



**Our society has hurt all of us.
The struggle is really a collective battle against what happened to everyone.
We get to fight for everyone. That's what we get to learn to do.**


Tim Jackins

Co-Counselors continue to move forward in many areas—from young people's use of computer games, to sleep, to liberation for direct production workers and large women, to having influence in the wide world. For the April *Present Time*, please send us articles and poems by February 18, and changes to the back-pages lists by February 24.

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CONTENTS

Counseling Practice—3-15

- 
- Challenging Isolation*, Tim Jackins, 3
Staying Focused on Good Things in Life, Janet Foner, 4
Needs for Sleep Vary with Circumstances, Randi Wolfe, 5
Early Distresses, Oppression, and Sleep, Ayana Morse, 5-6
The Contradiction of Benign Closeness, Scott Miller, 6-7
It's the Collapse of Society That's Exhausting,
Dan Nickerson, 7
Eye-Opening Work with Young People, Maryjane Ugwu, 8
Take Responsibility for Oneself as Client, Harvey Jackins, 8
My Granddaughter, and World Events, Anonymous, 9
Come and Join Us at a Sunrise Center Workshop!
Joan MacKenzie, 10
Remind Yourself Song, Harvey Jackins, 11
Young People and Computer Games, Anonymous, 12
Protecting My Daughter, Anonymous, 12
Thinking Together and Staying Connected,
Anonymous, 13-14
Good Times Playing with My Son, "A Proud Dad," 14
The Hurt Is Now Over, A— and Tim Jackins, 15
Bringing My Counselor with Me, Miri Sager, 15

Teaching, Leading, Community Building—17-34

- Getting RC Ideas Out Widely, While Also Building
the RC Community*, Tim Jackins, 17
An Area Reference Persons' Workshop, M'Lis Bartlett and
John Carroll, 18
Teaching RC in a Time of Collapse, Diane Shisk, 19-20
One Can Set One's Own Goals, Harvey Jackins, 20
סדנה מחונית בישראל – שמים במרכז את סיום הגזענות/
An Israeli Workshop Focused on Ending Racism, Tami Shamir, 21
Leading and Having Influence as a Working-Class Person,
Victor Nicassio, 22-27
A "First-in-a-Long-Time" Working-Class Workshop,
Keith Glassman, 27
Teachers and Leaders Gather in Nigeria,
Chinwe Obichukwu, 28
An Informative and Refreshing Workshop,
Radiance Okoli, 28

- Trying Something New on Yom Kippur*, Cherie Brown, 29-30
Connecting with the Earth, Lisa Bedinger, 31
Helping a Group Support Each Other, Felice Markowicz, 32
About Teaching RC, Harvey Jackins, 32
Reaching More People with RC, Diane Shisk, 33-34

Appreciating the RC Literature—36

Liberation—37-59

- The Knowledge and Power of Direct Production Workers*,
Dan Nickerson, 37-38
A Possible Source of Guilt, Harvey Jackins, 38
"This Workshop Was My Dream Come True,"
Nikki Stewart, 39-41
Some Directions for Allies to Large Women,
Jacqueline "Jackie" Kane, 41-42
"My Takeaway Was Pure Joy," Anne McAndrew, 43
Language Liberation—A Recipe for Africa's Re-emergence,
Onii Nwanwu-Stevenson, 44-45
*A New International Liberation Reference Person
for Young People*, Elvin Landaeus Csizmadia, 45
Highlights from the Jewish Men's Workshop, Brian Field, 46
More on the Jewish Men's Workshop, Eric Lessinger, 47
*The First RC Workshop for European Native People/
Europako Indigenen Lehenengo EB Lantegia*,
Frank van Tej van Wieskes, 48-51
Upward Mobility and "Going Home," Jerry Yoder, 52-53
My Identity Is Still Working Class, MacClurg Vivian, 53-54
"I Want This Nonsense of Oppressions to End,"
"Betty Boothroyd," 55
Racism and "Mental Health" Oppression, Janet Foner, 56
The "Mental Health" System Supports All Oppressions,
Harvey Jackins, 56
*Israeli and Diaspora Jews Reaching for Each Other/
יהודי ישראל והתפוצות מושיטים יד אלו לאלו*, Dan Alter, 57-58
Taking on the Whole Jewish Liberation Program, Miri Sager, 57
Following the Leadership of Indigenous People,
Marian Fredal, 59
*Language Liberation at the International "Mental Health"
Liberation Leaders' Conference*, Marcy Morgan, 59



Wide World Changing—61-88

Primer día del COP25 en Madrid/The First Day at COP25 in Madrid, Patricia Ibarra, 61-62

Más sobre la COP25/More from COP25, Leticia González López, 63-64

Climate Change Is Happening to You, Marcie Rendon, 65

Ain't Nobody Got Time for Climate Change: A Black Woman Speaks about Race and Climate Grief, D. Harris, 66-67

Nothing Less Than Complete Respect, Harvey Jackins, 67

The Climate Crisis and Being Jewish, Phil Rees, 68

A Support Group for Climate Activists, Ken Deveney, 68

Persisting with a Correct Policy, Jacqui Gibson-Clark, 69

A Parents' Climate Movement in Israel, Lotahn Raz, 70-71

Using Art to Quickly Get an Idea Across, Daniel Shaffer, 71

The Time Is Now—Follow Young People, Jenny Sazama, 72

Donating to Offset a Carbon Footprint, Allan Hansen, 73

Listening and the Climate Crisis, Julian Weissglass, 73

Teamwork and RC at a Women's Climate Action, Susanne Langer, 74-75

Promises (poem), Sojourner Truth, 75

Speaking Out at a Climate Event as a Worker, Jess Liborio, 76

Music as a Powerful Tool, Heather Hay, 77

Climate Action in Australia, Nicky Page, 78

About Greed, Harvey Jackins, 78

Disaster Preparedness—A Doorway into Addressing the Climate Crisis, Marsha Saxton, 79

A "Going Public with RC" Workshop, Cherie Brown, 80

Discharging on Historical and Ancestral Events, several people, 81-82

Lullabies for Activists, Flip Breskin, 82

Building a Local Climate Organization, Nancy Faulstich, 83

Reaching for Someone I Disagreed With, Rachel Winters, 84

Addressing Anti-Semitism, Dan Alter, 84

Share Solutions! Roberta Paro, 84

Influencing Wide World Organizations, Anonymous, 85

A Small Climate Success, Jennifer Kreger, 86

Language Liberation in a Union, Anonymous, 87

Supporting Climate Justice Activists, Brian Lavendel, 87

Where We Spend Our Money, Nancy Faulstich, 88

RC on the Internet—89-91

Information Coordinators—92-93

Publications—94-101, 103-106

Translation Coordinators—102

CDs—107-108

DVDs—109

Posters, Hankies, and T-shirts—110

Ordering Information—111

Present Time and *RC Teacher Update* Subscriptions—112

Reference Persons for Organized Areas—113-116

International Reference Persons, International Liberation and Commonality Reference Persons, and the Re-evaluation Foundation—117

Teachers in Developing Communities—118-122

Re-evaluation Counseling Contacts—123-124

Workshops—125-126

Index—127

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Challenging Isolation

From a talk by Tim Jackins* at the September 2019 Teachers' and Leaders' Workshop for Fryslân and the Netherlands

We feel isolated. We are isolated. We don't know how to be connected with anyone as much as we'd like. Often we try to have a connection with someone, then both of us get restimulated and we give up. Then we go on and maybe try again.

How many times have you tried and given up? Have you given up enough times that you don't try anymore? A lot of us sit and wait for someone to find us. That doesn't work very often. Everyone is waiting for us to find *them*.

The isolation interferes with everything we do, including our counseling of each other. When I am client, I don't really tell you, my counselor, everything. I tell you a little, but there's much more going on [happening] in my mind that I don't tell you. I make some use of you. I wouldn't try to discharge if you weren't there. But I don't use your mind very much. That's true for others of you, too. Your counselor gives you a phrase that they think will help you discharge, and you say it. But sometimes you think your own phrase as you're saying theirs. (*laughter*) Even here we can't really connect and use each other fully.

I don't actually know how to tell you everything. There's never been anyone I could do that with. Unless we challenge this kind of isolation, we stay separate. I sometimes look at my counselor and see the worry on their face. It's not reassuring. And if I don't think carefully, I pull away a little in my mind. Then I counsel myself more than I let them counsel me. But if I stop and think, I realize that what matters is not that they have a pattern of worry—that's merely restimulating—what matters is that they want to be with me and *try for me*. They have decided to be on my side, and that I can always use.

You can look at your counselor and ask them, "Are you really on my side?" You may have to ask them three or four times before you can hear their answer. Then it's

your job as client to try to believe them—to not let your mind go with your feelings that say that nobody ever wants to be with you. You can decide to believe them. You can decide that what they're saying is true. You get to decide that. Don't wait for your counselor to *make* you believe it. They have decided to be there with you. Use that fact.

Let's do a mini-session. Ask your counselor, "Are you really on my side?" and try to understand what that could mean.

(*mini-session*)

You could hear in the room how unsure we are of each other. Don't take it personally. It isn't about any individual. The person who doesn't trust you doesn't trust anybody. That's the way patterns are. But unless we challenge the isolation, it's hard to work deeply on it.

At the beginning of a session in which you'll be working on early hurts, ask your counselor, "Are you on my side?" Discharge a little on that, on what stops you from using them well. Then you can take more of them with you into the fight against the early distress.

We all have similar battles. We all got hurt very early with isolation. Then we got hurt by all the oppressions of society—the racism, sexism, men's oppression, anti-Semitism, and so on. But the early hurts happened first, and discharging on them will make all the other struggles much clearer.

We need someone to be on our side, and by our side, in these early battles. What we really need is everyone. This is not an individual struggle. Our society has hurt all of us. The struggle is really a collective battle against what happened to everyone. We get to fight for everyone. That's what we get to learn how to do.

First we have to decide that we are going to do it. Then we have to decide that other people are going to decide to do it, that we are not alone. Then we can go back and take on [confront] the early struggles that confused us.



MICHAEL HAND

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

The following was written by Janet Foner, the former International Liberation Reference Person for "Mental Health" Liberation, for a wide world project.

Staying Focused on Good Things in Life

If you're having a hard time—for example, feeling sad or terrified or out of sorts [irritable] all the time—here are five ways to refocus yourself toward enjoying life:

1) Have lots of two-way listening sessions—two or three long ones in person per week, plus shorter ones via phone. The process is easy: Each person has an equal turn to be listened to without interruption, advice, or comments. When it's your turn, say whatever is on your mind. Build trust as you go. Agree on how long an exchange you want and make sure each person gets equal time. Agree to keep confidential everything the other person says, to never bring it up again. It's mental health oppression that makes us believe that "something is wrong" with us for needing so much help. Set up a support network—of friends you are teaching to exchange listening with you and friends, period. That way you'll have plenty of people to call when you feel "down." Just the act of calling someone, even if they're not at home, can pull your attention out of bad feelings.

2) Use at least some of your listening exchanges to make a commitment to focus your attention off of distress and onto what's good in the world. Repeat the commitment and release the feelings associated with making it. I use this version (you can make up your own): "I don't have time to focus my attention on distress. There are so many things I would rather be doing—like (I name some). So I decide to focus my attention on pleasant and rewarding things. And this

means . . ." Often my next thought is what I need to do to accomplish that.

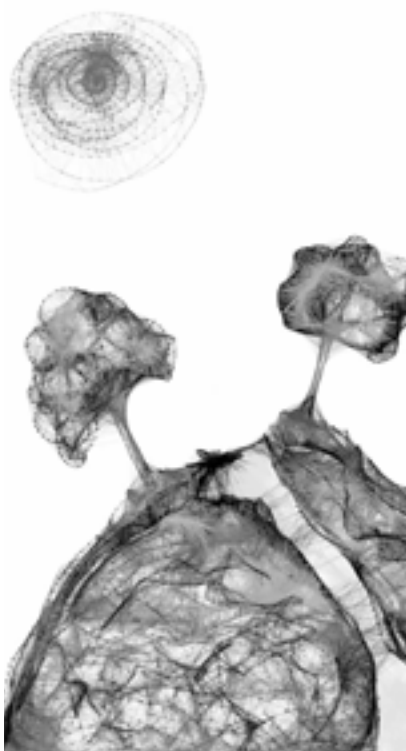
3) Use some of your listening sessions to think about your life and how to make it just the way you want it, to have your life and your environment be so exciting and fulfilling that your attention is pulled out of distress every day by the way your life is. Then make the changes you've thought of, even if they take several years and lots of upheaval. For example, if you hate your job, figure out some ways to find other jobs you might enjoy more.

4) When it's your turn to talk, keep your attention focused at least partially on good things, away from distress. Don't dive into the distress

headfirst. Think of the distress in your mind as a swimming pool. Your job is to tread water and keep your attention way above it. That doesn't mean not dealing with difficult things; it means dealing with them while remembering the good things in life at the same time. You can tell about a past incident by describing all the horrifying details and get sunk in the process, or you can say something like, "I'm alive! I made it out!" in a joyous tone of voice. You are working on the same material, but you're focusing on the positive. However, don't use these ideas like they're a cookbook. If you have a distress that says, "Don't tell," or "Hold everything in," you may need to tell the gory details.

5) Do lots of things you enjoy every day. When you're feeling fine, make a list of things you like to do. When you're feeling terrible, take out the list and do some of the things on it, even if it feels impossible at first. Your mood will eventually improve. Strategize ways to get more fun into your life, even if you are busy. In the long run [eventually], get yourself out of bad situations, so you can always have fun.

The above five things can be useful for many people. If a friend or acquaintance is having a lot of difficulty, you can show them how to share listening time and assist them to do these things. Know that they are going to be fine and convey that. Don't worry that they are "going off the deep end" [losing control of themselves]. Keep in mind that "mental illness" is a myth. People can handle their emotions if they get lots of support.



WYTSKE VISSER

Needs for Sleep Vary with Circumstances

Almost everyone has feelings about sleep, and wide world information can be confusing if not damaging (for example, the huge pressure on parents to “sleep train”).

It seems to me that our needs for sleep vary over time and circumstances. As I approach sixty-five years of age, I need to go to sleep much earlier than I used to (partly because I wake up *much* earlier!). At RC workshops—or anytime there’s lots of safety, discharge, and attention—I can often go with much less sleep than usual (at least for a few days).

The other day I spent two hours with a toddler. His parents and several Co-Counselors were paying attention to and playing with him, and he played happily and engaged with us fully while his usual nap time came and went. I think that, in the best of circumstances, RC workshops are like that: we are deeply engaged with others, we are being thought about and are thinking about others, many of our daily restimulations are minimized, *and* we are having fun! The late-night hours I’ve spent laughing hysterically with my RC buddies have been an important contradiction to isolation, discouragement, and despair. And, like the child who could play and connect straight through his nap time, when I’m surrounded by resource and awareness, I can go with far less sleep.

I often come home from a workshop *really* tired but also pleased. And the tiredness is different from the kind of tiredness I experience at the end of a typical workday—when the associated feeling is more discouragement or grumpiness than feeling pleased.



CLOSE-UP OF CAPER WHITE BUTTERFLY WING • DAMIEN COOK

A lot of us have found ways to rest at workshops, especially during breaks. Sometimes that is “suspect.” (Are we seeking isolation? Are we trying to avoid activity and play?) But sometimes it is just the smart thing to do! And for some constituencies—like parents, for instance—for whom exhaustion is a by-product of the oppression, resting in the middle of the day can be an exhilarating and important contradiction. Also, resting in the company of another person we care about is different from resting all by ourselves, as many of us have had to do.

Co-Counseling workshops are unique, profound, and often life changing. The late hours can remind us of times we’ve had to push ourselves beyond reasonable limits; the early-morning meetings can restimulate being forced to wake up before we were fully rested; but the re-emergent benefits of workshops far outweigh the difficulties, and discharging on the difficulties can make them less restimulating.

“Working hard for something we don’t care about is called stress. Working hard for something we love is called passion.” —Simon Sinek

Randi Wolfe

Oakland, California, USA

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

Early Distresses, Oppression, and Sleep

Yay for sleep! And for thinking and discharging about sleep. [See previous article.]

Most young children don’t reliably get the chance to sleep when they are tired, to wake up and be close to people when they are ready to be awake, to be as energetic and lively as they would

like to be when they are awake, to cry when they need to, or to wrestle and laugh when things get too scary to relax.

As babies, many of us woke up from sleep with hard feelings and cried. For some of us, someone came when we cried but usually couldn’t pay attention

as we discharged the hurt that we needed to get out. Often their goal was to “get us back to sleep.” For others of us, no one came when we cried. We might have gotten to cry a bit longer, because no one interrupted us, but eventually we gave up in isolation and fell asleep.

continued . . .

special attention to setting things up for older folks and also for young people, young adults, and anyone else with an identity outside the dominant ones. Extra sleep may be especially useful and a contradiction for some. Other people may benefit from extra counseling time and closeness—so they don't find themselves isolated and restimulated for many hours overnight.

Scott Miller

Minneapolis, Minnesota, USA

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

It's the Collapse of Society That's Exhausting

This discussion about sleep is a good one. [See previous three articles.] I struggle with getting enough sleep and rest. I also think that we need to be clear that it's not RC that is exhausting us, it is the collapse of society.

I don't think the lack of sleep on the two or three nights of a workshop are a threat to our individual survival. I think the question is, "What do we need to discharge on and change in our lives so we arrive at an RC workshop ready to work long and hard for a couple of days on a revolutionary project?"

We need to make sure that we don't let patterns of discouragement or entitlement affect our attitudes toward RC workshops. We don't want to make the jobs of workshop organizers and leaders more difficult than they already are. We don't want to restrict a leader's time with us or pile extra work on an organizer by expecting them to meet all of our unmet needs.

I remember staying up until 3:00 a.m. at a workshop, watching Harvey Jackins* do panels with every oppressed group. I would not be the leader I am today without all that I learned from his workshops, and others.

Figuring out how to live well in a collapsing society is a good thing and necessary to our work. I find helpful a line from the RC Parents' Commitment, ". . . some day I'll get a little rest." A personal direction from Harvey, "If you get a chance to do nothing, take it," is one that I can actually remember and act on outside of sessions.

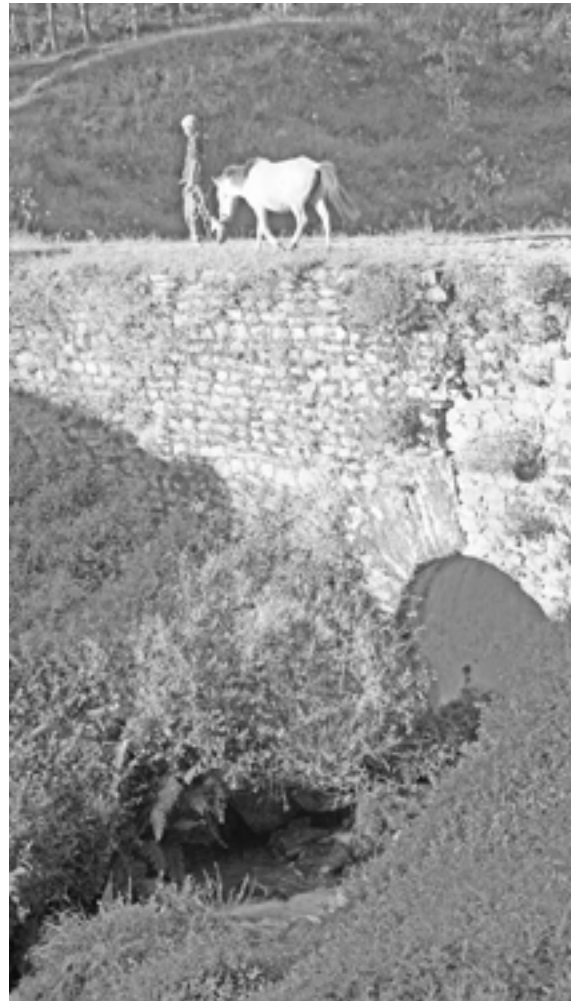
Dan Nickerson

International Liberation Reference

Person for Working-Class People

Freeport, Maine, USA

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



EAST TIMOR • LYNDALE KATZ

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 <lit-sales@rc.org>.

Thank you!

Rational Island Publishers

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



CHINA • CHEN PINGJUN

Eye-Opening Work with Young People

I was an ally to young people at a recent workshop in my RC Community. It was an eye-opener.

The workshop was led by twelve-year-old Aaliyah Ejeh. She is the young people's teacher in my Area. She reminds us that we adults are young people's biggest oppressors, that our policies create an artificial separation that makes young people seem less human.

Young people have feelings, too! They are emotional beings. I need to be patient and considerate, trusting that they are intelligent enough to figure out who and what they want to become—if only we give them the opportunity to do so.

The young people had sessions on young people's oppression, racism, and sexism. They did a short drama on climate change. They urged us to stop destroying the planet—they don't want to become extinct!

Maryjane Ugwu

Lagos, Nigeria

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

Take Responsibility for Oneself as Client

First, *take and keep responsibility for one's self as a client*. It is marvelous to feel the responsibility of one's counselor standing by when one is in the throes of heavy discharge; but in between times it is best to remember to think about and plan for one's own progress as a client. One will have much better sessions if one comes to them with an idea in mind of what one wants to work on, and allows even the most skilled counselor to fill his/her proper role as one's helper rather than having to try to plan for the client.

Harvey Jackins

From page 37 of "The Art of Being a Client"
in the *Fundamentals of Co-Counseling Manual*

My Granddaughter, and World Events

As a grandmother, I have more time to approach the climate crisis and other world problems with my granddaughter than her parents do. She is seven years old and very curious. She wants to figure things out.

We have had lots of time outside to enjoy the natural surroundings. From a very young age, about two, she would spontaneously hug the trees and say, "I love the trees, Grammy!" It just came naturally to her. My struggle has been to not give her too much information, make her panic, or fill her with guilt about the climate and other crises.

We have had lots of "fights" about her use of water. As she's gotten older and more independent, she has enjoyed taking long warm showers. Seeing her stay in the shower so long has been painful for me.

The last time I was with her while she was bathing, she said, "You won't tell me when to stop having my shower today." I assumed that she was telling me to behave myself. However, the truth was she was turning the water off while she soaped and was very proud of herself. "See! I told you, Grammy!"

At a day camp she went to last summer, she didn't allow the other children (she can be a bit of a dictator!) to use the faucet to wash their hands. She arranged for each to have a bucket to wash in and one to rinse in. I'm not sure it actually saved water, but she took action and got everyone thinking. (We're working on the bossy part.)

She often asks why people have wars. I speak about greed and tell her that some people think that they never have enough. The last

time I asked her what she thought we should do to end wars, she'd immediately responded, "Stop making weapons!" then added, "But then you will tell me they will war with sticks and stones. That would be a shame for the trees." (She knows that some of my friends and I are actively working to end war.) We agreed that not making weapons was a good start. Neither of us knows what to do beyond that, but we have agreed to keep thinking.

She has seen pictures of slums with extremely poor conditions. She asks why people live like that. I tell her it is because some people in the world think they deserve more than others and that we don't share things equally. Her first reaction was to "accuse" and suggest that the slum dwellers should be like us—that then they would have what we have. She said it with a sweeping gesture that indicated "all of this."

The last time she saw similar pictures, her response was deeply felt: "We have a lot of things, Grammy!" She's thinking. Changes are coming. They are slow, but they happen and she influences a lot of her parents' decisions. She also affects other children who might not have a Grammy like me who weighs the issues and gets her involved—hopefully in a way that empowers her and doesn't overwhelm her.

Our last discussion was about toilet paper and the water that's used in the toilet. She was immediately inspired and enthusiastic about going outside and starting to build a dry toilet. Unfortunately my skills stopped there, and I wasn't able to even think of getting that project

started. However, we had a lot of laughs. I know that she won't forget and will figure out more about this in the future.

English is a language she is learning by listening to me and sometimes her mother. I speak in English, and she mostly answers in her first language. The message still gets through. We share wonderful times.

Hugs to all from a dedicated Granny.

Anonymous

People have said, "Don't cry," to other people for years and years, and all it has ever meant is "I'm too uncomfortable when you show your feelings. Don't cry." I'd rather have them say, "Go ahead and cry. I'm here to be with you."

Mr. Rogers



Come and Join Us at a Sunrise Center Workshop!

Many Co-Counselors have taken RC ideas to other groups and projects that they have initiated or been involved with. One important project initiated by RCers is the Sunrise Center Project. It is aimed at giving people the resources they need to gain freedom from psychiatric drugs. It is not part of the RC Community, but it is very important.

Tim Jackins

Last November, outside of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, USA, I got to be part of the leadership team for the "Mental Health" Liberation Leaders' International Conference. It was our first conference without Janet Foner, and we grieved her loss and celebrated her huge life as our leader.

A team of ten people shared the leading of the classes and topic groups. Many more led small

groups and helped with other important jobs. It was a powerful week, with Co-Counselors attending from around the world. All of us were excited to step up our leadership and keep moving "mental health" liberation forward!

I assisted Lois Yoshishige in teaching a class about the Sunrise Center Project. She said confidently that with this project we are ending "mental health" oppression. We are stopping the blaming of people and taking the hurts of oppression off them.

The oppressive society pressures people to suppress their feelings with psychiatric drugs so that they can "fit in" and be "normal." It is a lie that there is not enough resource and people need to take psychiatric drugs. We know how to build resource, with discharge and connection. We have been building it at our workshops and saying, "Yes!" to liberation, fully and completely. People are getting their minds back and becoming empowered. Those who have done it already are with us. And who knows better than they how to help others?

The Sunrise Center Project offers workshops that are open to all active Co-Counselors who want to connect with others who are passionate about "mental health" liberation. This includes people who want to stop taking psychiatric drugs, people who are in the process of stopping, people who want to support someone else to stop, family members of people who are taking psychiatric drugs, "mental health" workers, people with psychiatric drug histories who want more discharge and contradiction [to the distress], and people who want to

discharge about any kind of drug. (People who are starting to get off drugs should bring at least one person who wants to support them. That person will not only provide support but also get help to do their own discharging about drugs and "mental health" oppression, so that everyone's life moves forward.)

We also respect and welcome to the workshops people who are not sure they want to stop taking psychiatric drugs. We hold out the possibility that they can and help them to build a support team that will work with them. The person getting off drugs is in charge. They get to trust their mind and train their helpers.

We have Sunrise Center Workshops annually on both the east coast and the west coast of the United States. Area Outreach Funds are not available for these workshops, but don't let money keep you away. We have separate resources you can apply for.

Lois said, "Every way someone is fighting 'mental health' oppression needs to be celebrated, even if the person has to rant about it or can't always function in rational ways, even if it takes time and they need lots of help. It all needs to be celebrated! If you are feeling hopeless about the collapsing society, then come and join us, because this work is a real contradiction. We get to have an attention-out attitude, make mistakes, have fun, and be close to each other."

Joan MacKenzie

Asheville, North Carolina, USA

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



BASQUE COUNTRY • DIANE SHISK



Remind Yourself Song

(to the tune of *Muss 'i Denn*)

LONDON, ENGLAND • BESS HERBERT

Listen well, listen well to all your clients tell,
 All your clients tell,
 Warm attention to everything they say.
 Don't advise, don't comment,
 Even with the best intent, with the best intent,
 What you say will get in their way.
 If you listen to them well,
 Then the discharge will come,
 And they'll think for themselves all the way.
 Don't advise, don't comment,
 Even with the best intent,
 With the best intent,
 What you say will get in their way.

When their voices break or shake,
 That's the phrase you have them take,
 Phrase you have them take,
 They need help for the tears to begin;
 But when discharge has begun,
 Quietly wait 'til it is done, wait 'til it is done,
 Then repeat their phrase and say "again."
 When laughter, or trembling, or tears are at hand,
 They need your little push to begin;
 But when discharge has begun,
 Quietly wait 'til it is done, wait 'til it is done,
 Then repeat their phrase and say "again."

To persist, to persist, that's the way you assist,
 The way you assist.
 That is one thing they cannot do alone.
 When their story is through, you request it anew,
 Request it anew,
 Even though they're sure that they are done.
 It takes a hundred recountings
 With discharge to clean up each one.
 When their story is through, you request it anew,
 Request it anew,
 Even though they're sure that they are done.

 Your reward, your reward is not long deferred,
 Not long deferred,
 A lovely human mind set free.
 Intelligence clear of sorrow and fear,
 Of sorrow and fear,
 Is a mighty pleasant sight to see;
 And best of all you get your turn
 To have warm attention, you see,
 And when discharge is through to again be really you,
 Again be really you,
 And live the way life ought to be.

Harvey Jackins
 From pages 124 to 125 of *Zest Is Best*



ATHENS, GREECE • CARYN DAVIS

Young People and Computer Games

I'm the mother of twelve-year-old twins, both raised in RC. Lately my son has become fascinated with computer games, and one in particular called FIFA.

Earlier both my twins were interested in Minecraft, and we'd play it together during special time. It was well regarded among teachers, so I didn't feel it was a time suck, but we'd limit the time we spent on it to twenty minutes each weekend day.

Then my son said that he wanted to try FIFA, which is basically a soccer game with well-known players. (He loves one player in particular.) Again, I would play it with him during special time. However, he has become obsessed with this game. He gets up early to play it—way before his father and I are up—and gets very upset when it's time for him to stop, for which I've given him plenty of sessions.

Lately he has even lied to his dad and me about how much he plays. He has never lied to us before (or at least we haven't known about it).

At a recent pumpkin-carving party, I noticed he connects with other boys around the game, which might be part of the pull. But I also know that these games can be addictive.

Does anyone have thoughts about setting limits for game time?

Anonymous

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

Protecting My Daughter

My at-the-time ten-year-old daughter was showing addictive signs with a computer game on her phone. (She had wanted it because all her peers at school were playing it.) So I took it away, explaining why. It didn't seem right for her to have even a little of it, if it created that strong an urge to keep going. She was upset, but that was okay.

Once in a while at a phone shop she'll play something on the display phones and act like she is desperate to keep playing. Then I can see that that kind of game is addictive, and I don't let her have a game like that.

She plays chess and Sudoku on her tablet, and that's about all. She doesn't get addicted to those.

