, when we're growing up, we are offered little or no attention to think about what we want in terms of sex.
- Women often have unwanted pregnancies because they've been coerced into having sex or brain-

washed into thinking they must please a man.

- A woman who might otherwise want to continue a pregnancy might choose not to because it endangers her livelihood or forces her to stay in a bad relationship with a man.
- There is rarely, if ever, enough support for a woman to raise a child and also have a full life for herself.
- Women targeted by racism, unmarried women, poor women, and young women are often more harshly judged when they have an unwanted pregnancy.

By discharging on abortion, we are fighting for a piece of intelligence that is critical in caring for the environment. When we can think clearly about reproduction, and are empowered to act on our thinking, we can decide the shape of humanity.

Amy Kalisher
Chaplin, Connecticut, USA
Reprinted from the RC e-mail
discussion list for leaders of women

“Age-Related Forgetfulness”

I will soon be seventy-five, and recently I was diagnosed with mild cognitive impairment (MCI) or, informally, “age-related forgetfulness.” On top of that I had surgery (on my foot), with general anesthesia. My memory is intact, but I am slower to come up with [think of] names or other words.

According to current thinking in the medical profession, there is a difference between MCI and dementia. The thinking is that MCI involves minor slowing of memory and speech and that dementia is a more serious disorder of the mental processes, caused by brain disease or injury, and is progressive. Apparently MCI doesn’t necessarily lead to dementia.

It is plausible that MCI, as well as dementia, is caused in part by the accumulation of undischarged distress. (Remember in *The Human Side of Human Beings* the schematic drawing of a brain with rigid patterns?)

I’ve decided to live fully, get as much information as I can, and discharge. I refuse to give up. This doesn’t mean pretending to feel good. It means living in the present while “leaning” into the future.

I remember a time in my early fifties when I was getting a haircut and the young woman cutting my hair was reprimanded for not having done something. Her boss asked her why she hadn’t done it, and her response was simply, “I forgot.” That was the end of the story. No feelings about it. It was a simple error, and her boss simply walked away. If she had been over fifty, the result would have been different.

As a person ages, simple everyday forgetfulness takes on [assumes] a new meaning. It restimulates the observer into thinking that the “forgetful” person must have “dementia.” Unlike that of the young woman, my forgetfulness is not easily dismissed. People close to me treat me as a full human being, and I treasure that, but others often don’t know what to do with me. They don’t have patience when I take a while to remember something. (My doctor says I haven’t lost any of my memory; it just takes me a while to remember.) They hide their distress and discomfort by ignoring me, when what I can use is patience and love. I am the same me; just a bit slower. My intelligence is very much intact.

My forgetfulness is at an early stage, and if all goes well it should not worsen. Am I scared? Sure! But I have pioneered health-related work in RC for many years, and

I intend to keep doing that—this time with memory as my target. I am currently on sabbatical from my role as International Liberation Reference Person for Elders, but I am discharging intensely with the goal of regaining my full abilities.

Recently I had an Intensive [twenty hours of one-way Re-evaluation Counseling, for a fee] at Re-evaluation Counseling Community Resources, in Seattle, Washington, USA. I spent the entire week discharging on early defeats, and at the end of the week life looked different. I am now more pleased with myself and happier. My goal is to refuse to give up. I will continue to discharge on my early defeats.

I challenge those of you who are elders to work on your fears of growing older and how aging can affect us. Set up elders’ groups and take them seriously. Read Harvey Jackins’s pamphlet *Is Death Necessary?* Then discharge on whatever you need to and stay with it—into a long and healthy life, with lots of love.

Pam Geyer
Bellaire, Texas, USA

Dishonesty and Cowardice

A few generations back, patterns of dishonesty and cowardice were publicly condemned by the society.

The deterioration of the current form of society (capitalism) has led to the deliberate promulgation of dishonesty and cowardice—the population can be more easily exploited if we are dominated by timidities and rationalizations.

Harvey Jackins
From page 43 of “Integrity and
Courage,” in *An Unbounded Future*

It Is Okay to Be Angry

The recent shootings in El Paso (Texas, USA) were outrageous. The direction from Lorenzo Garcia (the International Liberation Reference Person for Chicanos/as) to work on our feelings of outrage, grief, and fear is important. And as someone whose people have been colonised, I am reminded of how difficult that work can feel.

Over time I have felt a weariness from the oppression, a feeling of "here we go again," that makes it difficult to remember to take the feelings to sessions. It seems easier to go numb and not look at each instance of the oppression.

Behind this there is also a confusion about whether I have the right to be outraged. All the feelings of worthlessness and insignificance make it hard to remember that what happened was actually an outrage and that it's okay to be furious about it.

And then there are feelings of not wanting to upset the people in the oppressor group, especially the ones who are trying to be allies. Sometimes these feelings come out of feelings of worthlessness, and sometimes out of a fear of making things worse. The oppression has taught us to not expect to win, to not expect our allies to work on their oppressor distress, to not take on [undertake] the work of ending the oppression.

For me, feelings of powerlessness come up when I hear members of the oppressor group speak about my group with great confidence and certainty that what they are saying is the only position to take. I can't find the words to answer what they are saying.

Sometimes it is easier to work on the grief about the oppression than to look at my anger about it. Looking at the history of it sometimes feels too hard. Maybe we deserved it. Maybe we were too stupid. Maybe we're exaggerating how bad it was. Maybe the things they said about us are true.

It's important to recognise that all these reactions are part of the internalised oppression and to decide not to act on them.

What was done was outrageous. It is okay to be angry about it. It is okay to feel righteous indignation. It is okay to make demands on oppressor groups. It is okay to expect them to do the work at their end.

Seán Ruth

*International Liberation Reference
Person for Middle-Class People*

Stillorgan, County Dublin, Ireland

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



BEIJING, CHINA • DIANE SHISK

Relatives of "Mental Health" System Survivors

Our second Relatives of "Mental Health" System Survivors Workshop was held in April 2018. Many participants had never been to a "mental health" liberation workshop before, I assume because they had felt that "mental health" liberation was about their relative, not about them. We focused on how they had been affected by what happened to their relative.

Watching a relative get stuck in the "mental health" system and have a harder and harder time is part of "mental health" oppression. Children can be put in the position of taking care of their parent. Having a relative on psychiatric drugs can put people in the oppressor role when they are responsible for making their relative take the drugs.

Janet Foner

*International Liberation Reference
Person for "Mental Health" Liberation
New Cumberland, Pennsylvania, USA
(Janet died on July 24, 2019)*

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



Working on Anti-Semitism during Lent

This winter one of my dear Jewish Co-Counseling buddies and I, who are also longtime friends outside of RC, got involved in an old familiar conflict. He suggested that I spend some session time on anti-Semitism.

I had been thinking about what to “give up” for Lent, so I decided to use that time of prayer, reflection, and greater awareness to discharge where my patterns of anti-Semitism continue to influence me and our friendship.

Over the next weeks I had many sessions in which I told stories about how my parents had related to the Jewish families in our neighborhood and how confusing their upsets had been for me. I had made friends with my Jewish peers and had noticed where we had different beliefs and practices, but I had also recognized that everyone appreciated kindness, being included, and having fun. I had seen that they wanted to fit in and be liked, just like I did. My parents desperately wanted to be liked but had struggled with old prejudices. They had viewed our Jewish neighbors with suspicion and sometimes targeted them with anger and excluded them.

I also worked on oppressor patterns that make me feel disconnected from myself as a man, a white person, and a Catholic. I remembered when I had learned about the RC goal to end racism. I had been enthusiastic, but clueless about where to begin. Thankfully, I had been Co-Counseling regularly with a woman of the Global Majority and had learned about a racist pattern connected with my feeling bad about myself: I would often take her actions personally. Recognizing this was a step toward noticing any oppressive pattern, including anti-Semitism!

My re-evaluations from my Lenten counseling sessions included realizing that I feel fear all the time and always have. In one session, when I was feeling bad about myself and attributing it to a recent interaction with a friend, my direction was, “I don’t need (my friend), or anyone else, for me to feel afraid.” A lot of laughter followed. I became aware of an old pattern I had grown up with and dragged through my adult life. Yes, my feelings are mine.

I also decided repeatedly to give up being a victim—to take charge, to be an active ally and friend in all situations. This contradicted feelings of disconnection. I was reminded that I love many Jews and would never dream of hurting them.

It wasn’t long before I had a chance to be helpful to my friend, and I was much more able to be the friend I wanted to be. He suggested that I write about my experience.

Steve Banbury

Albany, New York, USA

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



CAROL WILBURN

The Leverage to Choose Differently

At the recent Ashkenazi Jews Eliminating White Racism Workshop, I worked on a memory from kindergarten. I had been playing all day with a Mizrahi Jewish girl. On our way home, she suddenly showed fear and insecurity, and I became angry and impatient with her for showing what I now know was internalized racism. In my session, I realized that I had actually been mad at her for leaving me—in her mind. My racism had come from feeling abandoned by her.

I lose patience around People of the Global Majority when the hurts of internalized racism show, because I take it personally. I feel like they are choosing their distress over being close to me. I could cry about this for a long time.

That I get lost in my own hurts around People of the Global Majority and pin my feelings of abandonment on them is a way that I act out my own racism. Understanding this gives me the leverage to choose differently.

Ela Thier

New York, New York, USA

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

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*, including 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
- Articles about teaching RC and outlines for teaching fundamentals classes, in Spanish
- An ever-growing collection of back issues of *Present Time* (currently 1974 to 2014)
- "Today's Thought"—a short daily thought from a Re-evaluation Counseling perspective
- Recent Draft Liberation Policy Statements and Climate Change Draft Programs
- Care of the Environment materials and information
- Resources for Human Liberation

New Website for People New to RC

A new 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.

Online Fundamentals Class

An online fundamentals of Co-Counseling class is available for people who are interested in learning more about RC. Active participation in the class is reserved for those who do not have fundamentals classes in their geographical region. Learning Re-evaluation Counseling via the Internet is much more difficult than learning it in a regular class and requires a higher level of commitment to the learning process and to regular Co-Counseling sessions. For more information, please see the RC website at <www.rc.org/onlineclass>.

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 the United Nations Climate Change 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 number of electronic mailing lists for particular categories of RCers. These lists are for active members of the RC Community, and most of them are for active leaders only. (If English is your first language, part of being an active member of the Community is subscribing to *Present Time*.) If you would like to subscribe to a list, first e-mail the person in charge of the list, then forward that person's approval, your request, your contact information (phone number, mailing address, city, state, postal code, country), and whether or not you have a subscription to *Present Time*, directly to the International Reference Person at <ircc@rc.org>. Read the information below for the various lists and whom you need to contact for approval to subscribe to them.

RC Community Members: <rc@mail.rc.org>.

Contact any Area, Regional, or Liberation Reference Person.

RC Community Members Involved in Eliminating Racism: <uer@mail.rc.org>. Contact any Area, Regional, or Liberation Reference Person. (This list is for trading information on the theory and practice of using RC in the fight to eliminate racism, both inside and outside of the RC Community.)

Regional Reference Persons: <rrp@mail.rc.org>.

Contact the International Reference Person at <ircc@rc.org>.

Area Reference Persons: <arp@mail.rc.org>.

Contact the International Reference Person at <ircc@rc.org>.

International Liberation and Commonality Reference Persons: <ilrp@mail.rc.org>. Contact the International Reference Person at <ircc@rc.org>.

RC Teachers: <teachers@mail.rc.org>. Contact the International Reference Person at <ircc@rc.org>.

Editors of RC or non-RC publications: <editors@mail.rc.org>. Contact the International Reference Person at <ircc@rc.org>.

Translators of RC Literature: <translators@mail.rc.org>. Contact Truus Jansen, Rational Island Publishers Translation Coordinator, at <ircc@rc.org>.

Leaders of African Heritage People: <black@mail.rc.org>. Contact Barbara Love, International Liberation Reference Person for African Heritage People, at <bjlove.rc@gmail.com>.

Leaders of Artists: <artists@mail.rc.org>. Contact Emily Feinstein, International Liberation Reference Person for Visual Artists, at <emsusanf@gmail.com>.

Leaders of Atheists: <atheists@mail.rc.org>.

Contact Allan Hansen at <hansen@rc.org>.

Leaders in the Care of the Environment: <environment@mail.rc.org>. Contact Jack Manno at <jpmanno@esf.edu>.

Leaders of Catholics: <catholic@mail.rc.org>. Contact Joanne Bray, International Liberation Reference Person for Catholics, at <jmbray@aol.com>.

Leaders of College and University Faculty: <colleagues@mail.rc.org>. Contact Ellie Brown, International Liberation Reference Person for College and University Faculty, at <ebrown@wcupa.edu>.

Leaders on Disability, Chronic Illness, and Health: <health-disability@mail.rc.org>. Contact Marsha Saxton, International Liberation Reference Person for People with Disabilities, at <marsax@wid.org>.

Leaders of East and Southeast Asian- and Pacific Islander-Heritage People: <asian@mail.rc.org>. Contact Francie Chew, International Liberation Reference Person for Chinese-Heritage People, at <franciechew@gmail.com>.

Leaders of Educational Change: <education@mail.rc.org>. Contact Marilyn Robb, International Commonality Reference Person for Educational Change, at <joyfulplace@yahoo.com>.

Leaders of Elders: <elders@mail.rc.org>. Contact Pam Geyer, International Liberation Reference Person for Elders, at <pgeyer@medcetera.com>.

Leaders of Family Work: <family-work@mail.rc.org>. Contact Chuck Esser, International Commonality Reference Person for Family Work, at <ckesser1@gmail.com>.

RC Community Members Interested in **Fundraising for RC**: <fundraising@mail.rc.org>. Contact Mike Markovits, President, Re-evaluation Foundation, at <mjmarkovits@gmail.com>.

Leaders of **Irish-Heritage People**: <irish@mail.rc.org>. Contact Sheila Fairon, Regional Reference Person for Northern Ireland, at <fairon@fastmail.fm>.

Leaders of **Jews**: <jewish@mail.rc.org>. Contact Cherie Brown, International Liberation Reference Person for Jews, at <nabiinc@aol.com>.

Leaders of **Latinos/as and Chicanos/as**: <latino@mail.rc.org>. Contact Lorenzo Garcia, International Liberation Reference Person for Chicanos/as, at <garcialore51@gmail.com>.

Leaders of **Lawyers**: <lawyers@mail.rc.org>. Contact Marsha Hunter, International Liberation Reference Person for Lawyers, at <m-hunter@comcast.net>.

Leaders of **Men**: <men@mail.rc.org>. Contact the International Reference Person at <ircc@rc.org>.

Leaders of **“Mental Health” Liberation**: <mental-health@mail.rc.org>. Contact Glenn Johnson, at <glenn@glennwjohnson.com>.

Leaders of **Middle-Class People**: <middle-class@mail.rc.org>. Contact Seán Ruth, International Liberation Reference Person for Middle-Class People, at <seangruth@gmail.com>.

Leaders of **Muslim Liberation**: <group@mail.rc.org>. Contact Azadeh Khalili, International Liberation Reference Person for South, Central, and West Asian-Heritage People, at <azikhalili@gmail.com>.

Leaders of **Native Americans**: <natives@mail.rc.org>. Contact Marcie Rendon, International Liberation Reference Person for Native Americans, at <MRendon70362@gmail.com>.

Leaders of **Owning-Class People**: <owning-class@mail.rc.org>. Contact Jo Saunders, International Liberation Reference Person for Owning-Class People, at <jo.saunders@btinternet.com>.

Leaders of **Parents**: <parents@mail.rc.org>. Contact Marya Axner, International Liberation Reference Person for Parents, at <maryaaxner@gmail.com>.

Leaders of **Protestants**: <protestants@mail.rc.org>. Contact Barbara Boring at <blboring@rc.org>.

Leaders of **Raised-Poor People**: <raised-poor@mail.rc.org>. Contact Gwen Brown, International Liberation Reference Person for Raised-Poor People, at <gbbrown@udel.edu>.

Leaders of **South, Central, and West Asian-Heritage People**: <scw-asians@mail.rc.org>. Contact Azadeh Khalili, International Liberation Reference Person for South, Central, and West Asian-Heritage People, at <azikhalili@gmail.com>.

Leaders of **Union Activists**: <unions@mail.rc.org>. Contact Joanie Parker, International Liberation Reference Person for Union Activists, at <Joanieparker7@gmail.com>.

USA Political Issues: <usa-issues@mail.rc.org>. Contact Julian Weissglass, International Commonality Reference Person for Wide World Change, at <julian@weissglass.net>.

Leaders of **Wide World Change**: <wwc@mail.rc.org>. Contact Julian Weissglass, International Commonality Reference Person for Wide World Change, at <julian@weissglass.net>.

Leaders of **Women**: <women@mail.rc.org>. Contact Diane Balsler, International Liberation Reference Person for Women, at <dibalsler@comcast.net>.

Leaders of **Working-Class People**: <working-class@mail.rc.org>. Contact Dan Nickerson, International Liberation Reference Person for Working-Class People, at <dnickerson122@comcast.net>.

Leaders of **Young Adults**: <young-adults@mail.rc.org>. Contact Emily Bloch, International Liberation Reference Person for Young Adults, at <bloch.emily@gmail.com>.

Leaders of **Young People**: <young@mail.rc.org>. Contact Elvin Landaeus Csizmadia, International Liberation Reference Person for Young People, at <elvin@landaeus.com>.



