



Present Time

No. 156 (Vol. 41 No. 3)

July 2009

An effectively caring person is the most
“dangerous” revolutionary you can let loose.

Harvey Jackins

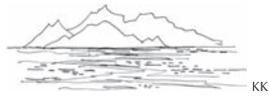
In this July 2009 *Present Time* you'll find a large number articles on parenting; some of Tim Jackins' talks at the Pre-World Conferences; reports from a recent White Privilege Conference; thoughts about Irish, disability, and anti-Jewish oppressions; and lots of other thoughtful contributions. For the October issue, please send us articles and poetry by Monday, August 17, and changes to the back-pages lists by Monday, August 24.

Lisa Kauffman, editor

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The Purpose of the Pre-World Conferences

Tim Jackins,¹ at the Eastern European Pre-World Conference, May 2009

We do these Pre-World Conferences every four years. We gather together representatives of the RC Communities, around the globe. Each time, our Communities are more widespread.

The purpose of these conferences is for us to get solidly reacquainted with each other. It's also to trade the information and understandings about Re-evaluation Counseling that we have acquired in the previous four years. Every Community has a slightly different perspective, and each is learning at a different rate. We learn things from Co-Counseling with each other.



WALES • ROBERT TOMBS

Another purpose of these conferences is for us to think further about the Re-evaluation Counseling Communities. Re-evaluation Counseling has existed for fifty-eight years. Our Communities have existed for maybe thirty-eight years. Re-evaluation Counseling first developed as a theory and practice in Seattle (Washington, USA) and was in existence almost twenty years before anyone thought about having RC Communities.

At the end of the 1960s, RC moved out to different places and involved new people. We had to start thinking about how to make it work in new places—places without the resource and experience that had developed in Seattle. Who should teach RC? How much organization do we need? How little organization can we have and function well?

The first RC class was taught in 1958. The first World Conference was held in 1972, and the first version of the *Guidelines* was adopted there. The first World Conference convened a group of people who knew much less RC than you do. Few people there had been in RC for more than three or four years. You can imagine the amount of restimulation that went on²

because people hadn't yet had the opportunities to have sessions as fully as we've had.

As RC has developed, we have figured out many important things. Thousands of us have put a lot of work and counseling into thinking about our Communities. We have worked on the *Guidelines*, over and over and over again, for thirty-eight years. The *Guidelines* are an interesting document. When people first get into RC they don't know anything about the *Guidelines*, and most of them don't care. They just care that the Community works the way it does. They love the benefits of

the *Guidelines* and the work that has been done, but they don't think about it. It's usually many years before people show real interest in the *Guidelines*. Once they actually pay attention to them, they become interested.

We've done well. Just look at each other. It's interesting that one set of ideas could attract people from all over the world and that there's enough structure that we can work well together.

AT THIS CONFERENCE

There will be a couple of working-group meetings at this conference, one of which will be looking at the *Guidelines*. The other will be looking at the goals of the RC Communities. At each World Conference, every four years, we set a goal or goals. We have done this for many years. At the last two World Conferences we did it a little differently. If you look at the earlier goals, they were long lists of wonderful things. In the last two years our goals have been about what we in the RC Communities can do now.

Our goals are for guiding our way forward for the next four years and beyond. They look at areas that we have struggled to put enough attention on. They are intended to wake us up to possibilities that are within our reach but not yet fully grasped. The intent of the goals is to encourage us to think about these

continued . . .

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

² Went on means happened.

COUNSELING PRACTICE

continued . . .

possibilities and counsel on them so that the work of the Communities can progress in those areas.

I want to use a good part of the first day of this conference for our Co-Counseling. Any time we gather this much experience together, each of us has a chance to make use of a rare opportunity. The large amount of attention available in this room is a wonderful resource and will make our sessions go better. After focusing on sessions with each other, we can turn and more fully work on our Community.