Thanks for mentioning Minecraft [see previous article]. I've been concerned about letting her play it, but perhaps I'll try what you have done.

Anonymous

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

Thinking Together and Staying Connected

This is hard! Nice job giving the sessions you have given and fighting to make sense of this. [See previous two articles.]

I am writing with the help of my children, both boys, ages nine and eleven. We have tried a lot of things:

1. Their playing computer games only when it's a social activity

2. Their getting to play in the mornings, which gives their father and me a chance to catch up on sleep

3. Giving them advance notice that we won't be on screens during special time

4. Giving them big sessions after they have been on screens and talking with them afterward about how they were feeling

5. Working together to come up with [think of] a time limit that seems reasonable to us all

6. Spending large amounts of time playing physical games and being silly together as we turn off the games, and also in general

7. Having weekly reflections on what is going well and what is challenging in our household that include their responses to when we say, "It's time to find a stopping place."

8. Having regular conversations and sessions that make room for them to show us things, even if we don't like those things, rather than keep secrets

9. Having honest conversations about where we trust them to think, where we don't trust them, and what we're so scared of that keeps us from trusting them; agreeing to work on our fear and fighting to

trust them; and discussing where we don't trust them so they can develop their judgment and build our trust

10. Having a limit on the weekends of one hour a day on screens

Upon reading one of the posts on this topic, all of us had the same thought—that twenty minutes isn't enough time. With FIFA you need to improve your team, which takes a while. My older son said, "Of course they are going to want to play more. They are lying to get their game time increased. The young people should be part of the conversation about what a reasonable time limit is."

Sometimes our special time has involved lots of screens, sometimes we've said no to screens, and sometimes we've said no and then gone back to screens. We have to keep thinking, and the key is our connection. When it looks like our sons are zoning out [leaving present time] and not staying connected, it's time to stop the screens—but we need to have talked about that beforehand, not during the special time. At this point my older son says, "The only reason to play video games during special time is to teach my parents or discover something new."

My younger son now says that if he plays for an hour or more, he doesn't like how he feels afterward.

continued . . .



PORTO, PORTUGAL (PHOTO) • © JOHN FEHRINGER

COUNSELING PRACTICE

... continued

"But the only reason I have noticed that is because you have let me notice." He says that he's noticed it after playing games for a long time and then being grumpy and having sessions.

Watching our precious boys get whammed with men's oppression is horrific, and we want to protect them in any way we can. We can fight to be connected to them while we back [support] them to face the world and fight for their connection to the world, to us, and to themselves.

They have lied a couple of times, and I've found that very restimulating. They lie because they don't feel they can tell us the things they need to. We have to discharge and make room for them to tell us those things and to show us the effect those things are having on them. Then we have to think together about what to do.

Anonymous

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



MAINE, USA • SUE EDWARDS

Good Times Playing with My Son

I thought that I'd add a bit to this topic. [See previous three articles.]

My own hero, Socrates, complained that the new tradition of writing things down would decrease people's ability to remember things. Chess was called out (in *Scientific American*, a journal I like) as "a mere amusement of a very inferior character, which robs the mind of valuable time that might be devoted to nobler acquirements." They recommended sports instead but later reported on the long-term brain damage caused by the violence in sports such as U.S. football.

The list of anxious sentiments of adults toward the activities of young people is very long. Every generation of parents appears to despair over the effects of new technology. Today we worry about social media and video games.

I'm a dad. In addition to weekly special-time sessions over fourteen years, I spent a couple of thousand wonderful hours playing video games with my son over the six to seven years leading up to high school. We had lots of laughter while scheming, solving puzzles, strategizing, and accomplishing difficult tasks together. We went

through many games as the years passed by, because we both grew older and the games mostly got better. When high school started, our playing together faded, with friends taking my place, but the fun continued.

While our love for and concerns and thinking about our children are to be praised and supported, our fears and anxieties about their activities are really for us to discharge and shed.

"A Proud Dad"

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

The Hurt Is Now Over

Dear Tim (Jackins),

The young me felt so threatened, so amidst the battle, that safety was an issue. The abuse was ongoing. I never knew when or where it would happen. I just knew it could happen anytime and usually when I was least expecting it. As to why, I was told that it was “my fault.”

Do you have any ideas for how to approach working on this early distress? Is the young me supposed to be the one discharging? I have found it nearly impossible to help her discharge—because, as I said, for her it’s going to happen again; it is not over.

A—

Dear A—,

Our young selves were so threatened and defeated that it is confusing if we can’t clearly remember that the past is over and does not have to determine the present or future.

It is you discharging on what happened to that young one. Those hurtful experiences are now over. She did not have the opportunity to discharge, and you do. It wasn’t safe for her, but that has ended.

It is you here in the present that we are concerned about having the best life possible. We cannot change what happened to her, and we don’t need to—as unfortunate and sad as it was. You survived. The battle is to discharge the effects of the old experiences so that you can go forward without the distress.

Love,

Tim Jackins

Bringing My Counselor with Me

I’ve been watching Tim Jackins and trying to understand what he’s been saying about working on early defeats and isolation. Is it different from how I’ve been using my sessions? And what is going on [happening] in his minimalist demonstrations?

Recently I framed it to myself as going back with my counsellor to the places where I gave up and fighting there for a correct perspective. I use a simple image: my counsellor coming and standing beside me, with their hand on my head, and their (or my) telling the young me that we can now look together at what was going on—at what was being done by others and by me, the sounds, the sights, the smells—and face all of it.

It is key that I bring my counsellor with me, and all they need to do is let me know that they are there, witness the horribleness of it, and remind me that I can face it now, with them. No need for positive directions.

I intend to persist with this work, as I’ve already experienced the profound difference that discharging early distress makes.

Miri Sager

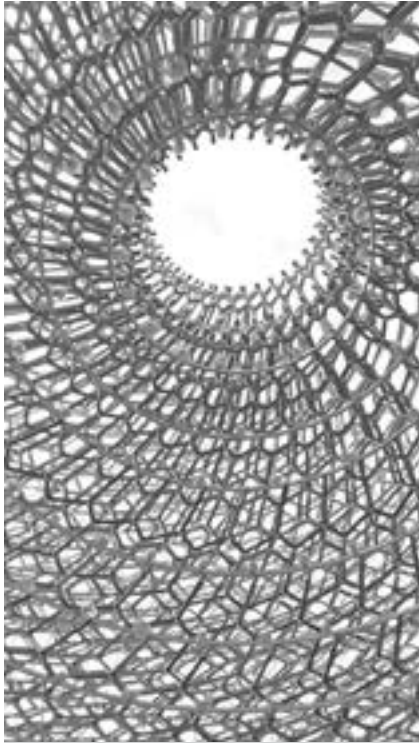
Hamilton, Ontario, Canada

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



JOANNA VAUGHN

From Rational Island Publishers



For the complete liberation of my beautiful, wise, strong, and courageous Black people, I solemnly promise I will always remember our/my own goodness and strength. I will fight against every division that tends to separate us from each other and from other people. I will settle for nothing less than complete liberation, complete equality, complete opportunity, and complete respect for everyone.

(The Black Person's Commitment)

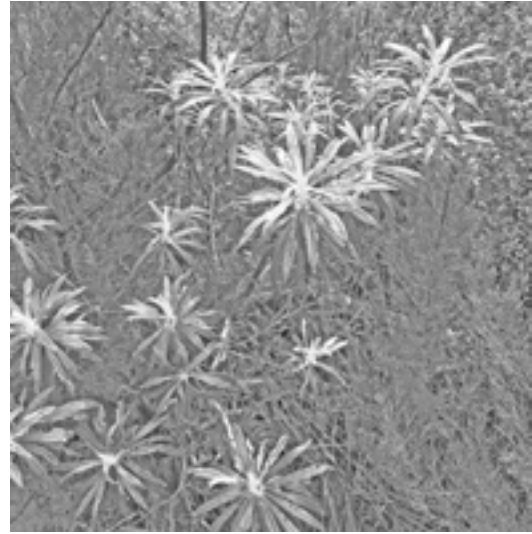
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TIM JACKINS



LYNDALL KATZ



Working Together to End Racism

A pamphlet introducing RC from the perspective of ending racism

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Getting RC Ideas Out Widely, While Also Building the RC Community

From a talk by Tim Jackins at the September 2019 Teachers' and Leaders' Workshop for Fryslân and the Netherlands

Question: The world is clearly eager for our knowledge. What ideas do you have for getting RC to people faster than we are already doing?

Tim Jackins: I don't think there are any shortcuts. And I think we are trying to do two things. One is to get out to everyone the basic ideas. ("Life goes better if you listen to each other.") The other is to build the RC Community in depth.

GETTING RC IDEAS OUT WIDELY

We are getting RC ideas out more and more in our wide world efforts, such as United to End Racism and Sustaining All Life. In New York (USA) this week [in September 2019], at least thirty-five different RC activities are taking place, and there are leaflets for each one. We have gone to enough climate events that people know us and look for us. Other groups are starting to advise their people to go to our activities because just knowing a few basic things makes their work go better. And that's great.

One of the best things about United to End Racism and Sustaining All Life is their effect on the Co-Counselors who participate. They come back different because they've been required to go out and meet people and talk straight to them about RC. And they've seen people interested in knowing about it. (The population they've been reaching for has already decided to change the world and is happy to get our tools to help them do it.)

BUILDING THE RC COMMUNITY

Building an RC Community in depth turns out to be [in practice is] much more work than giving people a taste of RC. Many of you have been building Communities long enough to get discouraged about it. That happens to almost everyone. And this weekend you are getting a picture of why it's so hard: early on we were all badly hurt and isolated from each other.

Every new person we invite into a fundamentals class got badly hurt as a child. We haven't always recognized that. We have offered them a chance to work on many things. We have wanted them to try Co-Counseling. But we haven't always let them know that they have big struggles to face.

Hundreds of thousands of people have come into RC, very enthusiastic. They have had some good sessions and seen things change. Then often they have hit a heavy piece of distress and gotten discouraged, and if they haven't had a strong relationship, they haven't been able to stay; it's been too hard.

I think 150,000 to 200,000 people are in RC, and maybe a million and a half to two million people have left. Almost all the people who have left are in orbit around us, hoping that we do well. They are thinking we are right and hoping we are successful. We have a big supportive system out there watching us. And every so often one of them comes back and looks to see if there's enough support that they dare try again.

We haven't been able to consistently offer enough support for many people. We, or their other counselors, get scared when their heavy distress comes up. Then they leave, and we wonder what happened. We're not good at chasing after people who turn away from us. It still restimulates our feelings of rejection. I think if we work on our early distresses, we won't be so timid. We'll have a little more confidence in what's possible.

A BIGGER GOAL FROM THE BEGINNING

I think it would be useful for each Community to have eight or ten introductory talks and then offer eight or ten fundamentals classes. Each of the talks and the classes could be aimed at a particular issue, to fit the groups we have around us. For example, one could be on women's liberation, another on young people's liberation, another on the liberation of men, another on ending racism, and so on. I think it's possible to look at RC through a particular window and learn everything from that perspective. And if we do this, I think we'll attract people differently than we have so far. From the beginning, we'll be providing not just a personal goal but also a bigger one.

Between these specialized approaches and getting better at directly challenging people's isolation and feelings of defeat, I think we might be able to be more effective. We'll see.

An Area Reference Persons' Workshop

At the recent Midwest and South USA Area Reference Persons' Workshop, it was a treat to discharge with other Area Reference Persons and people leading unorganized areas.

Alysia Tate, the Regional Reference Person for Illinois, USA, led us with warmth and precision.

At one point we broke into small groups—People of the Global Majority or white people, people of different class backgrounds, people of different ages, and Area Reference Persons or people leading unorganized areas—to discharge on the ways these identities impact our leadership.

When we reported back to the whole workshop, Alysia asked us to be very specific about what we had learned or talked about in the groups. For instance, if one of us said, "It was good to meet with my group," she would ask, "Why was it good?" If the response was, "We felt safe to share our thinking," she would ask, "Why was that true? What was your thinking?" It was a useful reminder of where fear affects my ability to communicate in my RC classes and when I talk about RC to my friends and coworkers.

Alysia also asked us to discharge on these questions:

- What is important to you about being in an RC Area?



J. EISENHEIM

- What conditions are needed for a Community to grow?

- Who references you? What do you appreciate about their referencing?

- What about your current financial situation do you not tell your Co-Counselors? (This was in reference to our role in approving Outreach Funds and charging for classes.)

We talked about the importance of being in a Community in which people try to think about each other, don't blame each other for struggles, and practice building a community that's different from what we see in the world around us.

We described how other leaders had referenced us by seeing us as more powerful than we thought we could be, pushing us to work on our hardest chronic distress while remembering our goodness, and not leaving us alone.

M'Lisa Bartlett

Ann Arbor, Michigan, USA

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

Alysia Tate led the Area Reference Persons' Workshop with such a sense of joy. It was very fun, with time for dancing and connecting and joking around. As a thirty-four-year old, I enjoyed seeing a leader engaged with recent pop culture; we watched a music video and skit that showed how young adult performers are fighting against systemic oppressions with art and humor.

It was helpful to hear about the leadership journeys of other folks—what had worked for them and what their obstacles had been. People who had led in RC for decades shared what practices had sustained them in building and leading their Areas and how they had kept their own journey toward re-evaluation central while doing the work.

We also looked at the value to our broader RC Community of charging for RC activities and doing fundraisers for the Re-evaluation Foundation, to support projects like Sustaining All Life.

John Carroll

St. Louis, Missouri, USA

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

Teaching RC in a Time of Collapse

I am very happy to have the tools of RC, to be part of this big Community of people who are fighting for a better world from a base of connection and liberation, and to have the internal resource to push hard for what I think is right. I can do what I do because of my years of sessions and RC leadership and the collective backing and intelligence of the RC Community. I do feel discouraged and scared at times, but I know to have a session and not back away from my challenges. I want everyone to have as much of their mind and will as I have had the chance to have. And for that to happen, we need to teach RC to a lot more people.

We are in the middle of a global climate emergency, within a collapsing society. The society is collapsing because its social and economic institutions are built on false distress-based ideas—ideas that support profit making at the expense of people and the earth, sanction oppressions that dehumanize and exploit people, cause poverty and increasing income disparities, and depend on ever-

continuing economic consumption. Our society, based on this foundation, can no longer sustain itself. And climate change is fueling a more rapid collapse as it destroys communities and reveals the exploitation that is driving the climate emergency and so many other social problems.

More and more of us are realizing that we are not heading into the future we expected even a decade ago, that we are moving into more difficult times for everyone. And we are trying to use these times to awaken huge numbers of people and engage them in working for transformative change. To prevent catastrophic warming, the expanding global climate movement will have to shut down our fossil-fuel-based economies, and that will require and cause huge changes in our societies.

Many of us RCers are addressing the climate emergency in the context of ending oppression and exploitation. We are taking RC into wide world movements, especially the climate movement, and people are noticing us. They are

responding to the many ways we are introducing the radical idea of people listening attentively to each other. They are responding to the ways we are helping them unload feelings brought up by global crises and the ways people are coming together to set things right. They are realizing that to function well in these times requires being emotionally healthy. And as a result, they are asking us to teach them more about listening and our understandings about oppression.

We have been working toward the goal of being asked to teach large numbers of people RC. We have created our going-public projects—United to End Racism, No Limits for Women, Sustaining All Life, and Jews and Gentiles United to End Anti-Semitism—to open the doors to RC to more people. In these projects we present RC in the context of issues, like oppression and climate change, that people care deeply about, and this allows more people to consider our ideas and practices.

To meet the growing interest, we can use many more of us taking

continued . . .



ECHTEN, THE NETHERLANDS • ROB VENDERBOS

TEACHING, LEADING, COMMUNITY BUILDING

... continued

RC into the world and teaching it. We can use you. If you are not yet doing this, consider that you are the right person to be doing it, have your sessions on it, and try it!

After people attend our events and show an interest, we want to be able to offer them a next step they can take toward making RC their own. What is possible depends on their resource, and the RC resource around them, but also on someone they can learn from. Could it be you?

If you are a certified RC teacher, please consider making places for new faces in your class. If you don't have a class now, consider starting one. If you are an experienced Co-Counselor but are not yet certified to teach, ask your Reference Person what you need to do to be certified. If teaching a class doesn't make sense for you, who could you teach one to one?

As more and more of us share RC more widely, we can think and discharge about how to make RC more relevant to the people who are coming to us in this time of collapse. We want RC teachers to understand the issues people are fac-



YUKO HIBINO

ing, to not be isolated from the social movements of our times, and to be thinking well about People of the Global Majority, young people, Native people, and working-class and poor people. We want to provide a good home in our Communities for these people, increase their numbers in our Communities, and increasingly be led by them.

This is a lot to think about, but taking it on [undertaking it] gives us the chance to have big, significant lives in these challenging times. I hope you will consider playing a bigger role in giving more people access to RC.

Diane Shisk

Alternate International Reference

Person for the Re-evaluation

Counseling Communities

Seattle, Washington, USA

Reprinted from the e-mail discussion

list for RC Community members

One Can Set One's Own Goals

One can set one's own goals. It is possible. One does not have to have goals set for one by anyone else. This is itself a revolutionary concept. One can set goals for all of the different concentric spheres of one's responsibility. One can set goals for oneself. One can set goals to achieve in relation to one's close intimate loved ones; for one's extended family; for one's various groups; for one's city, county, state, province, nation; for one's continent; for one's species; for the world of living things; and for the universe as a whole. Not only can one set goals at all these levels, but setting them at all levels greatly reinforces the power of the goals. Every level of goals becomes more workable if integrated with all other levels.

One can also set goals at all levels of time. In fact, one needs to set goals for all levels of time. One needs to plan at least what one will accomplish

today, this week, this month, this year, and in ten years. One needs a clear picture of what one wants to do before one climbs the ladder to the spaceship to explore the next planet. To set these goals for all these times and at all these levels and integrate them makes immediate goals much more easily achievable. Our practical experience is that if a person sets only an immediate goal, she or he will mill around [wander around aimlessly] indefinitely and discharge on that goal without achieving it, but that if a farther goal is set, he or she will discharge while achieving the immediate one and will tackle the next one.

Harvey Jackins

From pages 44 to 45 of "The Key Concepts and Insights of Re-evaluation Counseling to Date," in the *Fundamentals of Co-Counseling Manual*

סדנה מחוזית בישראל – שמים במרכז את סיום הגזענות

רכזת המחוז בישראל, מרצ'י שוקרון-ליאור, הנהיגה לאחרונה סדנה מחוזית. כ-70 יועצות ויועצים השתתפו בסדנה, נציגי כל האזורים בארץ.

במוקד הסדנה הייתה עבודה על גזענות – ובפרט גזענות של אשכנזים כלפי מזרחיים בישראל. מרצ'י הציגה תמונה רחבה מאוד של האופן שבו זה משפיע על חיי כולנו – החל ביחסים האישיים שלנו (בתוך ומחוץ לקהילת הייעוץ) ועד לקשר של גזענות לשינויי האקלים בעולם. העבודה על גזענות נעשתה כחלק בלתי נפרד מבניית קהילה, ומרצ'י הדגישה שני יסודות חשובים של העבודה הזו: לבנות יחסים קרובים ולקחת את הייעוץ ברצינות.

למרות שהסתכלנו על דברים לא קלים ועלו הרבה רגשות, הסדנה התאפיינה בקרבה ובתשומת לב טובה, שבאה לידי ביטוי בזמן המשחקים, בערב יצירה מלא תשומת לב ויצירתיות ובשירה ספונטנית (שבדרך כלל לא מאפיינת את הקהילה שלנו) במעגל סיום.

תודה, מרצ'י, על האמונה שלך בדרך, על העבודה והמחשבה הרבה שאת משקיעה בבניית הקהילה שלנו, ועל האופן שבו הראית את עצמך וראית אותנו בסדנה: באומץ ובאהבה.

תמי שמיר,
שפיים, ישראל

English translation of the preceding article:

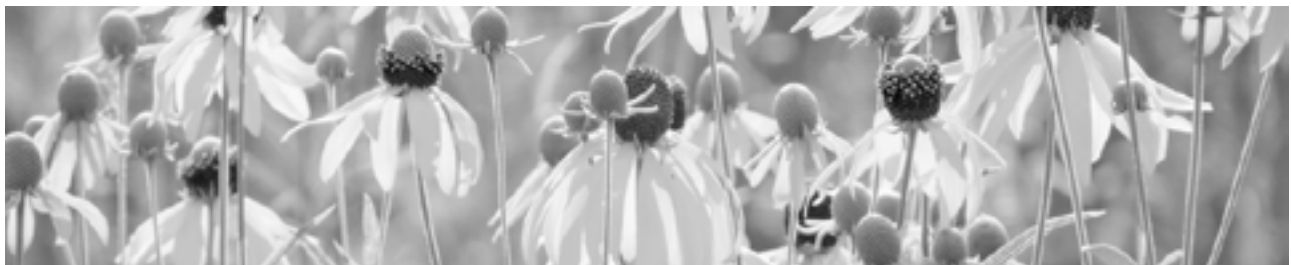
An Israeli Workshop Focused on Ending Racism

A Regional Workshop was recently held in Israel, led by our Regional Reference Person, Merchi Shukrun-Lior. Almost seventy Co-Counselors participated, representing all of the Israeli Areas. The workshop focused on racism and in particular the racism of Ashkenazim toward Mizrachim in Israel. Merchi described the many ways it affects our lives—from our personal relationships both in and out of RC to its connection with the climate crisis. Work on racism is clearly an integral part of Community building, building close relationships, and taking RC seriously.

Although we faced hard facts and feelings, the workshop was characterized by closeness and good attention. This was visible during playtime, in a wonderful and creative evening culture sharing, and in spontaneous singing (which is unusual for us) at the beginning of the closing circle.

Thank you, Merchi, for your faith in RC, all the work and thought you put into building our Community, and the way in which you showed yourself and saw us at the workshop—lovingly and with courage.

Tami Shamir
Shefayim, Israel
Translated from Hebrew by Tami Shamir
Reprinted from the RC e-mail
discussion list for leaders of Jews



KAREN WOSILAIT

Leading and Having Influence as a Working-Class Person

“My work has given me a taste of the power and hope of organizing.”

A Southern California Working-Class Liberation Workshop was held in August 2019 in Los Angeles, California, USA. Twenty-three Co-Counselors who were raised working class or poor or were currently working as direct production workers attended. Most were People of the Global Majority, and the majority were women.

I led the workshop (I’m the Regional Reference Person for the San Gabriel Valley/East Los Angeles Region). Dan Nickerson, the International Liberation Reference Person for Working-Class People, assisted me. And Pamela Shepard-García did the organizing. There were many mini-sessions, demonstrations, and small groups.

On Saturday evening, after Havdalah, Dan answered questions, talked about women workers and sexism, and did a panel of direct production workers. That was a highlight of the workshop.

In this article I summarize the talks I gave at the workshop.

*Friday Evening—Overview
of the Workshop*

LEADERSHIP

Welcome to the Southern California Working-Class Liberation Workshop! This is actually the second working-class weekend workshop I’ve led in RC. The first was in 1982—thirty-seven

years ago. Another RC leader was supposed to lead it but a few days before said he couldn’t because of



JENNIFER WEXLER

urgent union work he had to do. Harvey Jackins suggested that I lead it, and I said yes. I was a young adult and had never led a workshop before. The workshop had its ups and downs, but overall people said we did well, and I agree.

After the workshop, I focused on building my local RC Community and led one-day workshops. The first person to whom I successfully taught RC one-to-one was Horace Williams, an African American raised-poor-and-working-class man who had long been a leader in the wide world and was currently middle class. We decided to build a Community that was mostly People of the Global Majority and to back [support] each other as

an Arab-heritage person and an African-heritage person. Horace became Regional Reference Person in 1996, and a few years later I became an Area Reference Person. Then in 2017 I became the Regional Reference Person.

Our Community continues to be about sixty percent People of the Global Majority. It can be done, and yes, we the working class can lead. We don’t need to depend on our good middle- and owning-class allies to lead all our workshops. This weekend a dishwasher is leading this workshop. With preparation and work, all of us are capable of leading in bigger ways than we usually feel like we can.

I would now like us to do a mini-session. Here’s a suggestion: If I had called you a few days ago to say that I couldn’t lead the workshop and asked you to do it, what feelings would have come up for you to discharge?

VALUING OUR EXPERIENCES

We are a group of people raised working class or poor and people currently working as direct production workers. Many of us went to college, where we learned theories and academic values. Although much of that may have been beneficial to us, class oppression often makes us feel that our own experiences and thinking are not of much value.

Harvey Jackins, the founder of RC, was an admirer of the Chinese Revolution and encouraged us during the 1970s to learn about it. One thing I learned is that Mao Tse-tung was from a peasant background and early in his adult life attended a university where intellectuals held many discussions about the way forward for China. Besides studying, Mao spent time in the rural areas speaking with peasants and listening to them. He learned a lot from them about the actual conditions in the country. In political discussions, then and later, he often put forward a perspective that was different from that of others and was met with much resistance. Eventually some of his comrades realized that his ideas were more grounded in reality and effective in the struggle for change. He played a major leadership role, and in 1949 the revolutionary forces won national power.

Our experiences are valuable. We have a good sense of reality that we can recover with discharge and re-evaluation. Our perspective is much needed in the world today and will be of great importance in creating a society without exploitation and oppression. During this workshop I'll be sharing some of the experiences I've had during the forty years I have worked in machine shops and been a nursing assistant and now a food service worker. I encourage you to share your experiences, too. Let's have another mini-session: What do you value about your experiences, and how do they make you a good leader?

THE CURRENT SITUATION AND NEXT PERIOD OF TIME

We are at a critical point in human history that offers real opportunities for a liberating transformation of society. There are also real dangers

to life on Earth if we don't see to it that big changes happen. Climate scientists say we have eleven years to stop climate change and avoid a tipping point that could make many parts of our planet uninhabitable. Nuclear weapons are an increasing threat, as an irrational arms race continues and even limited treaties are abandoned. Reactionary governments have been gaining power and are shedding even the appearance of "democracy." The July 2018 *Present Time* has articles by Tim Jackins and Diane Shisk that challenge us to push our leadership forward during the next eleven years, even more than we have up to now, and enjoy our lives more than ever.

The 2017 World Conference of the RC Communities adopted a new goal on ending classism. It is a useful guide for us. At this workshop we will address each part of it with examples from our own efforts. I like to summarize things to help me hold some of the basic ideas in my mind. I've summarized below a few points in the goal:

We commit ourselves to end all exploitation by doing the following:

- Connecting with direct production workers (the large section of the working class that is underrepresented in RC) and poor people and learning from them

- Getting RC into their hands and backing their leadership

- Re-emerging from any distress that causes us to feel that some lives are more important than others, to seek economic advantages over one another, or to be preoccupied with irrationally seeking comfort and security

- Understanding the class society and communicating about it in our own way

(Following a mini-session, we reviewed the official version of the goal.)

Saturday Morning—Connecting with Direct Production Workers

GETTING A BIGGER VIEW OF REALITY

I was fortunate that I learned to enjoy reading at a young age. It was one way that I survived some hard times growing up. When I got into RC, I loved reading RC literature. Harvey's explanation of the class system and his confidence in the "intelligence, strength, endurance, and goodness of working-class people everywhere" had a big impact on me. Getting an accurate picture of class society and working-class liberation from an RC perspective led me to make key decisions about what I wanted to do with my life.

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MARGO HITTLEMAN

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Some years ago, Dan Nickerson and I put together a list of virtually every article on working-class liberation that Harvey had written up to that point. Dan gave me the titles of some of them and made a few comments about them. I went through Harvey's books and filled out the list. You were each e-mailed a copy of the list. It is also on the RC website (search for working class, scroll down, and click on "Articles by Harvey Jackins on Working-Class Liberation"). If you only read one article, one of my favorites is "The Working Class, the World, and RC."

DISCHARGING INTERNALIZED AND ALL OPPRESSION

When I began having sessions in RC, most of them were about the family I grew up with. I discharged a lot of grief about being separated from them as well as many painful memories of their distresses. I had moved to another city to try to escape the distresses, but after finding information about classism and discharging in a working-class support group, I re-evaluated. I realized that I didn't want to leave my people, I wanted to end the oppression.

For many years I attended workshops on the oppressions

I had experienced and on being an ally to other groups. That was crucial work in my fully reclaiming myself, my people, and all people, and it became an ongoing process for building the unity we need for our liberation.

CHOOSING A LIBERATION FOCUS

Almost everyone has many identities. Although it is good to work on as many as we can, we can easily spread ourselves too thin unless we choose one or a few to focus on. In my case, after several years in RC, I decided that working-class liberation would be my primary focus. It seemed to be key in my re-emergence and something I could do that would be most useful to RC and to liberation in the wide world. I also came to realize that in order to be effective, I would need to put an emphasis as well on being of Arab heritage and a man. Much of my chronic distress involved the oppressions of these groups, and moving Arab and men's liberation forward would strengthen RC as a whole.

Everyone's circumstances are different, but I hope some of you will consider ending classism as one of the liberation areas you focus on.

SETTING UP OUR LIVES

Once we have chosen a liberation focus, we can set up our lives to have regular contact with the people in our constituency. In my case, this included going home to the working-class neighborhood I grew up in and getting a job in a small machine shop in an industrial area nearby. I got the job by going to the state employment office and finding a company willing to train someone with no experience as a drill press operator. I continued to discharge on internalized working-class oppression and other oppressions that separated me from my coworkers. To have time for my goals, I made a personal decision not to live a traditional family life. Over the years I have made close friends who are like family to me.

Those of you who were raised working class or poor and are currently middle class might make choices that are different from mine. I don't know what makes sense for you to do, but if I were in circumstances similar to yours, I imagine that I would remember the part of the working-class commitment that says the working class is "the only class with a future." If that's true, being middle class could be a temporary stage a person is going through. As a first step, I would consider getting a part-time working-class job. In the future we all may be learning to do all kinds of work rather than being limited to a certain set of occupations defined by class. Meanwhile, I would go to both raised-working-class/poor and middle-class workshops.