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*. 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 her or his 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 her or to him, 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 BEFORE & AFTER BIRTH AS WELL AS DURING THE BIRTHS):
CATHERINE FISCHER
ANN ARBOR, MI USA
Tel. +1-734-395-5244 e-mail: catherinedfischer@gmail.com

CLERGYPERSONS:
BRIAN SMEATON
LETTERKENNY, COUNTY DONEGAL, IRELAND
Tel. +353-74-91 37917 e-mail: smeatonbrian@gmail.com

CONSTRUCTION WORKERS:
ELIZABETH SKIDMORE
ROXBURY, MA USA
Tel. +1-617-780-6792 e-mail: eskidmore2@aol.com

EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATORS:
DAN CORLEY
PROVIDENCE, RI USA
Tel. +1-401-467-9709 e-mail: dcorley@communityprep.org

ELECTED OFFICIALS, CURRENT AND FORMER:
RUTH ATKIN
PACIFIC TIME ZONE, USA
Tel. +1-510-653-6003, +1-510-915-0167 e-mail: ratkin1@aol.com

FARMERS:
KATE POTTER
FULLERTON, CA USA
Tel. +1-309-338-7876 e-mail: potter_kate@hotmail.com

FUNDRAISERS:
ROEWEN WISHART
SILVERWATER, NSW AUSTRALIA
Tel. +61 449 659 769 e-mail: roewen.wishart@gmail.com

MANAGERS, ADMINISTRATORS, AND EXECUTIVES:
MIKE MARKOVITS
STAMFORD, CT USA Tel. +1-203-536-5413
e-mail: mjmrkvt@aol.com, mjmarkovits@gmail.com

OCCUPATIONAL THERAPISTS:
JAN FROEHLICH
FALMOUTH, ME USA
Tel. +1-207-781-5793 e-mail: jfroehlich1@me.com

PHYSICAL SCIENTISTS:
JEFFREY HINKLEY
YORKTOWN, VA USA
Tel. +1-757-867-7909 e-mail: polymers1@aol.com

PHYSICIANS:
STEVE BROMER
OAKLAND, CA USA
Tel. +1-415-309-8912 e-mail: sbromer@mac.com

BACKGROUNDS AND AVOCATIONS

ADULT CHILDREN OF ALCOHOLICS:
WENDE WOOD
SEATTLE, WA USA
Tel. +1-206-783-7253 e-mail: wendej.wood@gmail.com

ARAB-HERITAGE PEOPLE:
BETSY NAJJAR
ALBUQUERQUE, NM USA
Tel. +1-505-242-4646 e-mail: betsynajjar@gmail.com

ASIAN-HERITAGE PEOPLE IN AUSTRALIA:
RIE SHIRAISHI
ANNANDALE, NSW AUSTRALIA
Tel. +61-2-9692-9628 e-mail: deanrie@ozemail.com.au

BLACK “MENTAL HEALTH” LIBERATION ACTIVISTS IN ENGLAND:
JENNY MARTIN
BIRMINGHAM, ENGLAND
Tel. +44 121 240 0998 e-mail: families52@hotmail.com

BLIND AND VISUALLY IMPAIRED PEOPLE:
DAN SIMPSON
LANSDOWNE, PA USA
Tel. +1-610-622-3212, +1-267-767-3689 (cell)
e-mail: dansimpson@comcast.net

BUILDERS OF RURAL/SMALL-TOWN RC:
MARGO HITTLEMAN
GROTON, NY USA
Tel. +1-607-533-7501 e-mail: mjh17@cornell.edu

CAJUNS:
ELAINE CLEMENT
SAINT MARTINVILLE, LA USA
Tel. +1-337-257-1592 e-mail: cadienne@gmail.com

CORNISH LIBERATION:

CLIVE MARTIN
CALSTOCK, CORNWALL
Tel. +44-1822 833680 e-mail: gurumayi.om@virgin.net

DIVORCED PEOPLE:

MARILYN ROBB
ST AUGUSTINE, TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO
Tel. +1-868-735-6377, +1-301-202-9960
e-mail: joyfulplace@yahoo.com

ESPERANTO SPEAKERS:

GEORGE PARTLOW
DOUGLAS, AK AND YUMA, AZ USA
Tel. +1-907-364-3309, +1-928-581-8146
e-mail: pricerbumanto@hotmail.com

GENTILE ALLIES OF JEWS:

DORANN VAN HEESWIJK
LONDON, ENGLAND
Tel. +44-207-622-6493 e-mail: vhdorann@gmail.com

HEALTH AND WELL BEING:

PAM GEYER
BELLAIRE, TX USA
Tel. +1-713-666-7300 e-mail: pgeyer@medcetera.com

INTERSECTION OF SCIENCE AND RC:

ALLAN HANSEN
CYPRESS, CA USA
Tel. +1-714-875-8870 e-mail: hansen@rc.org

INTERSEX PEOPLE AND PARENTS OF INTERSEX CHILDREN:

"PRSANK"
e-mail: prsank@mail.com

IRISH-HERITAGE US'ERS:

RITA DAVERN
SAINT PAUL, MN USA
Tel. +1-651-698-8498 e-mail: ritadavern@yahoo.com

MAORI:

HEMAIMA CARKEEK WIREMU
OTAKI, AOTEAROA/NEW ZEALAND
Tel. +64-6-364-6512, +64-21 100 4120
e-mail: hcwiremu@gmail.com

"MENTAL HEALTH" LIBERATION IN AUSTRALIA:

CATHY PICONE
HOVE, SA AUSTRALIA
Tel. +61-8-8296-4357 e-mail: cpicone@westnet.com.au

MIDDLE-CLASS JEWS:

AMY LEOS-URBEL
NORTHAMPTON, MA USA
Tel. +1-413-584-2515 e-mail: aleos-urbel@comcast.net

MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS, PEOPLE WITH:

KEITH GLASSMAN
COSTA MESA, CA USA
Tel. +1-714-444-2618 e-mail: kgrc2012@gmail.com

ORPHANAGE SURVIVORS:

LEAH BLACKBURN
PORTLAND, OR USA
Tel. +1-503-320-9563 e-mail: lvblack@comcast.net

PEOPLE COUNSELING ON MALE CIRCUMCISION:

RAMI BEN-MOSHE
KFAR-SABA, ISRAEL
Tel. +972-9-7651-343 e-mail: ram_ben@netvision.net.il

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AUSTIN, TX USA
Tel. +1-512-659-4447 e-mail: zenhamk@aol.com

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Tel. +1-607-227-9532 e-mail: beth.bannister@yahoo.com

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*The following people have agreed to be Translation Coordinators
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Acholi:

Charles Owona
Gulu, Uganda
+256-782742361
alfredoryem@gmail.com

Amharic:

Mesfin Taye Woldegiorgis
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
+251-91 099 2565
mtayewg@gmail.com

Arabic:

Iman Awadh
London, England
+44 7951-500-609
iawadh@gmail.com

Basque:

Juan Gabriel Urriategi
Antzuola, Gipuzkoa,
Basque Country
(between France & Spain)
+34-943-766020
j.g.urrio@gmail.com

Chinese:

Chen Pingjun
Beijing, P.R. China
+86-10-84648277
chenpj@hotmail.com

Danish:

Susanne Langer
København NV, Denmark
+45-24647311
susanne@susannelanger.dk

Dutch:

Marijke Wilmans
Groningen, The Netherlands
+31-50-312-2338
marijkewilmans@hetnet.nl

Farsi:

Vida Mozafarieh
Tehran, Iran
+98-21-22604145
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Filipino:

Melanie Catalan Jimenez
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Finnish:

Kaisli Syrjänen
Finland
+358-400-711206
kaisli@hotmail.com

French:

Régis Courtin
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+33-155198386
regis.courtin@obspm.fr

Fries:

Adalgard Willemsma
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The Netherlands
+31-58-2163474
adalgard.willemsma@
gmail.com

Galician:

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Moaña, Pontevedra, Spain
+34-986-313996
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German:

Matthias Wentzlaff-Eggebert
Mainz, Germany
+49 6131 86456,
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Greek:

Vivi Katou
Athens, Greece
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Hausa:

Chioma Okonkwo
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Hebrew:

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Hungarian:

Molnár Gabriella
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Italian:

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Japanese:

Emma Parker
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Kiswahili:

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Lithuanian:

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Norwegian:

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Polish:

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Romanian:

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Russian:

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Swedish:

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Tamil:

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Yoruba:

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Rational Island Publishers
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Truus Jansen
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<p>NO ANCESTORS, NO DESCENDANTS (53 minutes) with Harvey Jackins <i>A short talk and several demonstrations. (The notion that we "descend" from each other can be dispensed with.)</i></p>	<p>DVD 214</p>	<p>ELIMINATING WHITE RACISM NOW (1 hour, 10 minutes) with Tim Jackins <i>A talk on the central importance of eliminating white racism, and a demonstration with an African-heritage woman, on racism.</i></p>	<p>DVD 226</p>
<p>FRONTIER COMMITMENTS (2 hours) with Harvey Jackins <i>Advanced theory, and six demonstrations, on the "frontier" commitments.</i></p>	<p>DVD 215</p>		

<p>“PAIRED COMMITMENTS” (1 hour, 37 minutes) with Harvey Jackins <i>Forming “paired commitments” (in which two people make a lifelong commitment to each other and take responsibility for each other’s re-emergence).</i></p>	<p>DVD 227</p>
<p>“THE UNDERSTATEMENT” (55 minutes) with Harvey Jackins <i>A talk on Understatements and three demonstrations illustrating the use of them.</i></p>	<p>DVD 228</p>
<p>UNDERSTATEMENTS (AND MORE), IN SPANISH AND ENGLISH (2 hours) with Harvey Jackins <i>Several demonstrations using Understatements.</i></p>	<p>DVD 229</p>
<p>THE ENDING OF RACISM (1 hour, 33 minutes) <i>Video interviews with twenty Co-Counselors representing African-heritage, Asian-heritage, Chicano/a, Indigenous, Latino/a, Mizrahi, Palestinian, and mixed-heritage people, showing the effects of racism on their lives and the effectiveness of RC in ending racism. A project of United to End Racism.</i></p>	<p>DVD 230</p>
<p>THE ROLE OF WHITE PEOPLE IN ENDING RACISM (1 hour) with Tim Jackins <i>A talk at a United to End Racism workshop at the NGO Forum of the United Nations World Conference Against Racism, in Durban, South Africa, August 2001.</i></p>	<p>DVD 231</p>
<p>UNITED TO END RACISM (1 hour, 24 minutes) <i>Undertakings and experiences of United to End Racism at the United Nations World Conference Against Racism, in Durban, South Africa, August 2001.</i></p>	<p>DVD 232</p>
<p>REACHING NEW PEOPLE WITH OUR WORK TO END RACISM (1 hour, 51 minutes) <i>Ten- to fifteen-minute segments from ten of the United to End Racism workshops at the United Nations World Conference Against Racism, in Durban, South Africa, August 2001.</i></p>	<p>DVD 233</p>
<p>WORKING FOR MEN’S LIBERATION (1 hour, 48 minutes) with Tim Jackins <i>Men’s panels, two demonstrations, and several talks on applying RC theory to men’s liberation.</i></p>	<p>DVD 234</p>
<p>VIEWS OF RC 2005: TALKS FROM THE PRE-WORLD AND WORLD CONFERENCES (4 hours) with Tim Jackins <i>Two-DVD set of talks, for \$30.</i></p>	<p>DVD 235</p>
<p>RC LEADERS, ON CLASS ISSUES (19 minutes) <i>Talks by Tim Jackins and the four International Liberation Reference Persons who lead class-based constituencies.</i></p>	<p>DVD 236 (RCTU 13)</p>
<p>HARVEY JACKINS FOUNDATION SET 1 <i>A set of three DVDs of Harvey’s talks and demonstrations: DVD numbers 2, 8, and 9 (see descriptions under those numbers). \$25</i></p>	<p>DVD SET 1</p>

<p>HARVEY JACKINS FOUNDATION SET 2 <i>A set of three DVDs of Harvey’s talks and demonstrations: DVD numbers 204, 225, and 228 (see descriptions under those numbers). \$25</i></p>	<p>DVD SET 2</p>
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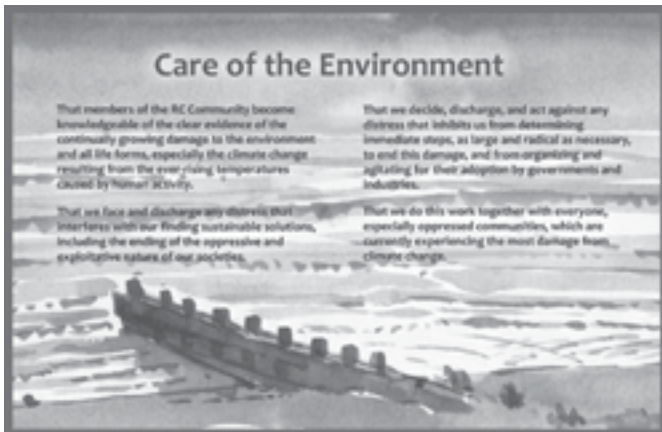
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REFERENCE PERSONS FOR ORGANIZED AREAS

AUSTRALIA

AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

Canberra
INGRID MCKENZIE
LYNEHAM, ACT
Tel. +61-2-6249-6684
e-mail: ingrid@newlives.com.au

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

South & East of Adelaide
ANNE THOMPSON
ADELAIDE, SA
Tel. +61-408-806-573
e-mail: annephillynne@gmail.com

North & West of Adelaide

CYNTHIA LAWSON
WEST CROYDON, SA
Tel. +61-423-775-527
e-mail: cynthia.lawson@mail.com

VICTORIA

Melbourne
LOUISA FLANDER
MELBOURNE, VIC
Tel. +61-407-831-676
e-mail: louisa@netspace.net.au

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Perth Coastal
BARBARA FREEMAN
PERTH, WA
Tel. +61-8-9337-8818
e-mail: barbfree53@gmail.com

Perth Eastern
DEE PARRY
PERTH, WA
Tel. +61-8-9274-3129

BASQUE COUNTRY (EUSKAL HERRIA)

(between France & Spain)

Basque Country II
JOSEBA INAKI MATA HOZ
ANTZUOLA, GIPUZKOA
Tel. +34 943 766567
e-mail: i-mata-hoz@outlook.com

CANADA

BRITISH COLUMBIA

North Shore/Bowen Island
MARY KLAUSEN
NORTH VANCOUVER, BC
Tel. +1-604-255-9884
e-mail: mary.klausen@gmail.com

Vancouver

ELAINE SHEARER
VANCOUVER, BC
Tel. +1-604-653-1115
e-mail: elaine.shearer@me.com

Okanagan/Shuswap

MARTHA WICKETT
SALMON ARM, BC
Tel. +1-250-463-5315
e-mail: mfw@shaw.ca

MANITOBA

Winnipeg
DARLENE DANIELS
WINNIPEG, MB
Tel. +1-204-783-7723
e-mail: ddaniels76@hotmail.com

ONTARIO

Toronto
PHILIP REES
TORONTO, ON
Tel. +1-416-910-7584
e-mail: toronto.rc.community@gmail.com

CHINESE MAINLAND

BEIJING MUNICIPALITY

Beijing
MA LIHONG
BEIJING
Tel. +86-130-5115-2890
e-mail: rcmalihong@163.com

CONGO, DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF

DR Congo
WILLY TUKUYI LUKANGA
KINSHASA PROVINCE
Tel. +243 972373193
e-mail: lukangawilli2016@gmail.com

DENMARK

København
TRINE MARIBO
CARSTENSEN
KØBENHAVN N
Tel. +45-35-35-79-86
e-mail: trinem@msn.com

ENGLAND NORTH EAST

Northumbria
RALPH DOMINIC
PETTINGILL
NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE
Tel. +44-79 0515 8658
e-mail: ralphpettingill@gmail.com

NORTH WEST

Manchester & Neighbours
SUE COOPER
HIGH PEAK, DERBYSHIRE
Tel. +44 16 6374 6621
e-mail: suecoopernewmills@hotmail.com

Merseyside

LINDA BOYNE
LIVERPOOL, MERSEYSIDE
Tel. +44 151 722 2937
e-mail: linda_boyne@hotmail.com

YORKSHIRE & THE HUMBER

North Yorkshire (Acting ARP)
ADAM MYERS
YORK
Tel. +44-1904 636055
e-mail: adammyers31@hotmail.com

Leeds

RUTH STEINBERG
LEEDS, YORKSHIRE
Tel. +44-11-3268-9994
e-mail: ruthsteinberg.steinberg@gmail.com

EAST MIDLANDS

Nottingham
ANICA GAVRILOVIC
NOTTINGHAM
Tel. +44-115-922-4389
e-mail: anica.gavrilovic@ntlworld.com

Leicester

CEE MARTIN
LEICESTER
Tel. +44-11-6259-3563
e-mail: ceemartin@aol.com

LONDON

Islington to Barnet (London)
OLIVIA VINCENTI
LONDON
Tel. +44 20 8883 9230
e-mail: olivia.vincenti@btinternet.com

Camden & Holloway (London)

TRICIA CLARKE
LONDON
Tel. +44 78 0390 9058
e-mail: tricia.clarke@btinternet.com

Northwest London

ELIZABETH MARTINDALE
LONDON
Tel. +44-20-8960-5393
e-mail: ms.elizabeth.martindale@gmail.com

West London

BARBARA HARWOOD
LONDON
Tel. +44 78 9038 6854
e-mail: barbaraharwood1944@gmail.com

Southwark & South Lewisham (London)

GALE BURNS
LONDON
Tel. +44-18-291-4108
e-mail: josgale@jgdburns.org.uk

SOUTH EAST

Oxford City
ROMILLY GREGORY
OXFORD
Tel. +44-18 6551 0037
e-mail: romilly.gregory@btopenworld.com

Bucks (Acting ARP)

CHRISTINE DIAMANTOPOULOS
MILTON KEYNES
Tel. +44-14 9486 8299
e-mail: sparklingmind@hotmail.com

SOUTH WEST

Bristol
BILLY FORSYTHE
SOUTHVILLE, BRISTOL
Tel. +44-11-79393517
e-mail: wjforsythe@hotmail.com

Wessex

PAMELA JEFFERIES
POOLE, DORSET
Tel. +44-12 0260 1395
e-mail: pamelajefferies@googlemail.com

ESWATINI, THE KINGDOM OF

(formerly Swaziland)

Madonsa Township
BAFANA MATSEBULA
MBABANE
Tel. +268-7-602-5295 (c)
+268-2347-2029 (h)
e-mail: mngani7@gmail.com

Manzini Central

NTOMBENKULU MARITHA
MHLANGA
MBABANE
Tel. +268-7-612-6442 (c)
+268-505-2172
e-mail: ntekati@gmail.com

ETHIOPIA

Addis Ababa
MESFIN TAYE
WOLDEGIORGIS
ADDIS ABABA
Tel. +251-91 099 2565
e-mail: mtayewg@gmail.com

FINLAND

Helsinki
ELINA MALKAMAKI
HELSINKI
Tel. +358-407-549-491
e-mail: hannaelinamalkamaki@gmail.com

GHANA

Accra
BAMANA-YANGOU
(URBAIN BAMANA)
ACCRA
Tel. +233-244-381-060
e-mail: urbainbamana@yahoo.com

Laterbiokorshie-Accra

YVONNE NAA DEDEI
AMMAH
ACCRA-NORTH
Tel. +233-243-156880
e-mail: royalnaa@yahoo.com

GREECE

Athens
MARGIE DOYLE
PAPADOPOULOU
KANTZA
Tel. +30-210-665-8985
e-mail: margiedp@otenet.gr

INDIA

MAHARASHTRA

Mumbai
HOMI BILIMORIA
MUMBAI
Tel. +91-22-2517-2581
e-mail: hominbilimoria@gmail.com

Pune

SUJATA RAJARSHI
PUNE
MAHARASHTRA
Tel. +91-20-65224887
e-mail: sujata_rajarshi@hotmail.com

IRELAND

Dublin
CAROLINE CONROY
KEELEY
DUBLIN
Tel. +353-86-811 7553
e-mail: cconroylatouche.training@gmail.com

ISRAEL

Jerusalem
NAOMI RAZ
JERUSALEM
Tel. +972-2-6439696
e-mail: naomi@razei-habriut.com

Ha Sharon

NAOMI BARELI
HOD HASHOARON
Tel. +972-9-742-7073
e-mail: barelin55@gmail.com

Misgav-Maalot (Acting ARP)

MERCHI SHUKRUN-LIOR
TUVAL
Tel. +972-4-9907995
e-mail: merchisl@walla.co.il

Tel Aviv

ISHAI SHLAIN
TEL AVIV
Tel. +972-3-516-7389,
+972-54-8165354
e-mail: ishai.shlain@gmail.com



REFERENCE PERSONS FOR ORGANIZED AREAS

JAPAN HOKKAIDO

Hokkaido East Side
KYONJA HWANG
SAPPORO-CITY
HOKKAIDO
Tel. +81-70-5012-2453
e-mail: green810kyon@
yahoo.co.jp

Hokkaido West Side
KAZUKO MATSUHASHI
SAPPORO-CITY
HOKKAIDO
Tel. +81-11-695-2477
e-mail: kazuko1524@
yahoo.co.jp

HONSHU

Tohoku
HIROSHI (HIROPY) SATO
YAMAGATA-CITY
YAMAGATA-PREF
Tel. +81-50-2012-7534
e-mail: hiro_peacefull@
yahoo.co.jp

*Kitakanto (North Side
Tokyo)*

MAKO HIRAHARA
TOKYO
e-mail: ameame634@
yahoo.co.jp

*Kanto Tamatama (South
Side Tokyo)*

ULALA SAKAIYA
KUNITACHI-SHI, TOKYO
Tel. +81-42-573-8363

Kanagawa & Machida

JUNKO HASHIMOTO
KAWASAKI-SHI
Tel. +81-44-945-8108
e-mail: shujii010_0911@
yahoo.co.jp

Kansai

YOKO (HIRO) HOSHIBA
OSAKA
Tel. +81-6-6180-4484
e-mail: hirohigashiosaka@
yahoo.co.jp

KYUSHU

Kyushu
SUNAMI-CHAN YUKO
TAKANAWA
OGORI CITY, FUKUOKA
Tel. +81-90-5746-0877
e-mail: btdyk933@yahoo.co.jp

KENYA

Nairobi
JANET WAMBUI KABUE
THIKA
Tel. +254-722-842-095
e-mail: janet2ke@yahoo.com

MEXICO

Mexico City
ILIRIA HERNANDEZ
UNZUETA
DISTRITO FEDERAL
Tel. +52-55-5850-6092
e-mail: i_unzueta@
hotmail.com