SHOW OUR DIFFICULTIES

One of our tasks is to use each other as fully as we can, to use the safety of this group to go further in our sessions than we often feel we can. One way to do this is to not hide that we have difficulties. You have difficulties. We all have difficulties. We can be a little defensive about them, and that gets in the way of our freeing ourselves from them. It is perfectly fine that each of us has big difficulties. It's not fine that they be left there. We get to use each other in the work to

remove them from our lives. The more we can be open about our difficulties and invite others in as allies in the struggle, the faster we'll re-emerge.³

THE GROWTH OF THE COMMUNITIES

Another thing we will look at is the growth of the Communities. We want everyone in the world to have access to RC tools. No one is going to make that happen but us. Many of us have waited for someone else to do it, and that hasn't worked terribly well. We do have a lot of people in RC, so we have done well, but the task of getting it out to everyone is still before us. We get to look at our distresses in this area: what slows us down, what discourages us, what makes us forget about growth. We have the opportunity to counsel on these distresses, so that they don't continue to impede our progress.

We have enough to do these three days!

³ Re-emerge means recover from how we were hurt and become our real selves.



BILL GARZA

Goals in the RC Community

At each World Conference, the RC Community sets goals for itself to help guide its way forward and begin work in areas that have been difficult to focus on but are important to our development and our progress out of distress.

Having these goals has made it possible for us to begin work in these areas more consistently and effectively. We have also found it useful to have only a small number of goals on which to concentrate.

Once the work has begun, modifying a goal is not the next step we should take. Our job is to continue the ongoing work of sharing our experiences and figuring

out how to ever more effectively move in the direction the goal initially set out. The goal is simply an important marker for an early stage of the work.

All of the priorities expressed in our goals will gradually make their way to being fully included in the ongoing work of the entire RC Community.

The goals enumerate only a few of the many important challenges we get to take on.* Most of the challenges will not be stated as goals at a World Conference and do not need to be. Instead we can have Co-Counseling

* In this context, take on mean face and take action on.

sessions on the distresses connected to these challenges, hold discussion tables and topic groups, and begin to get other minds involved. Through this process, the challenges can be brought up and thinking about them spread throughout the RC Community, without anyone having to wait for some *unnneeded* stamp of approval.

Any feelings that this is too difficult to do, or that one needs someone else or the whole RC Community to adopt a goal before one can move forward, must come from old recordings of powerlessness and can be counseled on and conquered.

Tim Jackins

Embarrassment and Humiliation

As a client I've worked a lot on embarrassment and humiliation, and I've tried to learn how to help other people work on them, too.

A few people seem able to discharge embarrassment easily. Others have had this type of discharge almost completely suppressed. Perhaps most of us do not remember the majority of embarrassing and humiliating incidents we've undergone.

The recordings we've acquired from embarrassing incidents substantially limit the flexibility of our behavior. Without discharge, we are generally unaware of how limited we have become and tend to believe that it is who we are.

Discharging these distresses is important work—not only because it frees our minds but also because embarrassment and humiliation play a big role in oppression and internalized oppression. They are systematically used to control us, and they work well because they cause us to limit ourselves with little or no outside intervention. (A few years ago I saw a French film called *Ridicule* that showed how owning-class people in the court of Louis XVI practiced humiliating each other as a technique for gaining political power.)

What is the difference between embarrassment and humiliation? I think of embarrassment as a distress we can still laugh about. Humiliation usually contains grief and heavier fears.

Feelings of embarrassment and humiliation can seem unbearably painful. They can also cause us to doubt that we are okay. They make many of us question whether we are like other people, as good as

other people, or truly belong with other people. As you read this, it is probably clear to you that they are distress recordings. However, when you are in the middle of the feelings, it's likely that you believe them, and limit yourself to try to avoid feeling them.