MAKING FRIENDS WITH DIRECT PRODUCTION WORKERS

To build the relationships with direct production workers that we need to enrich our lives and



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transform society, we need to do more than have regular contact with people and discharge our internalized oppression. We need to make friends. Sometimes this means getting good at our jobs and earning respect, taking public transportation and getting acquainted with people we see daily on our way to work at bus stops or in train stations, playing basketball with coworkers, spending time with their families, having conversations about our lives and the news of the world on our lunch breaks, seeking out jobs that bring us into contact with many people as we go about our workday, or offering a hug on holidays or birthdays. One direct production worker I met at a bus stop now shares my apartment with me, and our friendship has extended to family members I see on trips to their country. Such friendships may not happen quickly, but they can be lifelong and bring people into our lives whom we never expected to meet.

Saturday Afternoon—Taking Action with Direct Production Workers

BUILDING ALLIANCES AND TEACHING RC

Over time, I gradually shared my thoughts about the oppressive class system and human liberation with my friends. I found many who agreed with me. I also learned who among my coworkers didn't agree and why. That made me consider what people were saying and helped me clarify my thinking. I continued listening and looked for opportunities to go a step further than I had before in holding out a perspective of complete liberation for everybody.

I gained a reputation as a good listener. Coworkers would talk openly with me about their lives and struggles and then thank me for listening. When friends asked

me what I was reading and where I was going on my days away from work, I would offer naturalized RC at first. Then I found ways to tell them more about our project and my life. Some RC "classes" would be on breaks, and some would happen while our dishwashing crew was working. I've shared summaries of some RC literature via e-mail, and this has sometimes led to a person wanting to read one of Harvey's books. When I told people I was leading this workshop on working-class liberation, they were excited. One said, "We need your voice out in the world!"

TAKING ACTION TOGETHER

During the last few years, the level of trust and understanding at work made me think that people might be willing to take action together as a group. One of the big difficulties in many of our lives has been the large increases in rent in our neighborhoods. I joined a tenants' union of mostly working-class people and began circulating a petition for stronger rent control laws in California. My coworkers were eager to sign it, and we quickly filled the form with signatures. This year there's another statewide petition for improving the rent control laws, and we have a team at my workplace that is not only signing it but circulating it to people outside of work. One person took two forms to a basketball game and filled them with signatures.

During recent tense periods in the United States when many immigrants feared deportation, some of my coworkers gave me their e-mail addresses so I could send them information about their rights. I've been using the e-mail addresses I collected from these and other coworkers to send information and links to videos about political issues, climate



ALAN EPSTEIN

change, and candidates for U.S. president in 2020—which they can read, watch, and share with voters they know. Good conversations have followed and been highlights of my workdays.

During the recent global strikes for the climate, I talked to my coworkers about the events happening in our cities and sent out e-mails with the details. One person, within thirty minutes of our first conversation about it, organized seven friends on her cell phone to attend the rally and march in downtown Los Angeles. We all showed up.

BEING MORE VISIBLE AS A LEADER

In the 1980s Harvey challenged the leaders of the Los Angeles RC Communities to each build an RC Community on their own. Several of us from working-class or raised-poor backgrounds were able to do

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BEIJING, CHINA • DIANE SHISK

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that. It was a scary but satisfying experience and a contradiction to my internalized oppression patterns of insignificance.

Organizing in the wide world has come more slowly for me, but I have made steady progress. At first I was visible by writing letters to the editors of some local newspapers. In recent years I have become more visible and outspoken as an activist, both in the kitchen where I work and in the rest of the hospital of three thousand employees, including with the managers.

BEGINNING STEPS TOWARD INTERNATIONALISM

Harvey encouraged working-class Co-Counselors to build solidarity with working-class people outside their home countries. Some of my first steps in this direction were with coworkers who were mainly from Latin America, Asia, the Pacific Islands, and Africa. After establishing friendships with coworkers in the machine shop, I asked some of them if I could speak Spanish with them to help me be able to converse in that language. They agreed, and thanks to them I began having my first sessions in Spanish at workshops with Co-Counselors from Latin America. In 1998 Julian Weissglass (the International Commonality

Reference Person for Wide World Change) invited me to attend a workshop he was leading in Mexico, and it turned out to be life changing for me. I made my first contact with a Co-Counselor from El Salvador and eventually developed Co-Counseling relationships with several people in that country. In 2008 I attended a workshop Julian led in El Salvador, and that is where, after five years of telephone sessions, I met María Lorena Cuéllar Barandiarán in person. Our work together has continued since then.

In 2016 Azi Khalili (the International Liberation Reference Person for South, Central, and West Asian-Heritage People) led an Arab conference call and told us that she wanted us to come to Morocco to attend COP22 (the United Nations climate conference) as part of the Sustaining All Life delegation. At the COP I was able to make some Moroccan contacts and start teaching them RC.

Before these things happened, I had only a vague idea of how to connect with working-class and poor people in other countries. But I always kept it in my mind, and as opportunities arose I prioritized them.

Sunday Morning—Working-Class Liberation

LEADING IN A BIGGER WAY

This morning I want to talk about the same things we worked on yesterday but on a larger scale. We need to organize bigger communities and movements in the world to stop environmental destruction, nuclear war, and governments that oppose people's real interests. All these things are rooted in the class system that dominates the planet in the form of capitalism and its different forms of oppression. We have the theory and the tools to eliminate the distress patterns that underlie these dangers. Harvey challenged us to "build your own world community" and said that each of us could accomplish at least as much as he had. Harvey managed to get RC started in ninety countries. So far I'm working with two. If it goes well, maybe I'll be invited to another place in the world, and the number will grow. It's great to be allies and help build solidarity internationally. We each need to think bigger and challenge ourselves to be the leaders that we were born to be.

THINKING STRATEGICALLY

Although we can lead from whatever circumstances we happen to be in, it helps to think strategically. Since the system we are up against is big, we need to be bigger than the system, and we have the worldwide numbers to do so. Where can we reach larger numbers? Unions, schools, and workplaces and industries that have hundreds or thousands of

employees are all good places (and not the only ones) to reach people. Where we focus depends on who we are and where we are in the global society. Backing union activists is an excellent role to play. (Two members of the workshop then talked and discharged about their experiences standing up to their employers—one in a large manufacturing company as an individual worker, and the other

as a union member in a citywide school system during a teachers' strike.)

DEVELOPING NEW LEADERS AND LEADING LEADERS

Being a Reference Person for an Area or Region gives us experience developing new leaders. Helping people start new Communities and backing them is a way to lead leaders, who lead leaders, and so on. Developing a circle of allies among direct production workers who lead their families and communities is another way. As individuals we cannot do all of the work, but we can lead and organize in a way that gives us greater and greater influence.

My work both inside and outside of my local RC Community has given me a taste of the power and hope of organizing.

Victor Nicassio
Los Angeles, California, USA

A “First-in-a-Long-Time” Working-Class Workshop

Our San Gabriel Valley (California, USA) Regional Reference Person, Victor Nicassio, recently led a first-in-a-long-time working-class workshop for the four Regions in Southern California. He was assisted by Dan Nickerson, the International Liberation Reference Person for Working-Class People. The weekend was a thought-provoking, discharge-filled handful of days. I had many highlights, starting with the workshop being attended by mostly People of the Global Majority.

Victor did an elegant job of inviting us to describe our early and current connection to the working class and then proceeded to construct a direction for creating a classless society. He used examples from his own life as jumping-off points from which to discharge. The twenty-five of us got to know him a lot better as he opened the way for us to explore our own lives in the safety of an all working-class group.

There were only two other Jews at the workshop. We led the *Havdalah* moment at the end of Shabbat. None of us were observant Jews, so we had to resort to “Dr. Google” [do a search on Google] for some clarification. Also, my memories of *Havdalahs* at other RC workshops reminded me of a sweet song we could sing together.

One of the resonant directions Dvora Slavin had given us at last year’s working-class Jewish workshop was that as working-class Jews we need to be visible. The inaccurate stereotype says that all Jews are middle or owning class. We need to contradict our internalized terror and show ourselves among the world’s working class.

Keith Glassman
Costa Mesa, California, USA
Reprinted from the RC e-mail discussion list for leaders of wide world change



SPAIN • CAROL FONTEIN



SEATTLE, WASHINGTON, USA • LISA KAUFFMAN

Trying Something New on Yom Kippur

In my congregation, every Yom Kippur after a two-hour break from services, there are some small-group offerings before the afternoon prayer services begin. In past years I have led something on Israel-Palestine. This year I wanted to try something different. I titled my workshop “Healing from Hopelessness and Discouragement in These Challenging Times.”

One person after another rolled into the room saying something like, “I need this group—I’m feeling so hopeless.” (I find it special to do these Yom Kippur workshops, as folks have been fasting since the night before and are often raw and open.)

I started by talking about how years ago I had led a weekend for Jewish Middle East peace activists and on Saturday night one person after the other had shared how hopeless they felt about Middle East peace efforts. I’d left that weekend feeling awful—like I had set back Middle East peace work by not interrupting a whole evening of non-stop stories of hopelessness. But lo and behold [to my surprise] I began getting letters saying, “Thank you for that healing evening. Now I’m ready to keep working.”

I told the Yom Kippur workshop that this session was about that—creating a space in which to talk openly and from our hearts about how hopeless we sometimes feel. Then I had each person share one thing in the world from the past year that had given

them hope. (I explained that we need a foundation of hearing about hopeful things to have the courage to face our hopelessness.) After hearing what had given people hope, everyone went back into pairs and got two minutes each to be listened to about the thing in the world that had left them the most hopeless and discouraged, with little belief that they’d see real change. Many talked about the climate crisis, U.S. or Israeli political issues, or white nationalism.

Then—and this was my big experiment; I wasn’t sure how it would be received—I gave a short lecture about early discouragement and defeats and how, even though huge unsolved difficulties exist in the present, our discouragement is *not* about the present but rather unhealed baggage from our early defeats. As I spoke, I cautiously looked from face to face and saw many people nodding. Some said, “Wow! I never thought of that before.”

To help clarify what I meant, I decided to offer myself as an example. I shared that with the person I’d been paired with I’d said that I feel hopeless because I’m afraid that racism in Israel is making the possibility of a Palestinian state “dead in the water.” I went on to say that it wasn’t a coincidence I had used the words “dead in the water,” as my hopeless moment when I was little was connected to my brother being killed. Seeing the current situation like a death was linked to that earlier hurt.

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TEACHING, LEADING, COMMUNITY BUILDING

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Then I sent them back to the same partner to share how the current situation they felt hopeless about was linked to a specific early-life experience of hopelessness. I expected some resistance but got none. When they returned from the pairs, person after person opened up courageously about an early childhood incident of being bullied, not being able to read, being ignored by a parent, and so on. And they were able to make the connection between the current situation they felt hopeless about and the early experience of defeat.

In a closing circle, each person shared a highlight from the workshop and one way they would take action in the upcoming year on the issue that concerned them most. The lightness in the room—in total contrast to how they had come in—was palpable. Many said that the workshop had been so helpful and they'd had no idea that childhood hurts were impacting their ability to stay hopeful in the present.

I ended by saying a few things about RC. (I had done an introduction to RC for the congregation in the previous year, but many who came to this Yom Kippur group were new to me.)

I am still getting e-mails thanking me for the workshop, and I'm pleased that I took the risk to put out a key piece of RC theory.

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

A New Rational Island Publishers Website!

After resolving numerous technical challenges, we now have a new Rational Island Publishers website 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 the website at <www.rationalisland.com>. We'd love for you to give it a try!

Rational Island Publishers



TOGO • ELLIE PUTNAM

Connecting with the Earth

The following is part of a talk I gave at a Northeast USA Regional Workshop:

When I was asked to be on the care of the environment team at this workshop, my first question was, “What does that role involve?” I was told that it is to think about recycling, composting, handkerchiefs, and soap. I immediately started to think about using the role to do something more than that. How could we have more impact?

My first thought was to look at workshop consumption, energy use, and waste. I pictured a balance sheet. Then I wondered what that would feel like and if it would actually move us forward. Where would that leave us? Would it actually be helpful? What conclusions might people come to that were not helpful? I decided this approach was not a great idea.

I needed another idea—and I began to push the edge of my thinking. I’ve been deeply impacted by Robin Wall Kimmerer, who wrote *Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge and the Teachings of Plants* and is an enrolled member of the Potawatomi Nation. She asks us to consider, what do we offer the Earth? Our white U.S. culture keeps us focused on what we take from the Earth, and we miss part of our work and part of the equation.

I decided to focus on our relationship and connection to the land we’re on and the plant and animal beings who live here.

Where is our sense of wonder, awe, reverence, joy, connection, and gratitude? As RCers, we know

that our attention matters. Our attention for each other, our attention for our people—it matters. We are less sure that our attention for the Earth matters or makes any difference.

We need to follow the thinking and perspectives of Native people as we do this work because we have to start from a different place in our hearts and in our minds. As a white person, I do not know this way of thinking and this perspective. I was not taught this.

For me, going to a place of reverence and humility, and love of the Earth, feels tender, scary, fragile, and private. It’s hard for me to share it with others.

We can start by being in a quiet place. We can close our eyes, look outside—whatever works to help us find that place. Then we can notice the Earth that we’re on and the other beings here. Notice the trees, the lake, the sun, the wind, the piece of the sky we can see, the squirrels, the deer, the chipmunks, the birds. Notice all of it. Really notice. Notice what the wind feels like on

our skin and think about our place in all of this.

How often do we walk through our day disconnected from the Earth beneath our feet? What would we have to discharge to never take another step disconnected from the Earth? We can notice any feelings that come up—grief, longing, disconnection, futility, goodness, thankfulness, feeling protected and cared for, reverence, pleasure, joy, awe, gratitude—no matter how fragile or tender any of this feels. We can allow any feelings of fierceness to arise. We can trust that we do not yet understand how much our love and connection to the Earth matters and how much difference it makes.

Can we walk through a weekend connected to a sense of love, respect, and humility in our relationship with the Earth and the beings here? Can we build and honor our relationship to the Earth? Can we support each other to stay connected to the Earth?

Lisa Bedinger
South Burlington, Vermont, USA



SANTA CRUZ, CALIFORNIA, USA • PAM ROBY

Helping a Group Support Each Other

I recently had the privilege of supporting a diverse group of thirty-three university students, from across Canada, on a trip to Berlin and Poland. The goal of the trip—called the March of Remembrance and Hope—was to teach them about the Holocaust and help them become allies against it ever happening again to any group.

Traveling with guides, educators, and a Holocaust survivor, the group visited three concentration/death camps and many memorials and historical sites related to the Holocaust. My role was to provide the “mental health” support. As you can imagine, there were *many* feelings on a daily basis, and I couldn’t provide support to thirty-three young adults on my own. But it was my second time on the trip, and I had a more extensive plan this time for teaching them how to listen to and support each other.

We began in the orientation. Over two days we set the stage for how they would support each other as a group. We made “community commitments” for how they would be together and about confidentiality, including not gossiping. I had them do mini-sessions and taught them about taking turns and listening without interrupting. (We started with three minutes each, and by the time we left for Europe, they were doing seven minutes each in quite a lively way.) We discussed what it meant to pay complete attention and how to communicate caring. If they had a question they wanted to ask as counselor, we tried to notice who the question was for. Was it something they wanted to know, or was it useful to the client?

Once we began traveling (mostly on a bus), we did mini-sessions

every morning and four-ways after visiting more challenging sites. We also did minis during evening debriefs, to help us decide what we wanted to say in the larger group. And people began doing them on their own in their free time. Many commented that before the trip they had thought they were good listeners but realized now they were not. Others said they were going home with new listening skills.

I embedded the skills into the structure of the program, so even if I can’t attend next time the program leaders will understand how to use them.

Felice Markowicz

Toronto, Ontario, Canada

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

About Teaching RC

The teacher of Re-evaluation Counseling teaches mostly by example. Students learn to counsel by practice counseling, by being counseled, by seeing others being counseled. So the teacher is necessarily a counselor in practice much of the time, demonstrating techniques, getting discharge started for Co-Counselors to continue with, eliciting discharge from students, both in the class and in informal conferences.

Counseling theory is the summary and distillation of experience with counseling. It is a composite of, and explanation of, the common features of the counseling that have worked well. We stress at every turn that there should be no rigidity in the application of the theory, that the basic principles have to be applied flexibly and differently in every session.

There is a real need for offering theory, but when it is done well it is not preached or “told” to the students but rather demonstrated. The discussions of theory which are remembered well by students are the discussions which appear in answer to questions students ask, and even more particularly, in response to difficulties which the students have experienced and which they bring to the teacher for a solution.

Harvey Jackins

From page 3 of “The Teacher of Re-evaluation Counseling,” in *A New Kind of Communicator*

● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● Reaching More People with RC ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●

This is a follow-up to my posting about teaching RC in a time of collapse [see page 19 of this *Present Time*].

Building solid RC Communities continues to be our central work. It requires, at a minimum, that people do the following:

1. Learn RC theory
2. Get strong counseling on early hurts
3. Learn how to set themselves against the pull of distress recordings so they can move out of chronic distress
4. Understand RC liberation theory, and work on oppressor and oppressed distresses
5. Understand and follow our *Guidelines*
6. Prioritize building good relationships with other Co-Counselors, including RC leaders
7. Take leadership in RC

Doing all this is a lengthy process for everyone, and most of us have been hurt too deeply to be able to do it quickly. Yet it is vital. We need a bedrock of strong RC Communities everywhere to be able to stay strong and keep learning and re-emerging—for our own benefit and so we can play a big role in determining the future direction of our societies.

At the same time, we are in a new period of societal collapse. We are facing huge challenges caused by environmental degradation, war, oppression, economic collapse, and more—multiplied by climate change. And in the coming years the impacts of climate change will increase, making the other challenges more difficult.

It would be good if many more people had RC theory and practice to help them deal with the stresses and think better and lead people in rational ways. However, if we continue to teach RC only in the same ways that we have in the past, it is not clear that we will

reach large numbers of people quickly. And without challenging our timidities and discouragements, we won't even know if it is possible.

We can look at the situation and do some experiments. We are trying a few things now with non-RCers who have attended our going-public events (regardless of whether or not they come into the RC Community):

- We are teaching them how to exchange listening and set up support groups. Then we're turning them loose to try it, while checking in on them occasionally and giving them access to written and online materials to support their work.

- We are holding daylong workshops every few months and inviting back the same group from the event, over and over again, and encouraging them to do sessions and support groups in between the workshops.

- We are staying in touch with people one-to-one via videoconferencing and coaching them to teach the people around them.

- We are offering support groups and classes on Zoom (and other kinds of videoconferencing) to teach people the basics of RC.

A question we come up against repeatedly is, How much of our theory do people need for them to be able to think freshly and move against their distress, to function differently because they are having sessions and discharging? Our experience has been that to make big changes in their lives, people need several sessions a week and to be in a class led by an experienced leader. But if their goal isn't re-emergence but simply better thinking and functioning, how much of our theory do they need? How well do their sessions have to go? Only by doing experiments like the ones mentioned above will we gain answers to these questions.

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TEACHING, LEADING, COMMUNITY BUILDING

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Can we make efforts in this direction without diminishing our work of RC Community building? For me, this would mean being more connected to other people who are doing this, and doing more than I have before. I know that isn't possible for everyone.

Probably each of us has experienced feeling unable to begin a project because it has seemed too massive to be possible. Our restimulated discouragement has stopped us (or diminished the size of the project) before we have even begun. I propose that we each make some initial small effort and see what we learn and what is possible from there.

I don't know what we can do, but I think we will benefit from talking to each other, discharging about these things, and trying some experiments. I look forward to hearing your thoughts and what you are trying.

Diane Shisk

*Alternate International Reference Person for
the Re-evaluation Counseling Communities
Seattle, Washington, USA*

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



BRYCE CANYON NATIONAL PARK, UTAH, USA • GUY WOOD

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BIG BEND NATIONAL PARK, TEXAS, USA • MARSHA HUNTER

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For a complete list of all the CDs produced up until now, see pages 107 and 108 of this *Present Time*.

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Ordering information on pages 111 and 112 and at <www.rationalisland.com>

Appreciating the RC Literature

My October PRESENT TIME came in the mail! Just the cover with Marcie Rendon's quote on it and the lovely picture from South Korea touched me deeply. Flipping through the magazine, I can't wait to savour our connections across the world and how we are doing whatever we can to find our way through the human and environmental crises.

This PRESENT TIME made me think of Harvey Jackins's pamphlet *The Good and the Great in Art*.

Sandy Wilder

Moruya, New South Wales, Australia

Commuting to and from work is usually very stressful for me. But I find that if I have been reading PRESENT TIME, I have more perspective and am less "cranky." Thank you for helping make my commute more bearable!

Winnifred Lee

New York, New York, USA

Below is an e-mail I sent today to Michael Harding. It is a reminder that the older RC literature is of much value:

"It is still nighttime here. I woke up for a few minutes, and instead of checking my e-mail or looking at Google news, I grabbed WORKING FOR A LIVING No. 7 and discovered your 1996 article, 'A Photographer Organizes.' I had never read it before. Your story about the forty-year rubber worker brought years to my eyes, as did the next paragraph thanking Harvey Jackins for his clarity on working people. Thank you."

Steve Brown

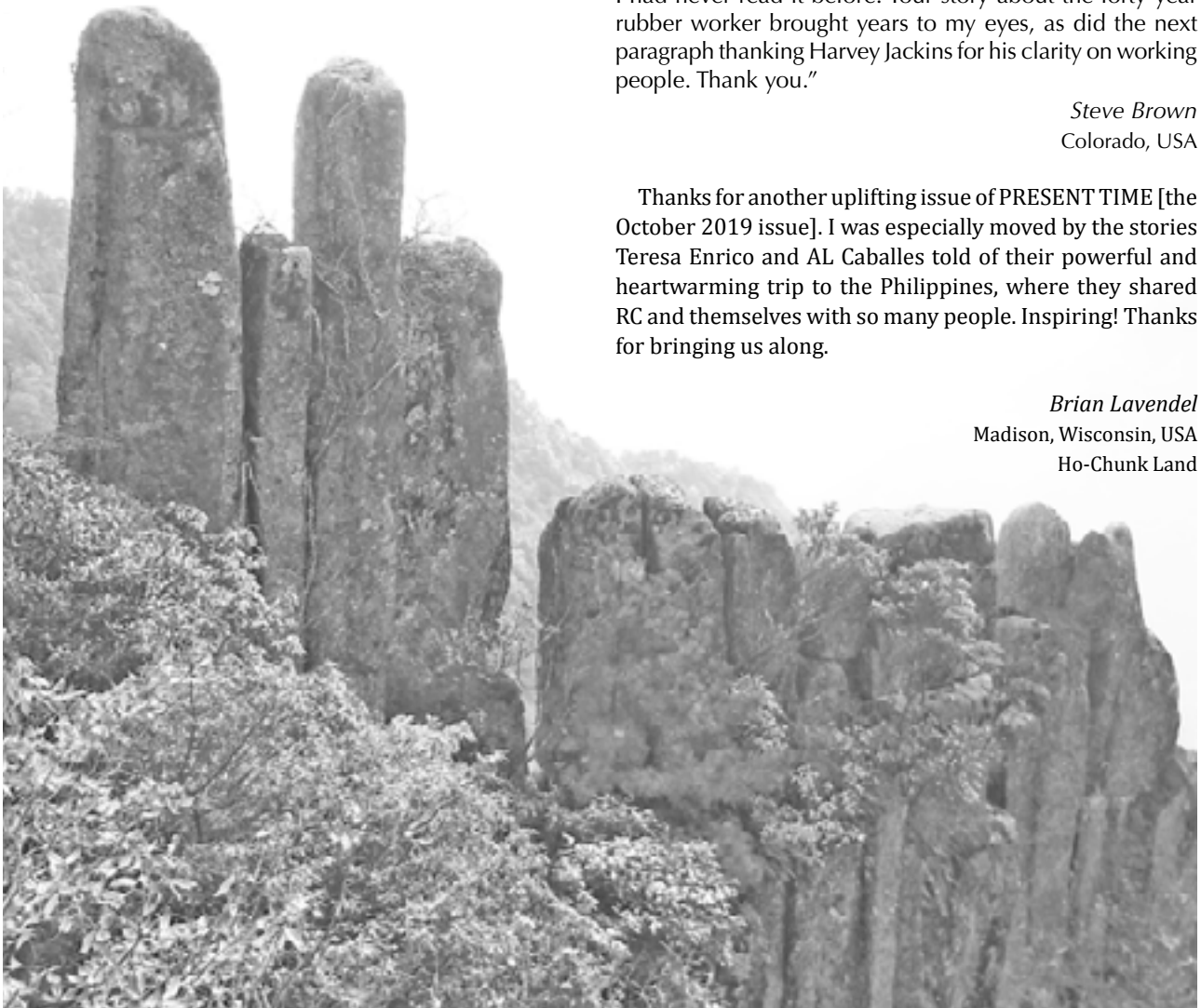
Colorado, USA

Thanks for another uplifting issue of PRESENT TIME [the October 2019 issue]. I was especially moved by the stories Teresa Enrico and AL Caballes told of their powerful and heartwarming trip to the Philippines, where they shared RC and themselves with so many people. Inspiring! Thanks for bringing us along.

Brian Lavendel

Madison, Wisconsin, USA

Ho-Chunk Land



CHINA • CHEN PINGJUN

The Knowledge and Power of Direct Production Workers

I, the International Liberation Reference Person (ILRP) for Working-Class People, was the overall leader of a Working Together to End Classism Workshop for the RC Regions in Australia. Gwen Brown, the ILRP for Raised-Poor People; Seán Ruth, the ILRP for Middle-Class People; and Jo Saunders, the ILRP for Owning-Class People led classes for the whole workshop and also for their constituencies.

It has always been encouraging and a contradiction to fears about classism for people to see the four of us working and thinking together and to see our closeness and support for each other's leadership.

It was also great to have Jane Lesley as organizer. She brought to the workshop the intelligence and skills she had gained as a crane operator and organizer of workers on the wharfs of Sydney.

The workshop began with people working in separate groups on ending racism, genocide, and the oppression of Jews. And as at all the recent Ending Classism Workshops I've led, there was a panel of direct production workers—the sector of the working class engaged in the direct production of goods and services. It consisted of twenty-three people, including me, fifteen of whom had been raised poor and/or working class and eight of whom had been raised middle or owning class. We each spoke briefly to the following questions:

What do you do for work?

How long have you done that work?

How much are you paid for that work?

What do you love about the work?

What do you hate about the work?

Do you have any workplace injuries? What hurts?

How will RC be different when direct production workers dominate the leadership?

What do you know, as a person in your type of work, that the rest of us do not know?



SIFNOS, GREECE • CARYN DAVIS

The last question was related to an earlier class on the climate emergency in which it was mentioned that direct production workers have information known only to people directly engaged in their kind of work.

I will share one example: Most of the people at the workshop thought that cement or concrete dries after it is poured. Some panelists who had worked with cement knew that it does not dry. Instead there is a chemical reaction in which the water added to the concrete mix bonds with the dry ingredients.

All the water used in concrete is forever lost to the environment. Intercontinental ballistic missile silos built in the dry parts of the United States during the "Cold War" removed forever huge amounts of "fossil water" from underground aquifers that had taken millions of years to form. Similarly, the United States border wall is draining the water sources (aquifers and groundwater) of many Native people and others who live close to the southern border of the United States.

A concrete truck driver told us how many liters of water, not including wastewater or the water used for cleaning his equipment, are used in each of his deliveries. He then told how many trucks of cement were involved in certain common constructions.

We then linked that to the large number of concrete buildings going up in Sydney (and many other wealthy cities of the world) and the efforts of Indigenous people, and their allies, to protect the nearby rivers. And we linked it to the water used to protect the houses being built in the bush [countryside] from more frequent bush fires due to global warming.

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LIBERATION

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It is clear that the familiarity we direct production workers have with our planet, its resources, and the details of our economic system is critical to rebuilding our society to a point of sustainability. Not to mention the enormous power we have to demand change by simply stopping our work.

Can we succeed in building a sustainable society without the knowledge and power of this group?

Dan Nickerson
International Liberation Reference
Person for Working-Class People
Freeport, Maine, USA
Reprinted from the RC e-mail discussion
list for leaders of wide world change



ESWATINI • TIM JACKINS

The *Benign Reality*, a book by Harvey Jackins, won't be reprinted for a while, so we are printing parts of it in Present Time. The following is a short chapter from the book. You can read another chapter on pages 24 to 28 of the October 2019 Present Time.

A Possible Source of Guilt

A firm, consistent stand against guilt has proven necessary for the discharge of oppression patterns, particularly for members of groups cast in oppressor roles by the society.

No guilt is ever justified if we remember our basic dictum: that each of us has, in the past, always done the very best he or she could do. Yet we RCers, let alone the rest of the world, must keep a constant watch that we not fall back into dealing with others by the use of blame, reproach, fault-finding, and criticism. These have never once, in all human experience, resulted in anyone being "better" or more human. But the tremendous dead momentum of pattern contagion from the past, and the manipulative pressure of the society, keeps us all surrounded by an atmosphere of constant blame and counter-blame.

This atmosphere and the pervasive reproach dramatizations might seem enough to explain the accumulation of guilt that we find surrounding every client. Yet in working with many clients to help them discharge their guilt, I run into [encounter] or sense a more basic source of guilt or self-blame that furnishes a foundation for the acceptance of all the later reproaches from others.

Speculation: That each new human starts out with complete confidence in her or his complete power to control the Universe and make it proceed in the ways she or he desires. (This confidence would be confirmed if the infant found rational humans waiting to cooperate in her or his plans.) When the patterned situation erupts in irrationalities, injuries, cruelties, losses, deaths, and so on, the infant, having assumed her or his possession of complete power, blames herself or himself for all the bad things that are happening, and this lays in a huge foundation of guilt to which all later reproaches can attach.

What do your memories of your early experiences say to this speculation?

Harvey Jackins
Reprinted from pages 233 to 234
of *The Benign Reality*

“This Workshop Was My Dream Come True”

I had the great pleasure of organizing Marion Ouphouet’s North American Large Women’s Workshop held near Baltimore, Maryland (USA), in September 2019.

ORGANIZING AS A LIBERATION PROJECT

When I chose to organize the workshop, I decided I would not just plan the event; I would also use the organizing to move large women’s liberation forward.