THE NETHERLANDS

Groningen
MARIJKE WILMANS
GRONINGEN
Tel. +31-50-312-2338
e-mail: marijkewilms@
hetnet.nl

Amsterdam
GITKA HAMBURGER
AMSTERDAM
Tel. +31-20-6261003
e-mail: neeltje_ams@
hotmail.com

Utrecht
FRANK VAN DEN HEUVEL
NIEUWEGEIN
Tel. +31-30-602-2441
e-mail: frank@heuveltop.nl

Zuid-Nederland
ERNA RAIJMAKERS
VUGHT, NOORD BRABANT
Tel. +31 6 525 60 600,
+31 411 78 50 38
e-mail: erna@raij.nl

OVERIJSSSEL

Zwolle
WENDY WESSELINK-TEN
THIJE
ZWOLLE, OVERIJSSSEL
Tel. +31 38 4525393
e-mail: wendy.wesselink@
zonnet.nl

NIGERIA

ABIA

Umuahia-Abia
PAMELA EZINWA UKAKU
UMUAHIA
ABIA-STATE
Tel. +234-8033063814
e-mail: pamukaku@
yahoo.com

ANAMBRA

Onitsha
JOY OGECHUKWU
IKEBAKU
IDEMILI NORTH LGA
ANAMBRA STATE
Tel. +234-8033703421
e-mail: joyikebaku@
yahoo.com

University Awka

ANAYO NKAMNEBE
AWKA
ANAMBRA STATE
Tel. +234-8036675771
e-mail: ad.nkamnebe@
unizik.edu.ng

Awka

NWANKWO CHINEDU
ODIDIKA
AWKA
ANAMBRA STATE
Tel. +234 8037670446
e-mail: eduodidika@
gmail.com

ENUGU

Enugu Main
KINGSLEY CHIMEDU
IBEKWE
NEW HAVEN, ENUGU
Tel. +234-803-781-9293
e-mail: kicbekwe@
hotmail.com

GRA Enugu

MARSHALL IFEANYI
CHINAKA
ENUGU EAST LGA, ENUGU
Tel. +234-8034359625
e-mail: ifeanymarshall@
yahoo.com

FEDERAL CAPITOL TERRITORY

Abuja
OGWU, UGO MERCY
ABUJA-FCT
Tel. +234 8033435373
e-mail: ugomerc@yahoo.com

LAGOS

Lagos
CHIOMA OKONKWO
LAGOS
Tel. +234-8023-108-536
e-mail: chioks4@yahoo.com

North Central Lagos

ONII NWANGWU-
STEVENSON
MASHA-SURULERE, LAGOS
Tel. +234-805-6009068
e-mail: oniinwangwu@
yahoo.com

Agor-Okota Lagos

OMODELE IBITOYE EJEH
AGOR OKOTA, LAGOS
Tel. +234-8020750826
e-mail: talk2modele@
yahoo.com

RIVERS

Port Harcourt
CHRIS AKUBUIRO
RUMUOGBA-PORT HAR-
COURT, RIVERS
Tel. +234-7066988252
e-mail: Chris1akubuiro@
gmail.com

PALESTINE

Palestinian Territories
NOHA HIJAB
KEAR MAKER
Tel. +972-52-8337311
e-mail: noha11968@gmail.com

RUSSIAN FEDERATION

Ufa
YAMIDANOVA VENERA
UFA
BASHKORTOSTAN
Tel. +7-9874886177
e-mail: ven_yamid@mail.ru

St. Petersburg I
SKOVRONSKAYA LIDIA
ST. PETERSBURG
RUSSIA
Tel. +7-812-351-5781
e-mail: li-skovronskaya@
yandex.ru

St. Petersburg III
SKVORTSOVA ANNA
ST. PETERSBURG
Tel. +7-812-2737698
e-mail: anna.skvortsova@
icloud.com

Cherepovets
ALEXANDER VIKULOV
CHEREPOVEITS
Tel. +7-8202-24-80-86

RWANDA

Kigali
JEAN CLAUDE (JUNIOR)
SHEMA
KIGALI
Tel. +250 781072868
e-mail: juniorshema@
yahoo.com

SWEDEN

Göteborg Väst
(Acting ARP)
HELEN JANSSON
GÖTEBORG
Tel. +46-739-314366
e-mail: helenjansson@
hotmail.se

Göteborg Centrum
CHRISTINA (TINA)
TENGBERG
GÖTEBORG
Tel. +46-737148640
e-mail: christina.tengberg@
gmail.com

Skåne
FREDRIK EKLÖF
MALMO
Tel. +46-708859171
e-mail: pamsamtal@
fredrikeklolf.se

Stockholm Nord (North)
BRITT ARBELIUS
SOLNA
Tel. +46 72-933 82 03
e-mail: barbelius@gmail.com

*Stockholm Sydöst (South-
west)*
SUJATA MAINI
STOCKHOLM
Tel. +46-734-413-151
e-mail: sujata.maini@
gmail.com

Parsamtal Stockholm
Sydöstra (Southeast)
JOSEFIN HASSELBERG
SKARPNÄCK
Tel. +46-70-725 91 70
e-mail: superdolphin@
hotmail.com

SWITZERLAND

AARGAU
*Switzerland & Fribourg i.
Greisgau*
GWEN POLLACK
ZOFINGEN / AG
Tel. +41-79-771-8078
e-mail: gwen_pollack@
yahoo.de

TAIWAN

Hualien
Hualien Taiwan
TSUL-LING WANG
HUALIEN CITY, HUALIEN
Tel. +886 912 132 751
e-mail: hanaling@gmail.com

TRINIDAD & TOBAGO

(WEST INDIES)
Trinidad & Tobago
CHANTAL ESDELLE
PORT OF SPAIN
Tel. +1-868-620-4616
e-mail: chantal.esdelle@
gmail.com

UGANDA

Kampala
MR. APOLLO SSEMWOGER-
ERE VVUBYA
KAMPALA
Tel. +256-753-421-092
e-mail: vubix@yahoo.com

Gulu
(Acting ARP)
ATUNU NAUME MARRIAM
ODONGKARA
GULU
Tel. +256-773-290940
e-mail: naumeoak7@
gmail.com

UNITED KINGDOM

*See Cornwall, England,
Scotland, and Wales*

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

ALASKA
Anchorage
PATTI SAUNDERS
ANCHORAGE, AK
Tel. +1-907-278-2802
e-mail: saunders.patti@
gmail.com

ARIZONA

Phoenix
JUNE-YVONNE MARTINEZ
COLERIDGE
PHOENIX, AZ
Tel. +1-602-861-8008
e-mail: jycoleridge@
gmail.com

ARKANSAS

Fayetteville
DOROTHY MARCY
FAYETTEVILLE, AR
Tel. +1-479-601-1321
e-mail: dmarcy1@gmail.com

CALIFORNIA

Mendocino-Redwood Coast
WADE GRAY
FORT BRAGG, CA
Tel. +1-707-357-4369
e-mail: wahday@mcn.org

Sonoma County
EDDIE HASAN
GUERNEVILLE, CA
Tel. +1-707-978-0270
e-mail: eddiehasan09@
gmail.com

Marin County
JANET HUGHES
FOREST KNOLLS, CA
Tel. +1-415-488-9113
e-mail: janethughrc@
gmail.com

Northeast Berkeley
BOB GOMEZ
BERKELEY, CA
Tel. +1-510-644-0354
e-mail: zorro@sbcglobal.net

West Berkeley
GAIL MANDELLA
BERKELEY, CA
Tel. +1-510-843-0139
e-mail: gmandella@
comcast.net
For more information contact:
Paula Buel
Tel. +1-510-847-7652
e-mail: paulabuel@gmail.com

East Bay North
SUE YOSHIWARA
ALBANY, CA
Tel. +1-510-684-8789
e-mail: sueoda617@gmail.com
For more information contact:
Rachel McMullin
Tel. +1-650-763-6047
e-mail: ramcmullin@
gmail.com

East Oakland
MICAELA MORSE
OAKLAND, CA
Tel. +1-917-518-4983
e-mail: micaelamorse@
mindspring.com

Oakland
MARIA FRANCO
OAKLAND, CA
Tel. +1-510-384-8919
e-mail: rccorre@earthlink.net

Greater Oakland
MORGEN ELIZABETH-
CHILD
OAKLAND, CA
Tel. +1-510-967-0565
e-mail: moonwolfmama@
aol.com

*Alameda County (except
Berkeley & Albany)*
RUTH HARTMAN
CASTRO VALLEY, CA
Tel. +1-510-543-6902
e-mail: rh@wordcraft.com
For more information contact:
Iris Goldman
Tel. +1-510-384-4617
e-mail: irisjoang@gmail.com

*Sacramento Valley &
Foothills*
GAYLE CRIBB
DIXON, CA
Tel. +1-707-678-2601
e-mail: gcribb@cal.net

San Francisco 1
BRIAN FOX
SAN FRANCISCO, CA
Tel. +1-415-370-6266
e-mail: bfoxae@gmail.com

San Francisco 2
AMPARO VIGIL
SAN FRANCISCO, CA
Tel. +1-415-637-1536
e-mail: avigil101@gmail.com

Mid-Peninsula
JUDY SEREBRIN
REDWOOD CITY, CA
Tel. +1-415-215-2066
e-mail: serebrin@sbcglobal.net

Peninsula South
SHARON VEACH
MOUNTAIN VIEW, CA
Tel. +1-650-968-4354
e-mail: srveach.rc@gmail.com

San Jose
LEYLA MODIRZADEH
SAN JOSE, CA
Tel. +1-718-768-3412
e-mail: leylamod1@gmail.com

Santa Cruz
MICHAEL LEVY
SANTA CRUZ, CA
Tel. +1-831-427-9916
e-mail: levysantacruz@
gmail.com
For more information contact:
Roland Saher
Tel. +1-831-295-6106
e-mail: rolandsaher@
gmail.com

REFERENCE PERSONS FOR ORGANIZED AREAS

Orange County/Long Beach
ALLAN HANSEN
CYPRESS, CA
Tel. +1-714-875-8870
e-mail: hansen@rc.org

Inland Valleys
SARA SCHOONMAKER
REDLANDS, CA
Tel. +1-909-793-0213
e-mail: sara_schoonmaker@redlands.edu
For more information contact:
Keith Osajima
Tel. +1-909-793-0213
e-mail: keithosajima@gmail.com

Central & West Los Angeles
MYRNA FRIEDMAN
LOS ANGELES, CA
Tel. +1-323-938-9783
e-mail: mfried2510@ca.rr.com

Eastside (Los Angeles)
VICTOR NICASSIO
LOS ANGELES, CA
Tel. +1-323-254-0309
e-mail: vnicassio55@gmail.com

San Fernando Valley
LUCY SOLOMON
WEST HILLS, CA
Tel. +1-818-340-8539
e-mail: lucysolo@rocketmail.com

San Diego
INGE TAYLOR
SAN DIEGO, CA
Tel. +1-619-575-4206
e-mail: profmdwfe@gmail.com

COLORADO

Boulder
ANNA SCHOETTLE
BOULDER, CO
Tel. +1-303-444-5348
e-mail: annabeing9@gmail.com

Denver
CHRISTIE MILLER GOSCH
DENVER, CO
Tel. +1-303-320-0348
e-mail: christiemgusch@yahoo.com

CONNECTICUT

New Haven
HANNAH LARKIN-WELLS
GUILFORD, CT
Tel. +1-203-457-0654
e-mail: larkin-wells@juno.com

Lower Eastern
ROBERTA PARO
NORWICH, CT
Tel. +1-860-889-2948
e-mail: raparo@snet.net

Quinebaug Valley
GERRY PECHIE
EASTFORD, CT
Tel. +1-860-974-1043
e-mail: leedspechie@charter.net

Hartford
MARCIA MCGEE
GLASTONBURY, CT
Tel. +1-860-633-7537
e-mail: m.mcgee1@cox.net

DELAWARE

Concord
MIKE REICHERT
WILMINGTON, DE
Tel. +1-610-667-9503
e-mail: michreich@comcast.net

Wilmington I
ELLIE BROWN
WILMINGTON, DE
Tel. +1-302-983-2902 (cell)
e-mail: ebrown@wcupa.edu

Wilmington II
LINDA WHITEHEAD
WILMINGTON, DE
Tel. +1-302-652-2704
e-mail: lindaw302@verizon.net

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, WASHINGTON

See Washington, D.C.

GEORGIA

Atlanta
CORNELIA CHO
MARIETTA, GA
Tel. +1-770-933-9523
e-mail: opt2hope@yahoo.com
For more information contact:
Sam Landes
Tel. +1-678-777-5863
e-mail: samland2@earthlink.net

ILLINOIS

Chicago & Suburbs
NJOKI KAMAU
CHICAGO, IL
Tel. +1-773-508-5708
e-mail: ngk@northwestern.edu

MAINE

Freeport/Brunswick
JERRY ANN YODER
YARMOUTH, ME
Tel. +1-207-233-5191
e-mail: jerryyoder@mac.com

Portland
DELLILAH POUPORE
BIDDEFORD, ME
Tel. +1-207-251-5695
e-mail: dpoupore@artisant.org

MARYLAND

Silver Spring-Bethesda
SALLY OESTERLING
SILVER SPRING, MD
Tel. +1-301-434-3237
e-mail: sallyoes@verizon.net

MASSACHUSETTS

Amherst
LYDIA VERNON-JONES
AMHERST, MA
Tel. +1-413-256-8885
e-mail: lvernonjones@gmail.com

New Area in Western Massachusetts
EUNICE TORRES
BELCHERTOWN, MA
Tel. +1-413-256-1186
e-mail: eunicejwrtorres@gmail.com

Northampton-East
JONATHAN KOHRMAN
WHATELY, MA
Tel. +1-413-665-9689
e-mail: jonathankohrman@yahoo.com

Northampton-West
MICHAEL JACOBSON-HARDY
FLORENCE, MA
Tel. +1-413-584-5898
e-mail: mjacobsonhardy@gmail.com

Worcester
SUSAN SEIBEL
OXFORD, MA
Tel. +1-508-987-8933
e-mail: seibelsusan1@gmail.com

Jamaica Plain/Boston
BETSY ABRAMS
JAMAICA PLAIN, MA
Tel. +1-617-515-4364
e-mail: betsyabrams@hotmail.com

Blue Hill
JESSICA LIBORIO
JAMAICA PLAIN, MA
Tel. +1-617-331-7519
e-mail: jessliborio@gmail.com

Dorchester-Roxbury
JENENE COOK
DORCHESTER, MA
Tel. +1-617-686-4230
e-mail: jenenecook@gmail.com

Franklin Park
SHANI FLETCHER
DORCHESTER, MA
Tel. +1-617-251-6052
e-mail: shanifletcher@gmail.com

Cambridgeport
SARAH SPADEMAN
CAMBRIDGE, MA
Tel. +1-617-447-7784
e-mail: animugs@gmail.com

North Cambridge
JOEL NOGIC
CAMBRIDGE, MA
Tel. +1-617-547-6463
e-mail: jnogic@comcast.net

Central Somerville
CHRISTOPHER AUSTILL
SOMERVILLE, MA
Tel. +1-617-625-8081
e-mail: caustill@pobox.com
For more information contact:
Marya Axner
Tel. +1-617-776-7411
e-mail: maryaaxner@gmail.com

Somerville
JOELLE HOCHMAN
SOMERVILLE, MA
Tel. +1-617-872-2789
e-mail: jhochman@pobox.com

Mystic River
GLADYS MAGED
SOMERVILLE, MA
Tel. +1-617-628-3986
e-mail: gladysmaged@gmail.com

North Boston
RANDI FREUNDLICH
SOMERVILLE, MA
Tel. +1-617-628-4208
e-mail: randifreundlich@gmail.com

Muddy River
ANNE GREENWALD
BROOKLINE, MA
Tel. +1-617-277-6068
e-mail: agreenwald814@gmail.com

Newton & Environs
BARBARA DECK
NEWTON, MA
Tel. +1-617-312-6515
e-mail: badeck1@gmail.com

MINNESOTA

Between Two Rivers
DOROTHEA HROSSOWYC
NORTHFIELD, MN
Tel. +1-507-645-6962
e-mail: hrossowyc@gmail.com

Hay River to St. Paul
JUDY TILSEN
ST. PAUL, MN
Tel. +1-651-776-3130
e-mail: judymtilsen@gmail.com

Minneapolis Gitchi Zibi & Southwest
SHARON HILBERER
MINNEAPOLIS, MN
Tel. +1-612-874-1170
e-mail: sharonerer@gmail.com

MISSOURI
Saint Louis
RUSSELL VANECEK
ST. LOUIS, MO
Tel. +1-314-249-5089
e-mail: redvan71@gmail.com

MONTANA

Missoula
JOE KIPPHUT
MISSOULA, MT
Tel. +1-406-370-1259
e-mail: joejb2008@gmail.com

NEW HAMPSHIRE

Monadnock
DEIRDRE HAYNIE
ASHBY, MA
Tel. +1-978-386-7371
e-mail: deirdrehashby@gmail.com

NEW JERSEY

Flemington/Princeton
PATRICIA HENNESSY
RINGOES, NJ
Tel. +1-908-963-7327
e-mail: path42@embarqmail.com

Jersey City/Union City & Surrounding Areas
EUGENIO ESPINOSA
JERSEY CITY, NJ
Tel. +1-201-709-5490
e-mail: ejes12850@yahoo.com

NEW MEXICO

Albuquerque I
(Acting ARP)
LORENZO GARCIA
ALBUQUERQUE, NM
Tel. +1-505-831-4757
e-mail: garcialore51@gmail.com

Albuquerque II
BETSY NAIJAR
ALBUQUERQUE, NM
Tel. +1-505-242-4646
e-mail: betsynaijar@gmail.com

Santa Fe
SPARKY (ROSEMARIE)
GRIEGO
SANTA FE, NM
Tel. +1-505-577-5325
e-mail: srgriego@rocketmail.com

NEW YORK

Albany
DOROTHY TRISTMAN
ALBANY, NY
Tel. +1-518-462-6005
e-mail: dorothy.tristman@gmail.com

Syracuse
JACK MANNO
SYRACUSE, NY
Tel. +1-315-391-5959
e-mail: jpmanno@esf.edu

Rochester
JIM BERGER
ROCHESTER, NY
Tel. +1-585-743-5584
e-mail: mijregreb@gmail.com

Ithaca
MARGO HITTLEMAN
GROTON, NY
Tel. +1-607-533-7501
e-mail: mjh17@cornell.edu

Brooklyn Bridge, NYC
NELSON SIMON
BROOKLYN, NY
Tel. +1-718-554-0853
e-mail: nsimon218@gmail.com

Crown Heights-Lefferts Gardens
TOKUMBO BODUNDE
BROOKLYN, NY
Tel. +1-347-833-7955
e-mail: toksieb@gmail.com

People in Park Slope
KATHLEEN MULLIGAN
ORITZ
BROOKLYN, NY
Tel. +1-718-514-4851
e-mail: kmulliganortiz@gmail.com

Brooklyn Ocean Parkside
TAMARA DAMON
BROOKLYN, NY
Tel. +1-718-349-1836
e-mail: tkdamon@me.com

Brooklyn West
ADLEY GARTENSTEIN
BROOKLYN, NY
Tel. +1-347-464-9040
e-mail: adleyrc@gmail.com

Brooklyn Sunset
MARITZA ARRASTIA
BROOKLYN, NY
Tel. +1-347-682-7219
e-mail: maritza@thewritingroom.org

Brooklyn Queens Connect
IRENE HONGPING SHEN
BROOKLYN, NY
Tel. +1-917-251-6949
e-mail: rchips@gmail.com

South Central Brooklyn & Long Island
KATHY MARTINO
BROOKLYN, NY
Tel. +1-718-627-6071
e-mail: kathymartino522@gmail.com

New York City North of GWB Plus Westchester
SARA SCHWABACHER
NEW YORK, NY
Tel. +1-347-831-0502
e-mail: saraschwab@aol.com