About a year before the workshop, I reached out to three women in different RC Areas near me and asked them to be on my organizing team. For many months we did a weekly phone call. We focused first on our re-emergence as large women and next on doing the organizing work together. After a few meetings I asked each woman to identify a key early memory she could return to in each session, so we could “track” each other as we discharged on the memories. Our goal was to see the effect of sustained discharge, the “draining” of an early memory connected to how fat oppression and sexism had come in on us.

Without planning to do so, each of us uncovered early memories of being “tortured” around food, eating, our female bodies, and our minds. There was an unexpected theme: our perception of reality and sense of right and wrong had been severely interfered with as irrationalities about food and fully using our bodies came in on us as little girls. All the work we did together helped us go into the workshop as a team with a lot of slack and be ready to welcome the other large women.

It was important to me that the workshop environment not be oppressive or unnecessarily restimulating to large women. Fat oppression is so “normal” that it can seem “normal” to have events in places where fat people have difficulty sitting or physically navigating the space. When we cannot easily fit into a space, it can



WYOMING, USA • KIRSTEN JOHNSON

seem “normal” and appropriate to shame us for being “overweight.” At many workshops, I have been in constant pain because of the seating or haven’t been able to fit in the restroom stalls. So I selected a site that had good chairs and was set up well for big bodies and/or people with mobility issues (for example, there were handrails on the walkways, and an elevator). There was also good, healthy, fresh food. And the setting was beautiful. I was determined that the environment reflect back to the attendees that they were good and beautiful and deserved to exist and be out in public. I also did not want the site to distract us from the work we were gathering to do together.

A LIVING CONTRADICTION TO THE OPPRESSION

Marion (once again!) created an amazing “container” in which we could move on our material [distress] and our liberation as large

women. Her perspective permeated everything she did and created enormous safety for us to work on the oppression as well as our bodies, health, and lives.

I continue to marvel at how Marion is a living contradiction to large women’s oppression. She does not have to stretch or

reach for a perspective outside the oppression—she *knows* that we are good, that we are not broken, that any distresses we have are not different from or more severe than the distresses carried by anyone, that our minds work, and that Co-Counseling works! She does not dramatize any worry, concern, dislike, disgust, or discouragement at us. For those of us who live at the intersection of fat oppression and sexism, this is like water in the desert.

On Saturday night, Marion asked us to share what we would want our female allies to know about how fat oppression comes at us. We showed the depth of our thinking and pushed ourselves to be hopeful enough to show what the oppression actually looks like. She had someone take notes, and on Sunday morning the allies, who were in a parallel workshop led by Teresa Enrico, joined us for an hour and Marion read the

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LIBERATION

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notes. She did it with a benign tone, and with smiles and little jokes throughout. Her hopefulness about our liberation extended to the allies, as she shared the information without condemning them or otherwise “acting out” distress. (Her tone was very different from the one we’d had when we were generating the list!)

REACHING FOR THIN WOMEN AS ALLIES

When I was organizing the workshop, I pushed myself on my relationships with female allies—or, as I think of them, thin women—and invited to the workshop two women I am very close to. Both of them are RC leaders, but they didn’t have much awareness of or perspective on fat oppression. After I invited them, I talked more about fat oppression in my sessions with them. They still didn’t have much attention or perspective but were curious. I realized that in the past I hadn’t talked much about the oppression, which, significantly, is a context for everything I work on as client. I decided to keep “showing.” I also encouraged other large women to reach out to thin women who were important to them and personally invite them to the workshop. When the registration opened, the first two registrants for the allies’ workshop were the two women I had invited!

On Saturday afternoon I led a topic group, “Reaching for and Showing More of Ourselves to Our Female Allies.” Two women came arm in arm, looking like they were dragging each other to the group. Then they started complaining about how much they didn’t want to attend, and we all were laughing uncontrollably. That inspired me to start the group by asking each woman to share, without editing, what runs in her head about the

thin female allies. People’s sharing included not trusting and feeling betrayed by thin women and feeling like they were mean, evil, and willing to do anything to feel superior.

I said that to have thin women as our allies we need to understand some things about them and be willing to lead them. I talked about sexism and fat oppression and the intersection of fat hatred and woman hatred (misogyny). I said that most women still struggle to face the depth of sexism and its impact on their lives and that it’s particularly hard for them to face the widespread hatred of women. Society bribes women to exempt themselves individually from the hatred, and thinness is like a golden ticket—it gives them a chance to not feel hated and to be less vulnerable to sexism and its violence. For example, when (often thin) women get a man’s approval (for example, through marriage), they may feel

more safe and secure. Because fat hatred is so vicious and open, thin women can be quite desperate to avoid it.

I shared that there is something powerful about large women reaching for our thin sisters and all of us being a unified group of women challenging the hatred of women. I also said that because thin women are confused here, we will need to be their leaders.

SHOWING, AND BEING FREE FROM, THE OPPRESSION

On Sunday morning Marion did a demonstration with me in a combined class of large women and allies. I did my best to show how I am mistreated under fat oppression—the big stuff that impacts my career; my life options, like having a family; and my ability to access public space and move fully and freely throughout this world. I also tried to show what it’s like to have no one take a stand against the mistreatment and to have no sense that anyone would be courageous in that way.

After the class, one of the allies I’d invited to the workshop came up to me and said that she’d had an epiphany that what I’d talked about was a systematic institutionalized oppression. (I think that before my demonstration she had thought of large women as women with a “weight struggle.”) She said that she was going to change how she thought about and counseled the large women in her life. Later she shared that she had never before seen what I looked like, and other large women she loved looked like, when we were away from thin women. She had observed us across the dining hall and noticed how different we had looked. I think it had been her first glimpse of the everyday impact of the oppression.



EXTERIOR WALL ORNAMENT, BHUTAN • MAURA FALLON

For me, a highlight of the workshop was the difference between introductions on Friday night and farewells on Sunday morning. The tone at introductions was sadness, grief, shame, and despair. At farewells the large women were open, connected, hopeful, and radiantly beautiful. It was amazing.

THE POWER OF WORKING FOR LIBERATION

As I organized the workshop, I experienced huge shifts in my life related to fat oppression: I was asked at work to apply for a significant and highly visible leadership role and am now in that role. I got my first real boyfriend, at the age of forty-seven. I shifted some dynamics of fat oppression within my family. And every once in a while, I asked myself, “Is this because I am organizing the workshop?” I think it was.

It was a great reminder of what Gwen Brown wrote in her pamphlet *Why Lead in RC*. Yes, I live at the intersection of fat oppression and women’s oppression. But as I stepped out on behalf of my liberation, things in my life that had seemed intractable moved. Barbara Love [the International Liberation Reference Person for African Heritage People] often talks about how when we don’t settle for the limitations that oppression attempts to place on our lives, and instead go for [pursue] our dreams, the universe will organize itself around us.

This workshop—its profound contradiction to large women’s oppression, and what it meant to all the women who came—was my dream come true.

Nikki Stewart

Washington, D.C., USA

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



SORRENTO, ITALY • RACHEL KIEFFER

Some Directions for Allies to Large Women

A Large Women and Female Allies Workshop took place in Maryland (USA) in September 2019. [See also previous article.] There were two separate workshops: Marion Ouphouet led the one for large women, and Teresa Enrico led the one for allies.

The RC Large Women’s Health Project will be celebrating its fifteenth year this spring. (It doesn’t seem that long!) Diane Shisk convened the group. She had noticed certain things happening when women did physical power work—things related to body size, size oppression, and the sometimes-related health challenges. Eventually she passed the project leadership on to Marion Ouphouet.

At the September workshop, Marion did many things to create safety: There was a short pre-workshop for Global Majority women. We were discouraged from having meetings during mealtimes, so we could focus on eating and pay attention to connecting. The two separate workshops ate separately. Resting was encouraged—the evening classes ended at 10:30, and there were no pre-breakfast meetings. Global Majority allies have often attended these workshops, but this was the first time that Black women allies had been present.

Many Black women are large. As a Black woman, I haven’t noticed fat oppression being acknowledged in the Black community. I don’t think we even talk about it in any real way. There is so much else going on—perhaps we don’t dare take on [confront and do something about] another oppression.

Large women shared the following with the allies:

- Don’t assume you know anything about fat oppression.
- As counselor, don’t have an agenda for me. Don’t sneak in advice—including about food and dieting—as a “direction.” Don’t run [act out] at me your discouragement about my size. Don’t forget “point zero” about me—I’m good.

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LIBERATION

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- Work on any feelings of urgency about large women, even if you don't have a relationship with a large woman.
- Assume you don't know anything about my struggle. Check in with me about my struggle. And I may not know what my struggle is, so hang in [stay] and love me.
- Don't leave me alone here. After I state my intention to do this work, my distress might make me forget to do it, but I expect you not to forget. (And if you do, don't be surprised if I "bite your head off.")
- It is best not to reassure me when I'm working on the horrors of self-hatred. Instead, be with me in my hard places. Learn to recognize the many flavors of self-hatred (I don't always need the same contradiction [to distress]).
- Don't ask, "What did the doctor say?" after I've had a medical appointment. Also, know that doctors often feel more comfortable with skinnier people, and take into account how that might have affected me.
- Don't congratulate me for my weight loss—that is inside the oppression. Learn about and work on how there's a difference between losing weight and going for [pursuing] good health.
- Work on any feelings of being "better" than large women and wanting us to be big so you can appear small and delicate.
- Recognize that skinnier women are more employable and get paid more.
- Discharge your fears of being fat—but not with us. Work on loving your own body.
- Never comment about my body size, or yours. My body is just right at this moment, and so is yours.
- Don't discuss food or dieting at RC events or talk about your body shape. Work on your issues about food, dieting, and nutrition, but not with us or when we are nearby.
- Don't take it personally if I don't trust you.
- Don't take food away from me at workshops.
- I can tell [sense] when you are not yet able to take a stand against the systematic oppression of fat people. The more you can take that stand, the safer I'll be to work as a client.
- Remember how pervasive fat oppression is and that the "information" out there is steeped in it.

Feelings came up for me during workshop farewells. At first I didn't know why, and then it occurred to me: I had spent a weekend not having to apologize for being me. I had spent a weekend not having to figure out how to make space for myself. I was feeling safe.



Jacqueline "Jackie" Kane
Albany, New York, USA
Reprinted from the RC e-mail
discussion list for leaders of women

*I had spent a
weekend not
having to apologize
for being me.
I had spent a
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having to figure out
how to make space
for myself.
I was feeling safe.*



“My Takeaway Was Pure Joy”

Since I returned from the Large Women’s Workshop with Marion Ouphouet [see previous two articles], my mind has been reeling with a multitude of thoughts, unleashed memories, directions that evoke tears, and tears shed for my sisters’ stories. Thankfully, my workshop buddies are also my regular Co-Counselors, and we can continue on streams of consciousness and strands of thought that our new awarenesses evoked.

As a Black woman, I have focused my writing and activism mostly on the intersectionality of Black women’s rights, racism, and fighting all the “isms” waged against women and especially women of color. I have neglected to notice how much time I spend each day creating a visual appearance that is uniquely mine yet deflects the observer’s eye from my large size.

Though I have always left a space for large women’s issues in my women’s support group, I haven’t done that in my writing. My excuse has been that they are not high enough on the hierarchy of “isms” that I fight to focus my full and precious attention on them.

This workshop brought into focus the many ways that large women’s oppression impacts my life. I realized how many health and appearance-related decisions I make each day and hour, and the huge amount of time I spend pressing against the oppression internally. My feelings about being large in relation to my thin male partner came into focus: “dating while fat,” “he knows you’re big; it’s not a secret,” and so on. I realized that my parents’ stories about food are also my stories. I thought about my mother, who was raised middle class during the Depression, and how her attitudes about food, scarcity, and obesity had impacted me.

This workshop was a wonderful experience. It was full of tears and empathy—and beautiful, caring women in a sisterhood within which we can stand tall and feel fully proud, perfect, and loved by ourselves and each other. My takeaway [what I took away] was pure joy!

Anne McAndrew
Rochester, New York, USA
Reprinted from the RC e-mail
discussion list for leaders of women



LINCOLN PARK, SEATTLE, WASHINGTON, USA • KATIE KAUFFMAN

Language Liberation

A Recipe for Africa's Re-emergence

For centuries, since the onslaught of the colonization of Nigeria, colonialists have managed to sustain the lie that their language, English, is superior to our native language. They have done this in many ways, including by banning our mother tongue in schools and meting out severe punishment to persons who dared to communicate in it to other pupils.

Christianity, which birthed in Nigeria as colonialism took root, lent itself to use by the oppressors. The English language was the means of communication in the early churches, and persons who got baptized were compelled to take up English names and be so addressed forthwith.

The colonial imperialists tried to obliterate the language of the natives. They imposed the colonial language and positioned it as superior. They hurriedly trained a few natives in their strange tongue (English) and elevated them above their fellow natives, who then aspired to also acquire the strange tongue that was presented as a gateway to "a better life."

Before long, the natives were stripped of their dignity—language

power—and began to think in the language of the oppressor. Then they gradually lost their culture and became separated from their roots.

When persons have difficulty understanding and reading their native language, they tend to jump at any other language someone brings to them. Therefore the language oppressor tricks people into believing that their own language is difficult! The workshop brought home [made clear] the reality that "no language in the world is difficult; all languages are perfect, complete, right, accurate, and intelligent," and I proudly add "awesome."

Many years after African nations secured their independence, the African people continue to suffer the long-term effects of forced disconnection from their language and culture. Currently in most African schools, the teaching is done in the language of the colonialist. In Nigeria, if a student fails to obtain credit in English language at the Senior Secondary level, that could mark an end to her or his dreams of a higher education.

It is heartwarming to see that Re-evaluation Counseling is at the

forefront of supporting people to reclaim their reality. A Language Liberation Workshop in Kenya, led by Xabier Odriozola, the International Commonality Reference Person for Languages and Interpreting, marked a great watershed for Africans who have watched many of their local languages become extinct in the face of extreme ignorance accentuated by internalized oppression. Now we have a clearer understanding of how colonialists and capitalism worked in tandem to destroy the native languages in order to plunder the people's resources.

A common tool of the capitalist system is to make people feel bad about their language. When people aren't proud of their language, they don't want to speak it and they lose the benefits derivable from it.

Today the capitalist and imperialist forces target the youth by telling them that certain foreign languages, for example, English, French, and Spanish, are superior and more important than other languages. Truth be told, every language is powerful and, for as long as it's spoken, is a vessel for preserving the core values of a people.

In the words of Xabier, the workshop leader, "If we forget our language and learn the language imposed on us, we forget who we are, where we come from, and what we need to survive, and we forget our main cultural values." The consequence is that "capitalism can grow inside us and achieve everything it wants."

If we base our style of life on our native language, we help young



AMANDA MARTINEZ

people have sessions about talking in the imposed language of the oppressor. (Sadly, a lot of our young people do not want to talk in their native tongue.)

A language is not on its own oppressive. It is the way that it's used that can be oppressive. It is oppressive to force assimilation on a people on pain of death. It is oppressive to force a people to denounce their native names and take names known only to the oppressor. It is oppressive to force people to speak in a strange tongue or be punished. It is oppressive for capitalism to eliminate the language of a people in an attempt to dominate. It is oppressive to import divide-and-rule tactics and use the power of language to pitch a people against one another so as to entrench capitalism and exploit the people's resources.

DETERMINED RESISTANCE, AND DISCHARGE

We need deliberate and determined resistance to every scheme of the language oppressor. One way to resist, as Xabier noted, is to "tell the story of your tribe, your culture, your language, all that you can remember," because "the more we remember our history, culture, language, and ancestors and talk about them, the more connected we will remain to our roots, so the more difficult it will be for capitalism to take us over [dominate us]."

Africans must invest in the discharge process, knowing that in so doing "you can clean up the bad feelings that you have been forced to developed around your language." Sadly, most people in Africa are as yet unable to discharge feelings about their language. The result is that the feelings continue from generation to generation.

The message at the Language Liberation Workshop was clear: Every time we talk about a lost language, we are talking about a history of oppression and capitalism. We may not recover all the languages, but we can discharge the loss that is affecting us in the present.

Language liberation is an emerging force. I see a Language Liberation Movement in the wide world. I see a Nigeria that will one day sustain a political force that will create a unified language—one that every Nigerian will understand. I see total re-emergence through sustained discharge.

Onii Nwanwu-Stevenson
Lagos, Lagos State, Nigeria



ANNE KOPLINKA-LOEHR

A New International Liberation Reference Person for Young People

I am the new International Liberation Reference Person for Young People.

Here are some things about me:

I am nineteen years old. I am a mixed-heritage man who lives in the south of Sweden. I have two younger siblings. Both my parents do RC. I am a musician, and I've been playing in the same band since I was twelve.

Being in this role is exciting! Getting the opportunity to take on [undertake] young people's liberation as a main project in my life means a lot to me!

Here are some questions you could help me think about:

What are the next steps for young people's liberation, ending oppression, and combating climate change?

How do we provide the tools of RC to bigger and bigger groups of young people around the world? How do we create the resource necessary for this?

I hope to see many of you involved in this project with me!

Elvin Landaeus Csizmadia
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Highlights from the Jewish Men's Workshop

I recently attended the International Jewish Men's Workshop led by Billy Yalowitz. I'm Canadian born; currently living in Denver, Colorado, USA; sixty-two years old; of Ashkenazi heritage; and a husband, a father, and a rabbi. This was my first Jewish men's workshop. We did some remarkable work together.

Some of my personal highlights were the following:

- Not being the only rabbi at the workshop—not even the only Reconstructionist rabbi
- Getting to robustly celebrate Shabbat
- Getting to *daven* (pray) with a group of Jewish men
- Getting to discharge with an Orthodox rabbi about my relationship with my Orthodox brother
- Getting to discharge about my minimal relationship with Yiddish (which my father spoke fluently)
- Getting to discharge about reaching out to working-class men
- Getting to discharge about how I, as a Jewish leader, can respond with more integrity to Jews of color
- Getting to be at a topic table about Jewish men and their daughters

I didn't have previous Co-Counseling relationships with any of the other participants, so a big part of the workshop was getting close to other Jewish men and letting them get close to me. It turned out [as it happened] that was a big part of the workshop for everyone. We acknowledged all the ways we had lost our connection with each other due to assimilation, upward mobility, anti-Semitism, and male domination.

Among our losses were the Jewish ways of being male—of showing feelings, being warm (not “cool”), and seeking contact. To the extent that as boys we showed any of these unassimilated Jewish qualities, we were targeted. And the more Jewish we looked or acted, the more targeted we were. The result was that we became liabilities for each other in a social world dominated by Gentile boys. This undermined our connections and solidarity with each other. A powerful

direction for me was “Who are you getting close to, and what do you like about him?”

We did a lot of work on male domination patterns in relationship to women. We began by remembering and discharging on the sweetness, kindness, and equality of our earliest relationships with girls before male domination and isolation patterns got downloaded onto us. It was through those patterns that we learned about sex. We need to go back in sessions and apologize to the girls and women.



WOOD DOVES • SKY YARBROUGH

Both male domination and anti-Semitism leave us as Jewish men with the message that we are bad. We come to suspect our motives for almost anything. We need to work on this with men who care about us and will remember our goodness. Because we were so isolated when the hurts landed on us, we each need a male Co-Counselor with whom we can take everything out of hiding.

We worked on the intersection of anti-Semitism with climate change and the collapsing society. We noticed the over-representation of Jewish perpetrators named by the #MeToo movement and how Alexander Vindman, a decorated Jewish Ukrainian-born Lieutenant Colonel who came forward in the Trump impeachment hearings, was used and then turned against by the owning class. Billy observed that if we Jews haven't yet been blamed for climate collapse, we will be.

He also suggested that we are less involved in climate and other environmental work than we might be because of the historical domination of the environmental movement by the Gentile owning class and because of the hurts we've inherited from our history of expulsions from European lands. Nonetheless, of the 106 Sustaining All Life delegates to last year's climate conference, twelve were Jewish men.

The last direction I heard from Billy's mouth was, “It's everybody's Holocaust this time, baby!”

Brian Field
 (Aharon ben Shlomo z'l u-Bluma)
 Denver, Colorado, USA
 Reprinted from the RC e-mail
 discussion list for leaders of Jews

More on the Jewish Men's Workshop

I attended the Jewish Men's Workshop led by Billy Yalowitz and organized by Dan Alter. [See previous article.] More than seventy men attended, including several Israelis.

The workshop "started" online before it started at the site. We Jewish men have often been isolated, so Billy set us up in small groups by geography or other commonalities for phone mini-sessions prior to the workshop.

I met many men for the first time and felt easily close to them. Others I had known but had stayed away from. I had felt intimidated because they were leading more than I was, both in RC and in the wide world. I realized that Jewish men like me often carry distress recordings that tell us on the one hand, "I am better and smarter than anybody else," and on the other hand, "I feel terribly insecure about my existence." (These two patterns are related.) It seems that many of us feel intimidated by other Jewish men. But when I listened to these men and heard their stories, I could see them more clearly—both their humanness and their struggles.

Four of us drove to and from the workshop together, and we are setting up regular Co-Counseling sessions to continue working on issues we got a good start on at the workshop!

Eric Lessinger

Gloucester, Massachusetts, USA

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



LIGHTHOUSE CLIFF, ISLE OF SKYE, SCOTLAND • © STAN EICHNER

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— The First RC Workshop for European Native People —

The first RC workshop for European Native people, led by Marcie Rendon (the International Liberation Reference Person for Native Americans), took place near Bilbao in the Basque country (Euskal Herria) in August 2019. Many thanks to the Basque people for hosting. Seeing them in their habitat, with pride in their country, was uplifting and hopeful.

What follows is some of what happened at the workshop, and some of my own thinking.

Interpreters were available for everyone who didn't understand English, and the interpreting often took a long time—because some of the subjects were challenging, as they weren't ones that are often talked about. That made it necessary for Marcie to speak even more directly and clearly, which to me was a great benefit.

Marcie outlined the situation for Indigenous people and said that it wouldn't work to claim Indigenous heritage to avoid working on being white. All identities need to be worked on. "Name it, claim it, discard it!" is the RC approach to every identity, and we need systematic discharge, probably for at least a year, on each of those steps.

WORKING ON THE OPPRESSOR ROLE

Marcie repeated many times, "We all have to work on the oppressor side of the distresses." Having been oppressed makes us vulnerable to flipping into the oppressor role, and "we all become oppressors at some point." As RCers, because we know that people have to be oppressed before becoming oppressors, we too often focus on the victim role.



UGANDA • CHUCK ESSER

I (Frank) think we need firm counseling to reverse the decision to act as oppressors. We need to discharge grief about the disconnection that has pulled us to pass on the hurt. We need firm counseling to face it, to not avoid it. I find it challenging to put my mind there. It is tempting to keep looking at the victim side. But in the end, it's been I who's decided to pass on the hurt. For me it works to decide not to do that. That is where my power lies.

RACISM AND GENOCIDE

Marcie explained the difference between racism and genocide. (Many people are targeted by both.)

Racism is used to exploit people's labor, with skin color as the excuse. It hurts people badly and often shortens their lives.

Genocide is the stealing of people's lands and resources by making the people "disappear"—not only by killing them but also by taking their children, erasing their culture, forbidding them to speak their languages, forcing them to convert to the oppressor's religion (Christianity in Europe), and not allowing them to govern themselves.

As I (Frank) have understood it, recordings from genocide can include thinking about suicide, putting one's life at risk, worrying about others dying, wanting to kill, carelessness, not taking care of oneself, exhaustion, shame, anger, violence, self-mutilation, abandonment, staying out of sight, going quiet, feeling disconnected, not being able to hold on to relationships, destroying the people one loves, addictions.

I've thought about how European children have been sent to boarding schools and seminaries (to become priests) and how the institutionalized brutalization there could have played a part in the passing on of genocide distress.

RECLAIMING OUR HERITAGES

We had a lot of time at the workshop to ask questions, such as, "What do we do with white people?" "Can we help white people?" "What does it mean that we are both white and Indigenous?" "When is someone Indigenous and when not?" "What about the racism in Europe of the Northern people toward the Southern people?" Marcie was precise in her answers and gave many examples. Between all the answers and stories, it

became clear to me that we need to reclaim our own heritages. We cannot replace the work we need to do on our own history and recordings with answers from other Indigenous peoples whose cultures have been more preserved.

Christianization erased or altered the Native European values and spirituality, including the rituals, ceremonies, and celebrations. And the institutionalization of “problematic” people separated the Native peoples from their elders and healers. These things led to the adoption of white norms and values and the colonization of the Native people’s minds. We have to discharge how our minds have been colonized, including by values that have led to the climate crisis.

The people I (Frank) grew up with hoped to give me a better future by passing on Dutch national oppression, which prepared me for further assimilation into being Dutch. My people’s survival has depended on assimilation. I can be proud of their skill in adapting quickly to new situations. Brabant [a region in the Netherlands and Belgium] has had many occupiers in the last two thousand years.

Assimilation is at the core of my distresses. I have struggled to speak when I’m around authorities, or middle-class or Dutch people. And I still struggle to speak my first language when (middle-class) Dutch people are around. (My first language is Noord-Brabants, which has at least ninety-four variations. It is poorly documented, but we still have writers and poets.)

Sometimes the internalized pressure to assimilate makes me behave awkwardly and I become blunt or adversarial. I could get stuck in blaming the Dutch, but it is my challenge to discharge the internalized oppression. My power lies in re-evaluating the distress—even when present-time issues also need to be addressed.

APPROPRIATION

Appropriation involves the taking of another people’s culture and spirituality. It played a big role in the history of Europe. The Romans made it one of their policies. When the Romans conquered Europe, they not only took the land and the people, they also took the people’s gods, spirits, and ceremonies.

When the Europeans colonized other parts of the world, they took spices, foods, clothing, art, music, and words—along with all the gold, silver, oil, and other valuable resources they stole—from Africa, Asia, the Americas, and Australia and blended them into the European world. Then the Europeans forgot their own



DIANE SHISK

culture and believed that the stolen culture was their own. It became hard for them to access their original identities.

In some Western countries, appropriation has become a part of white middle-class culture. In the 1960s large numbers of white middle-class Europeans went to India to recover some spirituality and came back with mystic ideas that seemed to fill a frozen need for connection and meaning. But mysticism is not going to replace our need for connection with our own people. We cannot appropriate another people’s spirituality to make up for the losses we have suffered.

Marcie encouraged us to figure things out instead of copying things from other cultures.

KINDNESS

Marcie “advised” us to be kind. Genocide and the colonization of our minds with whiteness have left us with recordings of harshness and defensiveness. Deciding to be kind is a good direction against these recordings.

There was much more at this workshop than I (Frank) have reported and reflected on, and so much that we didn’t have time to do. This will mean doing lots of research and having many sessions. And part of our liberation is to open up the work to many more Europeans, starting on our own street.

*Frank van Tej van Wieskes
Nieuwegein, the Netherlands*

[A Basque version of this article, translated by Juan Gabriel Urriategi, is on the following two pages.]

Aurreko artikulua Juan Gabriel Urriategik euskaratu du:
Basque translation, by Juan Gabriel Urriategi, of the preceding article:

□ — Europako Indigenen Lehenengo EB Lantegia — □

Europako indigenen lehenengo EB lantegia Bilbon (Euskal Herria) egin zen, 2019ko abuztuan, Marcie Rendonen (Ameriketako Indigenen Askapenerako Nazioarteko Erreferentzia Pertsona) gidaritzapean. Eskerrik asko euskaldun jendeari ostatu emateagatik. Haien bizilekuan ikustea, harro beren herrialdean, pizgarria eta itxaropentsua izan zen.

Lantegian gertatua dator jarraian, eta baita nik pentsatua ere.

Ingelesa ulertzen ez zuten guztientzat zeuden interpreteak eskuragarri; halere, ahozko itzulpenak luze jo ohi zuen sarri, jorratutako gaietako batzuk konplexuak ez ezik ezohikoak ere bai baitziren. Horrek are zuzenago eta argiago hitz egitera behartu zuen Marcie, eta hori onura handia izan zen niretzat.

Indigenen egoera deskribatu ondoren, esan zuen ez zela nahikoa indigenen jatorria aldarrikatzea, zuria izatea lantzetik sailhesteko. Nortasun guztiak landu behar dira. “Izendatu, aldarrikatu, asaskatu!”, hori da EB modua nortasun bakoitza lantzeko, eta asaskatze sistematikoa behar dugu, urtebetez gutxienez, nortasun bakoitzarekin.

ZAPALTZAILE ROLA LANTZEN

Marciek askotan errepikatu zuen: “Denok lan egin behar dugu estatusunen alde zapaltzailean”. Zapalketa bizi izanak zapaltzaile izateko zorian jartzen gaitu, eta “denok bihurtzen gara zapaltzaile uneren batean”. Elkar-entzuleak garenez, badakigu jendea zapaltzaile bihurtu dadin zapaldua izan behar dela aurretik, eta, hori

horrela, gehiegitan biktima rolera jotzen dugu.

Nik (Frank) uste dut saio irmoak behar ditugula zapaltzaile gisa jokatzeko erabakia iraultzeko.



GREGG WAGNER

Kaltea transmititzera bultzatu gintuen deskonexioari buruzko nahigabea asaskatu behar dugu. Saio irmoak behar ditugu horri aurre egiteko, ez sailhesteko. Zaila da nire gogamena hor jartzea. Tentagarria da biktimaren aldeari begira jarraitzea. Baina, azkenean, neuk erabaki nuen kaltea transmititzea. Hori ez egiteko erabakia hartzea da niretzat gakoa. Hor datza nire boterea.

ARRAZAKERIA ETA GENOZIDIOA

Marciek azaldu zuen arrazakeria eta genozidioaren arteko ezberdintasuna. (Pertsona asko daude bien jomugan).

Langileak esplotatzeko erabiltzen da arrazakeria, azalaren kolorea aitzakiatzat hartuta. Kalte

handia egiten die pertsoneri, eta sarritan haien bizitzak murrizten ditu.

Jendearen lurrak eta baliabideak lapurtzea da genozidioa; horretarako, jendea “desagerrarazten” dute, baina ez bakarrik jendea hilda, baita seme-alabak eramanda, kultura ezabatuta, euren hizkuntzan hitz egitea debekatuta, zapaltzailearen erlijioa inposatuta (kristautasuna, Europan) edota autogobernua debekatuta ere.