West Harlem/Washington Heights
BERTA RAMOS-RAMIREZ
NEW YORK, NY
Tel. +1-917-325-8484
e-mail: berta.ramosramirez@gmail.com

Central & East Harlem/ Central & East Bronx
(Acting ARP)
NEREIDA MORALES
BRONX, NY
Tel. +1-917-208-3552
e-mail: nerimora@aol.com

Western Queens
GREGG WAGNER
SUNNYSIDE, NY
Tel. +1-718-786-8982
e-mail: greggwag@earthlink.net

Queens Central
ROSE FICHTENHOLTZ
JACKSON HEIGHTS, NY
Tel. +1-917-523-9567
e-mail: rtficht@gmail.com

Hell's Kitchen & West of Central Park
ELA THIER
NEW YORK, NY
Tel. +1-212-665-7295
e-mail: ela.thier@gmail.com

Manhattan South of 110th Street
ED FRIEDMAN
NEW YORK, NY
Tel. +1-212-673-9067
e-mail: edisacommie@gmail.com

NORTH CAROLINA

Asheville
JOAN MACKENZIE
ASHEVILLE, NC
Tel. +1-828-606-8470
e-mail: joanmackrc@gmail.com
For more information contact:
Diana Lieb
e-mail: dljlieb@gmail.com

Chapel Hill
RACHEL WINTERS
CHAPEL HILL, NC
Tel. +1-919-960-5117
e-mail: twintersnc@gmail.com

OHIO

Athens
(Acting ARP)
JOHN SCHMIEDING
ATHENS, OH
Tel. +1-740-517-1978
e-mail: john_45701@yahoo.com



REFERENCE PERSONS FOR ORGANIZED AREAS

OREGON

Portland North
JUDI SOLOWAY
PORTLAND, OR
e-mail: jchazanow@
yahoo.com

For more information contact:
Eldon Potter
Tel. +1-503-867-5305
e-mail: eldon@
bryanpotterdesign.com

Portland South
JEANETTE ARMENTANO
PORTLAND, OR
Tel. +1-503-577-3328
e-mail: jarmentano@
icloud.com

For more information contact:
Mary Daniels
Tel. +1-503-839-3304
e-mail: groundbear@
gmail.com

North Eugene &
Outlying Areas
CAMERON HUBBE
EUGENE, OR
Tel. +1-541-913-7271
e-mail: human@
nu-world.com

South Eugene/Springfield
LOIS YOSHISHIGE
EUGENE, OR
Tel. +1-541-343-7795
e-mail: lkyoshishige@
comcast.net



PENNSYLVANIA

Chester County
ELINOR THOMFORDE
KENNETT SQUARE, PA
Tel. +1-610-388-2064
e-mail: ebthomforde@aol.com

Spruce
(Acting ARP)
MARCY MORGAN
PHILADELPHIA, PA
Tel. +1-215-724-1571
e-mail: marcymorgan48@
gmail.com

Philadelphia Northwest
(Germantown, Mount Airy,
Main Line, &
Montgomery County)
BILLY YALOWITZ
PHILADELPHIA, PA
Tel. +1-215-432-6366
e-mail: byalowitz@gmail.com

Wissahickon
(Germantown, Mount Airy,
Main Line)
HAO-LI TAI LOH
MERION STATION, PA
Tel. +1-610-667-4561
e-mail: tai_loh@msn.com

Schuylkill I
PAMELA HAINES
PHILADELPHIA, PA
Tel. +1-215-349-9428
e-mail: pamelahaines1@
gmail.com

Broad Street
ERIC BRAXTON
PHILADELPHIA, PA
Tel. +1-267-278-2772
e-mail: ebrax12@gmail.com

RHODE ISLAND

Rhode Island
BETSY BEACH
PROVIDENCE, RI
Tel. +1-401-467-9709
e-mail: betsybeach@
verizon.net

TEXAS

Dallas Sherman
KAREN CARRIER
MABANK, TX
Tel. +1-469-261-8580
e-mail: kmcarrier@
sbcglobal.net

North, Central, & East
Austin
SELWYN POLIT
AUSTIN, TX
Tel. +1-512-696-0410
e-mail: selwynpolit@
gmail.com

South Austin
BEVERLY BAJEMA
AUSTIN, TX
Tel. +1-512-809-0730
e-mail: bev@bajema.me

West Houston
BOB ROMERO
HOUSTON, TX
Tel. +1-713-995-8392
e-mail: bobromero@
gmail.com

East Houston
JENNIFER KELLOUGH
HOLMES
MISSOURI CITY, TX
Tel. +1-281-437-0622
e-mail: jennifer_m27@
hotmail.com

VIRGINIA

Northern Virginia
DREAMA FRISK
ARLINGTON, VA
Tel. +1-703-524-1459
e-mail: dreamawf@gmail.com

Charlottesville
KAREN BYRD
AFTON, VA
Tel. +1-434-361-1359
e-mail: kbyrdva@gmail.com

Richmond
MARCIA DICKINSON
RICHMOND, VA
Tel. +1-804-355-0936
e-mail: marciadickinson@
hotmail.com

WASHINGTON

Bellingham
ALBERT FIELDS
BELLINGHAM, WA
Tel. +1-360-734-9056
e-mail: albertfields@mac.com

North Seattle/Northwest
King County
SANDRA MCDONALD
EDMONDS, WA
Tel. +1-425-772-2417
e-mail: mcdonaldmcgregor@
hotmail.com

Meridian (Seattle)
DEBBIE BELL
SEATTLE, WA
Tel. +1-206-498-7403
e-mail: deborahbell@
comcast.net

Madison (Seattle)
STEVE THOMPSON
SEATTLE, WA
Tel. +1-206-799-7288
e-mail: stevedt@comcast.net

Duwamish (West Seattle)
YUKO HIBINO
SEATTLE, WA 98136
Tel. +1-206-947-6313
e-mail: hibiyuko@gmail.com
For more information contact:
Lisa Kauffman
Tel. +1-206-501-6542
e-mail: lisaprws@gmail.com

Rainier (Seattle)
KAREN LASOTA
SEATTLE, WA
Tel. +1-206-818-6801
e-mail: lasotak@hotmail.com

Olympia
JAN YOSHIWARA
OLYMPIA, WA
Tel. +1-360-951-5852
e-mail: jyoshiwara@
gmail.com

WASHINGTON, D.C. (DISTRICT OF CO- LUMBIA)

Washington, D.C.
JEVERA TEMSKY
WASHINGTON, DC
e-mail: jrtemsky@gmail.com

WISCONSIN

Madison
HOLLY JORGENSON
MADISON, WI
Tel. +1-608-233-5699
e-mail: hollydjorgenson@
gmail.com

Milwaukee
MARTHA BARRY
MILWAUKEE, WI
Tel. +1-414-350-4761
e-mail: barrymle@aol.com

WALES

De Cymru/Cardiff
PAT GREGORY
CARDIFF
Tel. +44-2920 226990
e-mail: patj.gregory@
gmail.com



ALASKA, USA • ALAN EPSTEIN

INTERNATIONAL REFERENCE PERSONS AND THE RE-EVALUATION FOUNDATION

INTERNATIONAL REFERENCE PERSONS, INTERNATIONAL LIBERATION REFERENCE PERSONS, INTERNATIONAL COMMONALITY REFERENCE PERSONS, AND THE RE-EVALUATION FOUNDATION

International Reference Persons

International Reference

Person:
TIM JACKINS
C/O RE-EVALUATION
COUNSELING COMMUNITY RESOURCES
719 SECOND AVE. NORTH
SEATTLE, WA 98109
USA
Tel. +1-206-284-0311
e-mail: ircc@rc.org

Alternate International Reference Person:

DIANE SHISK
C/O RE-EVALUATION
COUNSELING COMMUNITY RESOURCES
719 SECOND AVE. NORTH
SEATTLE, WA 98109
USA
Tel. +1-206-284-0311
e-mail: ircc@rc.org

International Liberation Reference Persons

For African-Heritage People:

BARBARA LOVE
AMHERST, MA
USA
Tel. & Fax +1-413-253-3814
e-mail: bjlove.rc@gmail.com

For Allies to Young People:

JENNY SAZAMA
JAMAICA PLAIN, MA
USA
Tel. +1-617-308-5384
e-mail: jenny.yob@gmail.com

For Catholics:

JOANNE BRAY
STAMFORD, CT
USA
Tel. +1-203-273-3058
e-mail: jmbray@aol.com

For Chicanos/as:

LORENZO GARCIA
ALBUQUERQUE, NM
USA
Tel. +1-505-831-4757,
+1-505-228-3063 (cell)
e-mail: garcialore51@gmail.com

For Chinese-Heritage People:

FRANCIE CHEW
SOMERVILLE, MA
USA
Tel. +1-617-628-4998 (home),
+1-617-293-4058 (cell)
e-mail: franciechew@gmail.com

For College & University Faculty:

ELLIE BROWN
WILMINGTON, DE
USA
Tel. +1-302-983-2902
e-mail: ebrown@wcupa.edu

For Elders:

PAM GEYER
BELLAIRE, TX
USA
Tel. +1-713-666-7300
e-mail: pgeyer@medcetera.com

For Japanese-Heritage People:

JAN YOSHIWARA
OLYMPIA, WA
USA
Tel. +1-360-951-5852
e-mail: jyoshiwara@gmail.com

For Jews:

CHERIE BROWN
SILVER SPRING, MD
USA
Tel. +1-240-638-2813
e-mail: ncbiinc@aol.com

For Lawyers:

MARSHA HUNTER
CAMBRIDGE, MA
USA
Tel. +1-617-803-3449
e-mail: m-hunter@comcast.net

For Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Queer, & Transgender People:

"JEANNE D'ARC"
SEATTLE, WA
USA
e-mail: ircc@rc.org

Asst. Liberation Reference Person for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Queer, & Transgender People:

"DAVID NIJINSKY"
USA
e-mail: dnijinsky@gmail.com

For "Mental Health" Workers:

JEAN HAMILTON
PALO ALTO, CA
USA
Tel. +1-650-493-6668,
+1-650-387-3837
e-mail: rcjean1@gmail.com

For Middle-Class People:

SEÁN RUTH
ARDSBEG, GORTAHORK
COUNTY DONEGAL
IRELAND
Tel. +353-87-2350362
e-mail: seangruth@gmail.com

For Musicians:

HEATHER HAY
VANCOUVER, BC
CANADA
Tel. +1-604-876-7148,
+1-604-340-6027 (cell)
e-mail: hlhay3@gmail.com

For Native Americans:

MARCIE RENDON
MINNEAPOLIS, MN
USA
Tel. +1-612-722-9579
e-mail: MRendon70362@gmail.com

For Owning-Class People:

JO SAUNDERS
WINTERESTER
HANTS
ENGLAND
Tel. +44 1962 877465
e-mail: jo.saunders@btinternet.com

For Pacific Islander & Pilipino/a-Heritage People:

TERESA ENRICO
SEATTLE, WA
USA
Tel. +1-503-735-5419
e-mail: teresaenrico@gmail.com

For Parents:

MARYA AXNER
SOMERVILLE, MA
USA
Tel. +1-617-776-7411
e-mail: maryaaxner@gmail.com

For People with Disabilities:

MARSHA SAXTON
EL CERRITO, CA
USA
Tel. +1-510-234-2656
e-mail: marsax@wid.org

For Raised-Poor People:

GWEN BROWN
WILMINGTON, DE
USA
Tel. +1-302-656-2630
e-mail: gbbrown@udel.edu

For South, Central, & West Asian-Heritage People:

AZADEH KHALILI
BROOKLYN, NY
USA
Tel. +1-917-645-2538
e-mail: azikhali@gmail.com

For Union Activists:

JOANIE PARKER
JAMAICA PLAIN, MA
USA
Tel. +1-617-522-4086
e-mail: Joanieparker7@gmail.com

For Visual Artists:

EMILY FEINSTEIN
BROOKLYN, NY
USA
Tel. +1-718-625-6696
e-mail: emsusant@gmail.com

For Women:

DIANE BALSER
JAMAICA PLAIN, MA
USA
Tel. +1-617-390-5660
e-mail: dibals@comcast.net

For Working-Class People:

DAN NICKERSON
FREEPORT, ME
USA
Tel. +1-207-865-3869
e-mail: dnickerson12@comcast.net

For Young Adults (ages 21-30):

EMILY BLOCH
BROOKLINE, MA
USA
Tel. +1-617-763-8085 (cell)
e-mail: bloch.emily@gmail.com

For Young People (21 and under):

ELVIN LANDAEUS
CSIZMADIA
HOOR (near Malmö)
SWEDEN
Tel. +46-737473444
e-mail: elvin@landaeus.com

International Commonality Reference Persons

For the Care of the Environment:

(Acting ICRP)
DIANE SHISK
SEATTLE, WA
USA
Tel. +1-206-284-0311
e-mail: ircc@rc.org

For Educational Change (Classroom Teachers):

MARILYN ROBB
ST AUGUSTINE
TRINIDAD & TOBAGO
Tel. +1-868-735-6377
e-mail: joyfulplace@yahoo.com

For Family Work:

CHUCK ESSER
PHILADELPHIA, PA
USA
Tel. +1-215-349-9428
e-mail: ckesser1@gmail.com

For Languages & Interpreting:

PATXI XABIER ODRIOZOLA
EZEITZA
ERRIBERA GOITIA, ARABA
BASQUE COUNTRY
Tel. +34-630-828554
e-mail: nuxilabi@gmail.com

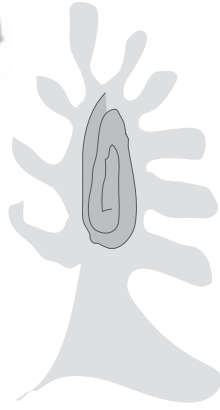
For Wide World Change:

JULIAN WEISSGLASS
SANTA BARBARA, CA
USA
Tel. +1-805-637-8895
e-mail: julian@weissglass.net

The Re-evaluation Foundation

President:
MIKE MARKOVITS
STAMFORD, CT
USA
Tel. +1-203-536-5413
e-mail: mjmrkvt@aol.com,
mjmarkovits@gmail.com

Send contributions to:
THE RE-EVALUATION
FOUNDATION
P.O. BOX 9292
QUEEN ANNE STATION
SEATTLE, WA 98109
USA



AUTHORIZED TEACHERS OF RE-EVALUATION COUNSELING IN DEVELOPING COMMUNITIES

ALGERIA

BADIS FATEH KHIREDDINE
TIPAZA
Tel. +213 0662675379
e-mail: khiredinebadis@gmail.com

AMEL BOUCETTA
DRAA BEN KHEDDA
Tel. +213 559221301
e-mail: boucettamel@gmail.com



ARGENTINA

ELSA LEONIDA MONZON
CAPITAL FEDERAL, BS AS
Tel. +54-15-5217604

MARIA GUADALUPE
FLEITAS MOLINI
SAN ISIDRO, BS AS
Tel. +54-47465350
e-mail: guadafleitas@gmail.com

SELVA DEL CARMEN
LAZARTE
CASTELAR, BS AS
Tel. +54-4692-0163
e-mail: seguiredelante2009@hotmail.com

SILVINA SPAGNUOLO
CASTELAR, BS AS
Tel. +54-4692-2733
e-mail: silvispag@hotmail.com

AUSTRALIA

NEW SOUTH WALES
NICOLE COONEY
NEWCASTLE, NSW
Tel. +61 408 938 740
e-mail: nicintaz@hotmail.com

HELEN LAMONT
EAST GOSFORD, NSW
Tel. +61 403 454 004
e-mail: helenlamont7@gmail.com

JANE LESLEY
MARRICKVILLE,
SYDNEY, NSW
Tel. +61 2 7901 9655
email: jlh2204@gmail.com



JO PERRY
RANDWICK,
SYDNEY, NSW
Tel. +61 410 413 467
e-mail: jp44213@gmail.com

JOANI LEWIS
GRANVILLE, SYDNEY
Tel. +61 423 696 303
e-mail: 59 honey@gmail.com

ANN PORCINO
MOSMAN, SYDNEY, NSW
Tel. +61 417 266 301
e-mail: atporcino@gmail.com

SANDY WILDER
MORUYA, NSW
Tel. +61-407-402-021
e-mail: southernsandpiper@gmail.com

LAUREL WADDELL
BEGA, NSW
Tel. +61-3-62233716
e-mail: waddellaurel@hotmail.com

NORTHERN TERRITORY

KATHY BANNISTER
MILLNER (DARWIN), NT
Tel. +61-408-895-621
e-mail: kathrynbanister1@gmail.com

BARBARA MOLANUS
ALICE SPRINGS, NT
Tel. +61-439 827 160
e-mail: barbstar.m@gmail.com

QUEENSLAND

MARIAN BOMAN
BRISBANE, QLD
Tel. +61-402 396 547
e-mail: bomanm2@gmail.com

MARGARET PESTORIUS
CAIRNS, QLD
Tel. +61-7-4052-1563
e-mail: margaret@cairnspacebypeace.org

TASMANIA

JODIE EPPER
HOBART, TAS
Tel. +61 03 6223 4745
e-mail: jodie.epper@yahoo.com

RICHARD JAMES HALE
SOUTH HOBART, TAS
Tel. +61 3622-32690
e-mail: richardjameshale@gmail.com

ANDREW DOUBE
SOUTH HOBART, TAS
Tel. +61 0429-015-371
e-mail: andre.doube@gmail.com

PAMELA MEARS
KINGSTON, TAS
Tel. +61-427-348-766
e-mail: pamelamears@gmail.com

BASQUE COUNTRY

(Between France & Spain)

BIZKAIA
FERMIN PORRAS
BOCANEGRA
GORLIZ, BIZKAIA
Tel. +34-666-76-79-16
e-mail: fermin.porras2@gmail.com

YOLANDA SAEZ GOMEZ
SONDIKA, BIZKAIA
Tel. +94-6549613
e-mail: yolanda.saez@gmail.com



BENIN, REPUBLIC OF

ERIC AMOUSSOU-GUENOU
COTONOU
Tel. +229-9420-8255,
+229-9747 5843,
+229-98765126
e-mail: guenouer2@yahoo.fr

ANGELO AMOUSSOU-GUENOU
COTONOU
Tel. +229-93577813,
+229-6454 2284
e-mail: angelofranz@yahoo.fr

ALAIN SAKITI
COTONOU
Tel. +229-9623-2162
e-mail: freshsak@yahoo.fr

BOLIVIA

PATRICIA IBARRA
BAJO ACHUMANI-ZONA SUR
LA PAZ
Tel. +591-2-279-7970
e-mail: pibarrasi@gmail.com

CAMEROON

FELIX NKAM
DOUALA
Tel. +237 699 633 549
e-mail: nkamfelix@yahoo.fr

CANADA

ALBERTA
AMBER FORNELLI
CALGARY, AB
Tel. +1-403-999-2899
e-mail: afornell@alumni.sfu.ca

BRITISH COLUMBIA

KERRI WALL
FERNIE, BC
Tel. +1-250-423-6986
e-mail: kerriwall@hotmail.com

BILL HORNE
WELLS, BC
Tel. +1-250-994-2332
e-mail: bhorne@netbistro.com

CLAIRE KUJUNDZIC
WELLS, BC
Tel. +1-250-994-2332
e-mail: claire@clairreart.ca

ELIZABETH SHEFRIN
GABRIOLA ISLAND, BC
Tel. +1-250-247-7476
e-mail: simaelizabeth@gmail.com

SAMANTHA SANDERSON
SALT SPRING ISLAND, BC
Tel. +1-250-537-9296
e-mail: swsanderson22@gmail.com

BETH CRUISE
VICTORIA, BC
Tel. +1-250-727-9163
e-mail: rc.bethcruise@gmail.com



NEW BRUNSWICK

MARY ANN COLEMAN
WATERFORD, NB
Tel. +1-506-433-5232
e-mail: macoleman.nb@gmail.com

ONTARIO

JEAN HANSON
OTTAWA, ON
Tel. +1-613-321-2765
e-mail: jeanh@magma.ca

QUÉBEC

MANUEL MEUNE
MONTREAL, QC
Tel. +1-514-522-3273
e-mail: manuelmeune@hotmail.com

ANNIE POTTER
NORTH HATLEY, QC
Tel. +1-819-919-4658
e-mail: anniepwrite@gmail.com

CHILE

REGION METROPOLITANA DE SANTIAGO
ELLEN TAIT
LA REINA, SANTIAGO, RM
Tel. +56 9-9-873-1199
e-mail: ellentait@hotmail.com

CARMEN RODRIGUEZ
SANCHEZ
PROVIDENCIA, RM
e-mail: carmenrodriguezsanchez@gmail.com

EMMA EDITH MORALES
LAFATA
PUENTE ALTO, RM
Tel. +56-2-265-3962
e-mail: e.edithm@hotmail.com

CECILIA VIDAL
GONZALEZ
PUENTE ALTO, RM
Tel. +56-29808362
e-mail: ceysabel2008@gmail.com

ROSA MATILDE PONCE
DIAZ
PUENTE ALTO, RM
Tel. +56-2-265-1892
e-mail: rosaponce2004@hotmail.com

ANA CRISTINA FRANCA
MATURANA
PUENTE ALTO, RM
Tel. +56-2-874-1083
e-mail: cristinafranc@hotmail.com

CHINESE MAINLAND

See Hong Kong and Taiwan under separate listings

ZHEJIANG PROVINCE

WU RONGRONG
HANGZHOU, ZHEJIANG
Tel. +86-18698558680
e-mail: wurongrong85@hotmail.com

SHAN MIN
HANGZHOU, ZHEJIANG
Tel. +86-1377499439
e-mail: 29245908@qq.com

CHEN ZHENZHEN
HANGZHOU, ZHEJIANG
DE VELASCO
Tel. +86-13588482806
e-mail: 106181691@qq.com

HE YUEQIAN
WENZHOOU, ZHEJIANG
Tel. +86 4439-492347
e-mail: 1136114648@qq.com

FUJIAN PROVINCE

DOU JUN
XIAMEN, FUJIAN
Tel. +86-13517989423
e-mail: candy.dou@foxmail.com

JIANXING PROVINCE

CHEN MINGRUI
JINGDESHEN
JIAGXI PROVINCE
Tel. +86-13517989423
e-mail: 583918555@qq.com

WEN YOU
JINGDEZHEN SHI,
JIANGXI SHENG
Tel. +86-13407989707
e-mail: 13082203@qq.com

GUANGDONG PROVINCE

LIYA DONG
GUANGZHOU
Tel. +86-13928853317
e-mail: liya.banks@gmail.com

HA YINGMIN
GUANGZHOU
GUANGDONG
Tel. +86-20-13660042174
e-mail: ha3721@gmail.com

WANG AILI
GUANGZHOU
GUANGDONG
Tel. +86-13527017427
e-mail: aili_w98@hotmail.com

LI GUODONG
SHENZHEN
Tel. +86-755-13652302896
e-mail: 61076038@qq.com

GUIZHOU PROVINCE

ZHOU HUAQIONG
DUYUN, GUIZHOU
Tel. +86-18685060717 (work)
e-mail: emily_zhq@sina.com

SHANDONG PROVINCE

WANG JIMENG
YANTAI, SHANDONG
Tel. +86-15905352086
e-mail: yishengrutong@icloud.com

COLOMBIA

DISTRITO CAPITAL
DALBA NATALIA LINARES
VALDERRAMA
BOGOTA, DC
Tel. +57-316 232 5181
e-mail: dalbanatalialinares@gmail.com



SANTANDER

MARIA STELLA GOMEZ
DE VELASCO
BUCARAMANGA
SANTANDER
Tel. +57 6459900,
+57-314 4442076
e-mail: mastela7@hotmail.com

CORNWALL

CLIVE MARTIN
CALSTOCK
Tel. +44-1822 833680
e-mail: gurumayi@virgin.net



DENMARK

SJALLAND
KARI CATHARINA SOFIA
RASMUSSEN
HILLEROD
Tel. +45 61 654 70 71
e-mail: kari.catharina@gmail.com

EL SALVADOR

MARIA LORENA CUÉLLAR
BARANDIARÁN
SAN SALVADOR
Tel. +503-2260 6568 (h),
+503-7761-0123 (cell)
e-mail: marialorencuellar@hotmail.com

ENGLAND

NORTH EAST
JEAN TURNER
DARLINGTON
Tel. +44 1833 660172
e-mail: jeanturner22@hotmail.co.uk

NORTH WEST

FIONA FRANK
HALTON, LANCASTER
Tel. +44-7778-737681
e-mail: fionafrank@googlemail.com

TYRA TILL
MACCLESFIELD
CHESHIRE
Tel. +44-1625 260260
e-mail: tyra@tyratill.com

YORKSHIRE & THE HUMBER

JULIE LONGDEN
ALLTERTON
Tel. +44-1274-481067
e-mail: julielongden123@yahoo.com

ALISON NORRIS
SHEFFIELD
Tel. +44-114-2435732
e-mail: anorrisrc@gmail.com

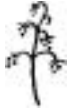
EAST MIDLANDS

PAULINE HAMMOND BALL
WELLINGBOROUGH
Tel. +44 1933 403746
e-mail: Pauline.ball@uwclub.net

WEST MIDLANDS

JENNY MARTIN
BIRMINGHAM
Tel. +44-121-240-0998
e-mail: families52@hotmail.com

MARK HINTON
COVENTRY
WEST MIDLANDS
Tel. +44-24 76 714 417
e-mail: mark.hinton@gmail.com



NETTA CARTWRIGHT
STAFFORD
STAFFSHIRE
Tel. +44-1785-613585

JUDE HAWES
NEWCASTLE UNDER LYME
Tel. +44-793-246-4478
e-mail: jude.hawes@sncab.org.uk

MARGUERITE PALMER
NEWCASTLE-UNDER-LYME
Tel. +44-01782 630751
e-mail: margueritepalmer@aol.com

EAST OF ENGLAND

KARL LAM
CAMBRIDGE
Tel. +44-1638-604101
e-mail: karl@parsonage1.plus.com

NICKY XANDORA
BLOXHAM, OXON
Tel. +44 1295 722639
e-mail: nickyxandora@gmail.com

STELLA DARKE
SOUTH NEWINGTON
BANBURY
Tel. +44 1295 720096
e-mail: darkestella@gmail.com



ALIMA ADAMS
BURWELL
Tel. +44-1223-210561
e-mail: alimaadams@hotmail.com

LONDON

ANTHONY LEETE
LONDON
Tel. +44-207-613-0535
e-mail: anthony.leeete@live.co.uk

ALEX SAUNDERS
LONDON
Tel. +44-208-470-9756
e-mail: alex.saunders22@gmail.com

TERRY DAY
WALTHAMSTOW
LONDON
Tel. +44-20-8520-5337
e-mail: terryday1@talktalk.net



CATHERINE GOLDSTEIN
LONDON
Tel. +44-208-809-3010
e-mail: catherine.goldstein@hotmail.com

MARY THOMPSON
LONDON
Tel. +44-208-340-7552
e-mail: marythompson68@gmail.com

ANNA MOORHOUSE
LONDON
Tel. +44-171-20 8771-1160
e-mail: anna.moorhouse123@btinternet.com



ANNA VAN HEESWIJK
LONDON
Tel. +44-7732-075-835
e-mail: annavanheeswijk@hotmail.com

PAMELA CARNEGIE
LONDON
Tel. +44-7944411441
e-mail: pamelacarnegie@googlemail.com

ALI BOURNE
LONDON
Tel. +44 20 7733 7253
e-mail: alibourne@hotmail.com



BESS HERBERT
LONDON
Tel. +44-208-6712820
e-mail: bess_herbert@yahoo.com

DORANN VAN HEESWIJK
LONDON
Tel. +44-207-622-6493
e-mail: vhdorann@gmail.com

SAM SILVERLOCK
LONDON
Tel. +44 79133-50510
e-mail: samsilverlock@hotmail.co.uk

FIONA GILVRAY ADAMSON
LONDON
Tel. +44 208 677 8260
e-mail: fio.adamson@btinternet.com

SOUTH EAST

RACHEL BECK
HOVE
Tel. +44-1273-945856
e-mail: rachelbeckyes@yahoo.co.uk

LEAH THORN
FOLKESTONE, KENT
Tel. +44-1303 488 711
e-mail: leahthorn@hotmail.com



ARIKE
FOLKESTONE, KENT
Tel. +44-20-8488-6786
e-mail: mrrarike@yahoo.com

JO SAUNDERS
WINCHESTER, HANTS
Tel. +44-1962-877465
e-mail: jo.saunders@btinternet.com

AGATHA COFFEY
ST. LEONARDS-ON-SEA
E. SUSSEX
Tel. +44-1424-428-641
e-mail: agathacoffey@yahoo.com

JAN WOODLING
NEWHAVEN, E. SUSSEX
Tel. +44-7747-784613
e-mail: janwoodling@aol.com

SOUTH WEST

SHANNON COGGINS
SHEPTON MALLET
SOMERSET
Tel. +44-1749-860767
e-mail: shannoncoggins23@gmail.com

RUTH GOODFELLOW
STROUD
GLOUCESTERSHIRE
Tel. +44-7794054623
e-mail: rgoodf@hotmail.com

AL HEAD
TAVISTOCK, DEVON
Tel. +44-1822-616083
e-mail: seaalbatross@btinternet.com

HEATHER NICHOLSON
TOTNES, DEVON
Tel. +44-1803 863717
e-mail: h.heather.nicholson@gmail.com

RICHARD MITCHELL
TOTNES, DEVON
Tel. +44 1803 863717
e-mail: nichmitch@supanet.com

HELEN BOURNE
NEWTON ABBOT, DEVON
Tel. +44 1803 812836
e-mail: helen.bourne52@btinternet.com

NICOLA VINCENT
BURNHAM-ON-SEA
SOMERSET
Tel. +44-1278-782274
e-mail: nk.vincent@btinternet.com

FINLAND

KARJALOHJA

PER VIKTOR HJALMARSSON
SON
KARJALOHJA
Tel. +358 400 284 012
e-mail: viktor.hjalmarsson@gmail.com

VILMA MAAHTANEN
KARJALOHJA
Tel. +358 402431758
e-mail: vilmaelina@gmail.com

KESKI-UUSIMAA

KAISLI SYRJANEN
Tel. +358 400 711206
e-mail: kaisli@hotmail.com

TURKU

EEVA HAMALAINEN
TURKU
Tel. +358 40 557 9046
e-mail: eeva.hnen@gmail.com

FRANCE

CLAIRE PARAVISINIERNOUF
NICE
Tel. +33-4-93-98-29-60
e-mail: claire.paravisiniernouf@niccotedazur.org

MARINA DEL CAMPO
VENICE
Tel. +33 4 93 59 87 29
e-mail: marina.loubet@wanadoo.fr

HELENE FARNELLI
NICE
Tel. +33-60-99-36-90

BRIGITTE GUIMBAL
VALBONNE
Tel. +33-4-93-12-93-49
e-mail: bguimbal@free.fr

CATHERINE ALBERTINI
CHATEAUNEUF
Tel. +33-4-97-01-03-12
e-mail: catherine.1@libertysurf.fr



NADINE GARDERES
DIE
Tel. +33 4 7-521-1585
e-mail: naga@poivron.org

VIRGINIE PHILIPPE
STE ANNE SUR VILAINE
Tel. +33-9 80 65 42 45
e-mail: virginiephilippe@free.fr

CECILE FLOURY-
BUCHALIN
MONTS
Tel. +33-4-72-87-07-81
e-mail: flouirybuchalin@gmail.com



FANETTE BILLARD
SAINT SEVER
Tel. +33 5 58 44 13 17
e-mail: billard.fanette@orange.fr

FARID SI MOUSSA
NANTES
Tel. +33-2-40-89-57-07
e-mail: farid_sim@hotmail.com

FLORE SI MOUSSA-LOUIS
NANTES
Tel. +33-2-40-89-58-73
e-mail: florelouis@yahoo.fr

CAROLINE WALLACE
LARRE
Tel. +33 7 89 51 60 45
e-mail: cwarott@gmail.com

JOS SJOLLEMA
NONETTE-ORSONNETTE
Tel. +33-4-73-89-04-95
e-mail: j.sjollema@wanadoo.fr

FRÉDÉRIQUE
BRAGUIER
PAU
Tel. +33 5 59-62-26-48
e-mail: frederique.braguier@kiwi-fibre.fr

DELPHINE BARBEROT
PURGEROT
Tel. +33 3 84 91 77 71
e-mail: delnew@gmail.com

DANA POWERS
VILLIERS-ST. FRED.
Tel. +33-1-34-89-81-25
e-mail: danapowers26@hotmail.com

JOHN MULLEN
MONTREUIL
Tel. +33-1-48-97-84-52
e-mail: john.mullen@wanadoo.fr

GAMBIA, THE

SAIBA SUSO
SERREKUNDA
Tel. +220 765 3642
e-mail: shybetsuso@gmail.com



GERMANY

ANGELINA HAUG
ESSLINGEN
Tel. +49 0711-5764-8369
e-mail: info@angelinahaug.de

JULIANE CIESLAK
DIETRICH
GOHRISCH
Tel. +49-331-27328040
e-mail: julianecieslak@gmx.de

CLAUDIA BERGER
NAUMBURG SAALE
e-mail: der@stressrat.de

CARSTEN FILOR
BERLIN
Tel. +49-30-61659091
e-mail: c.filor@schoenberlin.de

SUSANNE (SUSI) BRIEL
BERLIN
Tel. +49-176-30419797
e-mail: susi.briel@gmx.de



VERA KOPPEN
BERLIN
Tel. +49-30 231 85 895
e-mail: verakoppen@gmail.com

JOACHIM KREMERS
BAD BELZIG
Tel. +49-15772056532
e-mail: jojoachim@posteo.de

JULIA SIEBERT
KREFELD
NORDRHEIN-WESTFALEN
Tel. +49-2151-395946
e-mail: julia.siebert@ymail.com

KARIN GEORGII
STUTTGART
Tel. +49-711-742562
e-mail: karin.georgii@gmx.de

CORDULA HERCHET-
HOFRICHTER
NEULER
Tel. +49-6221-860159
e-mail: veit-hofrichter@gmx.de

EVE ABRAHAM
KIRCHSEEN
BEI MÜNCHEN
Tel. +49-8091-518258
e-mail: evejesko@yahoo.de



GHANA

REGINALD KPAKPO
ACQUAYE
Tel. +233-244-818-805
e-mail: reginald_k84@yahoo.com

GREECE

LOUKIA PIKI
ZAKYNTHOS
Tel. +30-26950-24562
e-mail: yogainzakynthos@gmail.com



PERIKLIS XONDROS
XANTHI
Tel. +30-25410 67250
e-mail: periklisxondros@hotmail.com

KATERINA STAVROPOU-
LOU-VLACHOU
XANTHI
Tel. +30-25410-77308

GUINEA

MAMADOU SARKOZY
DIALLO
CONAKRY
Tel. +224-622-05-22-10
e-mail: diallomamadou316@gmail.com

HONDURAS

ALICIA
e-mail: alyfunes30@gmail.com

HUNGARY

VAJDA VIOLETA
BUDAPEST
Tel. +36 30 953 0822
e-mail: vajdavioleta@yahoo.com

SUZSANNA LAKATOS NE
DANO
NYIRBATOR
Tel. +36 30 392 2855
e-mail: lakatosnedano.2015@gmail.com



INDIA

ANDHRA PRADESH
VANDANA DEGAONKAR
HYDERABAD
ANDHRA PRADESH
Tel. +91-40-27562681
e-mail: Degaonkarvandana@gmail.com

J.B.V. LAKSHMI
HYDERABAD
Tel. +91-40-27017040
e-mail: jvsbrabrahmanyam@yahoo.co.in

KARNATAKA

JAGANNATH SHASHIKALA
BANGALORE
KARNATAKA
Tel. +91-9902584557
e-mail: sjsashikala@gmail.com

TAMIL NADU

SR. BENEDICTA
THENI, TAMIL NADU
Tel. +91-4546-253907,
+91 944 360 7921
e-mail: pushpamfdo@gmail.com

WEST BENGAL

KAJAL SEN
KOLKATA, WEST BENGAL
Tel. +33 246 06646
e-mail: sen76kajal@gmail.com

SUMITA ROY
KOLKATA, WEST BENGAL
Tel. +33-245-58043
e-mail: sumita444@gmail.com

IRAN

VIDA MOZAFARIEH
TEHRAN
Tel. +98-21-22604145
e-mail: vida5978@yahoo.com

IRELAND

MAURICE HEARNE
LUCAN, CO. DUBLIN
Tel. +353-87-6784764

IRELAND, NORTHERN

SHEILA FAIRON
PORTRUSH, CO. ANTRIM
Tel. +44-28-70-823193
e-mail: fairon@fastmail.fm

ISRAEL

MICHAEL NOY MALKA
MOSHAV HAYOGEV
Tel. +972-775501523
e-mail: noy.rc.il@gmail.com

TEACHERS IN DEVELOPING COMMUNITIES

ORNA SHUMAN
BEIT SHEARIM
Tel. +972-4-9531528
e-mail: ornashuman1@gmail.com

TAMI SHAMIR
SHEFAYIM
Tel. +972-9-9584447
e-mail: tamish@netvision.net.il



ITALY

JUNE MACKAY
CAREZZANO
ALESSANDRIA
Tel. +390-131-839-381

GIANNA BELTRAME
VICENZA
Tel. +39 349 724 2247
e-mail: giabeltrame@gmail.com

IVORY COAST

ZOUNON KOFFI URBAIN
CYRILLE
COCODY
Tel. +225 46 05 96 18
e-mail: zounoncyrille@gmail.com

JAPAN

HONSHU
MIYUKI TERADAIRA
MATSUMOTO-SHI
NAGANO PREF
Tel. +81-90-7019-6082
e-mail: miyuki.tag1115@gmail.com



MICHIKO (JO) IWAKI
OOBU-CITY, AICHI-KEN
Tel. +81-70-5032-3359
e-mail: ilovejo3700@yahoo.co.jp

OKINAWA

TOMOMI SUZUKI
OKINAWA-CITY
OKINAWA
Tel. +81-70-5480-0189
e-mail: tomomyjpo@yahoo.co.jp

SHIKOKU

KAORI YOSHIOKA
TAKAMATSU-SHI
KAGAWA-KEN
Tel. +81-80-3164-2288
e-mail: sorano_iroiro@yahoo.co.jp



AKARI TAKECHI
NARUTO CITY
TOKUSHIMA
Tel. +81-080-3928-4900
e-mail: akanotake@yahoo.co.jp

KOREA

SANGWOO KWON
SEOUL
Tel. +82-10-7306-4746
e-mail: sangwkwon@yahoo.com

MEXICO

OAXACA
JUDITH BAUTISTA PEREZ
SAN JUAN ATEPEC
OAXACA
Tel. +52-951-165-6869
e-mail: judithb57@yahoo.com.mx



QUERETARO

CONCEPCIÓN MÁRTÍNEZ
GASCA
QUERETARO, QUERETARO
Tel. +52-49-74 09 89

MOROCCO

ANAS RAGHIB
MARRAKECH
Tel. +212-634512514
e-mail: an.raghib@gmail.com

SARRA EL GUERRARI
MARRAKECH
Tel. +212 624671253
e-mail: mouna.book@hotmail.fr

NOURIJHANE MAHMANI
MARRAKECH
Tel. +212 707033435
e-mail: jihanamahmani@gmail.com

ESSALHA OUAFA
Tel. +212 0662676200

NETHERLANDS

FRYSLÂN
INGRID DOLLEE
LEEUWARDEN, FR
Tel. +31-58-8446918
e-mail: i.dollee@gmail.com

HENNIE JONGSMA
LEEUWARDEN, FR
Tel. +31-58-2137991
e-mail: jongsma1@chello.nl

WYTSKE VISSER
LJOUWERT, FR
Tel. +31-58-2672084,
+31 (0)6 38455620
e-mail: wytskevisser.coe@gmail.com