Nik (Frank) ulertu nuenaren arabera, genozidioaren grabazioak izan daitezke, besteak beste, suizidioan pentsatzea, norberaren bizitza arriskuan jartzea, hurkoaren heriotzarekin larritzea, hil nahi izatea, norbere burua ez zaintzea, nekea, lotsa, haserrea, indarkeria, automutilazioa, abandonua, begibistatik kanpo geratzea, isilik geratzea, deskonektatuta sentitzea, harremanak izateko gai ez izatea, maite dituzun pertsonak suntsitzea edota adikzioak.

Gogoan dut nola bidali izan zituzten Europar haurrak barnetegi eta apaizgaitegietara (apaizak izateko), eta nola, han, hango basakeria instituzionalizatuak zerikusia izan zuen genozidioaren estatusunaren transmisioarekin.

GURE JATORRIA ALDARRIKATU

Luze aritu ginen lantegian honelako galderak egiten: zer egingo dugu jende zuriarekin?, lagundu diezaiekegu zuriei?, zer esan nahi du aldi berean garela zuri eta indigenak?, noiz da

norbait indigena, eta noiz ez?, zer pentsatzen duzu Europako Iparraldeko jendeak Hegoaldeko jendearenganako duen jarrera arrazistari buruz? Marciék zehatz erantzun zuen, eta adibide asko eman. Erantzun eta istorio guztien artean, argi geratu zitzaizkion gure jatorri propioa berreskuratu beharra daukagula. Ezin dugu ordezkatu gure historia eta grabazioei buruz egin behar dugun lana kultura zainduagoak izan dituzten indigenen erantzunekin.

Kristautasunak europar natiboen balioak eta espiritualitatea ezabatu edo eraldatu zituen: erritualak, zeremoniak eta ospakizunak, besteak beste. Eta pertsona “problematikoen” instituzionalizazioak bereizi egin zituen haiek beren sendalari eta adinekoengandik. Gertakari horien bidez, zurien arau eta balioak ezarri eta gogamena kolonizatu zieten indigenei. Gure gogamena nola izan den kolonizatu asaskatu behar dugu, klima-krisia eragin duten balioak barne.

Ni (Frank) hazi ninduen jendeak etorkizun hobe izango nuela espero zuen Herbehereetako zapalkuntza nazionala transmititzen bazidaten, zeinak herbeheretar asimilazio handiagoa izateko prestatu ninduen. Nire jendearen biziraupena asimilazioaren arabera zen. Harro egon naiteke egoera berrietara azkar egokitzeko izan zuten abileziak. Brabantek (Herbehereetako eta Belgikako eskualde bat) okupatzaile asko izan ditu azken bi mila urteetan.

Asimilazioa nire larritasunen erdigunean dago. Saiatu naiz hitz egiten agintariengandik, klase ertainetik edo herbeheretarrengandik gertu egon izan naizenetan. Eta oraindik kostatzen da hitz egitea herbeheretarrak (klase

ertainekoak) gertu daudenean. (Nire lehen hizkuntza ipar-brabantekoa da, eta, gutxienez, lauordegeita aldiera ditu. Gutxi dokumentatuta dago, baina oraindik baditugu idazleak eta poetak.)

Batzuetan, asimilaziorako barne presioak baldar jokarazten dit, eta zakarra edo arerio bihurtzen naiz. Trabatuta gera ninteke herbeheretarrei errua botatzen, baina nire erronka da zapalkuntza barneratutik askatzea. Nire boterea estutasun hori berrebaluatzean datza, nahiz eta egungo arazoei aurre egitea beharrezkoa izan.

JABETZEA

Jabetzea da beste herri baten kultura eta espiritualtasuna bereganatzea, eta Europako historian eginkizun handia bete zuen. Erromatarrentzat euren politiketako bat izatera iritsi zen, eta Europa konkistatu zutenean, lurra eta jendea ez ezik, jendearen jainkoak, espiritua eta zeremoniak ere berenganatu zituzten.

Europarrek munduko beste leku batzuk kolonizatu zituztenean, espeziak, elikagaiak, arropa, artea, musika eta hitzak hartu zituzten –urre, zilar, olio eta lapurtu zituzten beste baliabide baliotsu guztiekin batera– Afrikatik, Asiatik, Ameriketatik eta Australiatik, eta europar munduan txertatu zituzten. Orduan, europarrek kultura propioa ahaztu, eta lapurtutako kultura euren zela uste izan zuten. Hala, zaila egin zitzaizen beraien jatorrizko identitateetara iristea.

Mendebaldeko herrialde batzuetan, jabetzea klase ertain zuriaren kulturaren parte bihurtu da. 1960ko hamarkadan, klase ertaineko europar zuri askok Indiara jo zuten espiritualtasuna berreskuratu nahian, eta itzuli ziren konexioarekin eta bizitza ulertzearekin dauzkagun behar

izoztuak asetzen zituztela ziruditen ideia mistikoekin. Baina mistizismoak ez du ordezkatu gure jendearekin konektatzeko daukagun beharra. Jasan ditugun galerak konpentsatzeko, ezin gara beste batzuen espiritualtasunaz jabetu.

Beste kulturetatik kopiatu beharrean, gauzak ulertzen saiatzera animatu gintuen Marciék.

ONBERATASUNA

Marciék “gomendatu” zigun atseginak izatea: zuriek eraginako genozidioak eta adimenaren kolonizazioak zurrin eta defentsiban jarrarazten gaituzten grabazioak laga dizkigutenez, haiei aurre egiteko norabide ona da atsegina izateko erabakia hartzea.

Hemen adierazi eta islatu dudana baino askoz gehiago egon zen lantegi honetan, eta beste asko egin gabe gelditu zen, ez baikenuen astirik izan. Horrek ikerketa eta saio asko eskatuko lituzke. Eta gure askapenaren zati bat da lan hori europar askori zabaltzea, geure auzotik hasita.

*Frank van Teij van Wieskes
Nieuwegein, Herbehereak*



MIRIAM SAGER

Upward Mobility and “Going Home”

Those of us who were raised working class and/or poor and have been upwardly mobile can use the “privileges” we now have to get RC into the hands of direct production workers and to follow their leadership in making the world right. We can use RC to fully reclaim our working-class selves. We can discharge the hurts that led us away from home as well as the hurts and confusion, from being in the middle and owning classes, that stand between us and our people. We can “go home.”

Dan Nickerson (the International Liberation Reference Person for Working-Class People) is asking us to use the term “direct production workers” for the group of people we have called “currently working class.” These people were usually raised working class or poor and are currently engaged in the direct production of goods and services.

Dan is asking us to look at our place in the class system from the perspective of the work we do and our role in society, rather than from the viewpoint of an “identity” (“What class am I?”). From Dan’s perspective, the role of direct production workers is to create the wealth that the rest of us live on.

I find it helpful to try out Dan’s perspective, if for no other reason than it forces me to think afresh. I was upwardly mobile. I no longer do direct production work by virtue of my current place and roles in society.

I carry the strengths of my working-class background and the scars of the oppression.

I went to college to get badly needed information for my family and community. Of all the things I learned in college, RC is the most important. (One should not have to leave their family and undergo heavy middle-class training in order to have access to RC!)

I got confused and did not return home as I had planned. Thanks to Harvey’s [Harvey Jackins’s] work on classism, I did eventually go home and

determinedly shared what I had learned. After a few years I left home again, thinking I would be gone only a short time in order to do some important work—but I got mired in the middle class again.

Now, decades later, I am discharging on returning home and bringing with me all that I have gained from RC. What does it mean to “go home” now? I think for me it means going back after the people I left in my hometown. It is with these people that I can most directly face the internalized oppression as I received it, and where the greatest discharge and re-evaluation will happen, at least initially. But I think “going home” also means prioritizing my relationships with direct production workers, especially with the women.

I have been going back to my hometown to renew and deepen relationships. I’m finding I have many opportunities to listen, support people’s thinking, and follow their leadership in making things right—and in the process, get a bit of RC into their hands.

In my current class position I have many privileges that most direct production workers do not have. I am astounded when I look this fact squarely in the face. A few of the privileges are as follows:

- *Time* to do my work and also get lots of sessions to keep thinking freshly and grow in my leadership
- A warm, calm, orderly space of my own to work in
- Excellent health care and access to exercise options so that at seventy I am healthy and energetic enough to do my work
- A safe neighborhood where I do not need to keep an eye on my safety and that of my family and friends or handle threats to our safety
- Work I choose to do for the love of the work, not for livelihood, work that is not hard on my body



KENYA • TIM JACKINS

- A middle-class daughter who can afford to stay home with her children, so I am not needed for day-care

The list goes on and on and on. Those of us in the middle and owning classes generally take these privileges for granted (or we think we have “earned” them).

I have the opportunity to use these privileges to move things forward for direct production

workers—and for all of us—and to write about it. Now *that* is a *real* privilege!

What are you up to [doing] in this regard?



Jerry Yoder
Maine, USA

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

“My Identity Is Still Working Class”

My identity is still working class, even if my work is middle class. I do middle-class work in nonprofit organizations.

I am between classes. I’m not well connected to any one class. I do not appreciate any suggestion that my working-class identity is not valid. I strongly identify that way.

I grew up white, poor, and working class. I did not want to do factory work. I went to college to avoid getting trapped in poverty like my mom (and her seven children) were. That scared me early in my life. As a female I fought hard against the sexism that said I could not live fully, use my mind, and have many choices. College did open new doors for me, new ways of thinking and hoping. Sometimes it stimulated my mind, and sometimes it gave me insights into classism and racism. That was a good thing. I’m glad I had the experience. No one paid my way. I worked, took out some small loans, and went to cheaper schools.

I was poor well into my twenties. Most of my life I’ve worked in nonprofit organizations for modest pay. I was in administration in the corporate world before that but couldn’t stand [tolerate] the pressure to be more middle class—so I left.

However, I did learn some good work habits and attitudes from the corporate world.



LOBO, BATANGAS, PHILIPPINES • AL CABALLES

I don’t have a pension. No one in my family ever talked about that. I am financially vulnerable and am trying to solve it by exploring different ways to live and whom to live with. (I live alone and like it, which may not be rational.)

My Social Security income (money based on lifelong earnings that we can get from the U.S. government after sixty-two years of age) is under \$1,000 per month, so I must work until I can’t. I have almost no assets. Without a paid job, I would be in significant financial jeopardy—just a few paychecks away from poverty.

I am seventy-six years old. I bought my first modest house at sixty-five and am determined to pay off the

mortgage so no one can take it from me. That’s where my earnings go. It’s a lovely hundred-year-old city house, and I am always grateful that I have it. It’s a big deal [very important]. I take nothing for granted in my life. I appreciate every comfort I have (being a homeowner, having decent food and a car, being able to exercise). I live in the city by choice in a neighborhood that is eighty percent African American and twenty percent white; my street is probably sixty/fifty percent. It is a nice neighborhood. It is relatively safe (having things stolen from our

continued . . .

LIBERATION

... continued

cars and yards is not unusual, but it doesn't happen all the time).

I do not have children that will help me as I continue to age.

I have enough money to buy healthy, nutrient-dense food. I've invested considerable time studying food science research, of which there is plenty. Some working-class people around me are learning this as well. They are seeking answers, especially if they have been very sick. Doing this is not restricted to middle- and upper-middle-class people (a widely held stereotype that also permeates RC).

I can't afford vacations or RC Intensives [twenty hours of one-way Re-evaluation Counseling, for a fee, at Re-evaluation Counseling Community Resources]—maybe one every eight to ten years.

I exercise regularly. My government Medicare insurance (for people over sixty-five) pays for my fitness center membership.

Three of my six siblings stayed in working-class work, and many of their children did also.

I see myself as stuck between classes—not deeply connected to “blue collar and pink collar” workers and definitely not connected to middle-class people. I have not made friends with middle-class people, and I've lost close contact with production workers (other than with my family). My friends tend to be working-class people who are working in middle-class jobs.

I resent any suggestion that working-class people have to stay working in factories to keep a working-class identity or live a certain way inside the oppression to be legitimately working class.

So, am I upwardly mobile? I haven't gone far, and I'm definitely not still climbing. Yes, I do live differently than many production workers. I also know some direct production workers who make a decent [good] salary and have nice

city homes and some comforts. I say that to make the point that there is more than one way for “still-working-class” people to live.

I fully support the direction from Dan Nickerson (the International Liberation Reference Person for Working-Class People) to get direct production workers into RC and/or get RC tools into their hands.

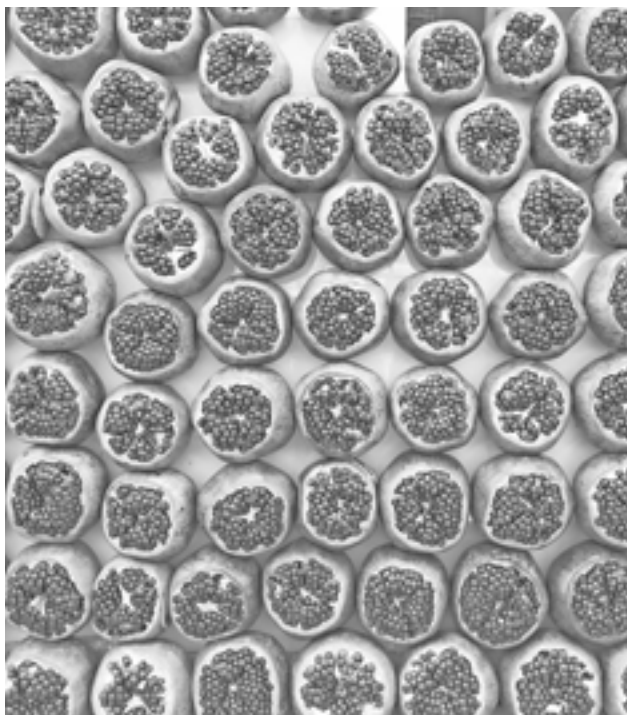
I am not pretending about my class background. I am not middle class. I have never fully embraced that lifestyle or perspective. Yet I know I am infected by middle-class patterns. How could I not be? They permeate our mainstream dominant culture. But I fight against them.

Do I need to fight for deeper connections with the production workers and poor working-class people around me, including with my family? Yes. That is imperative.

MacClurg Vivian

Rochester, New York, USA

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



POMEGRANATES, IN ISRAEL • LYNDA KATZ

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

You can send corrections to publications@rc.org or to Rational Island Publishers, 719 2nd Avenue North, Seattle, Washington 98109, USA.

Thanks very much!

Rational Island Publishers

“I Want This Nonsense of Oppressions to End” ●●●●●●●●

Thank you, Diane [Diane Balsler, the International Liberation Reference Person for Women], for asking about male domination early in our lives. It’s a chance for me to look again at the many early hurts that are holding back my strong and powerful self and leadership.

I hardly want to talk about the multitude of ways that male domination has affected me. It feels like talking about it is rude, too much, disgusting, attention seeking—all the things I’ve been told to make me shut up [be quiet] about it. I feel like I will be killed if I open up. I think many raised-poor women can barely look at or tell their stories.

Violence and threats of violence started for me in the womb. I was conceived when my sister was five months old. My mum wasn’t ready and couldn’t afford me—she told me this many times when I was a child. And apparently my dad kicked my mum in the stomach when I was in the womb. I remember seeing her bent over in fear when I was a child.

My raised-poor leader, Julie Longden, always reminds me that it is safe to breathe now, safe to let go. When counselling with raised-poor women, I’ve noticed a need for us to *slow down*, breathe, and let go of all the tension in our bodies; to connect even if it feels impossible. We get to consider having the connections that got so messed up by the oppressive society.

I think a marvelous attribute of raised-poor women is that we value connection more than anything. Even at work, it’s not just about getting the job done; it’s about connecting and having fun.

I was given a direction to go get my dad back after not being in touch with him for ten years. I contacted him, and we had some good and terrible

exchanges over many years. Even though he had been a monster in our home, he told me just before he died that he knew I was a feminist and that he regretted the life he had led. He had been a coal miner and worked one mile under, ten miles in. He said that it had been red hot and terrifying and that the only way the workers had been able to keep going was by telling jokes, many of them racist and sexist. He said that he wished it could have been different.

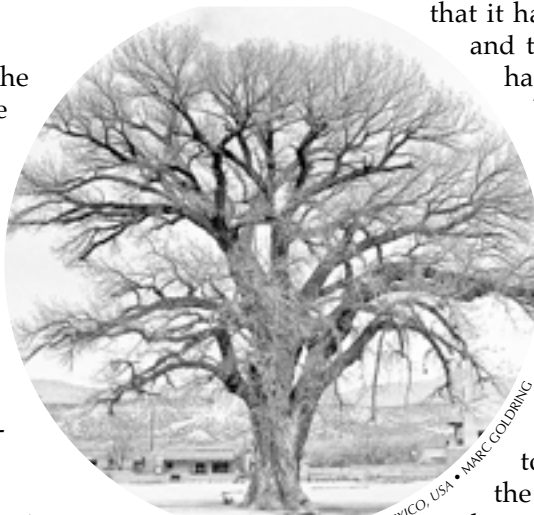
My working-class leader, Barbara Thompsett, has often said that for working-class people, really big things happen one after another, and we’ve been trained to pick ourselves up and get the job done on the barest of discharge—because getting the job done is “what we are here for.” I guess that’s the message in a Protestant-dominated capitalist world: the job is more important than who is getting hurt.

I have been using a direction of self-appreciation without reservations—saying that I have a wonderful body and a brilliant mind. These words carry me to places I haven’t dared to be in before. I think my posture is changing. My body feels stronger, and I am better at making sentences.

I want to appreciate how fortunate I have been to know great people in Co-Counselling, people who have dedicated their lives to human liberation. I met Harvey Jackins once. He was relentless in working to end sexism and classism. He and many others have given me a chance to live a good life.

Now I want *more*. I want this nonsense of oppressions and oppressor distress—and all that holds women back from being big, bold, and magnificent—to end.

“Betty Boothroyd”
England



SAN ILDEFONSO PUEBLO, NEW MEXICO, USA • MARC GOLDRING



Racism and “Mental Health” Oppression

Society defines “normal” people as those who have dominant roles in society—who are white, Protestant, USers, male, owning or middle class. These people’s behaviors are the “standard” for how “normal” people are supposed to act, which sets things up so that people targeted by racism are seen as “other,” “strange,” or “crazy.”



forces assimilation. People targeted by racism have to adopt white culture in order to survive economically. (And white people feel like they don’t need to learn about the cultures of people targeted by racism, so they miss out on a lot of the world’s richness.)

Colonialism and genocide are examples of how violently assimilation has been enforced on people targeted by racism.

People targeted by racism are made to feel like they aren’t okay, like they have no place in the society, like their cultures are inferior to the dominant white culture. And they can’t show how they feel about this for fear of being further targeted. They are seen as troublemakers or “crazy” if they react to the racism. So they have to hold tightly to their emotions and pretend that it isn’t happening. They also receive the worst treatment in the “mental health” system. (As a result, they may be more aware than white people of how “mental health” oppression works.)

The “normality” enforced by “mental health” oppression rein-

The lies perpetuated by racism, held in place by “mental health” oppression, have become part of the societal status quo. Many psychiatrists have given them a medical stamp of approval. When slavery was the norm in the United States, African-heritage people attempting to escape to freedom were diagnosed with “drapetomania.” Not wanting to be enslaved was perceived as a “mental illness.”

The “normality worldview” also reinforces a backward picture of the world. The idea that people targeted by racism are “the minority” belies the truth that they are

actually the majority of the world’s people.

Everyone has been hurt by racism and “mental health” oppression—including being made more disconnected and separate from each other, which helps to keep racism going.

As white people heal from the intertwining effects of racism and “mental health” oppression, they can be better allies and friends to people targeted by racism. They can listen more easily to them, and the people targeted by racism can have more space to heal.

Doing this work also makes racism and the damage it causes more visible. It contradicts the pervasive oppressive idea that racism doesn’t exist. It helps white people see the larger context of how racism works, which shifts the blame to society instead of leaving it on the individual, making it easier for them to feel and release outrage about it instead of being stuck in guilt.

Janet Foner

Former International Liberation Reference Person for “Mental Health” Liberation

The “Mental Health” System Supports All Oppressions

The “mental health” system functions not for “mental health” but as an overhanging, overwhelming threat against people who rebel against any oppression. “Mental health” oppression is the “stop sign” for all liberation movements. In every other oppression there is a piece of “mental health” oppression that threatens and enforces people to submit to that particular oppression.

The “mental health” systems of the world function as reactionary “gendarmes” of the oppressive society, supporting all oppressions.

Harvey Jackins

*From page 155 of *The List**

Israeli and Diaspora Jews Reaching for Each Other

Israeli and Diaspora Jews had a breakthrough at the Jewish Leaders' Conference led by Cherie Brown, the International Liberation Reference Person for Jews, and Tim Jackins in Israel last year. The two groups have been longing to make real connections with each other but have had to learn how to do this. I loved how much Cherie prioritized it. We were pushed to get to know and work with each other. We learned a lot.

As I listened to Diaspora Jews from outside the United States, I understood that USers have a particular piece of work to do. I called a topic group for USers. We worked on where we attach frozen hopes, longings, and disappointments to Israel. Also, the United States is the owning class of the world and plays one of the most destructive roles. We feel bad about this and have been slow to work on it, which muddies our relationships with Israelis. Finally, I said that Israel is a resource for all Jews and makes a difference in our lives and that Israelis make this possible with their bodies and pay a price for it by living with war.

Cherie asked me to participate in an experiment in which Israeli and Diaspora Jews reached for and spoke directly to each other across their divisions. I was to speak about what I wanted Israelis to understand about my life. I said that Israel had been an important force in my life since I was young. (I had to have several sessions to even start to think about how to say it.) All of us struggled to communicate on a subject we have many painful feelings about. In sessions and conversations afterward, I had these new thoughts:

- What if Diaspora Jewish life is just as important for Jewish survival as Israel is? Israel needs Jewish communities outside of it for building needed alliances. And Jewish life in the Diaspora needs to continue developing in the forms it has taken for thousands of years.

- Diaspora Jews pay a heavy price for living in Gentile-dominated countries, but we rarely notice this because we are so resigned to it. (Maybe we glimpse it when we come home from a visit to Israel.) Anti-Semitism



KATIE KAUFFMAN

surrounds us, making us feel like we have to hide and apologize for our existence. In the last generation or so, our oppression has mostly not taken the form of physical harm, at least in the United States and Western Europe. It's been more like an internal compromise—like agreeing to and participating in conditions that are bad for us—and this can be hard to work on because it seems like the air that we breathe.

- Because we struggle to fully face our oppression where we live, it is hard to see Israelis as our cousins who can be our allies.

Dan Alter

Berkeley, California, USA

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

[See the next page for the Hebrew version of this article, translated by Dan Alter.]

Taking on the Whole Jewish Liberation Program

Cherie Brown (the International Liberation Reference Person for Jews) started and ended the last RC Jewish Leaders' Conference with a direction for us to take on [act on] the entire RC Jewish liberation program.

In the last year as I've been moving toward getting my local Jewish community to look at climate change and take action on it, I have bumped into anti-Semitism, internalized anti-Semitism, classism, and feelings about Israel. Cherie's challenge has clarified for me that this is not an annoying coincidence but actually to be expected and a good thing! It makes sense for me to start out by taking on the whole Jewish liberation program rather than finding myself dragged, screaming and kicking, into more and more parts of it.

Miri Sager

Hamilton, Ontario, Canada

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

Hebrew translation, by Dan Alter, of the article by Dan Alter on the previous page:

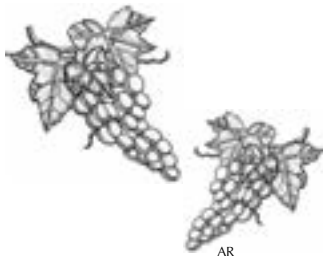
יהודי ישראל והתפוצות מושיטים יד אלו לאלו

התרחשה פריצת דרך בין יהודי ישראל והתפוצות בכנס המנהיגים היהודיים בהנהגת שרי בראון, הרכזת הבינלאומית ליהודים (שהתקיים בנווה שלום באפריל 2019). זה זמן רב ששתי הקבוצות משתוקקות לקשרים אמיתיים אחת עם השנייה, אבל היינו צריכים ללמוד איך לעשות זאת. אהבתי איך ששרי נתנה קדימות לעניין הזה. היא דחפה אותנו להכיר ולעבוד אחד עם השנייה. למדנו הרבה.

כשהקשבתי ליהודים מהתפוצות מחוץ לארה"ב, הבנתי שלנו כאמריקאים, יש עבודה מסוימת לעשות הנחתי קבוצת נושא ליהודי ארה"ב. עבדנו על המקומות בהם הדבקנו תקוות, ערגות ואכזבות קפואות על ישראל. כמו כן, ארה"ב הינה מעמד בעלי ההון של העולם וממלאת את אחד התפקידים ההרסניים ביותר. אנחנו מרגישים רע לגבי זה וממעטים לעבוד על העניין. זה מערפל את תמונת היחסים שלנו עם ישראלים. לבסוף אמרתי שישראל הינה משאב לכלל היהודים, היא עושה הבדל בחיי כולנו - אבל ישראלים הם האנשים שמאפשרים את זה בגופם, ומשלמים את המחיר עבור זה בכך שהם חיים עם מלחמה.

שרי בקשה ממני להשתתף בניסוי שבו יהודי ישראל והתפוצות מושיטים יד זה לזה ומדברים ישירות אחד עם השני מעבר למה שמפריד בינו. הייתי צריך לדבר על מה אני רוצה שהם יבינו לגבי החיים שלי. דברתי על כך שישראל הייתה גורם חשוב בחיים שלי מאז שהייתי צעיר. (הייתי צריך לעשות כמה סשנים כדי להתחיל בכלל לחשוב איך להגיד זאת.) כולנו נאבקנו לתקשר במקום שבו יש לנו הרבה נאב. בסשנים ושיחות שלאחר מכן עלו לי מחשבות חדשות:

- מה אם חיים יהודים בתפוצות הינם חשובים להשרדות העם היהודי באותה מידה שישראל חשובה לזה? ישראל זקוקה לקהילות היהודיות שמחוצה לה כדי לתמוך בה ולבנות בעלות ברית. חיים יהודים בתפוצות צריכים להמשיך להתפתח בצורות שבהן הם התפתחו במשך אלפי שנים.
- אנו, היהודים שחיים בתפוצות, משלמים מחיר כבד על חיינו בארצות הגויים, אבל אנחנו זוכרים זאת לעתים רחוקות כי אנחנו די קיבלנו את המצב הזה (בעצם ייתכן שנכלל להבחין בזה באופן הכי ברור כשאנחנו חוזרים מביקור בישראל). האנטישמיות מקיפה אותנו, וגורמת לנו להרגיש שעלינו להסתתר, או להתנצל על עצם קיומנו. בדורות האחרונים זה לא התבטא על פי רוב בפגיעה פיזית עבור יהודי צפון אמריקה ומערב אירופה. זה יותר נראה לי כהפנמה של פשרה - הסכמה והשתתפות בתנאים שאינם טובים עבורנו - קשה לעבוד על זה כי זה נראה כמו האוויר שאנחנו נושמים.
- כיוון שאנחנו נאבקים על מנת להתייצב באופן מלא מול הדיכוי שלנו כיהודים במקומות בהם אנו מתגוררים, יש לנו גם מאבק לראות את הישראלים כבני הדודים שיכולים להיות בעלי ברית עבורנו.



AR

דן אלטר
ברקלי קליפורניה ארה"ב
תרגום דן אלטר בעריכת עופר ליאור ונעמי רז

לקוח מרשימת דיונים בדוא"ל למנהיגים של יהודים ביעוץ ההדדי

Following the Leadership of Indigenous People

It was an honor to attend some recent events led by Native leaders.

Marcie Rendon (the RC International Liberation Reference Person for Native Americans) led “Native Perspectives on Living with the Earth” for the Midwest and Mid-South Regions of the United States. Approximately eighty of us learned how we can use the discharge process to have big visions for, and take big steps toward, the survival of the earth. Marcie’s voice was strong, and she was brutally honest. The workshop was different from any other workshop I had attended.

A week later I went to the “Gichi-gami Gathering to Stop Line 3,” in Duluth, Minnesota (USA), on the shores of Lake Superior. The Indigenous planners led the rally, march, and gathering, whose purpose was to get decision

makers to stop the tar sands pipeline. The pipeline would go through the state of Wisconsin, including Dane County, where I live, on its way to the Gulf of Mexico—greatly disrupting the Bad River community.



JENNIFER KREGER

Drumming and the hum of people met us when we arrived. There were speeches detailing

how the pipeline would bring devastation to the land, watershed, and community. Then we marched along the park and shoreline. Protesters chanted and held signs and street art. Later there were prayers and a community meal to which everyone was invited. Classes followed, including “Pipelines 101” and a class on nonviolence.

I had gone back and forth for days with indecision about joining the action. I had been concerned about discomfort and a long commitment (a whole day!). But I am glad I did it. I learned so much. And I will continue to follow Indigenous leadership in the care of the earth.

Marian Fredal

Madison, Wisconsin, USA

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

Language Liberation at the International “Mental Health” Liberation Leaders’ Conference

In October 2019, ninety-five RC “mental health” liberation leaders gathered in New Jersey, USA, for a conference.

The language liberation team, led by Xabi Odriozola (International Commonality Reference Person for Languages and Interpreting), had been meeting for several months prior to the conference. We were pleased with what we were able to accomplish. We had up-front interpreting into Basque, Japanese, Spanish, Tagalog, Russian, Yiddish, Italian, French, and Gronings* in every class. There was a sense of excitement about participating in a significant liberation movement (rather than just “tolerating” the language liberation work).

Janet Foner (former International Liberation Reference Person for “Mental Health” Liberation) often said that what is considered “normal” behavior is that of a white owning-class Protestant heterosexual man. Here in the United States, we can add English speaker to that list. People immigrating to the United States have been expected to assimilate—to leave behind connection to their roots, their land, their culture, and their language—in order to be accepted as “normal.” Many of us began to make a connection between our language history and our “mental health” history.