ANNIE HOEKSTRA
LJOUWERT, FR
Tel. +31-58-2800853
e-mail: annie.hoekstra@planet.nl

JAN VENDERBOS
WERGEA, FR
Tel. +31-58-2673543
e-mail: j.venderbos7@upcmail.nl

ADALGARD WILLEMSMA
BITGUM, FR
Tel. +31-58-2163474
e-mail: adalgard.willemsma@gmail.com

HANNIE SCHURMAN
WIRDUM, FR
Tel. +31-58-2552659
e-mail: hannie.schuurman@gmail.com

GELDERLAND

NIRUPA SHANTIPREKASH
ARNHEM
Tel. +31 268486183
e-mail: nirupa@antenna.nl

ALBIEN HENDRIKS
ARNHEM
Tel. +31-26-4434168
e-mail: albienhendriks@gmail.com

MARLENE MELFOR
ARNHEM
Tel. +31-26-3819221
e-mail: m.melfor@chello.nl

BRIGITTE THEEUWEN
NIJMEGEN
Tel. +31-24-323-7663
e-mail: b.theuwen@antenna.nl



NICOLE KIENHUIS
NIJMEGEN
Tel. +31-24-3239769
e-mail: nkienhuis@hotmail.com

JULIA KOSTELIJK
NIJMEGEN
Tel. +31-24-3568317
e-mail: jmkosteljik@upcmail.nl

KEES JANSEN
NIJMEGEN
Tel. +31-24-3505405
e-mail: bjoetecees@upcmail.nl

MONNIE PAASHUIS
DOETINCHEM, GE
Tel. +31 314 344453
e-mail: monniepaashuis@gmail.com

OVERIJSSSEL

ANNEKE GROOT
DEVENTER, OV
Tel. +31-570-769170
e-mail: anneke@amao.nl

TANJA KIENHUIS
OLDENZAAL, OV
Tel. +31 541 511990
e-mail: tkienhuis@yahoo.com

UTRECHT

NICOLET GROOT
HUIS TER HEIDE (UT), UT
Tel. +31-30-2210977
e-mail: burostrafwerk@gmail.com

ROSEMARIE MELENHORST-
MULDERS
EEMNES, UT
Tel. +31-35-5387098
e-mail: rosemarie.melenhorst@planet.nl

ZUID-HOLLAND

JULIA TELTING
VOORBURG
Tel. +31-487-522304
e-mail: juliatelting@hotmail.com

ROEL BOSCH
ROTTERDAM, ZH
Tel. +31 6 521 999 83
e-mail: roelbosch@ms-panta-rhei.nl

NEW ZEALAND

HEMAIMA CARKEEK
WIREMU
OTAKI
Tel. +64-6-364-6512,
+64-21-100 4120
e-mail: hcwiremu@gmail.com

CARMEN CARKEEK
OTAKI
Tel. +64 6 364 0166
e-mail: carkeema@gmail.com

ALISON KENNEDY
NELSON
Tel. +64-3-548-8467
e-mail: ali.kennedy@xtra.co.nz

AMI KENNEDY
NELSON
Tel. +64-3-386-1025
e-mail: amikgrowingfood@gmail.com

FRANCA MORANI
TAKAKA
GOLDEN BAY
Tel. +64-3-525-6202
e-mail: francamorani@hotmail.it

GIULIANA MORANI
TAKAKA
GOLDEN BAY
Tel. +64-3-525-8389
e-mail: giulimorani@hotmail.com



DIANE SHANNON
CHRISTCHURCH
Tel. +64 3 332 2360
e-mail: diane.shannon@cdhb.health.nz

NIKKI BERRY
CHRISTCHURCH
CANTERBURY
Tel. +64-3-981-8729
e-mail: nikki@sing.co.nz

UMI ASAKA
NORTH DUNEDIN
Tel. +64 0221 093218
e-mail: a.rose.dream.0929@gmail.com

LANCE CABLK
DEVONPORT, AUCKLAND
Tel. +64-9-446-6546
e-mail: lcablk1010@gmail.com



NICARAGUA

GUSNARA DEL CARMEN
BUSTOS HURTADO
SAN MARCOS
Tel. +505-88640035

NIGERIA

FEDERAL CAPITAL
TERRITORY
AKUDOLU IFEYINWA
ABUJA, FCT
Tel. +234-806-2095171

MUSA ZAINAB
MAITAMA DISTRICT
ABUJA
Tel. +234 8065449386
e-mail: yaanatmusa@gmail.com

KADUNA

HANNATU BORORO MUSA
KADUNA
Tel. +234-62-210976
e-mail: hannyororo@gmail.com

JOHN KAZACHIANG
GARBA
KADUNA
Tel. +234-81642-05595 (work)
e-mail: johnkazachiang@gmail.com

HAUWA B. MUSA
KADUNA SOUTH
Tel. +234 070 304 71355
e-mail: hauwabmusa_385@yahoo.com

LAGOS

TEMITOPE FAKUNLE
ATEGUNLE, LAGOS
Tel. +234-8051214135
e-mail: tope_last@yahoo.com



ONDO

ADEKUNLE AKINOLA
AKUNGBA AKOKO, ONDO
Tel. +234-803-656-5310
e-mail: adekunleakinola99@gmail.com

BANKOLE AKINSELURE
AKURE
Tel. +234 0070342152-33
e-mail: bankoleakinseleure@gmail.com

NORWAY

ANNE HELGEDAGSRUD
OSLO
Tel. +47 909 62 061
e-mail: helgedagsrud@gmail.com

SIMON JAMES-EIDE
OSLO
Tel. +47 906 333 50
e-mail: sj-eide@hotmail.com

BRITA HELLEBORG
PORSGRUNN
TELEMARK
Tel. +47-35-51-31-50
e-mail: hhellebo@online.no

STEIN HELLEBORG
PORSGRUNN
TELEMARK
Tel. +47-91153073
e-mail: steinh_5@hotmail.com

PERU

MARISOL CALLANAUPA
MESCCO
SANTA ANA, CUSCO
Tel. +51-084-777294
e-mail: marisol_cm@hotmail.com

NANCY CALLANAUPA
MESCCO
SANTA ANA, CUSCO
Tel. +51-084-777294
e-mail: nancy9andes@hotmail.com

ROSIO DE JESUS RAMOS
FERNANDEZ
CUSCO
Tel. +51 984351440
e-mail: rosiodejesus14@gmail.com

PHILIPPINES

NIK LEUNG
SAN FRANCISCO, CA, USA
Class taught over the Internet for the Philippines
Tel. +1-703-346-8351
e-mail: nikleung@gmail.com

POLAND

JACEK STRZEMIECZNY
WARSZAWA
Tel. +48 601 21 80 32
e-mail: jacek.strzemieczny@ceo.org.pl

YVONNE ODROWAZ-
PIENIAZEK
JONKOWO
Tel. +48-502-594-833,
+48-89-512-9356
e-mail: yvoodr@gmail.com

ZOFIA OLEJNIK-HASIUUK
LODZ
Tel. +48-519088375
e-mail: mahas@go2.pl

PUERTO RICO

MARIA JUDITH COLON
SAN JUAN, PR
Tel. +1-646-319-9403
e-mail: majuco4150@msn.com

LEYKAMARIE ALMA-
BONILLA
SAN JUAN, PR
Tel. +1-787-758-7747
e-mail: leykalma@yahoo.com

YARA ALMA-BONILLA
SAN JUAN, PR
Tel. +1-787-431-5795
e-mail: yarasady@yahoo.com

NELIDA ORTIZ ROLON
BAYAMON, PR
Tel. +1-787-222-8929
e-mail: nelly51648@gmail.com



ROMANIA

MIHAELA BERINDEANU
TIMISOARA
Tel. +40-56-167589
e-mail: mikiberindeanu@yahoo.com

LAZAR IULIA
MAGDALENA
ARAD
Tel. +40-357-402283
e-mail: iuliaml@yahoo.com

SCOTLAND

MARGARET GAULT
FRASERBURGH
ABERDEENSHIRE
Tel. +44-134-653-2487
e-mail: margaret.gault@virgin.net

MICHAEL SPRING
EDINBURGH
Tel. +44 131 337 4990
e-mail: mikespring@hotmail.com

FIONNTAN (JOHN)
HURLEY
MUSSELBURGH
Tel. +44-7931-355-348
e-mail: jf1hurley@aol.com

BARBARA K. SCHMIDT
DUNOON, ARGYLL
Tel. +44 1369-704-707
e-mail: barbaraskmidt@btinternet.com

SOUTH AFRICA, REPUBLIC OF

GAUTENG

ROSLYN CASSIDY
JOHANNESBURG
Tel. +27 11 615 3572
e-mail: rcassidy423@gmail.com

WESTERN CAPE

HEIN KLEINBOOI
BRACKENFELL
Tel. +27-21-4479438
e-mail: hein.kleinbooi@gmail.com

MARGARET GREEN
CAPE TOWN,
WESTERN CAPE
Tel. +27-21-761-3027
e-mail: mgreen@mweb.co.za



ZAAHIDA HARTLEY
CAPE TOWN,
WESTERN CAPE
Tel. +27 083-383-0193
e-mail: ZaaHida.Hartley@
westerncape.gov.za

SOUTH SUDAN

VICTOR BATALI SILAS
YEI
Tel.c +211-955203537
e-mail: victorsillas06@
yahoo.com

SPAIN

MARI CARMEN GARCIA
FERNANDEZ
LAS PALMAS DE GRAN
CANARIA
Tel. +34-62-854-8586
e-mail: rimacar@gmail.com

ANDREA AJA MARURI
SANTANDER, CANTABRIA
Tel. +34-605-875597
e-mail: milpanesypeces@
gmail.com

OSCAR ARGUMOSA SAINZ
PENAGOS, SANTANDER
CANTABRIA
Tel. +34-942-554338,
+34-660798485
e-mail: oscarargumosa@
gmail.com

SWEDEN

KRISTIAN LUND
FALUN
Tel. +46-247 10483
e-mail: kristian@norsbro.se

ANNIKA FEHLING
VISBY
Tel. +46-708467203
e-mail: annika@
annikafehling.com

TAIWAN

YIH-SHEUE LIN
SHOUFENG, HUALIEN
Tel. +886-934288728
e-mail: ysl@gms.ndhu.edu.tw

TANZANIA

MARY MWITA
ARUSHA
Tel. +255 754520109
e-mail: marymwita2011@
gmail.com

ELIASENYA ISSANGYA
ARUMERU
Tel. +255 784982720

ELLY MASAM
ARUMERU
Tel. +255 784729648
e-mail: emasam2@yahoo.com

MBONEA MFINANGA
ARUSHA
Tel. +255 753884001
e-mail: mboneamfinanga184@
gmail.com

THAILAND

PERMSUK AMP-
ORNCHARAT
BANGKOK
Tel. +66-87-688-9692
e-mail: permsuka@gmail.com

TED MAYER
BANGPAKOK
RATBURANA
Tel. +66-86-599-4802
e-mail: morethanmeetshei@
gmail.com

TOGO

AMEDAVI EDOH
LOME
Tel. +228 9253 5816
e-mail: edohbarnabe@
gmail.com

EDMOND EKUE HETTAH
LOME
Tel. +228 9236 6243
e-mail: ekuegan2004@
gmail.com

KOKOUVI ABOBOYAYA
KAME
Tel. +228-9198-2465
e-mail: cooleo2009@gmail.com

JENNIFER GBKOU
Tel. +228 93 62 05 16/
99 99 77 17
e-mail: jennifergbekou96@
gmail.com

UNITED KINGDOM

*See Cornwall, England,
Scotland, and Wales*

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

(Within States by Zip Code)

ALASKA
BRIDGET HITCHCOCK
SITKA, AK
Tel. +1-907-747-3102
e-mail: bridgethitchcock@
hotmail.com

ARIZONA
CATHERINE LAND
EVILSIZOR
TUCSON, AZ
Tel. +1-520-261-1628
e-mail: azcland@gmail.com

BRENDA CASEY
TUCSON, AZ
Tel. +1-520-981-7356
e-mail: brencasey@yahoo.com

LOUISE GOOD
TUCSON, AZ
Tel. +1-808-381-2939
e-mail: hanellingood@
aim.com

CAROL ROSE
TUCSON, AZ
Tel. +1-312-933-8986
e-mail: carolarose77@
gmail.com

GENE GALAZAN
PRESCOTT, AZ
Tel. +1-928-443-9100
e-mail: insiderartist@
gmail.com

ARKANSAS
CHARLOTTE DOWNEY
EUREKA SPRINGS, AR
Tel. +1-479-253-6721
e-mail: cdowney@ipa.net

PATTY MINOR
FAYETTEVILLE, AR
Tel. +1-479-935-0267
e-mail: minorbiz@gmail.com

CALIFORNIA

JULIAN WEISSGLASS
SANTA BARBARA, CA
Tel. +1-805-637-8895
e-mail: julian@weissglass.net

DAVORA TETENS
SEBASTOPOL, CA
Tel. +1-917-518-7456
e-mail: davoratetens@
gmail.com

EMILY SIEGEL
EUREKA, CA
Tel. +1-707-845-2401
e-mail: emily5@sonic.net

COLORADO

JULIE FOX-RUBIN
BASALT, CO
Tel. +1-970-319-1744
e-mail: julie@foxrubin.com

CONNECTICUT

JOANNE BRAY
STAMFORD, CT
Tel. +1-203-273-3058
e-mail: jmbray@aol.com

MIKE MARKOVITS
STAMFORD, CT
Tel. +1-203-536-5413
e-mail: mjmrkvt@aol.com,
mkmarkovits@gmail.com

TREY VAN NORSTRAND
STAMFORD, CT
Tel. +1-203-325-0940
e-mail: chiahog@yahoo.com

FLORIDA

HENRY HALL
TALLAHASSEE, FL
Tel. +1-850-656-2207
e-mail: henryhall6@gmail.com

LISA TRIPP
TALLAHASSEE, FL
e-mail: Lisatripp1@gmail.com

DENNIS LEFILS
TALLAHASSEE, FL
Tel. +1-850-421-1930
e-mail: Dennis.lefils@fldoe.org

DEBO POWERS
TALLAHASSEE, FL
Tel. +1-406-407-0787
e-mail: debopowers@
gmail.com

ALYSSA ZUCKER
GAINESVILLE, FL
Tel. +1-352-505-9119
e-mail: alyssa.zucker@
gmail.com

ELENA MURATORI
KEY LARGO, FL
Tel. +1-305-453-1835
e-mail: seamaid55@
yahoo.com

CHARLOTTE DOWNEY
GULFPORT, FL
Tel. +1-479-253-6721
e-mail: cdowney@ipa.net

GLENDA FINDLAY
GULFPORT, FL
Tel. +1-917-767-5515
e-mail: glendafindlay@
gmail.com

MYRNA CHARRY
PORT CHARLOTTE, FL
Tel. +1-212-365-4695
e-mail: myrnabcharry@
gmail.com

LAUREN SPIRO
VENICE, FL
Tel. +1-703-862-6512
e-mail: laurenspiro1@
gmail.com

HAWAII

XIAN LAI
HONOLULU, HI
Tel. +1-808-391-9426
e-mail: xian.lai@gmail.com

IDAHO

KATHY SCABBYROBE
LAPWAI, ID
Tel. +1-208-791-8711
e-mail: kscabbyrobe@
yahoo.com

PAM PIPER-RUTH
BOISE, ID
Tel. +1-208-344-5951
e-mail: piperruth@msn.com

PETTRA POLLACK
BOISE, ID
Tel. +1-208-362-5587
e-mail: pettra.pollack@
gmail.com

CAROL WILBURN
MISSOULA, ID
Tel. +1-919-969-6553
e-mail: wilburncs@
phoenixesrising.com

ILLINOIS

ALYSIA TATE
CHICAGO, IL
Tel. +1-773-680-9767
e-mail: alytate@gmail.com

KATE INSOLIA
URBANA, IL
Tel. +1-773-216-8650
e-mail: kjinsolia@gmail.com

EDNA VIRUELL FUENTES
URBANA, IL
Tel. +1-313-550-8022
e-mail: eviruell@gmail.com

INDIANA

PATRICIA TURNER
FORT WAYNE, IN
Tel. +1-260-744-7511
e-mail: medina_46803@
yahoo.com

IOWA

JANET COOK
AMES, IA 50010
Tel. +1-515-388-3824
e-mail: jancooks@gmail.com

MAGGIE LA WARE
AMES, IA
Tel. +1-518-268-1732
e-mail: mlaware@iastate.edu

LOUISIANA

AMA ROGAN
NEW ORLEANS, LA
Tel. +1-504-650-1295
e-mail: arogan@tulane.edu

JULIE LAUSÉ
NEW ORLEANS, LA
Tel. +1-504-202-2011
e-mail: julie.lause@gmail.com

TANYA M. JONES
NEW ORLEANS, LA
Tel. +1-917-686-3022
e-mail: tmjones.822@
gmail.com

ELAINE CLÉMENT
SAINT MARTINVILLE, LA
Tel. +1-337-257-1592
e-mail: cadienne@gmail.com

MAINE

CYNTHIA PHINNEY
LIVERMORE FALLS, ME
Tel. +1-207-491-9928
e-mail: cynth@gwi.net

ANNA SHAPLEY-QUINN
MONROE, ME
Tel. +1-207-525-3323
e-mail: anna.shapleyquinn@
gmail.com

BONNIE TOMASH
SKOWHEGAN, ME
Tel. +1-207-474-0903
e-mail: btomash@msad54.org

MARYLAND

HELENE KASS
COLUMBIA, MD
Tel. +1-410-992-9505
e-mail: helenekass@gmail.com

MARY VIGLIANI
OWINGS MILLS, MD
Tel. +1-410-356-4069
e-mail: mgvig@hotmail.com

PETER DWYER
BALTIMORE, MD
Tel. +1-410-464-1827
e-mail: p.c.dwyer44@
gmail.com

JOY KROEGER-MAPPES
FROSTBURG, MD
Tel. +1-301-689-3745
e-mail: jkroeger@
frostburg.edu

MASSACHUSETTS

KELLY BATES
BOSTON, MA
Tel. +1-617-233-5395
e-mail: kbatesrc@gmail.com

BETSY FEICK
FLORENCE, MA
Tel. +1-413-584-1090
e-mail: bf@betsyfeick.com

SUSANNE (SUE) WALKER
NORTH ADAMS, MA
Tel. +1-413-663-7396
e-mail: greenwalker@
verizon.net

IARA CURY
WILLIAMSTOWN, MA
Tel. +1-714-914-8714
e-mail: iarapcurry@
gmail.com

GLENN JOHNSON
GREENFIELD, MA
Tel. +1-413-773-7712
e-mail: glenn@
glennwjohanson.com

DUEY KOL
LYNN, MA
Tel. +617-669-3404
e-mail: dueykol@gmail.com

ROBERT (BOB) WALD
TEWKSBURY, MA
Tel. +1-978-590-8172
e-mail: rwald@alum.bu.edu

SABRA DOW
NEWBURYPORT, MA
Tel. +1-978-465-2766
e-mail: sabradow@yahoo.com

CAROL CATALANO
SOUTH HAMILTON, MA
Tel. +1-978-468-4963
e-mail: cca0@catalanoinc.com

JENNIFER WEXLER
CANTON, MA
Tel. +1-617-910-7848
e-mail: jennwexshayndle@
gmail.com

CARLOS ROJAS ALVAREZ
BOSTON, MA
Tel. +1-857-919-8468
e-mail: crcrcc.rojas7@
gmail.com

DIANE BALSER
JAMAICA PLAIN, MA
Tel. +1-617-276-3165
e-mail: dibalscr@comcast.net

BECKY SHUSTER
HYDE PARK, MA
Tel. +1-617-390-5660
e-mail: beckyshuster@
comcast.net