Marcy Morgan

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, USA

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



* Gronings is a collective name for some dialects spoken in the province of Groningen, and around the Groningen border in Drenthe and Friesland, in the Netherlands.

Still More from Rational Island Publishers

New pamphlet!

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

Includes information on

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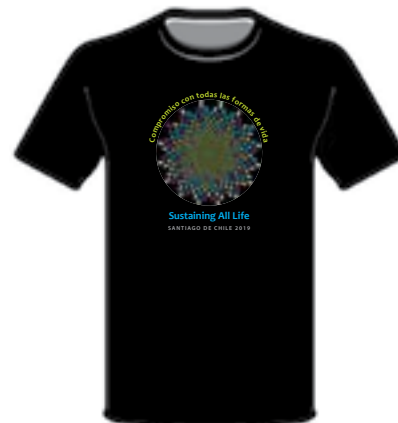
A New Sustaining All Life T-shirt!

Help support Sustaining All Life by buying and wearing the attractive 2019 Santiago, Chile, COP25 t-shirt shown on the right. (COP25 ended up being held in Spain.)

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)



Ordering information on page 111 and at <www.rationalisland.com>

Instrucciones para pedidos en la página 111 y en <www.rationalisland.com>

We received the following two reports from the Sustaining All Life delegation to COP25 (the December 2019 United Nations climate change conference) just in time to print them in this January *Present Time*. More reports will be appearing in the April issue.

Recibimos los siguientes dos informes de la delegación de Compromiso con todas las formas de vida / Sustaining All Life en la COP25 (la conferencia sobre cambio climático de las Naciones Unidas de diciembre de 2019) justo a tiempo para imprimirlos en esta edición de enero de *Present Time*. Aparecerán más informes en la edición de abril.

Una traducción al inglés, por Ellie Hidalgo, del informe que figura a continuación se encuentra en la página siguiente.

Primer día del COP25 en Madrid

El primer día en la COP25! Ahí vamos. Conseguimos un quisco, un espacio para nuestra literatura y para que sea el centro de nuestros encuentros.

REUNION DE CATÓLICOS

La primera reunión fue el de católicos. Se trabajó desde la perspectiva de patrones católicos, y donde nos afecta para actuar y pensar sobre la crisis climática y también sobre los aspectos que nos fortalecen. Se considera que la perspectiva católica alcanza no solo a los creyentes si no también a todos los que nos atraviesa la cultura católica. Lo mas lindo fue conectarse con gente del país Vasco.

EL FORO INDIGENA

Vino mucha gente indígena de todas partes de América Latina, América del norte y del país Vasco. Fue remarcado por nuestros co-escuchas que hicieron un papel importante al empoderarse reclamando su espacio con firmeza. El taller se llevo a cabo en diferentes lenguas nativas. Yo estuve interpretando y vi mas de cuarenta personas en el foro mirando con amor y con atención. El hombre chileno que habló empezó a temblar y llorar. Fue emocionante ver eso!

FORO DE JOVENES

La variedad de jóvenes que fueron al Foro fue desde los doce años

hasta los treinta. Habían como unos treinta o mas jóvenes hablando para que sus voces, historias y experiencias sean escuchadas. Los jóvenes activistas de otros países que



© STAN EICHNER

pudieron hablar de sus experiencias, lo hicieron apasionadamente. La mayoría quieren seguir luchando para que sus voces sean escuchadas y sus ideas sean consideradas para mejorar el medio ambiente. Habían especialmente dos indígenas del Brasil que contaron su trabajo de activista por el medio ambiente, la opresión que sufren y también dieron la visión y consciencia que tienen sobre los seres humanos. Tomar una consciencia de que los seres humanos son parte de la naturaleza y no se puede separar.

“Si tu hieres a la naturaleza te hieres a ti mismo.”

GRUPO DE MUJERES

Las mujeres que fueron invitadas ya sabían que podían expresarse y hablar en nuestro espacio. Fue realmente lindo poder dar una oportunidad a las mujeres para hablar sobre el cambio climático desde los sentimientos de ser mujer .

Una de las mujeres que vino al taller dijo que vio la realidad y la humanidad en nuestro grupo. Las mujeres que fueron agradecieron un montón por tener un espacio solo de mujeres. Un espacio para poder hablar y expresarse desde su corazón y donde se puede expresar sus voces.

Los desafíos que estamos enfrentando en la COP25 es el ruido que existe en el espacio de la feria. Ha sido el doble de esfuerzo de cada uno de los líderes y organizadores para poder expresar sus ideas cuando todo alrededor solo es bulla. Otro desafío es el racismo que estamos enfrentando por ser Europa. Esto nos está desafiando a tener sesiones mas profundas de efectos de racismo y como seguir haciendo el trabajo con atención.

Patricia Ibarra
La Paz, Bolivia

Re-impreso de la lista de discusión del correo electrónico de co-escucha para líderes en el cuidado del medio ambiente

English translation of the preceding report:

The First Day at COP25 in Madrid

The first day at COP25! Here we go. We got a booth, a space for our literature, and a place for our meetings.

A CATHOLIC MEETING

Our first meeting was for Catholics. We looked at Catholic patterns and where they affect our ability to think about and act on the climate crisis. We also considered ways that our Catholic heritage strengthens us to work on the climate crisis—not just those of us who are believers but all of us who live in a Catholic culture. It was beautiful to connect with people from the Basque Country.



WATKINS GLEN, NEW YORK, USA • SUE EDWARDS

THE INDIGENOUS FORUM

Indigenous people from many parts of Latin America, the Basque Country, Canada, and the United States attended our Indigenous Forum. Our Sustaining All Life leaders empowered themselves by firmly claiming a space to hold it in. The forum was conducted in several Native languages. I was interpreting and saw more than forty people looking on with love and attention. A Chilean man shook and cried. It was emotional to see that!

THE YOUTH FORUM

About thirty young people and young adults, ages twelve to thirty, attended our Youth Forum. They took turns talking, so their voices, stories, and experiences could be heard. Young activists spoke passionately. Most of them wanted to keep fighting so that people would hear their voices and consider their ideas to improve the environment. Two Indigenous people from Brazil told about their work as activists for the environment, about the oppression they suffer, and about the vision they have for human beings. One young man talked about the growing consciousness that human beings are part of nature and cannot be separated from it. "If you hurt nature, you hurt yourself."

A WOMEN'S GROUP

The women who came to our women's group already knew that they could express themselves in our space. It was good to give them a chance to talk about climate change from the perspective of being female. One woman said that she saw reality and humanity in our group. They thanked us for having a space just for women to speak and express themselves from their hearts.

Challenges at COP25 include the noise in the big space. It has taken twice the effort to express our ideas when everything around us is noisy. Another challenge is the racism we face here in Europe. We are having deep sessions about how it affects us and how to continue doing the work with good attention.

Patricia Ibarra

La Paz, Bolivia

Translated from Spanish by Ellie Hidalgo

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



ARTHUR RIVER, TASMANIA, AUSTRALIA • LYNDA KATZ

Una traducción al inglés, por Sheresada Villela, del informe que figura a continuación se encuentra en la página siguiente.

Más sobre la COP25

Escribimos desde Madrid, España, aunque en esta ocasión la COP25 estaba programada para Santiago de Chile, fue cancelada a raíz de la protesta social provocada por las desigualdades en el pueblo chileno, y la cual sigue en pie desde hace dos meses.

El cambio de Santiago a Madrid representó un gran esfuerzo por parte de la organización de RC, y cambió completamente la perspectiva de los integrantes que vienen a la COP25 de los países de América Latina. Pensamos que iba ser en Sur América y el cambio hacia Europa nos ha hecho tener que desahogar todas las emociones que surgieron.

Este año la organización de RC cuenta entre sus delegados a representantes de la mayoría global. Somos treinta y uno personas de once países diferentes. México, Chile, Perú, Argentina, Puerto Rico, Bolivia, Japan, Sweden, The Netherlands, England, U.S. Es muy importante que las personas de América Latina expresen su experiencia personal en la dificultades que tienen actualmente con los efectos del cambio climático. Y es clave que el mundo escuche las voces de América Latina, especialmente

las indígenas, para que el COP25 incluye las perspectivas de los grupos de personas mas vulnerable dentro la emergencia del cambio climático.

Como parte de los preparativos para la COP25, nuestros delegados del Compromiso con todas las formas de vida/Sustaining All Life asistimos a un taller con el objetivo de organizar previamente y desahogar todo lo referente a los talleres y foros que estamos organizando para el COP25. Se habló sobre las conexiones de cercanía entre las personas y la importancia de realizar conexiones con participantes de la COP 25. Se centró en dos puntos: (1) facilitar la herramienta de RC a otros grupos que trabajan con el tema del medio ambiente y otros vinculados a distintas luchas contras las opresiones sistémicas, y (2) realizar conexiones valiosas para enseñar a nuevas personas las herramientas de RC.

Durante el COP25, los temas abordados en los talleres y foros del Compromiso con todas las formas de vida/Sustaining All Life serán sobre las personas indígenas y su lucha ambiental en América Latina; los jóvenes liderando en la

emergencia climática; terminando con el racismo en el movimiento ambiental; la salud y el cambio climático; expresando nuestro dolor en la emergencia climática; y mas.

También estaremos transmitiendo en vivo varios eventos por Facebook, en la pagina Compromiso con todas las formas de vida/Sustaining All Life:

Foro—Activistas Jóvenes

Foro—Voces de América Latina

Taller—Los Jóvenes Liderando en la Emergencia Climática

Taller—El Cambio Climático y la Violencia Estructural

Por el momento nos despedimos invitándoles a seguir leyendo nuestros reportes y ver por Facebook, Instagram y Twitter diariamente durante la COP25.

Con mucho cariño
del equipo de reportes,

Leticia González López
Ciudad de México, México

Re-impreso de la lista de discusión del correo electrónico de co-escucha para líderes en el cuidado del medio ambiente

English translation of the preceding report:

||||| More from COP25 |||||

We write from Madrid, Spain. COP25 was scheduled for Santiago de Chile but was canceled because of the social protests happening there against the inequalities in Chilean society.

The change in location from Santiago to Madrid meant that Sustaining All Life (SAL) had to make a great effort and change its plans. That completely changed the perspective of the COP25 delegates from Latin America. We thought the COP was going to be in South America. The change to Europe led us to discharge many emotions.



BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS, USA • © STAN EICHNER

This year there are many People of the Global Majority in the SAL delegation. We are thirty-one delegates and volunteers from eleven countries: Mexico, Chile, Peru, Argentina, Puerto Rico, Bolivia, Japan, Sweden, the Netherlands, England, and the United States. Those of us from Latin America need to talk about the difficulties we face in our lives because of climate change. The world needs to hear Latin American voices, especially Indigenous ones. COP25 must include the perspectives of the most vulnerable groups.

Our SAL team began with an RC workshop, to discharge everything related to organizing our workshops and forums. We talked about the importance of connection and closeness within our group as well as connecting with the participants we would be meeting. We focused on two points: (1) bringing the tools of RC to groups working on climate change and struggling against systemic oppression, and (2) making valuable connections with people.

Our SAL workshops and forums will focus on hearing from Indigenous people about their environmental struggles in Latin America, hearing from young people leading work on the climate emergency, ending racism in the environmental movement, health and climate change, and expressing painful feelings about the climate emergency.

We will also be broadcasting the following events live on the SAL Facebook page:

Forum—Young Activists

Forum—Voices of Latin America

Workshop—Youth Leading in the Climate Emergency

Workshop—Climate Change and Structural Violence

We invite you to read our daily reports on our Facebook page and on Instagram and Twitter.

With much love from the reporting team,

Leticia González López

Mexico City, D.F., Mexico

Translated from Spanish by Sheresada Villela

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

Climate Change Is Happening to *You*

Recent hurricanes on the south and east coasts of the United States, large tornados in the Midwest, and tornados where they haven't been before. Polar vortexes, extreme heat, small towns in the Southwest running out of water. All these things are due to climate change.

U.S. news sources downplay or deny the situation. They often report climate disasters as one-time events. They rarely follow up on how people's lives have been affected. And they "color" the news, making it seem as if black and brown people are the only ones impacted. It's true that black and brown people are currently the ones most affected by climate disasters, but the "coloring" of the news makes white USers think the disasters are happening only to "others" or are overseas. The reporting doesn't make visible the large numbers of poor and other white farmers (who are the majority of the farmers in the United States) that are affected by climate change.

First World wealth helps keep USers in denial about the changes. Many USers have a pattern that says, "Nothing bad can happen to us," or "We are the smartest people on earth so we'll be able to figure this out and make it not happen." But it *is* happening. Climate change is happening to you and to your people. It is happening right in your own backyard. It makes sense to notice this.

Learn what is happening in your immediate area. Set up listening projects in your neighborhood, and for the farmers. Propose and take bold actions at various governmental levels. Talk to anyone and everyone about climate change. What are the "drastic actions" you can take, and use your influence to get others to take?

Marcie Rendon
International Liberation Reference
Person for Native Americans
 Minneapolis, Minnesota, USA
 Reprinted from the RC e-mail discussion list
 for leaders in the care of the environment



PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA, USA • EURHI JONES

Ain't Nobody Got Time for Climate Change

A Black Woman Speaks about Race and Climate Grief

The following was adapted from a talk on a panel at the Sustaining All Life Climate Grief Workshop at the United Nations Global Climate Action Summit in New York, New York, USA, in September 2019.

My connection to climate change and the environment has been shaped significantly by my identity. I am a mixed-race Black female USer. I've worked in the outdoor education world for twenty years. I care deeply about the environment, and yet I'm pretty [quite] new to taking action on climate change. I've come to realize that much of that is because the climate movement didn't feel accessible to me. It felt like "a white thing."

A lot of my experiences in nature were with white people. Many of the organizations working on climate change were run by white people, peopled with white people, and didn't always seem to care or understand how my community was being affected by the crisis. The racism I experienced in those organizations made it difficult to stay in there. It became yet another barrier to getting engaged. The primary reason I'm engaged in this work now is because of connecting with Sustaining All Life and being brought by it into People of the Global Majority spaces in which people are working on the environment and using the tool of Co-Counseling.

My grief about climate change is really grief about the loss of relationship to the land that happened because of my heritage. My ancestors were not only taken from their Indigenous lands, they were also intentionally separated from anyone who remembered

what those lands looked like, or felt like, or smelled like. Our connection to the land here in the United States was fraught [filled with anxiety] to say the least. It was a history of forced labor and chronic terror.



YUKO HIBINO

In my personal experience, my great grandfather was literally driven from his farmland in Georgia. He was forced to drive through the night, with his children huddled terrified in the car, while being chased by the Ku Klux Klan because he'd had the audacity to vote and register others. In the 1980s when I was a child, my grandmother pressured my father not to visit the countryside where she had grown up because she was afraid that if he returned there with his white wife and biracial children, he would be lynched like so many Black men before him. And lest we think that this is about a faraway place, that it only takes place in the U.S. South or in another time, the examples continue. When I was a young adult working with children of color in the 2000s

and taking them hiking in the woods in Maryland right outside of Washington, D.C., on multiple occasions beer cans were thrown at us, epithets yelled, and threats made because of our race.

Growing up in the inner city, I was raised to think that nature, that the environment, that "Earth" was out there somewhere. It was out where white people lived. No one ever talked about the things that grew in our neighborhoods as complex and beautiful examples of non-human life. There's a tree called the tree-of-heaven. It actually has a lot of medicinal properties and has been used in Chinese medicine for thousands of years. We called them "trash trees" because they grew around dumpsters and in alleyways and the cracks in our sidewalks. They grew in Black folks' neighborhoods. I thought that they, and everything else that sprouted in my neighborhood, were all "weeds." They didn't count [qualify] as nature, because why would anything of value be growing in the neighborhood where we grew? That's how deep the devaluation of my community was.

My experience in many of the outdoor organizations I participated in was that the white folks—many of whom I cared about deeply and were people who cared deeply about me—were very unaware that this is what I and other People of the Global Majority were going through while being out in nature. They found our fear, our discomfort, in being out in wilderness spaces amusing or quirky. For them, it was a simple case of "urban dwellers" who were

just not used to [accustomed to] the great outdoors. Because what could feel more safe and peaceful than sleeping out under the stars, more restorative and rejuvenating than being in the countryside where cell phones don't work? Furthermore, because of white supremacy, that mentality often turned into a sense that "Well, we just need to teach People of the Global Majority. We need to shepherd them into a connection to nature, instruct them in how to take care of the environment, enlighten them on how to go green."

But that isn't true at all. We don't need to be taught. We need to be healed. We need the space to reclaim what is inherently ours.

Black folks and other People of the Global Majority, as full human beings, have an innate connection to the earth. Which is why, for me, climate grief is about the violence and injustice of having that connection so tampered with that it is sometimes difficult for me and many of my people to know that this world belongs to us, and that we belong to it.

This is not to negate the many African-heritage folks and other People of the Global Majority who have maintained close connection to non-human life both within and outside the climate justice movement and face different struggles around race and the environment. But for many of us, the tampering with our connection to nature has gotten in the way of taking on climate change. It has led to feeling like this isn't our problem; this isn't our thing. For a long time, I just felt like I wasn't interested, like I didn't care. I felt "lazy" about it or cynical because few of the solutions proposed seemed to address the needs of my community. But by digging in, in *Sustaining All Life*

listening sessions, I was able to figure out that underneath the apathy and disconnect was a deep well of grief and outrage.

This has motivated me to want to meet other people in the place that I was in, in the place that I'm still getting out of. At the Black Liberation and Community Development Workshop this past year, I led a small group that I called "Ain't Nobody Got Time for Climate Change: A Group for

People Who Aren't Sure They Want to Be in It." And that's who I really want to go after [pursue]. Because I think Co-Counseling allows us not only to heal ourselves but also to reach the people who aren't at conferences like this one but who are so important and need to be a part of this movement. Because this is, in fact, our world.

D. Harris
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, USA

Nothing Less Than Complete Respect

In working with teenagers, the internalized oppression (that takes place with every group that has been oppressed) was so heavy that we were looking for a way of interrupting it. . . . We asked them to make a promise to each other, and the wording is, "I solemnly promise that, from this moment on, I will never again treat any young person, including myself, with anything less than complete respect." We've never had a group of young people together where more than two of them have made that promise before everyone in the group started crying—got their arms around each other and sobbed. Lack of respect is a crucial element in the mistreatment that young people endure.

It's also at the heart of every other oppression. What's at the heart of sexism? A woman being treated without respect. What's at the heart of racism? The non-white person being treated without respect. What's at the heart of ageism? The elder being treated as a cast-off. "Oh, Grandma, now you just go sit down." Lack of respect.

Harvey Jackins
From page 60 of "The Art of Listening,"
in the *Fundamentals of Co-Counseling Manual*



PHILIPPINES • AL CABALLES

The Climate Crisis and Being Jewish

I recently led the first meeting of a climate action committee at my synagogue. Ten people came. I was pleased with how it went. People appreciated the focus on taking action and that we shared how we feel about the crisis.

Later that week I read that a founding leader of Extinction Rebellion (XR)—a group I have been involved with locally—had downplayed the significance of the Holocaust in a German publication. His statements were condemned by German politicians, XR Germany, and XR United Kingdom.

There was a meeting that evening of our local XR working committee. We work on colonialism, capitalism, and oppression. So far, I'm the only Jew in the group. During my "check in" I told the group about the meeting at my synagogue and that I was hoping we would discuss the XR leader's anti-Semitic statements. I was relieved to find that the issue was already on the agenda and that the committee had been asked to edit

a draft press release from XR Toronto condemning the founder's statement.

I said it would be good to include in the draft that anti-Semitism plays a unique and significant role in capitalist exploitation and the climate crisis and that being clear about this would help Jews (including my newly formed synagogue group) feel welcome in the organization. I also said the XR leader shouldn't be demonized for his mistake (he has since apologized).

The following was eventually included in the press release: "Anti-Semitism has been used for centuries to confuse people about where the power truly lies. We denounce anti-Semitism for the sake of clarity and inclusion of all people."

Phil Rees

Toronto, Ontario, Canada

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



SANTA CRUZ, CALIFORNIA, USA • PAM ROBY

A Support Group for Climate Activists

A fellow Quaker with some acquaintance with RC noticed how dispirited some climate change activists were. She and I teamed up with two other climate change activists and organized a support group—called Sustaining Climate Activists—under the auspices of an activist group. We held the first meeting at a public library. There were ten of us, including the co-leaders of the activist group.

We opened with "news and goods" followed by a short talk on why it's important to take care of ourselves emotionally. Then we had a go-around on "What's a current challenge for you in doing climate change work? Or, if you have no challenges, what's your next step in solving the climate problem?"

After a break, I talked for five minutes about RC. Then we did a five-minutes-each mini-session on "What came up for you as a result of the earlier sharing?" To close, we did a go-around on "What was something you noticed or will take away today?"

The four organizers stayed to do an evaluation of the meeting. I suggested including a song next month, and they agreed enthusiastically. The next time we organizers meet, I'll suggest we appreciate each other.

Ken Deveney

Ashland, Oregon, USA

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

Persisting with a Correct Policy

My daughter attended a Catholic school. Somehow, when I was reviewing the school, I missed the fact that it had a Sioux mascot. [The Sioux are a large group of Indigenous tribes originally from what is now the north-central part of the United States.]

I couldn't find anyone in the school community who thought it problematic that a Catholic girls' school in New Orleans (Louisiana, USA) was laying claim to a Sioux identity. I was met with awkwardness and a little fear.

I asked for a meeting with the school leadership and went into it expecting to defend myself. Then I realized that they were terrified of the conversation. They explained that the mascot had been around since 1948, that the girls had had the identity since then, and that it was very important to them. They also said this would be a hard conversation to have with the alumnae, and the alumni fund the school. In other words, "Kindly go away."

I decided that a lengthy, possibly decade-long conversation about cultural appropriation would be more fruitful than walking away. I launched a multi-year campaign and worked the discussion into conversations at birthday parties, assemblies, and parent meetings. And I had not a single ally—not one parent, teacher, or administrator would publicly stand with me.

Over the years I continued to meet with the administration and the alumni association. I continued to not let my daughter participate in Sioux activities. Each year I

explained to her teachers why our family had to abstain from that cultural norm. I wrote a lot of letters.

My main talking points were that it was immoral and fundamentally un-Christian to be indifferent to the horrors of the genocide committed by white people, and specifically white Catholics.



MAGLEBY, DENMARK • ROB VENDERBOS

I wrote that if we are to take Christian education seriously, we must ask ourselves the fundamental question, "Does this teaching inspire peace and justice?" and if the answer is no, then the teaching does not belong in a Christian school. I offered the perspective that we, as Catholics, have the skills and obligation to take right action. It is within our culture and faith to evaluate our trespasses, say them aloud, ask forgiveness, and take corrective penitent actions.

SUCCESS

The school announced a month ago that at the end of the 2019–2020 school year, they will retire the school mascot. I know this is because of me. When I read the announcement, I could see how my words had inspired the action.

It would be easy for me to feel that this is a small win, but I will take it in differently. Because I decided not to leave my people and instead act, future generations of young women will not be encouraged to assume someone else's identity. They will not be asked to defend genocide. Because of me, they will have a better story about themselves. Because I stayed and

had the conversation, dozens of people will not be able to escape the new information rattling around in their heads about our history with Native people.

That last paragraph required some discharge to write. As Catholics we are encouraged to be modest and self-deferential. We don't often get to take credit. We stay small in the presence of God. However, we can't afford to think of ourselves as unimportant. Our only hope of disassembling organized systems of oppression is to believe deeply in our significance.

Jacqui Gibson-Clark
New Orleans, Louisiana, USA
Reprinted from the RC e-mail
discussion list for leaders of Catholics



A Parents' Climate Movement in Israel



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At the end of August 2019, with the huge fires burning in the Amazon, the climate crisis was becoming impossible to ignore, and I was crying hard in Co-Counseling sessions about the news.

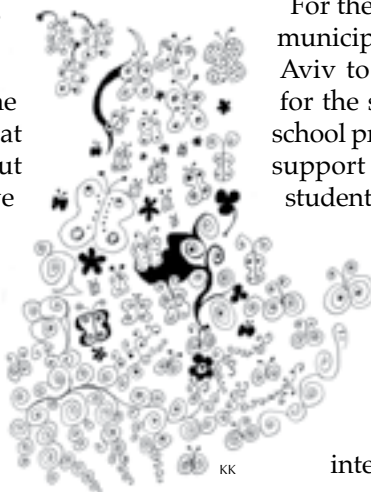
I decided to try something I had been thinking about for months. I wrote a post on Facebook stating that as parents we had an important role to play, that young people had taken the lead in climate change work but it was time for us to take our place in the struggle. I posted something similar in an Extinction Rebellion Facebook group I had recently joined.

Both posts received a lot of attention and interest, and I decided to pursue my idea. I began writing personally to all the people who responded to my posts, both people I knew and people I did not. Then I set up phone conversations with those who were interested in talking. I sensed right away that parents had a lot of hunger for something like what I was proposing. Many told me that they'd been thinking of starting a parents' group on climate for a long time.

At first I was hesitant about going forward. I had to make a decision, to overcome my timidities.

I noticed that I was good at the phone conversations. I would ask about people's lives and families. Then I would put forward a clear and hopeful picture of what I thought we could do, and listen to people's thinking, fears, and discouragement and about their difficulties in organizing the parents around them. Then I would share my thoughts about what needed to and could happen so that we could move forward. I talked about lending other people confidence, how people need someone who can be brave and take them by the hand and say, "We can do this."

As I was moving along with the phone conversations, I began to formulate what we could do and how we could go about doing it. Early on I suggested that we form local groups so that people would know each other and could most easily work together. It was clear there was no way to be effective countrywide without people being able to meet each other, build relationships, and work together closely.



Things began taking shape faster than I had thought possible. An administrator of a Facebook parents' group focused on ecology and families joined our movement. Another parent offered to run our Facebook page. A graphic designer created a beautiful logo. We were suddenly up and running [in operation].

I decided to kick-start things by calling a meeting in Haifa, the city where I live. Just calling it and setting the time and place made a difference. People could see that a parents' movement was possible and that things were taking shape. I knew that not many people would be able to make it to [attend] the meeting, but I also knew that that didn't matter—just calling a meeting would help things take form.

I put forward early on that it would be good to support the young people who were striking on Fridays, and we joined the global climate strike on September 20 as our first event. People from our group joined demonstrations in three cities.

I work as an electrician in a small underground train, a working-class environment, and I told people there about the project. Three of my friends from work came to a demonstration during their break time (it was outside one of the stations). I think it was their first demonstration.

Just the idea of our then very sketchy existence gave one of the striking young people in Jerusalem the idea that she could gather parent support. She got the parents' committee at her school to support the strike, and as a result the whole school became involved in the protest.

For the November 29 global strike, we got the municipal parents' boards of Jerusalem and Tel Aviv to issue a public declaration of support for the students. Because of our work, several school principals e-mailed their staffs expressing support for the strike, and they allowed their students to miss school for it if they had parental approval.

We now have several hundred activists countrywide and roughly eight groups either active or in the early stages of development.

I have also been involved in an international movement of parents, which

KK

has put me in touch with parent activists around the world.

I am learning to push myself beyond my feelings of despair. I feel the feelings, but then I move and they don't stay stuck.

I have a long history of activism. I have always known I have something unique to offer, because of my knowledge of and work in RC, but it is showing clearly in what I can do with this movement. I can be caring; show that I want people and can think about them; lend my confidence; have ideas about how to work together and what to do when things get stuck; and let people know that we are all in this together, that it is a movement for everybody, and that there are no bad people. I can offer RC understandings about young people's oppression and help adults with any difficulties they have with the young people's movements. All these things have made a big difference in what we have been able to build.

There are many struggles and challenges as well, and hopefully I will get a chance to write about them at some point.

Lotahn Raz
Haifa, Israel

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



TEXAS, USA • DIANE SHISK

Using Art to Quickly Get an Idea Across

At the student walk-out march at the September United Nations Climate Action Summit, three of us Sustaining All Life artists went into the crowd and using street chalk drew a forty-foot-long stream pouring out of the words "Water Is Life."

People stopped and used the chalk to draw fish. One woman drew a dolphin leaping out of the water. An Indigenous music group stood by the stream as if it were a real stream and began playing their folk music. We spontaneously drew the stream around their feet to make the music part of the art. It was like a street performance.

I loved how quickly we figured out what to do. We stood in the crowd holding the chalk and envisioned the entire event in less than three minutes.

Art can so quickly get an important idea across.

Daniel Schaffer
Brooklyn, New York, USA
Reprinted from the RC e-mail discussion list for leaders of artists

The Time Is Now—Follow Young People

The young people we are around every day are going to be alive for many more years. They will be greatly impacted by climate change. They are living through it now, here and in many parts of the world.

Four years ago when I talked about the climate crisis to the young people in my program, most of them did not understand what it was. Now almost all of them are not only aware of the crisis but also understand some of the science.

I've been running a nonprofit organization (Youth Build) for twenty-five years. Our theory of change is based on an "action and support model." We have used this model to support thousands of young people. Young people need support when they hear hard information or go through hard experiences. They need us to back [support] them. And they need us to get out of their way so that they can take every action they can think of.

I always have people talk to each other in pairs. I ask them what they think. As much as possible, I get all of their minds involved.

I've been teaching RC classes for the young people in my program for

twenty years. Many of them do RC just while they are in the program. I've also built an RC Area with a lot of the young people in it. It's totally possible.

We adults need to discharge our feelings of urgency and discouragement about climate change so that we can get our tone right. But we don't have time to get it perfect, and we don't need to. We can try everything we can think of, apologize for our mistakes, and keep going. We need to bring the young people in close with us. Young people are good at being close and can lead us in this.

In a recent young people's class, I said the following:

"You look at adults, and you can see that they are making a big mess. And if they could just figure out how to get along with each other, the mess would go away. With climate change, adults are making a very big mess, and we have to do something about it.

"When you try to do something about it, the adults will say that you don't understand, that you don't have your facts right, that 'that's not how things are done.' You can

say, 'Well, it's not working, and we're in really big trouble. I want all the animals and all the people I know to keep living. Your systems are not working. You need to listen to young people and start thinking big and freshly and redo the whole system—so that everybody has enough, and nobody has too much.'"