SARAH ALMER
CAMBRIDGE, MA
Tel. +1-617-913-3475
e-mail: sarahalmer@
gmail.com

JOAN KARP
CAMBRIDGE, MA
Tel. +1-617-864-2857
e-mail: j-karp@comcast.net

PHIL LYNES
NEEDHAM HTS., MA
Tel. +1-508-364-1862
e-mail: PTLyness@gmail.com

AMY RICHARDSON
LARKIN
EAST FALMOUTH, MA
Tel. +1-508-563-6934
e-mail: amylarkin@gmail.com

MICHELLE GERHARD
JASNY
VINEYARD HAVEN, MA
Tel. +1-508-693-7823
e-mail: mvyyet@aol.com

MICHIGAN

CATHERINE FISCHER
ANN ARBOR, MI
Tel. +1-734-395-5244
e-mail: catherinedfischer@
gmail.com

M'LIS BARTLETT
DEXTER, MI
Tel. +1-734-474-2723
e-mail: mlis@umich.edu

PAM OATIS
DUNDEE, MI
Tel. +1-734-279-1800
e-mail: pam.oatis@gmail.com

JOHN KIELY
DUNDEE, MI
Tel. +1-734-279-1800
e-mail: jkiely@vmc.org

CINDY TOBIAS
DETROIT, MI
Tel. +1-313-842-1245
e-mail: wowcst120@
gmail.com

CHRISTINA KELLY
EAST LANSING, MI
Tel. +1-517-574-5543
e-mail: ckelly@umich.edu

TEACHERS IN DEVELOPING COMMUNITIES

MINNESOTA

CLAUDIA MURPHY
MOORHEAD, MN
Tel. +1-518-466-6904
e-mail: cmm214@aol.com

MONTANA

DEBO POWERS
POLEBRIDGE, MT
Tel. +1-406-407-0787
e-mail: debopowers@gmail.com

NEW HAMPSHIRE

WENDY BYRN
SULLIVAN, NH
Tel. +1-603-847-9621
e-mail: dervish@myfairpoint.net



NEW JERSEY

CARL HEATH
MAPLEWOOD, NJ
Tel. +1-973-327-2740
e-mail: ceheath@verizon.net

MOIRA WILKINSON
MONTCLAIR, NJ
Tel. +1-646-265-2069
e-mail: moirawilkinson@gmail.com



ODELIA SHARGIAN
TENAFLY, NJ
Tel. +1-201-560-7872
e-mail: oshargian@gmail.com

RICKIE KASHDAN
LONG BRANCH, NJ
Tel. +1-732-222-1685
e-mail: kashdan@comcast.net

CAROLYN SMITH
GILLETTE, NJ
Tel. +1-908-578-2235
e-mail: vterinnj@gmail.com

MATTHEW FRIERSON
RIVERTON, NJ
Tel. +1-856-520-1318
e-mail: mfry85@gmail.com

DIANA COOPER CRONE
PENNSAUKEN, NJ
Tel. +1-609-665-5647
e-mail: dc.write@gmail.com

LUIS GARCIA
MAYS LANDING, NJ
Tel. +1-202-329-6389
e-mail: luisg@gwmail.gwu.edu

JUDY GAMBLE
SOMERSET, NJ
Tel. +1-732-873-5231
e-mail: judygamble@comcast.net

NEW MEXICO

BETH ENSON
ARROYO SECO, NM
e-mail: wildmushroomsoup@gmail.com

NEW YORK

DYAMI NASON-REGAN
HIGH FALLS, NY
Tel. +1-845-594-4518
e-mail: 4dyami@gmail.com

ELLIE KRAMER
WEST HURLEY, NY
Tel. +1-845-750-2922
e-mail: elliek2@hvc.rr.com

ALYSON (ALY) HALPERT
MILLERTON, NY
Tel. +1-734-239-3641
e-mail: akhalpert@gmail.com

JOHN BUCKLEY
BUFFALO, NY
Tel. +1-716-886-0544
e-mail: love2healnow@gmail.com

ELISABETH ROSSOW
BUFFALO, NY
Tel. +1-716-903-5375
e-mail: rossowelisabeth@gmail.com

MARK KILMARTIN
CORNING, NY
Tel. +1-607-962-5582
e-mail: mkilmartin@earthlink.net

NORTH CAROLINA

ANNE MACKIE
THOMASVILLE, NC
Tel. +1-336-313-5125
e-mail: awmackie@gmail.com

GEORGE DIMOCK
GREENSBORO, NC
Tel. +1-336-210-8122
e-mail: g_dimock@uncg.edu

SUSAN LINDSAY
GREENSBORO, NC
Tel. +1-336-272-4690
e-mail: sclindsay22@gmail.com

LESLIE KAUSCH
GREENSBORO, NC
Tel. +1-336-852-4063
e-mail: singonki@gmail.com

MARIA RUATTO
DURHAM, NC
Tel. +1-828-989-7055
e-mail: mariaruatto@gmail.com

DALE EVARTS
DURHAM, NC
Tel. +1-919-402-6275
e-mail: dale.evarts@gmail.com

ANNE CLAIRE
BROUGHTON
DURHAM, NC
Tel. +1-919-286-9391
e-mail: acbroughton37@yahoo.com

ANNA GRANT
DURHAM, NC
Tel. +1-484-326-4399
e-mail: annathegrant@gmail.com

BEVERLY A. BRANAMAN
APEX, NC
Tel. +1-919-773-8330
e-mail: bbrnc@nc.rr.com

JOHN THOMAS
CARY, NC
Tel. +1-919-460-8909
e-mail: frog.pond@mindspring.com

ANGELIA STRADFORD
JAMES
CHARLOTTE, NC
Tel. +1-704-905-2185
e-mail: adstradford2@yahoo.com

JEANNETTE HICKMAN
CHARLOTTE, NC
Tel. +1-704-726-0300
e-mail: revjeannette@hotmail.com

OHIO

HEATHER DEAN
COLUMBUS, OH
Tel. +1-614-572-6344
e-mail: copalaa2003@yahoo.com

JOE SPARKS
PERRYSBURG, OH
Tel. +1-419-345-0885
e-mail: joe.sparks@toast.net

SONDRA D. MCCURRY
EUCLID, OH
Tel. +1-216-407-7823
e-mail: smccurry@ameritech.net

JOAN DANES
BROOK PARK, OH
Tel. +1-216-961-9444
e-mail: kjdanes@nowonline.net

SARALYNNE THORESEN
CINCINNATI, OH
Tel. +1-513-542-6085
e-mail: olive@e-burwinkel.net

BOMANI MOYENDA
YELLOW SPRINGS, OH
Tel. +1-937-450-3483

OKLAHOMA

SUSAN MULLINS
GUTHRIE, OK
Tel. +1-405-821-9613
e-mail: susan.mullins1906@gmail.com

OREGON
RUTH MCNEILL
CORVALLIS, OR
Tel. +1-541-738-6950
e-mail: ruthmcn49@yahoo.com

KENNETH DEVENEY
ASHLAND, OR
Tel. +1-541-488-5506
e-mail: kenndev@yahoo.com

PENNSYLVANIA

DEWAINE BEARD
PITTSBURGH, PA
Tel. +1-412-719-9904
e-mail: dewaineb@gmail.com

KELLY JOHNSON
PORT MATILDA, PA
Tel. +1-814-280-3127
e-mail: kellyajjohnson@gmail.com

CLAIRE FOREMAN
MANSFIELD, PA
Tel. +1-570-662-3218
e-mail: claireforeman@gmail.com

KIM BANISTER
BOILING SPRINGS, PA
Tel. +1-717-574-5458
e-mail: kim@banister-heishman.com

CHUCK BARONE
CARLISLE, PA
Tel. +1-717-776-4950
e-mail: csbarone@pa.net

KATHY TUNNEY
PHILADELPHIA, PA
Tel. +1-215-637-3072
e-mail: ktreds2@aol.com

PATIENCE RAGE
PHILADELPHIA, PA
Tel. +1-215-817-5667
e-mail: paciencerage@gmail.com

ANN WILKEN
JULIAN, PA
Tel. +1-814-321-4144
e-mail: abwilken@verizon.net

GINNY BOOTH
KEMPTON, PA
Tel. +1-610-756-4431
e-mail: gbooth@ptd.net

SOUTH CAROLINA

JODY USHER
ANDERSON, SC
Tel. +1-404-668-0466
e-mail: jusher@emory.edu

MARION FARINA
MCCORMICK, SC
Tel. +1-201-207-0590
e-mail: farina39@verizon.net

TENNESSEE

KALAI MUGILAN
BRENTWOOD, TN
Tel. +1-205-243-7747
e-mail: Kalai_Mugilan@yahoo.com

CLARE BRATTEN
NASHVILLE, TN
Tel. +1-615-383-5675
e-mail: clarebratten@gmail.com

ANNE THOMAS-ABBOTT
KNOXVILLE, TN
Tel. +1-865-719-4911
e-mail: anne.of.knoxville@gmail.com

BETSY HOBKIRK
KNOXVILLE, TN
Tel. +1-865-382-6207
e-mail: betsyhobkirk@bellsouth.net

TEXAS

LINDA XIMENES
SAN ANTONIO, TX
Tel. +1-210-492-9401
e-mail: lindax1944@icloud.com

VERMONT

BILL KEEGAN
POST MILLS, VT
Tel. +1-802-333-9372
e-mail: bill.b.keegan@gmail.com

MARISA HEBB
VERSHERE, VT
Tel. +1-802-685-1222
e-mail: marisa_hebb@yahoo.com

A. LAUREL GREEN
CHESTER, VT
Tel. +1-802-275-4646
e-mail: laurel1planet@gmail.com

STEVE CROFTER
CHESTER, VT
Tel. +1-802-275-4646
e-mail: steve.crofter@gmail.com

ANNE KOPLINKA-LOEHR
BRATTLEBORO, VT
Tel. +1-802-258-7612
e-mail: anne.koplinka@gmail.com

GUY WOOD
PUTNEY, VT
Tel. +1-802-579-4844
e-mail: guynvt@gmail.com

GAIL HAINES
PUTNEY, VT
Tel. +1-802-258-0369
e-mail: gail.haines.48@gmail.com

KEN FIELD
PUTNEY, VT
Tel. +1-802-337-5288
e-mail: kenfield@gmail.com

GARTH ALLEN
BURLINGTON, VT
Tel. +1-802-310-4962
e-mail: garthcallen@hotmail.com

SUSAN MUNKRES
BURLINGTON, VT
Tel. +1-802-540-0736
e-mail: susan.munkres@gmail.com

LISA BEDINGER
SOUTH BURLINGTON, VT
Tel. +1-802-865-0211
e-mail: lisa.bedinger@comcast.net

KATHY MANNS
DANVILLE, VT
Tel. +1-802-684-3698
e-mail: kmmnccen@myfairpoint.net

MARILYN MCENERY
DANVILLE, VT
Tel. +1-802-684-3698
e-mail: kmmnccen@myfairpoint.net

PAMELA PARKER
E. SAINT JOHNSBURY, VT
Tel. +1-802-748-5124
e-mail: plparkervt@gmail.com

BARBARA DELZIO
GLOVER, VT
Tel. +1-802-525-3460
e-mail: barbdelzio@gmail.com

VIRGINIA

JEFFREY HINKLEY
YORKTOWN, VA
Tel. +1-757-867-7909
e-mail: polymers1@aol.com

LAURA NEWELL-FURNISS
LYNCHBURG, VA
Tel. +1-434-665-7657
e-mail: Lauranewell.furniss@gmail.com

WASHINGTON

PETER SCHOONMAKER
ISSAQUAH, WA
Tel. +1-425-392-9236
e-mail: pschoonmaker@comcast.net

LINDA BAKAN
RENTON, WA
Tel. +1-425-271-1097
e-mail: lbakan@comcast.net

BETSY CARROLL
SEDRO WOOLLEY, WA
Tel. +1-360-299-0818
e-mail: cbetsyjo@gmail.com

GARY BRANDT
BELLINGHAM, WA
Tel. +1-360-734-0383
e-mail: gary@macy-brandt.com

HEIDI MORFORD
CLINTON, WA
Tel. +1-360-321-5206
e-mail: heidim@whidbey.com

CAROLINE WILDFLOWER
PORT TOWNSEND, WA
Tel. +1-360-379-5376
e-mail: ckwildflower@gmail.com

JUDITH-KATE FRIEDMAN
PORT TOWNSEND, WA
Tel. +1-360-643-1961
e-mail: judselsings@gmail.com

JUDITH KAY
TACOMA, WA
Tel. +1-253-759-5844
e-mail: judithkay@harbormet.com

BARBARA MENNE
TACOMA, WA
Tel. +1-253-444-1395
e-mail: menneb@harbormet.com

MIKE GRAHAM
TACOMA, WA
Tel. +1-253-759-4544
e-mail: grafoss@icloud.com

WALES

PIP WALLER
LLANGOLLEN
DENBIGHSHIRE
Tel. +44 1978 861750
e-mail: pipsie108@gmail.com

MARIANNE JONES
MENAI BRIDGE
ANGLESEY
Tel. +44-1248-712962
e-mail: swynymor@googlemail.com

PATRICIA HUGHES
NEWTOWN, POWYS
Tel. +44-1686-625980
e-mail: patricia.hughes2010@hotmail.co.uk

STEPHEN HUGHES
NEWTOWN, POWYS
Tel. +44-1686-625980
e-mail: stebbits2010@hotmail.co.uk

KERAN SIMMONDS
LLANIDLOES, POWYS
Tel. +44-1686-411016
e-mail: keran@hotmail.com

ZAMBIA

PRECIOUS MONDE MWIYA
LUSAKA
Tel. +260-977-144977

BARBARA MALUMO
LUSAKA
Tel. +260 979478358
e-mail: bmalumo@gmail.com

ZIMBABWE

RUDO TRACY PHIRI
HARARE
Tel. +263 772 855452
e-mail: rudop9@gmail.com

PETRONELLA MUZA
CHICAGO, KWEKWE
MIDLANDS
Tel. +263-552-4283,
+263-772-755-802



RE-EVALUATION COUNSELING CONTACTS *These are persons outside the organized Areas who have expressed an interest in meeting others who might join them in getting Co-Counseling started.*

AUSTRALIA

NEW SOUTH WALES

NICOLA OSSHER
TWEEDS HEAD WEST, NSW
Tel. +61 432 724 661
e-mail: nicolaossher@gmail.com

NORTHERN TERRITORY

HENRY HARPER
RAPID CREEK, NT
Tel. +61-8-8948-2220
e-mail: brownandharper@bigpond.com

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

PAM RUMBLE
DENMARK, WA
Tel. +61-8-9848-1015

BAHRAIN, KINGDOM OF

RAMAKRISHNA IYER
MANAMA
Tel. +973-1729-1583 (h),
+973-1725-5209 (w),
+973-3947-0153 (mobile)
e-mail: uramiyer@hotmail.com

BELGIUM

KRIS VAN DAELE
ANTWERPEN (BORGERHOUT)
Tel. +32-496-10 73 91
e-mail: krisvandaele1971@gmail.com

BRAZIL

BAHIA
ALISA CLEMENTS
AREMBEPE (near Salvador)
BAHIA
Tel. +71-9348-3513,
+71-3624-2154
e-mail: alisaside@gmail.com

CANADA

MANITOBA
CATHY-JANE GREEN
BRANDON, MB
Tel. +1-204-727-8343
e-mail: cathyjane@yahoo.com

COSTA RICA

GUANACASTE
KEITH LEHRER
PLAYA SAMARA
GUANACASTE
Tel. +506-301-3867
e-mail: keithkiddo@yahoo.com

DENMARK

SJAE LLAND
LEIF SINIUS NIELSEN
RØDVIIG STEVNS
Tel. +45-4158-3335
e-mail: leif.sinius@leneogleif.dk

LINE SVENDSEN
4760 VORDINGBORD
Tel. +45-3810-7280
e-mail: dumildehimmel@gmail.com

CAMILLA SANDFELD
NIVA
Tel. +45-30702034
e-mail: sandfeld@webspeed.dk

KARL NESSE
HILLERØD
Tel. +45 61 65 7071
e-mail: karl.ness@gmail.com

ARNE STENTOFT
KIRKE HYLLINGE
Tel. +45-3672-6616
e-mail: arnestoft@gmail.com

HELENA HAVBYN
NYKOBING SJAE LLAND
Tel. +45-2671-6626
e-mail: helena@havbyn.dk

HELLE EYDE LAURSEN
TAPPERNØJE
Tel. +45-30 29 07 29
e-mail: helle.eyde@skolekom.dk

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

DEBORAH WILSON
SANTO DOMINGO
Tel. +1-829-606-8416
e-mail: deborahlynnwilson@yahoo.com

ENGLAND

YORKSHIRE & THE HUMBER

HELEN LOWE
SHEFFIELD
Tel. +44-114-2838702
e-mail: helenlowe935@btinternet.com

EAST OF ENGLAND

JEREMY THORNTON
NORWICH, NORFOLK
Tel. +44-1603-484924
e-mail: rejemy63@hotmail.com

GERMANY

MARA WOLDT
COPPENBRUGGE
Tel. +49-5156-785252
e-mail: post@mara-woldt.de

ICELAND

DOROTHEA LORENZ-
DOTTIR
REYKJAVIK
Tel. +354-5510334
e-mail: lorenzdottir@gmail.com

INDIA

TAMILNADU
K. SOUNDAR RAJAN
Tel. +91-4542-225202
e-mail: soundar_pmk@yahoo.co.in

UTTARAKHAND

SAVITRI NARAYANAN
DEHRADUN
UTTARAKHAND
Tel. +91-9897053073
e-mail: savitrinn@gmail.com

WEST BENGAL

DIPAK BASU
TAKI, WEST BENGAL
Tel. +91-3217-247584

IRELAND, NORTHERN

PASCAL MCCULLA
BELFAST
Tel. +44-28-90813444
e-mail: pascalmculla@googlegmail.com

LATVIA

KRISTINE MAK
SALDUS RAJ.,
SALDUS RAJ.
Tel. +371-26471-919
e-mail: kristine.maka@gmail.com

MADAGASCAR

MME RAZANASETA
JOSEPHINE
ANTANANARIVO
e-mail: razanaset@yahoo.fr

MALAYSIA

YEAP EIT KUENG
PETALING JAYA
Tel. +60-16-332-0857
e-mail: ekyeap@gmail.com

MAURITIUS

(INDIAN OCEAN)
GISÈLE LUXIMAN-VARDIN
VACOSAS
Tel. +230-696-4074
e-mail: rengarani@yahoo.co.uk

MONGOLIA

CH. SOSORMAA
CHINGELTEI DISTRICT
ULAANBAATAR
Tel. +976-1-310991
e-mail: mongolcav@magicnet.mn

NEPAL

BIJAYA SAINJU
KATMANDU
Tel. +977-1-277033
e-mail: bijaya.sainju@gmail.com

PHILIPPINES

VINCENT LEUNG
QUEZON CITY
Tel. +63-920-954-3424
e-mail: vpleung70@yahoo.com

MELANIE CATALAN
JIMENEZ
LAS PINAS CITY
Tel. +971-562598809,
+971-508724726
e-mail: melanie010700@gmail.com

RUSSIAN FEDERATION

UDMURTIA
GUZEL GILMANOVA
LDZEVSK, UDMURTIA
Tel. +3412-52-12-18

SAUDI ARABIA, KINGDOM OF

GERALDINE GORMAN
DHARHAN
e-mail: ggorman@hotmail.com

SPAIN

GALICIA
MARIA ISABEL FLORES
SEIJAS
MOANA, PONTEVEDRA
Tel. +34-986-313996
e-mail: ifdm61@gmail.com

DAVID MIDDLETON
MOANA, PONTEVEDRA
Tel. +34-986-313996

SWEDEN

CAROLYN JOHANSON
JÖNKÖPING
Tel. +46-36-176590

THAILAND

GEOFFREY H. WHEELER
UDON THANI
Tel. +66 81 2611715
e-mail: geoffrey@cvbt-web.org

BENGT METTINGER
CHIANG MAI,
CHIANG MAI
Tel. +66-86-188-1280
e-mail: bamswed@hotmail.com

TURKEY

BILGE SELUK
USKUDAR - ISTANBUL
Tel. +90-216-343 94 42
e-mail: blgsel@hotmail.com

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

ALASKA
SARAH TRAINOR
FAIRBANKS, AK
Tel. +1-907-978-2237
e-mail: sarah.fleisher@gmail.com

LEONA SANTIAGO
JUNEAU, AK
Tel. +1-907-364-2682
e-mail: lsantiago@cfc.org

GEORGE PARTLOW
DOUGLAS, AK
Tel. +1-907-364-3309,
+1-928-581-8146
e-mail: pricerbumanto@hotmail.com

MERLE NANCY HAWKINS
KETCHIKAN, AK
Tel. +1-907-225-2538

ARKANSAS

ALMA BURT
DUMAS, AR
Tel. +1-870-382-6585
e-mail: almburt@gmail.com

CALIFORNIA

MYCHAE L DE LA TORRE
SIMI VALLEY, CA
Tel. +1-805-526-5502

SUSAN HEDGPETH
PLEASANT HILL, CA
Tel. +1-925-363-5779
e-mail: hedgpeth@berkeley.edu

COLORADO

BOB LENK
FORT COLLINS, CO
Tel. +1-970-430-5365
e-mail: boblenk@frii.com

ANNA ROYER
SALIDA, CO
Tel. +1-970-903-4174

FLORIDA

IRA HOROWITZ
MIAMI, FL
Tel. +1-305-757-8838
e-mail: ira04@comcast.net

HOWARD ROBBY
DELRAY BEACH, FL
Tel. +1-561-563-8115
e-mail: robboy98@yahoo.com

MELBA BAEZ-OFFICER
POINCIANA, FL
Tel. +1-941-258-5419
e-mail: baezmo@hotmail.com

ILLINOIS

FRED LAMB
URBANA, IL
Tel. +1-217-840-3909
e-mail: fklamb@gmail.com

INDIANA

NANCY MARIE
ROBERTSON
INDIANAPOLIS, IN
Tel. +1-317-417-2592
e-mail: Herstorian.Grrl@gmail.com

IOWA

CLAIRE WOFFORD
IOWA CITY, IA
Tel. +1-641-233-7633
e-mail: M.claire.wofford@gmail.com

IRVING TREADWAY
WEST BRANCH, IA
Tel. +1-319-643-7623

KENTUCKY

CAROL LAMM
BEREA, KY
Tel. +1-859-986-9256
e-mail: carol@klingbeils.us

MAINE

BOBBIE GOLDMAN
MOUNT DESERT, ME
Tel. +1-978-604-4953
e-mail: bobbieg082@gmail.com

MICHIGAN

MARY MYERS
HUNTINGTON WOODS, MI
Tel. +1-248-545-9080
e-mail: marymy@aol.com

MONTANA

LAURIE TALCOTT
LIVINGSTON, MT
Tel. +1-831-234-4237
e-mail: laurietalcott@sbcglobal.net

SHARON SILVAS WAGNER
EAST GLACIER PARK, MT
Tel. +1-406-459-2182
e-mail: silvas.sharon@gmail.com

NEVADA

POLLY PEACOCK
RENO, NV
Tel. +1-775-329-0128

NEW HAMPSHIRE

LOTUS LIEN
MANCHESTER, NH
Tel. +1-603-275-9988
e-mail: lien@hotmail.com

CHRISTINE GARR-MAY
LUKE
LACONIA, NH
Tel. +1-401-742-5361
e-mail: christinegluke@gmail.com

NEW YORK

PHUNG PHAM
PLATTSBURGH, NY
Tel. +1-617-383-4080
e-mail: phungis@gmail.com

NORTH CAROLINA

ELIZABETH MACDONALD
ORIENTAL, NC
Tel. +1-252-249-3520
e-mail: elizm65@gmail.com

COLLEEN HARGREAVES
HICKORY, NC
Tel. +1-828-294-6939
e-mail: colleen_har-greaves1@hotmail.com

SADIE KNEIDEL
BURNSVILLE, NC
Tel. +1-336-392-0122
e-mail: sadie.kneidel@gmail.com

ELAINE LONG
PISGAH FOREST, NC
Tel. +1-828-862-8932
e-mail: elaineblong@yahoo.com

RE-EVALUATION COUNSELING CONTACTS

OHIO

JOHN EDGERTON
AKRON, OH
Tel. +1-330-696-0734
e-mail: jwe@uakron.edu

ANNIE GERIG
WOOSTER, OH
Tel. +1-330-262-1466
e-mail: bstyer@ssnet.com

VELMA BARBER
DAYTON, OH
Tel. +1-937-258-8126
e-mail: vlb137@aol.com

OREGON

KERRY JOYCE
COOS BAY, OR
Tel. +1-541-297-6938
e-mail: kerryjoyce@gmail.com

KATHLEEN HARRINGTON
BEND, OR
Tel. +1-541-815-8522
e-mail: kmharrington@
hotmail.com

PENNSYLVANIA

BETH GRAYBILL
LANCASTER, PA
Tel. +1-717-945-7575
e-mail: bethgraybill@
gmail.com

TENNESSEE

REGINA MORTON
MEMPHIS, TN
Tel. +1-901-604-8006
e-mail: corin2518@
msn.com

REBECCA KILMER
SPARTA, TN
Tel. +1-501-372-6633
e-mail: rebkilmer@
gmail.com

TEXAS

NORI-LYNN TRUSCOTT
BULVERDE, TX
Tel. +1-830-438-3193

UTAH

STEFFANI RAFF
PLEASANT GROVE, UT
Tel. +1-801-796-6110
e-mail: steffaniraff@
gmail.com

CATHY HASKINS
SALT LAKE CITY, UT
Tel. +1-801-583-3515
e-mail: cathy.haskins@
gmail.com

VIRGINIA

POLLY HIESER
CHECK, VA
Tel. +1-540-651-3226

WASHINGTON

KRISTA THIE
WHITE SALMON, WA
Tel. +1-509-493-2626
e-mail: krista@gorge.net

HARVEY CAINE
SPOKANE, WA
Tel. +1-509-270-1234
e-mail: spiritwalk@
comcast.net

WYOMING

CHRIS ANDERSON-
SPRECHER
LARAMIE, WY
Tel. +1-307-745-8536
e-mail: chrisas1@hotmail.com

LISA HILLMER
LANDER, WY
Tel. +1-307-332-5976
e-mail: netofgems@
rocketmail.com

WALES

JANET EDWARDS
OSWESTRY
Tel. +44-1691-780829
e-mail: j_edwards_eagle@
yahoo.co.uk

ZAMBIA

CHILIMBA HAMAVHWA
LUSAKA
Tel. +260-283-483,
+260-1-283-977,
+260-96-758-193 (cell)



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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.

DATE	PLACE & ACCESSIBILITY CODE	LEADER(S)	ORGANIZER	DESCRIPTION
October 11-13/19	Barnens O. Sweden (outside Stockholm)	● Diane Shisk, assisted by Janet Kabue	Sandra Almqvist Tel +46 73-671 30 44. sandra.ahmqvist@mail.com	International—Climate
October 18-20/19	Harvard, Massachusetts, USA	◇ Diane Shisk & Rudy Nickens	Amir Femi Tel +1-617-312-3679. amirfemi@hotmail.com	International—Race & Care of the Environment, for Black Men
October 18-21/19	Europe	◇ Alysia Tate	Jenny Martin. families52@hotmail.com	BLCD (Black Liberation & Community Development), for Europe
October 23-28/19	near Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, USA	◇ Tim Jackins & a leader to be announced	Anne Piche Tel +1-603-209-2615. annepiche@gmail.com	"Mental Health" Liberation Leaders' Conference
October 24-27/19	The Netherlands	◇ Emily Bloch	Fabian Polman. femil.polman@gmail.com	Young Adults, for Europe
October 31- November 3/19	Alton, New Hampshire, USA	◇ Diane Shisk	Guy Wood. guynvt@gmail.com	Teachers & Leaders, for Maine, Albany, New York, Western Massachusetts, Vermont, & New Hampshire, USA
November 7-10/19	East Coast USA	◇ Billy Yalowitz	Dan Alter. dialter@sbcglobal.net	Jewish Men
November 8-10/19	Albuquerque, New Mexico, USA	◇ Diane Shisk & Lorenzo Garcia	Sparky Griego. sgriego@rocketmail.com	Care of the Environment & Racism, for Southwest USA
November 8-10/19	Roskilde, Denmark	◇ Emily Feinstein	Simon James-Eide Tel +4790633350. snjames.eide@gmail.com	Artists' Liberation, for Europe (not UK)
November 8-10/19	Oisterbeek, the Netherlands	● Joanne Bray	Frank van den Heuvel Tel +31653705854. frank@heuveltop.nl	Catholic Liberation, for Europe (Leaders day 11/8/19)
November 8-10/19	Location to be announced	◇ Teresa Enrico	JeeYeun Lee Tel +1-773-805-4303. jeeyeun.lee@gmail.com	CKorean Heritage, for North America
November 14-17/19	Caribbean	◇ Fela Barclift	Chantal Esdelle Tel +1-868-620-4616. chantal.esdelle@gmail.com	BLCD for the Caribbean
November 22-24/19	near Boston, Massachusetts, USA	● Jenny Sazama	Andy Vernon-Jones Tel +1-413-335-9909. avernonjones@gmail.com	Allies to Young People, for East Coast North America & the Caribbean
November 28- December 1/19	Cheshunt, Herts., England	◇ Diane Balsler	Dorann Van Heeswijk Tel +44 207 622 6493. +44 7950 814 662. vhdorann@gmail.com	Contemporary Women's Issues, for Ireland & United Kingdom
December 7-9/19	Kenmore, Washington, USA (near Seattle)	◇ Marcie Rendon	Morgen Elizabethchild, moonwolfmama@aol.com	Western Native Raised Native & Native Raised Other
December 12-15/19	near San Francisco, California, USA	◇ Tim Jackins & Diane Shisk	Mary Ruth Gross Tel +1-510-333-3347. maryruthgross@gmail.com	Conference on Climate Change/Climate Justice in the RC Communities
January 2-5/20	Warwick, New York, USA	● "David Nijinsky"	"JS Chardin" Tel. +1-314-249-5089. gmorandi7614@gmail.com	GBQT Men
January 2-5/20	Honesdale, Pennsylvania, USA	◇ "Jeanne D'Arc"	"Aya Ansar" Tel +1-215-680-7871. aya.ansar.rc@gmail.com	LGBTQ Raised Female
January 10-12/20	Burlington City, New Jersey, USA (near Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, USA)	◇ Jo Saunders	Blair Hyatt Tel +1-717-645-0155. blair@paheadstart.org	Owning-Class Liberation for Men, for Eastern US, Canada, & Southern US
January 24-26/20	Burton, Texas, USA	◇ Barbara Love	Jennifer Holmes. jennifer_m27@hotmail.com	People of the Global Majority, for South Central US & Texas
January 24-26/20	Louisiana, USA	◇ Dvora Slavin	Elaine Clement. cadienne@gmail.com	Eliminating White Racism
January 31- February 2/20	Becket, Massachusetts, USA	◇ Joan Karp	Russ Vernon-Jones. russvj@gmail.com	Death & Dying, Life & Living, for Eastern Canada, rural New England, & eastern Upstate New York, USA
February 7-9/20	Northern California, USA	◇ Maria Franco & Diane Shisk	Sparky Griego. sgriego@rocketmail.com	International—Chicanas & Mexicanas & their Female Allies
February 13-16/20	Kagerup, Denmark (near Copenhagen)	● Diane Balsler	Susanne Wittrup Andersen Tel +45-2347-4932. suswit@dalgashave.dk	Women's Liberation, for Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Finland, Poland, Germany, Switzerland, Russia, Hungary, & Romania
February 13-16/20	near San Francisco, California, USA	◇ Tim Jackins	Steve Thompson. stevedt@comcast.net	Men's Leaders, for West Coast of North America & Mexico
February 14-17/20	Location to be announced	◇ Dvora Slavin	Randy Karr Tel +1-917-670-6486. randy0702@msn.com	Working-Class Jews, for East Coast North America
February 20-23/20	The Netherlands	◇ Diane Balsler	Annie Hoekstra Tel 06-54358425. annie.hoekstra@planet.nl	Women, for Fryslân & the Netherlands (February 20, Jews & Allies)
February 27- March 1/20	Eastern USA	◇ "Jeanne D'Arc" & Cherie Brown	"Ruth Zack" ruthzack18@gmail.com	International—LGBTQ Jews

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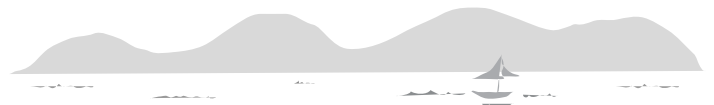
WORKSHOPS

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DATE	PLACE & ACCESSIBILITY CODE	LEADER(S)	ORGANIZER	DESCRIPTION
March 6-8/20	near Chicago, Illinois, USA	◇ Dvora Slavin	Karen Bez, karenbez@gmail.com	Ending White Racism for White Co-Counselors, for Illinois & Wisconsin, USA
March 6-8/20	Los Angeles, California, USA	◇ Joanne Bray	Pamela Shepard Garcia, pluisa@mac.com	Catholic Liberation, for Southern California, New Mexico, & Texas, USA & Mexico (Leaders' Day 3/6/20)
March 12-15/20	Location to be announced	◇ Fela Barclift & Teresa Enrico	Alix Webb, alixmw@gmail.com	People of Global Majority Family Workers, for East Coast North America
March 13-15/20	Livermore, California, USA (inner San Francisco Bay area)	◇ Cherie Brown & Diane Shisk	Michael Saxe-Taller, Tel. +1-510-292-7923, miketaller@yahoo.com	Jews & the Climate Emergency, for West Coast of North America
March 20-22/20	Chappell Hill, Texas, USA	◇ Rudy Nickens	Miguel Esparza, Tel. +1-512-351-6736, migueldesparza@gmail.com	Men, for Texas, USA
March 26-29/20	Chevy Chase, Maryland, USA	◇ Tim Jackins	Jevera Temsky, jrtemsky@gmail.com	Leaders in Maryland, Washington, D.C., Philadelphia, Delaware, & New Jersey, USA
March 27-29/20	Northants, England	● "Jeanne D'Arc"	"Jean Genie," jeaneniebristol@outlook.com	LGBTQ & "formerly" Liberation
April 3-5/20	Northants, England	● "Jeanne D'Arc"	Anica Gavrilovic, anica.gavrilovic@ntlworld.com	Allies to Gay Liberation
April 3-5/20	Warwick, New York, USA	◇ Marcie Rendon	Jack Manno, jpmanno@esf.edu	Climate Change/Climate Justice
April 3-6/20	near St Louis, Missouri, USA	● Diane Balsler	Joan Ostrove, Tel. +1-651-334-5286, ostrove@macalester.edu	Contemporary Women's Issues, for Central/Southern USA & Manitoba, Canada
April 17-19/20	Colorado, USA	◇ Cherie Brown	Julie Fox-Rubin, julie@foxrubin.com	Jewish Liberation, for Southwest USA (Colorado, New Mexico, Arizona, & Texas, USA)
April 30-May 3/20	Denmark	◇ Jo Saunders	Matilde Maribo Kohler, matildemk92@gmail.com	Owning Class, for Europe, Israel, & South Africa
May 1-3/20	near Seattle, Washington, USA	◇ Cherie Brown & a leader to be announced	Dave Cook, 41cdcook@gmail.com	Jews & Allies, for Washington, Oregon, Montana, Idaho, USA & British Columbia, Canada
May 1-3/20	Pennsylvania, New Jersey, or New York, USA	◇ Leader to be announced	Rickie Kashdan, kashdan@comcast.net	"Mental Health" Liberation for Everyone, for Pennsylvania (except Philadelphia & Pittsburgh), New Jersey, and Central Western New York, USA
May 1-4/20	Greensboro, North Carolina, USA	◇ Seán Ruth	Leslie Kausch, Tel. +1-336-509-3680, singonki@gmail.com	Ending Classism for Middle-Class People, for Central & Eastern USA
May 15-17/20	near Atlanta, Georgia, USA (tentative location)	◇ Rudy Nickens	Dale Everts, dale.everts@gmail.com	Southern US Men
May 15-18/20	Location to be announced	◇ Cherie Brown	Judy Tilsen, judymtilsen@gmail.com	Jewish Liberation, for North Central USA
May 22-24/20	England	◇ Emily Feinstein	Tyra Till, Tel. +44 (0)1625 260260, +44 (0)7976 236 457, tyra@tyratill.com	Artist Liberation, for Northern Ireland, Cornwall, Wales, Scotland, & England
June 5-7/20	Stanwood, Washington, USA	◇ Diane Balsler	Diane Lobaugh, dlobaugh@frontier.com	Women, for King, Snohomish, Pierce Counties, Washington, USA & British Columbia, Canada
June 5-7/20	near Boston, Massachusetts, USA	◇ Diane Shisk & Dan Nickerson	Jeanne Giguere-Gagnon, jigueregagnon@gmail.com	The Working Class & the Climate Emergency, for North America
June 26-28/20	near Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, USA	◇ Leader to be announced	Rachel Noble, Tel. +1-971-212-5768, rocnoble@msn.com	"Mental Health" Liberation for ILRPs, RRP's, & ICRP's
July 9-12/20	Melbourne, Australia	◇ Marion Ouphouet	Joan Janaway, 59honey@gmail.com	Large Women, for Melbourne, Australia
July 9-12/20	Melbourne, Australia	◇ Teresa Enrico	Louisa Flander, louisa@netSPACE@.net.au	Female Allies to Large Women, for Melbourne, Australia
July 14-16/20	Location to be announced	◇ Tim Jackins & Barbara Love		Wygelian Leaders, BLCD
July 16-20/20	Location to be announced	◇ Barbara Love		International—BLCD
August 14-16/20	Oregon, USA	◇ Marya Axner	Judi Soloway, jchazanow@yahoo.com	Parents, for Oregon, USA
August 21-23/20	New York, USA	◇ Emily Feinstein & Monnie Paashuis	Kathryn Gardner, Tel. +1-207-890-7823, kathryngardner@gmail.com	Women Artists, for Mexico, the Caribbean, Canada, Europe, & USA
August 21-23/20	near Seattle, Washington, USA	◇ Marcie Rendon	Mary Ruth Gross, maryruthgross@gmail.com	Native American Perspectives on Living With the Earth, for West Coast North America
September 10-13/20	East Coast USA	◇ Diane Balsler & Ayana Morse assisted by Tokumbo Bodunde	Beth Edmonds, bethedmonds@gmail.com	Women & Our Reproductive Lives: For Women 16-50 (deciding whether or not to raise children, etc.), for North America
October 1-4/20	Denmark	◇ Tim Jackins	Susanne Langer, Tel. +45 24647311, susannelanger44@gmail.com	Taking RC Actively into the World & Climate Change, for Europe
October 2-4/20	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, North America
October 28 to November 1/20	The Netherlands	◇ Tim Jackins	Goof Buijs, bunic@ziggo.nl	Men's Leaders, for Europe
November 13-15/20	East Coast USA	◇ Marya Axner	Jerry Yoder, Tel. +1-207-233-5191, jerryyoder@mac.com	Parents & Climate Change, for East Coast North America
November 26-29/20	Cheshunt, Herts, England	● Dvora Slavin	Christine Sheppard, Tel. +44 (0) 1525 374378, christinesheppard@icloud.com	Eliminating White Racism, for Cornwall, England, Scotland, & Wales
November 27-30/20	Africa	◇ Tim Jackins		Pre-World Conference for Africa
December 3-6/20	South Asia	◇ Tim Jackins		Pre-World Conference for South Asia

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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 his or her interaction with other human beings and his or her environment. The theory assumes that everyone is born with tremendous intellectual potential, natural zest, and lovingness but that these qualities have become blocked and obscured 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 his or her 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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719 2nd Avenue North
Seattle, Washington 98109
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