Greta Thunberg [a young Swedish climate activist] has said that the rules are not working, so it's time to change the rules. When I tell the young people this, I can see a sense of power cross their faces.

I give them facts. I talk about the real situation. Usually no one else is. But it's part of our job as adults. It's scary, but we can't keep hiding things, especially from young people.

Young people have been prominent in liberation movements and revolutions throughout history. The people I'm in the most contact with are thirteen to eighteen years old. They are mostly young people of color from poor neighborhoods who have already seen a lot in their lives. They understand that things need to change. They understand activism. They are empowered when they have real information. I show them videos of young people taking action in the Sunrise Movement, Extinction Rebellion, and other movements. That's some of the best information they can get.

Jenny Sazama

*International Liberation Reference
Person for Allies to Young People*

Jamaica Plain, Massachusetts, USA

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



RAINBOW VALLEY, NORTHERN TERRITORY, AUSTRALIA • BARBARA MOLANUS



FRECKLED DUCK, IN HEART MORASS, AUSTRALIA • DAMIEN COOK

Donating to Offset a Carbon Footprint

Our family decided to reduce our carbon footprint. This led to several improvements.

AT HOME

We installed the first solar panels in the neighborhood (now there are many) and have recently installed more. We changed our cooking range and our clothes dryer from gas to electric. We replaced our furnace with a more efficient one. We installed double-pane glass in all our windows and added fans and insulation to the attic. We now have a plug-in hybrid car and a fully electric one. We buy from an electricity company that gets its electricity from renewable sources. Our direct fossil fuel usage—and thus CO₂ emissions—has decreased significantly.

TRAVEL

We live 5,500 miles from my family in Denmark. We are not eager to fly there in terms of CO₂ generation. However, sometimes it is necessary to go, so this summer we combined three necessary trips into one long one.

In spite of using the most fuel-efficient airline available and lots of public transportation, the trip generated more than nine metric tons (9,000 kg) of CO₂. Very embarrassing! What could we do to make up for [offset] that? It turned out [as it happened] there were many ways to do it.

WHERE TO DONATE?

I searched the Internet and found a charity that uses donations to plant trees. Another improves cookstoves in Kenya. Another supports the extraction of gas from landfills. Such charities can sometimes tell you how much CO₂ a certain activity (for example, flying or driving a car) generates and how much to donate to offset that amount.

How could I ensure that our hard-earned donation would end up in the right pockets and have the most impact? I wanted an organization that works to eliminate the root causes—greed and racism—of our current inability to react fast enough to climate change. I wanted one that was honest about its goals and that used donations to support climate activists. What organization was the best one to support with my carbon offset funds? The answer was easy: it was RC.

My next step was to decide on a contribution. I made use of online calculators and decided to donate \$200.

Allan Hansen

Cypress, California, USA

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

Listening and the Climate Crisis

Researchers have found that simply increasing the frequency of climate-related discussions shifts people's perceptions of the scientific consensus on human-caused global warming, as well as their own attitudes on the matter. See <<https://www.latimes.com/science/environment/talking-about-global-warming-helps-story.html>>.

“The more we talk about global warming, the more we might move the needle on public opinion,” the Yale team reported in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences. “These findings suggest that climate conversations with friends and family enter people into a pro-climate social feedback loop,” the researchers wrote.

Since we Co-Counselors know how to start conversations and listen, this research shows that we can play an important role in changing people's opinions about the climate crisis.

Keep listening!

Julian Weissglass

International Commonality Reference

Person for Wide World Change

Santa Barbara, California, USA

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

..... Teamwork and RC at a Women's Climate Action

Since January 2019 I have been part of XR (Extinction Rebellion) in Denmark. I have participated in actions and trainings and made some speeches. In April I was asked to be part of an action group of women who were mostly nineteen to thirty-three years old. I recruited a fifty-year-old woman, and we were the two not-young women. The proposed action was a hopefully spectacular banner drop from the tower at our Parliament.

We did the drop on the first day the Parliament was debating about finances for the coming year. It was good timing for a protest, as the government had not, as promised during the elections, made climate key in their allocation of money.



LONDON, ENGLAND • BESS HERBERT

Our group was intentionally all women, to show that (1) women are at the forefront as climate activists (women of all ages, with young women being most visible); (2) women are disproportionately the victims of climate change, including as climate refugees; and (3) women are often not seen as physically strong and powerful—a sexist assumption we wanted to contradict.

There were twenty of us, and we each had different roles: “rope women,” with the banner; police contact; media contact; communicators between the top and bottom of the tower; and peacekeepers. I was a peacekeeper.

The banner was made of white cloth, in reference to women’s fight for the right to vote, and had “Listen to the climate researchers. Protect life. Extinction Rebellion,” written on it in purple and green. It was twenty-five meters long and ten meters wide. We prepared meticulously for each step of the action, focusing on the banner drop—how to throw ropes from the tower, attach them to the banner on the ground, and pull up the banner—and all the security issues connected with the action.

INTRODUCING LISTENING AND DISCHARGE

I finally got thirty minutes to do “something social” in our group. I started with a physical game. Then I talked about how we wanted and needed to think and act clearly during our action and how thinking can get blurry under the pressure we experience as activists. I then talked about our need to “let out steam,” with loving attention from someone else, so we can clear our mind and connect well, so we can act as a unified body. I said that this was a contradiction to all the separations society imposes on us.

I explained the “rules” for a mini-session: equal time (five minutes) for each person; the one paying attention not commenting, giving advice, or sharing her own feelings or experiences; complete confidentiality; and paying warm, relaxed attention. Then I asked the women under twenty-five to pick their partners first. They asked why, and I said it was because young women are often chosen last. They liked that. After the mini-session (which they did in a disciplined way—they all followed my guidelines), I asked them to tell their partners what they particularly appreciated about them and their contribution to our project and action.

Afterward they said things like, “It was overwhelming to be listened to without interruption and as the listener to not have to speak—to trust the mind of another person to find her own thoughts and mind,” “I realized that comments from me would’ve turned my partner’s attention in a direction different from the one she chose herself,” “I discovered a chain of connected situations and feelings that I hadn’t realized were there.” Someone had worried that it would be a waste of time—“How can we get through our tight schedule?”—but afterward was happy that we had done it and said that it had created an atmosphere of energy, connection, trust, safety, and confidence that we all needed!

THE DROP

Then came the day of the drop. The weather was finally okay, and we decided “now is the time.” We met a few hours beforehand for final preparations. I wanted to remind everyone about listening and discharge, but when I mentioned it to two of the women, they were hesitant. My heart sank, but then another woman asked if I would lead an exercise similar to the one we had done on Sunday. She said we could invite those who wanted to do it, and the others could do something else in another room. So while we were gathering, eight of us took turns sharing the unique contributions that each of us, as a woman activist, was bringing to the action.

In our lunch break I introduced a conversation about our role as women, and it became like a women’s support group. The women shared how they experience sexism; how the discourse about sexism in Denmark seems to have vanished, due to the illusion that everything is okay; how they loved to prove that they were well organized, strong, perfectly focused, and one-for-all and all-for-one; and how it was such a relief to be all women in this action.

We managed to have the banner up for almost thirty minutes before we were forced to take it down. Two of us negotiated with the guards, police, and tourists in the tower and explained why we were doing the banner drop—that we wanted to aim attention at the climate crisis—and why it would be very dangerous if the guards and police did what they were threatening to do—cut the ropes. The tourists loved what we did!

The police asked for our names and social security numbers, and we will probably get a fine. We had hoped to be arrested but were not. We suspect that there’s a policy to give as little attention as possible to actions like this, especially since there was no violence on our part—no destruction, only civil disobedience—and all the women looked “undramatic” (without a lot of tattoos or piercings, or black clothes or hoods). We also did not attract much media coverage, maybe for the same reasons.

At our follow-up meeting we talked about our learnings and gains. I promised to invite everyone to a meeting at which we could go more deeply into the (RC) practices and ideas I had introduced, and they all liked that a lot.

A GOOD CONCLUSION

To be part of this action I had to contradict all sorts of chronic distresses—of feeling too old, too large and un-

fit, not really wanted, and too different and marginal because I didn’t want to go out for a beer. Then I was asked to please join the others at a vegan pizza place, “and beer is not mandatory.” Several of the women even chose non-alcoholic beverages, saying, “I think I will try what you chose.” We had a wonderful time. I got tons of un-asked-for appreciations. I was told how valuable my presence had been for the whole group, how I’d managed to have each woman feel part of the group and important, how I’d expanded the concept of being an activist, and more.

I remembered something I had heard Tim Jackins say (these aren’t his exact words): “Whenever we back away from a challenge, we give our early defeats and other old distresses more power over us than the power we have in the actual situation.”

I felt like dying at every bold step I took, but I am more alive now than before. Good conclusion!

Susanne Langer

Copenhagen, Denmark

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



Speaking Out at a Climate Event as a Worker

I was invited to speak on behalf of labor at a climate justice action at the Rhode Island (USA) State House. I thought about what I could say in a forceful way about the crisis, what would represent what most of the people in my union think, and what would be good for a group of young environmentalists to hear. I was pleased with what I said:

I was invited here to talk about my experience and perspective as a worker. I'm here as a union construction worker. This morning I was installing lights and electrical outlets in a building powered by fossil fuels. The people in my family are and have been factory workers, house cleaners, laborers, custodians, and cement masons. Others have cut down trees and torn the stubs off of movie tickets.

My parents grew up in villages on Sao Miguel, one of the Portuguese islands in the Atlantic Ocean. They heard about the economic opportunity they could find if they came to America. They moved here, with most of their families, so they could have more to eat, have children, and buy a house. They didn't know that the land had been violently stolen. They didn't know much about the horrific exploitation and enslaved labor of African-heritage people, from which the wealth of the country had been built. They just thought of America as the land of opportunity. They didn't know that people here were poor, too, or that workers

were treated so badly that they were forced to make impossible choices.

In her twenties, my mother worked in a plastics factory. For thirty years after that, she was a housekeeper, cleaning houses. Decades after she came here, she became a U.S. citizen. When she went to get her fingerprints taken for her citizenship papers, it took many attempts because the prints on her fingers had been worn away from the scrubbing and harsh chemicals. When she was fifty-two, she was diagnosed with a rare form of cancer. It is rare everywhere except in China. I remember the moment I realized how many workers manufacture plastic in China. I believe that my mother's cancer was caused by her work in the plastics factory. She lived fifteen more years, but because of the cancer treatment she could hardly eat or drink in the last several years of her life. In the last two years, she could only talk somewhat and barely breathe. She didn't know that with her first job in the United States, she would be exchanging her labor for a wage and cancer.

Last year I was in Washington, D.C. [USA], sitting in at the capitol building, demanding that our elected officials fight for a Green New Deal. I was arrested with a young woman. While we were in a van being transported for processing, she told all of us why she was there. Her father had been a coal miner. She cried as she told us about him making a living and supporting their family by mining coal but then dying very young because of the lung cancer he got.

We workers do not want to choose jobs that make us sick, and make the planet sick, just so we can make enough money to live!

We do not want to choose jobs that poison the land and pollute the water just so we can make enough money to retire!

We do not want to choose jobs that pollute the air; intensify storms, droughts, wildfires, and floods; and have disproportionate and deadly impacts on Indigenous, Black, brown, and small island peoples just so we can feed our families!

These are the choices given to us by the people who are lying about the climate crisis and pitting workers and the environment against each other. These are the choices created by the people who have known that their business interests are making the earth unlivable and incompatible with human civilization. They have sown doubt, created "debate," and deceived us—funded by their excessive and immoral profits—for the last forty years!

All workers want family-sustaining wages, a retirement, and dignity—while protecting our air, water, and land and human life and all living things.

Even though my mother couldn't talk at the end of her life because of her cancer treatment, and even though I am terrified to stand here in front of you all, I am deciding to use my full voice and full breath and power to say as clearly as I can that we can't win this fight without fighting fully for the workers who are affected by the climate crisis and the workers who will be transforming our energy, agriculture, and transportation infrastructure. That and more is why we need a Green New Deal!

Jess Liborio

Jamaica Plain, Massachusetts, USA
Reprinted from the RC e-mail discussion
list for leaders of wide world change



Music as a Powerful Tool

Along with my friend and fellow musician Rosemary, I decided to organize a musical flash mob* on the day before the September 2019 Climate Strike, in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada, to bring people's attention to the strike. I also wanted to back [support] the strike organizers, a youth group called the "Sustainabiliteens." They were enthusiastic about our proposal.

We used an arrangement (created by another Canadian orchestral musician) of a short section of Beethoven's 9th Symphony, known as "Ode to Joy," which has been used historically in protests—from the Chinese student broadcast at Tiananmen Square, to demonstrations in Chile against the Pinochet dictatorship, to concerts celebrating the fall of the Berlin Wall.

We chose the city center Vancouver Public Library with its large public plaza as the site for the event and then reached out to local musicians.

Our local musicians' union president, a bass player, was enthusiastic about the project and a strong ally. He had a few informal "sessions" with me, sharing his thoughts and fears about climate change.

We contacted one of the conductors of my opera orchestra, who very much wanted to participate. He even changed the orchestra's rehearsal time to make it work (which almost never happens in my business!).

Rosemary contacted our city council for help in getting permission from the Public Library to use their indoor atrium space in the event of rain. The council is supportive of and active in climate action, and its members immediately wrote to the chief librarian encouraging them to give us full support, which they did!

The idea was a solid one, and people wanted to be part of it. In the end about forty orchestral players and over a hundred singers showed up at the event, eager and happy to participate.

We invited the media, and volunteers handed out leaflets about the Climate Strike. We made a big banner with "Musicians for Climate Action" on it and posters advertising the strike. I borrowed a microphone

2 A flash mob is a group of people who assemble suddenly in a public place, perform an act for a brief time, and then quickly disperse—for the purpose of entertainment, satire, artistic expression, or public demonstration.



MACHU PICCHU, PERU • PAM ROBY

system and spoke for about thirty seconds after the music finished. I said that we were playing on lands stolen from the Coast Salish peoples and encouraged everyone to follow the leadership of Indigenous peoples. I also encouraged everyone to support the youth leaders of the Climate Strike.

Rosemary and I got close doing the project. I introduced the idea of mini-sessions, and we sometimes did them during our almost nightly phone planning times. (We put the flash mob together in just two weeks.) We cried together on the phone on the morning of the event about how nervous we were and also felt powerful and excited, knowing that music can be so inspirational.

The flash mob was one of the most powerful things I had ever organized as a musician. One of my favourite moments was looking at the faces of the musicians as they played. They were clearly pleased to be using their skills and passion to say something important with music. The media included the event in their reports on the climate actions of the week. And a video of it, edited by my friend Peter, has been shared widely. Here is a link to it: <<https://peterandclaire.smugmug.com/Music/Ode-to-joy-climate-protest/n-9z2k4X/i-Bpb98tB/A>>.

I'm not sure what is next, but the fire has been lit. I love that there is much more conversation now about climate change in my orchestra and musical circles. We are noticing what it is possible to do together.

Heather Hay
International Liberation
Reference Person for Musicians
Vancouver, B.C., Canada

Reprinted from the RC e-mail discussion lists for leaders of artists and for leaders in the care of the environment

Climate Action in Australia

Here in Adelaide, South Australia, a great group of RCers are working within Extinction Rebellion and having a good impact. I have been training marshals. It's an excellent way to teach people about listening pairs. I am clear about marshals always having a buddy. Many are much in the habit of "independence," but many others are developing the buddy habit.

Once when I was a police liaison, a road blockade was very loud and tense and the police commander was threatening to bring in the horses. I put both my hands in the air and waggled my fingers and told everyone to do the same. Many did, and the crowd of about two hundred and fifty people went silent. Everyone got calmer, including the police commander. He did not call the horses forward. I was shaking a bit inside but feeling very connected to my own buddy and many others whom I trust.

The police keep telling us how well organized we are, and many of them say they agree with us about the climate emergency. During the week of action here, called Spring Rebellion, the media were full of discussion about civil disobedience.

I've started a small "activist support group." We are all women, because I want our voices to be strong in whatever activism we are doing. Mostly I am teaching people to swap time [exchange listening], but I'm also introducing RC thinking about oppression and being allies. It's not an RC class, but I acknowledge RC and Sustaining All Life. It is going well, and the trust is deeper every time we meet.

This is a scary and exciting time to be alive! As a white middle-class woman in a wealthy country, I think what I am doing is the right thing.

Nicky Page

Adelaide, South Australia, Australia
Reprinted from the RC e-mail
discussion list for leaders of women

About Greed

There are many emotional distresses that afflict humans—jealousy, despair, panic, frustration, boredom, greed. All of them have played destructive roles in many individual and social situations.

Greed, however, occupies a special place in that it has been made the basis and the fundamental operating principle or requirement in all oppressive societies. It has been esteemed to the point where, in practice, it takes precedence over most human aspirations. The successful fulfillment of goals based on greed is accepted in all class societies, and in particular the current societies, as taking precedence over happiness, health, care of the environment, good relationships with others, and the operation of human intelligence.

We have recently begun to understand that probably an even earlier appearance of irrationality into humans' relations with each other, earlier even than greed, is the idea of preferment or choice of one individual over another. There apparently is nothing necessarily irrational about an individual preferring a warm room to a cold breeze, liking blue color better than red, or choosing vanilla over chocolate, but any choosing or preferring of one human over another in any sense seems to be deeply oppressive and lays in the patterns for a spreading oppression, out of which greed can flourish, wars can rage, and class societies persist.

Harvey Jackins

From page 164 of *The List*



DIANE SHISK

Disaster Preparedness— A Doorway into Addressing the Climate Crisis

My job is working with people with disabilities and their families, allies, caregivers, and service providers. I am learning ways to gently and amicably bring up climate issues without shutting people down [making people lose their attention]. I am also working with a small group of my neighbors who took the Community Emergency Response Team class taught by the local fire department.

People who identify as “disability community members” tend to be progressive and to accept the reality of the climate crisis. They also have lives that may feel and be hard. They are often managing on a low income and are largely People of the Global Majority who experience several intersecting oppressions. They tend to be discouraged by discrimination and exclusion along with having physical struggles.

My chosen doorway into addressing the climate crisis has been disaster preparedness. California (USA) is experiencing many disasters—fires, floods, sea level rise, and more—all clearly related to the climate (plus we are in an earthquake zone!). Our non-profit organization got a grant to develop disaster preparedness resources—workshops, webinars, YouTube presentations, brochures, and so on—that include our additional information on the climate.

Focusing on disaster preparedness is attracting my constituency of disabled people to our events and materials. (The majority of people who die in disasters are disabled people and seniors.)

Disaster preparedness involves mostly individual planning, individual solutions to social problems, “because government can’t do everything.” Potentially interested people tend to first approach it—and the climate emergency and environmental injustice—with an attitude of “Are you kidding [joking]? I’m overwhelmed just getting through my day. I can’t think about the planet or an earthquake.” But because disaster preparedness is personal and not abstract, they often make their way to learning about it.

At our gatherings we talk about the climate crisis. Then we have listening pairs, including one in which people talk about their next actions. We try different things, using humor and suggesting “baby steps.” We play with hope and despair and sing silly songs. We appreciate our resiliency and creative solutions, which we have as disabled people because we have to.

We encourage people to connect with their neighbors as the most important safety action they can take and to see themselves as useful in disasters, doing what they can with the resources they have. For example, blind people and wheelchair users can be communication point persons.

Connection is the key in all aspects of this! We encourage people to form buddy teams for creating “go bags” (essential items if one has to evacuate). Having “think and listens” about what to put in the bags, and so on, makes it fun. We are reframing the climate crisis as an opportunity (an idea taken from Naomi Klein’s book *This Changes Everything*).

The following is our fifteen-minute disaster preparedness presentation on YouTube: <www.youtube.com/watch?v=OTMTjPTR47Y&t=10s>. The funder resisted our including climate issues, but our website cer-



SKY YARBROUGH

tainly does: <www.wid.org>, then click on Climate Change.

Our personal relationships with community members and local and national leaders have been helpful. To be visible, we join committees and do a lot of public speaking. Sometimes this feels busy, slow, and of little impact. We can’t know what people do or think after they read or watch our materials or leave our events. But I keep taking a direction of continuing the work whether it seems effective or not. Doing so pushes me against my discouragement. And we have decades-long connections and relationships with hundreds of people who respect us and our work. We have an audience, even if it’s a very, very discouraged audience. I am pleased that sometimes people say, “I’m doing X because Marsha (or another team member) said I should.” Yes!

Marsha Saxton

*International Liberation Reference
Person for People with Disabilities
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Reprinted from the RC e-mail
discussion list for leaders in
the care of the environment*

A “Going Public with RC” Workshop

I recently led a “going public with RC” workshop. I wanted us to think about going public in bolder and more strategic ways.

We were a wonderful and diverse group of forty-five RC activists who had been bringing RC to many different areas—climate change and anti-racism work; women’s, Jewish, and “mental health” liberation; the labor movement, teachers, health care, young people, artists, and more.

Classes included discharging on early defeats around being courageous, on making mistakes, on fear of failure or being attacked, and on showing people a thing we loved and having it ridiculed.

I led a class on dealing upfront and openly with emotions. I’ve found that when I can talk about emotions (discharge and re-evaluation) with confidence, as if discharging is the most natural thing to do, people are less critical. Worrying about people’s reactions seems to draw criticism.

There was a class on “internalized RC oppression”—our undischarged feelings about RC that interfere with going public.

People took turns practicing how to handle attacks, listen to irrational positions without getting defensive, and communicate about our more controversial draft policies in a relaxed way.

I did a class on strategic thinking. I first had everyone discharge any feelings about being strategic. Then I talked about choosing winnable victories to organize around. Everyone picked a liberation area and discharged about a winnable goal for it and what RC could contribute to moving it forward.

There were 7:00 a.m. classes led by others, some of whom had decades of experience in going public



KATIE KAUFFMAN

with RC. The classes were on building wide world organizations based on RC, doing listening projects, going public with RC policies, doing RC work on racism within organizations, bringing RC to climate change activists, setting up a support system for staff in an organization based on RC, beginning RC in new places, leading a going-public event with an RC support group, and backing [supporting] other people’s leadership from behind (a powerful leadership skill).

I tried to set a tone of all of us being in this together—those of us who have been trying things for forty years, and those who have just gotten into RC yet somehow figured out how to recruit their whole family and network of friends. We all have things to learn from each other.

I drew a diagram Sunday morning with long (tree) trunks representing our many liberation areas and with an umbrella above the trunks that I called “our united front.” Each of us needs to be able to fully bring RC to our own people—women, Native peoples, Black and Asian-heritage peoples, Jews, Muslims, men, LGBTQ people, people with disabilities, working-class people, middle-class people, owning-class people, and so on. And each of us needs to be part of a united front, needs to be a “generalist” who brings RC to the whole. People discharged on where they have struggled in bringing RC to their own people and then where they have struggled to be a generalist and bring RC to everyone.

We met in Wygelian leaders’ groups in which people shared what they’d tried in going public, lessons learned, and mistakes made and then got thinking from others about unsolved challenges.

It was a joy leading this workshop. It pushed me to keep discharging so I could keep putting out what I’ve learned, inspire others, and create a safe place for everyone to learn from each other. I had a great team that thought with me every step of the way. I look forward to doing more.

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

Discharging on Historical and Ancestral Events

At a recent Thirty-Five-and-Under Climate Change and Climate Justice Workshop, in Massachusetts, USA, we (Iara Cury, Fialau'i'a Lamositele, Julianne Gale, and Aly Halpert) led the land acknowledgement and the work on historical and ancestral events.

Our leader, Iara, is a mixed-heritage Indigenous Brazilian living on Mohican territory. Fialau'i'a is a mixed-heritage Indigenous Samoan living on Lummi and Nooksack territory. Julianne is a mixed-heritage Han Chinese and Ashkenazi Jew living on Skokomish/Twana territory. Aly is a white Ashkenazi Jew living on Schaghticoke territory.

Iara: Working on distress recordings handed down to us by previous generations is not only possible but necessary. We need to make sense of our history. We need to face the reality and lingering effects of past survival challenges in order to be able to feel deeply, reclaim our power and purpose, and work toward liberating and sustaining all life.

I encourage people to learn about distressing historical and ancestral events, to have sessions about them in the present tense (as if they are happening or have just ended), and to notice any feelings or thoughts, regardless of how implausible or unbelievable they may seem. Part of "mental health" oppression is to deny that humans pass on feelings and patterns from generation to generation. The reality is that humans are proficient transmitters of culture, knowledge—and feelings.

In RC (and increasingly in the wide world) there is evidence



SUE EDWARDS

that people carry specific distress recordings related to events from any number of years before their conception. You may be surprised not only at your ability to discharge on historical and ancestral events but also at the intensity of the sessions (if you can counteract internalized "mental health" oppression in the form of self-judgment, disbelief, and discouragement).

Fialau'i'a: Many Native/Indigenous communities recognize the soil, the land, the water, the earth that we are on. What follows is a land acknowledgement protocol from my people to your people. It is a daily practice done wherever one goes. You might hear different variations of it from different (Oceanic) Islanders. We're not all the same. This is our version.

(Land acknowledgement ceremony, led by Fialau'i'a)

Iara: We are standing on Wampanoag land. The people are still here. There are a couple of Wampanoag communities on Martha's Vineyard and on Cape Cod (in Massachusetts, USA). About two thousand people are currently registered as Wampanoag. They are a thriving community and are reviving their language. I encourage you to do some research on that, because it's inspiring. The language died in the late 1800s, but

they have found written records and are reviving the language from them. It's incredible that people can rescue a language, that they can get it back like that. So we want to thank the Wampanoag and honor them.

Indigenous people, African-heritage people, and Jewish people (and other groups I might not know about) have been working on distress recordings that are hundreds of years old. Today I invite everybody to discharge on what might have been happening to your ancestors five hundred years ago. I think that if we don't discharge on this, the undischarged hurt creates oppressor material [distress]. (People of European descent generally don't do this kind of work because it sounds "crazy.") Have you ever discharged about your ancestors surviving the plague? Or surviving a famine? Or surviving wars? You have no memories of these events, but the distress recordings are in you. That's something Indigenous people, African-heritage people, and Jewish people know deeply.

I think everybody has recordings from hundreds of years ago, and if you feel "crazy" discharging on them, that's "mental health" oppression. I think about zombie and apocalypse movies. They show a recording being played over and over again. We can relate to them because we have recordings like that. We just don't have the actual memories, so it feels confusing. Consider having a session on "everybody died but me or a couple of people." That certainly happened to some of your ancestors.

We have three different prompts for the mini-session: (1) for people

continued . . .

WIDE WORLD CHANGING

... continued

of European descent, (2) for people who have Indigenous ancestors, and (3) for People of the Global Majority who don't know if they have Indigenous ancestors. You can be creative. What are all the horrible things you think might have happened to your ancestors?

Aly: For people of European descent, "What happened to your people that led them to brutally mistreat and kill Indigenous peoples?" (Hint: horrible things!)

Iara: For Indigenous-heritage people, "What is your connection to your Indigenous roots?" (If you can find each other for the mini-session, that would be helpful. If people targeted by genocide in other ways can find each other, that would be helpful, too.)

Julianne: For non-Indigenous People of the Global Majority, "What domination experiences do you have to discharge on to commit to building strong relationships with Indigenous people?" (Sometimes we are so overwhelmed by racism that we forget to notice that we have oppressor material about Indigenous people.)

Question from an Asian-heritage Co-Counselor: By "domination experiences," do you mean experiences of being oppressors or of being dominated?

Iara: If you get oppressed and don't discharge the hurt, you have oppressor distresses, so you can discharge on the oppressed side or on the oppressor side. It's up to you [you can choose].

(Mini-session)

*Iara Cury, Fialau'a Lamositele,
and Julianne Gale*
Hoodsport, Washington, USA
and Aly Halpert
Millerton, New York, USA

Lullabies for Activists

Two other musicians and I offered an evening of "lullabies for activists," and some young adults were interested. I encouraged them to bring sleeping bags, mats, and pillows and to plan on falling asleep. We met at the Alternative Library—a lovely, peaceful space in a former church. It has great acoustics, and young activists seem to feel at home there.

I arrived first, visited a little with the library staff, set up some chairs, tuned up, and began to play softly. The activists arrived and set up their little "nests" or cuddled up on the couches. My fellow musicians arrived a bit later, quietly got out their instruments, and joined in.

Our goal was to reassure our listeners and help them rest rather than entertain them. The music was beautiful, calm, and quiet. It was interesting enough to engage the listeners and repetitive enough to let them drift into sleep, and it wound down gently and slowly, just like "real lullabies."

Some of the activists had been arrested for interfering with oil tankers and pipelines. As an elder with health issues, I'm not confident that my body could recover from pepper spray and police violence. But I've shared lullabies with two generations of babies, so that's something I can do to support these young adults.

A couple of them plan to arrange another gathering and invite their friends. I'm thinking about posting on the door part of the RC commitment for world changers: "The future needs me, well-rested, well-nourished, well-exercised, and well-organized." At some point I might need to offer an RC introductory lecture (once I've built deeper relationships).

Flip Breskin

Bellingham, Washington, USA

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



SWITZERLAND • HOLLY JORGENSON

Building a Local Climate Organization

Starting in 2015, after a few years of partial focus, I reorganized my life and put working on the climate crisis at the center. I kept a couple of part-time jobs and reduced my living expenses so that I could start building a new organization: Regeneración—Pajaro Valley Climate Action.

I decided to try my best with the information I had and the resources available to me. I set a big goal and started by doing small projects and consulting with people.

Regeneración owes much of its success to how I have built relationships and developed partnerships with other agencies and organizations. I have moved slowly and gathered the support of key people, and we now have a long and growing list of partners. Regeneración has become the hub of a growing climate justice movement here in Watsonville, California, USA.

I've prioritized centering our organization on the local majority population, which is low income and Mexican heritage. Eliminating racism has been central to our every action and decision: whom to hire or contract with, how to utilize volunteers, where and when to hold events, and so on.

Recent steps forward include the following:

- Major leaders coming together and for the first time focusing their comments on climate change and building resilience
- A young Latina videographer wanting to collaborate with us in creating a video campaign to inform people about the climate emergency and actions they can take
- Launching a heat-stress awareness and prevention campaign that will bring together stakeholders from agriculture, health, education, and government to address the effects of rising temperatures
- Slowly introducing RC practices into meetings and teaching RC to individuals

I believe any actions we take to lower emissions will protect some people's health and save some lives. I am committed to doing everything I can figure out.

I think we are each in exactly the right place to start *something*, and we don't have to know everything in order to start. Some helpful qualities we can bring to the work are being dependable and responsive, listening well, and managing our feelings. These qualities can take us a long way!

I've been battling distresses that have kept me small and quiet, and I'm getting bigger and louder. I believe I am benefiting the most from all my efforts. (I think this is always true when we fight our distresses to live the life we want to live.) Most days I am excited to wake up and start working. I am in contact with wonderful people and have creative work to do every day.

Big challenges remain! I still struggle to raise sufficient funds, organize volunteers to do more of the work, and take care of myself as I move all this forward. Working on early isolation seems to make the most difference.

Nancy Faulstich
Watsonville, California, USA
Reprinted from the e-mail discussion
list for RC Community members

Reaching for Someone I Disagreed With

I would like to share a story about reaching for someone I disagreed with.

In the county where I live, there's a statue of a Confederate soldier in front of the county courthouse. [Confederate soldiers fought in the U.S. Civil War on the side of the Confederacy, which was fighting in part to retain the institution of slavery.] Last week our county commissioners voted to remove it.

Many people, including white working-class people, support removing the statue. And there are also many working-class white people who are deeply upset about removing it.

After the county commissioners' meeting, some angry conservative white people gathered in a nearby parking lot. As I walked to my car, I saw a white man quietly sitting on a wall. He looked working class, and I guessed he might be conservative.

I sat down and asked him what he thought about the situation. He told me he was sad that people were acting in an angry way but thought it was okay for the statue to remain in front of the courthouse. For him, the statue was about honoring soldiers who had died in the Civil War, and he wanted that history to remain visible. I mentioned that not all people saw the statue in the way that he did and that some of them were very upset and hurt by it.

After some conversation I asked him, "Could you agree that the statue represents one sliver of history but that many other slivers of history are not represented by it?" He said he could agree to that and had some ideas for making the situation more inclusive. That led to a good conversation about what might be good for all people in our county.

When we stood up to leave, I thanked him and asked if he would shake my hand, which he did. He then asked me if we could hug. I was a little surprised, but I said yes, and we had a big hug. I told him our conversation had been very hopeful to me and the highlight of my evening. He told me he also felt hopeful. We both agreed that it had felt very human and we wished people would treat each other better.

Rachel Winters
Chatham County, North Carolina, USA
Reprinted from the RC e-mail discussion list
for leaders in the care of the environment



Addressing Anti-Semitism

A few weeks ago, Julie Saxe-Taller and I gave a talk at our synagogue called "Anti-Semitism in the U.S. Today." Every seat in the room was full—forty to fifty people. It went well. We had two mini-sessions: "When have you had an experience you weren't sure was anti-Semitism?" and "When have you had an ally?" Then we shared some RC theory and introduced the work of Jews and Allies United to End Anti-Semitism.

We also did a listening project at a street festival in Berkeley (California, USA). Eight pairs of Jews and allies actively engaged people with the question "How have you noticed anti-Semitism lately?" The allies were delighted to be part of it, and it was a big contradiction [to distress] for the Jews to do this with so much support.

Dan Alter
Berkeley, California, USA
Reprinted from the RC e-mail
discussion list for leaders of Jews

Share Solutions!

I've noticed that when the media report on anything related to climate change, they don't give a solution.

Recently I heard Mark Z. Jacobson, a professor at Stanford University (in California, USA), speak. He and his colleagues have started "The Solutions Project" <<http://thesolutionsproject.org/>> and have developed plans to replace fossil fuels with clean energy in 139 countries and all fifty U.S. states.

Prior to hearing him speak, I had been stuck in early distress that sounded like, "Okay, this is the way it will be"—a feeling that nothing will change.

Roberta Paro
Norwich, Connecticut, USA
Reprinted from the RC e-mail
discussion list for leaders of Catholics

Influencing Wide World Organizations

I'm a mixed-heritage (Colombian and European white) USer who has been living in the United Kingdom (UK) for sixteen years. I am also a newly single mother of Catholic heritage and a member of the Catholic Worker Movement.

My ten-year-old raised-in-RC daughter was the first climate student striker in the UK (although she is home educated and was not actually striking). Her first strike outside Parliament in London in October 2018 was organized by Extinction Rebellion (XR). That was how we first got to know XR.

After that we participated in the blocking of bridges. Also, members of XR/Christian Climate Action supported my daughter when she went to several big oil companies in London to ask their chief executive officers to please have a change of heart, declare a climate emergency, and keep their fossil fuels in the ground. Her action got a lot of publicity, and she received an award for it. (She has since been a spokesperson for XR and has founded XR Kids.)

Last January I began volunteering with XR in their international network, offering trainings on the principles and values of XR. That led to my being in the DNA (the heart of XR) working group in XR UK.

I have close relationships with some of the founding members of XR and with other active members who have a lot of structural power. I am able to influence people on decolonisation and centring marginalised voices. I am not the only one doing this work (or the only RCer working in XR in the UK), but it is still isolating at the structural power level. A lot more of us could be of use.

We can make ourselves uncomfortable and do this work now.

I remember an e-mail Diane Shisk (Acting International Commonality Reference Person for the Care of the Environment) and Julian Weissglass (International Commonality Reference Person for Wide World Change) sent out a few years ago that suggested that RCers join the biggest climate change organization in their locality (or start one if there isn't one) and go in and make it better. As RCers we have clear perspectives on many oppression issues; we have organized workshops and support groups. We're not perfect, but we have a lot of experience in these areas and know how to listen to people's ideas. We also know about discharge, but I am not emphasising discharge here. I

think that we can leave our comfort zones (one of the principles of XR) and do the hard work of organising in the messiness of a mass liberation movement.

I want to encourage all of us (who haven't already) to join our biggest local climate change or social change organization—Extinction Rebellion, Zero Hour, Fridays for Future, the Sunrise Movement, whatever is near us and makes sense for our particular background—and use our voices to raise the voices of people who are marginalised. If we are already in these organisations, we can go in deeper, and be brave and speak up. Our perspective is attractive.

We can go in as ourselves. We can volunteer to be in working groups and work our way in, via relationships, so we can influence strategies and tactics and trainings and language and systems and processes. While we are in there, we can suggest that people discharge more, too. They may learn to trust us on this after seeing what great perspectives we have and how much we are willing to do the work.

We can make ourselves uncomfortable and do this work now.

Anonymous

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



KATIE KAUFFMAN

A Small Climate Success

Here is a small but hopeful story:

Each winter my family goes to a four-day camp where we sing, dance, play folk music, write songs, and celebrate the end of a calendar year. Anyone who goes to this camp may offer a seventy-five-minute gathering on a particular topic, like “French Country Dances” or “How to Play Banjo.”

I led a gathering called “Our Climate Change Stories.”

Over the first twenty minutes of the gathering, twelve people arrived—or about sixteen percent of the camp. I had expected fewer people to want to stop doing music and talk about this scary topic. Many of the people had already met me. My years of discharge have helped me to share more of what I think about and to be more loving to new friends.

I asked people to say their names, where they lived, and one way they could tell [perceive] that the climate was changing even if they did not read the news. I repeated the instructions and widened the circle of chairs each time one more person arrived.

This worked well. It had nothing to do with quoting scientists or political leaders. It led to people thinking about their home environments and what they could see with their own eyes. Everyone shared for two minutes each.

Then I said that when we are listened to, we get smarter, and that the problem of climate change will need us *all*, not just people in certain roles, to be the smartest we can be, so we should listen to each other.



BROLGA • DAMIEN COOK



ANNE BARTON

I asked them to pair up and listen without interruption for six minutes each. “When you are talking, you can start out with a plan for what story to tell but then follow your mind anywhere it wants to take you. It does not have to make sense; you will be smarter afterward. When you are the listener, offer eye contact. Use a facial expression that shows that you are glad—glad that the other person has this chance to be heard, even if the story is not happy. When the timer goes off, stand up and stretch and then switch roles.”

This also worked well. Everyone did a mini-session as if there were nothing surprising in my instructions. It had been my briefest “introduction to Co-Counseling” ever, and it was enough. They looked like they could have gone right on to twelve-minute-each-way sessions if we’d had the time. Everyone seemed hungry to talk, now that there was a place in which talking about climate change was the expected thing to do.

I suggested that they look for opportunities to open up similar safe places for respectful listening everywhere they go. I said that the eye contact helps us get close to people, including those who may not agree with us, and helps us renew our hopefulness.

We each got a very short time to say highlights in our closing circle.

“Inspiring,” said one person.

“I feel better,” said a ninety-one-year-old.

“People like you give me hope,” said a man who I know votes differently from me.

As I walked out to go to my next class, two people who had just met and been each other’s partners for the mini-session told me that they were now friends and were going to stay in the room and keep talking to each other.

Jennifer Kreger
Fort Bragg, California, USA
Reprinted from the e-mail
discussion list for RC teachers

Language Liberation in a Union

I lead workshops for union staff and members, and our recent one was simultaneously interpreted into Spanish. I shared with the interpreter that I'm part of another group that pauses every twenty to thirty minutes to give the interpreter and the people listening time to rest. She had lots to say, and I listened to her for a long time.

She talked about how an effort to get a second interpreter had gone nowhere, and she shared some statistics indicating that the quality of interpretation goes down after thirty minutes if you don't change interpreters or take a break. We are going to use those statistics to talk with people about making the moment of silence a new union tradition.

Anonymous

LISA VOSS

Supporting Climate Justice Activists

I recently started an open biweekly drop-in support group for local climate justice activists. We're calling it a "home base for climate justice activists." Nine to twelve of us attend.

It's been a good challenge to share what I know about RC in this setting.

The group has made strong use of "news and goods," mini-sessions on our fears and hopes, and self-appreciation. We answer questions like, "What's going well? What's hard? What are your next steps? What support do you need?"

We talk a lot about what's hard about being a climate activist. We talk about hopelessness and fear. We talk about guilt and overwork. And we laugh together. People are gradually getting the idea that it's not about convincing each other about specific issues or solutions.

I offer bits of theory about reality and the nature of human beings. I encourage people to think about how to take care of themselves and to not do things alone. We've touched on racism.

Last week we talked about how every human actually wants to be engaged in climate justice work—they just may not know it yet. We talked about the harmfulness of criticism and passing judgment on ourselves and others. We talked about not blaming ourselves for being implicated in a system that is inhumane and unsustainable.

The only thing that's been hard about the group is the feelings I'm left with after each meeting: "It wasn't good enough." "It was a failure." Ha! No one else seems to think that. But I do need to keep discharging the old distress.

At a recent workshop Diane Shisk said something like, "If it's worth doing, it's worth doing shoddily!" (Shoddily means poorly.) This contradicts the feeling that I have to get it "right" or "perfect."

Brian Lavendel

Madison, Wisconsin, USA

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

Where We Spend Our Money

I was on the literature sales promotion team at the West Coast USA Care of the Environment Workshop. Being on that team helped me stop and think about gift giving and resource allocation (where we spend our money) in this time of climate breakdown. I've been thinking about how to move money quickly into organizations, including RC, that are working to stop climate change.

Scientists estimate we have only a few more years to make enormous changes in how industrialized countries are powered. This means making enormous changes in where we dedicate resources, in what we prioritize to maintain a livable world. Giving money to deal with climate change is one essential *action* that large numbers of people need to take in the near future.

How are you thinking about allocating your resources in this time of collapse? If you have more than you need, what are you doing with the excess? Holding on to it does not appear to be a rational decision.

INVESTING IN RC

Moving money to the RC Community is a key way to increase our chances of successfully building a unified movement to protect life. We need many people discharging, re-evaluating, and thinking more clearly about the climate emergency. This is a top priority.

Our *Guidelines* say (on page 49), "We encourage all Co-Counselors and others who want to support our work to voluntarily donate to the Re-evaluation Foundation or to local Outreach (Area Outreach Funds) or International Outreach (Community Service Funds)." We

can also contribute to Outreach Funds by paying higher up on workshop sliding scales.

Investing in RC could help make more workshops on climate change accessible to more people, by providing scholarships and making such workshops happen more often. Imagine a fund that would make it possible for climate justice activists to go to climate change workshops for \$20 or \$50 (U.S.), instead of \$250 or \$300. Raising money for Sustaining All Life also helps bring RC information and tools to climate justice activists.

SHARING RC LITERATURE

In addition, sharing RC literature is a fantastic way to spread ideas about liberation from oppression and introduce RC theory—about paying attention, discharge, and re-evaluation. I'm encouraging everyone to give RC literature to everyone in their life. Why buy things that are not re-emergent? How would it push you on your distresses to give RC literature instead?

DONATING TO CLIMATE JUSTICE GROUPS

I'm also asking people to consider donating money to local groups that are organizing for climate justice. I'm a director of a non-profit organization, and I can tell you that money makes a huge difference in our capacity to inform and lead large numbers of people. Most non-profits spend a large percentage of their time on fundraising. Ample funding would make it so much easier to deal with the climate crisis and eliminate the oppressions that are dividing us.

By investing money *now* in organizations that are working to end oppression and stop climate change, we can improve the odds of avoiding complete catastrophe.

Nancy Faulstich

Watsonville, California, USA

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



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In the case of RC literature on the RC website, you may print or download one copy of any article for personal use without charge. If you want to print or electronically distribute multiple copies, you must request permission from the International Reference Person and pay ten cents per copy (see paragraph above).

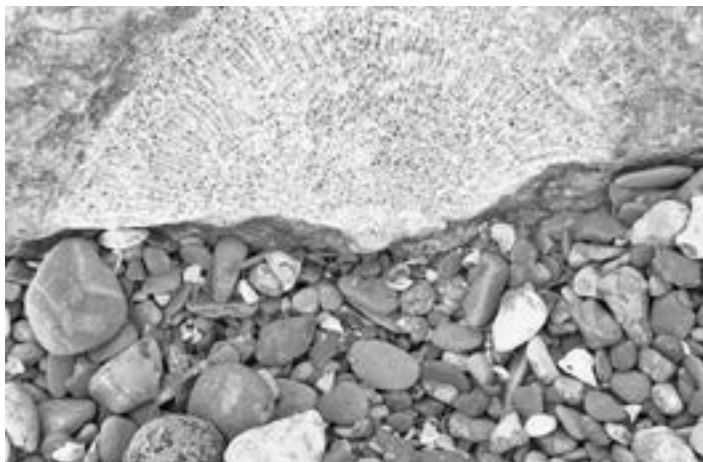
The Community RC Website

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
- "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.



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How to Contact Us Online

- The International RC Community: ircc@rc.org
- United to End Racism: uer@rc.org
- Rational Island Publishers: litsales@rc.org, for orders and billing questions (or order on our website at <www.rationalisland.com>)
- Re-evaluation Counseling Community Resources (Intensives and office matters only): rcoffice@rc.org
- Automatic response e-mail about RC: info@rc.org
- For sending photos: photos@rc.org

We now have websites for four ongoing projects that are taking the work of RC into the broader society. They have information geared to people who are not yet a part of RC.

United to End Racism (UER) works with other groups involved in eliminating racism and shares with them the theory and practice of RC. You can find valuable resources and a description of UER's projects at <www.unitedtoendracism.org>. (UER's e-mail address is uer@rc.org.)

No Limits for Women (No Limits) is an international organization of women (and men who are allies to women) dedicated to eliminating sexism and male domination throughout the world. Its website, <www.nolimitsforwomen.net>, features the No Limits Draft Liberation Policy Statement for Women and a video of a No Limits workshop, *Women and Men in Partnership to End Sexism*.

Sustaining All Life (SAL) has been attending 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 <nbiinc@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@glennwjohanson.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
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BACKGROUNDS AND AVOCATIONS

ADULT CHILDREN OF ALCOHOLICS:

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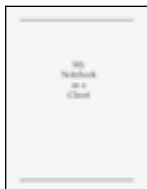
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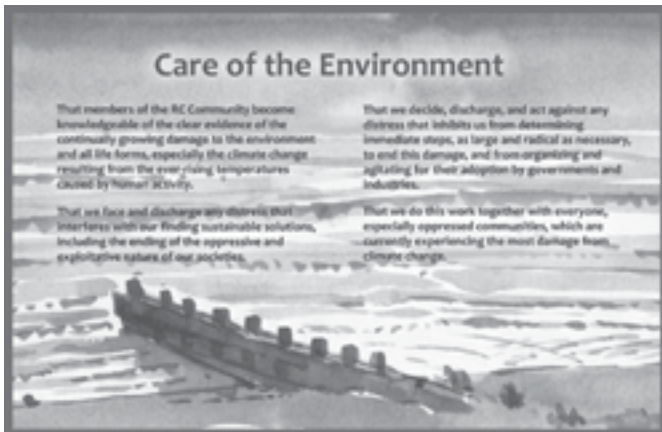
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If you are looking for information about Re-evaluation Counseling in a particular geographical location, we suggest that you first look in the section "Reference Persons for Organized Areas" to see if there is an Area Reference Person for that location. If there isn't, check to see if there is an RC teacher, by looking under the section "Authorized Teachers of Re-evaluation Counseling in Developing Communities." If there is no Area Reference Person and no teacher, check the following section, "Re-evaluation Counseling Contacts," to learn whether there is someone (who is not an RC teacher) who has expressed an interest in meeting others who might join with him or her in getting Co-Counseling started. If there are none of the above, you can contact Re-evaluation Counseling Community Resources at 719 Second Avenue North, Seattle, Washington 98109, USA, Tel. +1-206-284-0311, e-mail: <irc@rc.org>, for information on how to get RC started.

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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 ircc@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
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 2-5/20	Warwick, New York, USA ●	"David Nijinsky"	"JS Chardin." Tel. +1-314-249-5089, gmorandi7614@gmail.com	GBQT Men
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 16-18/20	Sydney, Australia ✧	Chuck Esser	Lyndall Katz, lyndallk@gmail.com	Family Workers
January 18-20/20	Sydney, Australia ✧	Chuck Esser	Lyndall Katz, lyndallk@gmail.com	Teen Family
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	San Francisco, California, USA ✧	Maria Franco & Diane Shisk	Sparky Griego. Tel. +1-505-577-5325, sgriego@rocketmail.com	International—Chicanas/Mexicanas/Mexicanas-Americanas & Female Allies
February 13-16/20	Kagerup, Denmark (near Copenhagen) ●	Diane Balsler	Susanne Wiltrup 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, stedtdt@comcast.net	Men's Leaders, for West Coast of North America & Mexico
February 14-16/20	Warwick, New York, USA ✧	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 21-23/20	Kenmore, Washington, USA (near Seattle) ✧	Dan Nickerson	Shari Briggs, sharibriggs@hotmail.com	A New Goal to End Classism
February 21-23/20	near Boston, Massachusetts, USA ✧	Joanie Parker	Cynthia Phinney, cynth@gwi.net	Trade Union & Social Justice Activists
February 27-March 1/20	Eastern USA ✧	"Jeanne D'Arc" & Cherie Brown	"Ruth Zack," ruthzack18@gmail.com	International—LGBTQ Jews
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 13-15/20	Lunteren, the Netherlands ●	Goof Buijs	Paul Goorden, paulgoorden60@gmail.com	Men, for Fryslân & the Netherlands
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, jrtmsky@gmail.com	Leaders in Maryland, Washington, D.C., Pennsylvania, Delaware, & New Jersey, USA
March 27-29/20	Northants, England ●	"Jeanne D'Arc"	"Jean Genie," jeaniebristol@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, jmanno@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 & Sparky Griego	Julie Fox-Rubin, julie@foxrubin.com Mike Kingsbury, swatj2019@gmail.com	Jews & Allies Liberation
April 17-19/20	Marin Headlands, California, USA ✧	Diane Balsler & Tim Jackins	Micaela Morse, micaelamorse@mindspring.com	Women & Men Leaders

continued . . .

WORKSHOPS

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DATE	PLACE & ACCESSIBILITY CODE	LEADER(S)	ORGANIZER	DESCRIPTION
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	Northwest USA, location to be announced	◇ Cherie Brown & Dorann van Heeswijk	Jews: Judi Soloway, jchazanow@yahoo.com Allies: Tibor Bessko, besskota@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 Boston, Massachusetts, USA	◇ "Jeanne D'Arc" & "Clara Lemlich"	"Audre L.," audrelrc@gmail.com	LGBTQ Parents
May 15-17/20	Chicago, Illinois, USA	◇ Joanne Bray	Claudia Murphy, cmm214@aol.com	Catholic Liberation, for Midwest USA
May 15-17/20	near Atlanta, Georgia, USA (tentative location)	◇ Rudy Nickens	Dale Everts, dale.evarts@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
May 28-31/20	Europe	◇ Tim Jackins	Brigitte Theeuwen, b.theeuwen@antenna.nl	Leaders, for Europe
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	Jeannine Giguere-Gagnon, jgigueregagnon@gmail.com	The Working Class & the Climate Emergency, for North America
June 12-14/20	Tonbridge, Kent, England	◇ Cherie Brown	Stella Mason. Tel. +44 208 392 0605, stellamason@blueyonder.co.uk	Jewish Liberation (June 11-12/20, Leaders in Jewish Liberation)
June 12-14/20	Tonbridge, Kent, England	◇ Dorann van Heeswijk	Amanda Harrington. Tel. +44 7976 258685, amanda.harrington01@gmail.com	Allies to Jews
June 19-21/20	near Knoxville, Tennessee, USA	◇ Marilyn Robb	Dale Everts, dale.evarts@gmail.com	Educational Change/Reclaiming Intelligence
July 3-5/20	Nairobi, Kenya	◇ Diane Balsler assisted by Tokumbo Bodunde	Wanjiku Kironyo, wanjiku@sedsmmc.org	Women, for Kenya
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 10-12/20	Nairobi, Kenya	◇ Diane Balsler assisted by Tokumbo Bodunde	Wanjiku Kironyo, wanjiku@sedsmmc.org	Teachers & Leaders, for Kenya
July 14-16/20	Location to be announced	◇ Tim Jackins & Barbara Love		Wygellian Leaders, BLCD (Black Liberation & Community Development)
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	Warwick, New York, USA	◇ Emily Feinstein & Monnie Paashuis	Kathryn Gardner. Tel. +1-207-890-7823, kathryngardner13@gmail.com	Women Artists' Leaders Liberation, 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
September 24-27/20	West Coast USA	◇ "Jeanne D'Arc" with "David Nijnsky"	"Laura Secord," laurasecord2@yahoo.ca	GLBQT Leaders (Eagles)
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 22-25/20	East Coast USA	◇ Barbara Love & Cherie Brown	Gentile organizer: Rachel Noble. Tel. +1-971-212-5768, rcnoble@msn.com	Black Gentiles & Jews
October 28- November 1/20	Lunteren, the Netherlands	◇ Tim Jackins	Goof Buijs, bunic@ziggo.nl	Men Leaders, for Europe
November 6-8/20	Glasgow, Scotland	◇ Diane Shisk & others		Pre-COP26 RC workshop
November 9-13/20	Glasgow, Scotland	◇		COP26 (for SALUER)
November 26-29/20	Cheshunt, Herts, England	● Dvora Slavin	Christine Sheppard. Tel. +44 (0) 1525 374378, christinemsheppard@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
December 4-6/20	Maryland, USA	◇ Ellie Putnam	Uta Allers, uta.allers@gmail.com	Elders

Present Time Index—January 2020

Africa: workshop in Nigeria, 28; and language liberation, 44-45
African-heritage people: and being large women, 40-43; and a perspective on climate change, 66-67
Allies: to large women, 39-43; to Indigenous people, 59
Anti-Semitism: and the climate emergency, 68; addressing, 84
Art: and quickly getting an idea across, 71
Australia: climate action in, 78
Basque language: article in, 50-51
Children: see young people
Class oppression/classism: about, 22-27, 37-38; and upward mobility, 52-54
Climate crisis: and teaching RC, 19-20; connecting with the earth, 31; and Jewish men, 46; is happening to you, 65; a Black woman's perspective, 66-67; and being Jewish, 68; support group for climate activists, 68; and using art, 71; following young people's leadership, 72; donating to offset a carbon footprint, 73; and listening, 73; women's climate action, 74-75; speaking out about, as a worker, 76; music as a powerful tool, 77; action in Australia, 78; and disaster preparedness, 79; building a local climate organization, 83; where we donate our money, 85; a success, 86; supporting climate justice activists, 68, 87; influencing wide world organizations, 88
Closeness/contact/connection: and sleep, 6
Co-Counseling/counseling: challenging isolation, 3; staying focused on good things, 4; and sleep, 5-7; taking responsibility as client, 8; "Remind Yourself Song," 11; on early distress, 15; setting one's own goals, 20; on discouragement, in a congregation on Yom Kippur, 29-30; in a wide world group, 32; about guilt, 38; and large women, 39-43; on historical and ancestral events, 81-82
Colonialism: and language liberation in Africa, 44-45
Computer games: and young people, 12-14
Community (RC): Building it, while getting RC ideas out widely, 17
Direct production workers: making friends with, 24-25; learning about, reaching out to, 37-38, 52-53, 54
Disaster preparedness: for addressing the climate crisis, 79
Discharge/discharging: on historical and ancestral events, 81-82
Distress: early, 15; 81-82
Environment (care of): and connecting with the earth, 31
Genocide: and European Native people, 48-51
Goals: setting one's own, 20
Guilt: a possible source of, 38
Hebrew: articles in, 21, 58
Indigenous people: European Native people, 48-51; following the leadership of, 59
Isolation: challenging it, 3
Israel: a workshop on racism in, 21; Israeli and Diaspora Jews reaching for each other, 57; a parents' climate movement in, 70-71
Jackins, Harvey: 8, 11, 20, 32, 38, 56, 67, 78
Jackins, Tim: 1, 15, 17
Jews: at an Israeli workshop focused on racism, 21; working on discouragement, 29-30; at a Jewish men's workshop, 46-47; taking on the whole Jewish liberation program, 57; and the climate crisis, 68
Language liberation: in Africa, 44-45; at the International "Mental Health" Liberation Leaders' Conference, 59; in a union, 87
Large women: workshop for, 39-43
Leadership: an Area Reference Persons' workshop, 18; having influence as a working-class person, 22-27; reaching more people with RC, 33-34; following the leadership of Indigenous people, 59; following young people's leadership, 72; building a local climate organization, 83
Liberation (see Oppression/liberation)
Listening: and the climate crisis, 73; "to someone I disagreed with," 84
Literature (RC): appreciating, 36; sharing, 85
Men: Jewish men, 46-47
"Mental health" oppression: focusing on good things, 4; the Sunrise Center, 10; and racism, 56; supports all oppressions, 56; and language liberation, 59

Money: donating to RC, 85
Music: a powerful tool, 77; lullabies for activists, 82
Native people (see Indigenous people)
Nigeria: teachers' and leaders' workshop, 28
Oppression/liberation: "mental health," 4, 10, 56, 59; working-class, 22-27, 37-38, 52-54; of direct production workers, 37-38; of large women, 39-43; of large Black women, 41-43; language liberation in Africa, 44-45, in a union, 87; of Jewish men, 46-47; of European Native people, 48-51; of women, and male domination, 55; of Jews, 46-47, 57; of Black people, 41-43, 66-67; and complete respect, 67; of people with disabilities, 79
Oppressor/distresses: and European Native people, 48
Parents: young people and computer games, 12-14
People with disabilities: and the climate crisis, 79
Poems/songs/rhymes: "Remind Yourself Song," 11; "Promises," 75
Poor/raised-poor people: and upward mobility, 53-54; and male domination, 55
Racism: an Israeli workshop focused on, 21; and European Native people, 48-51; and "mental health" oppression, 56
Sexism: and large women, 39-43; and male domination, 55
Sleep: articles about, 5-7
Society (collapsing): effect on sleep, 7; and reaching more people with RC, 33-34
Spanish: articles in, 62, 64
Shisk, Diane: 19-20, 33-34
Sunrise Center: about, 10
Support groups: in the wide world, 32, 68, 87
Sustaining All Life (SAL): at COP25, 61-64
Teaching/communicating RC: getting RC ideas out widely while building the RC Community, 17; an Area Reference Persons' workshop, 18; in a time of collapse, 19-20; at Yom Kippur, 29-30; and connecting with the earth, 31; in wide world support groups, 32, 68; how to teach RC, 32; reaching more people with RC, 33-34; "going public" with RC, 80; supporting climate justice activists, 87; influencing wide world organizations, 88
Wide world changing: on Yom Kippur, 29-30; at COP25, 61-64; persisting with a correct policy, 69; a parents' climate movement in Israel, 70-71; using art, 71; following young people's leadership, 72; donating to offset a carbon footprint, 73; by listening, 73; a women's climate action, 74-75; speaking out as a worker, 76; music as a powerful tool, 77; in Australia, 78; and greed, 78; disaster preparedness and the climate crisis, 79; lullabies for activists, 82; building a local climate organization, 83; "reaching for someone I disagreed with," 84; sharing solutions, 84; where we donate our money, 85; a small climate success, 86; supporting climate justice activists, 87; influencing wide world organizations, 88
Women: liberation of large women, 39-43; Black women, 40-43, 66-67; a women's climate action, 74-75
Working-class people: leading and having influence, 22-27; direct production workers, 24-25, 37-38, 52-55; ending classism in Australia, 39-38; upward mobility, 52-54; fighting male domination and sexism, 55; speaking out as a worker, 76
Workshops/gather-ins/conferences: on racism, in Israel, 21; a working-class workshop, 22-27; for teachers and leaders, in Nigeria, 28; on "working together to end classism," 37-38; for large women and allies, 39-43; for Jewish men, 46-47; for European Native people, 49-51; the Jewish Leaders' Conference, 57; on "going public with RC," 80
Young people: and sleep, 5-6; an eye-opening workshop with, 8; communicating with about world events, 9; and computer games, 12-14; complete respect for, 67; following their leadership, 72

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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