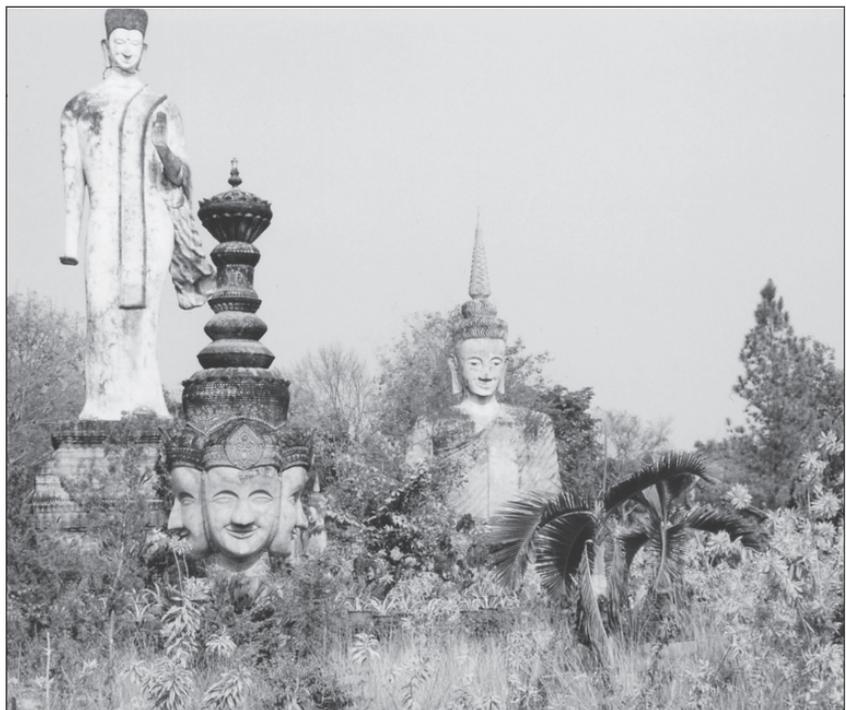
To work on them we have to decide to feel feelings we "want" to avoid. This means actively deciding to "walk toward" embarrassment and humiliation. In the middle of feeling the distress, we usually can't tell whether the humiliation is past or present; it feels the same when it's discharging as when it happened. The counselor has to gently remind us that we are fine and encourage us to keep looking at the feelings.

Much of this material* is in occlusion. For that reason it can seem safest and easiest to begin working on it in large groups

* Material means distress.

and to start on the lighter side (with embarrassment rather than humiliation). Large groups work well because (1) people's stories are similar and it's always easy to see that the client is fine and completely innocent, that the distress came from the outside; (2) it becomes clear that everyone has this distress (it was forced on everyone through contagion and oppression); and (3) hearing other people's stories allows our own stories to "pop" briefly out of occlusion. When this happens, if we get to have a mini-session, we may do enough discharging on an incident that we can remember to work on it later in a longer session. If we don't, such incidents seem to go quickly back into occlusion. Because the recordings have an inhibiting effect, a combination of encouragement from the outside and decision on our own part seems to be required for us to persist in discharging them.

continued . . .



THAI STATUES • CLAUDIA ALLEN

COUNSELING PRACTICE

continued . . .

I may ask a group, “What is the most embarrassing thing that ever happened to you, or to someone else?” I also tell stories of embarrassing things that have happened to people. The main themes seem to be bodies, bodily functions (urine, feces, intestinal gas, sex) and “mistakes.”

The people who have the most attention for embarrassment usually talk first, and this is helpful. I do not force anyone to talk; I *offer* sessions but do not require them. At the same time I encourage people to decide to work on this material.

CONTROL PATTERNS

I’ve noticed that we tend to have control patterns that stop us from discharging fully on embarrassment. We have “learned” that some

embarrassed laughter is okay, but not too much. (“Too much” is related to “mental health” oppression.) We may tell an incident, laugh about it a little, and then stop ourselves from continuing to discharge. If there is enough attention, and the counselor can keep encouraging us, the “light” embarrassment discharge often leads to the discharge of heavy fear.

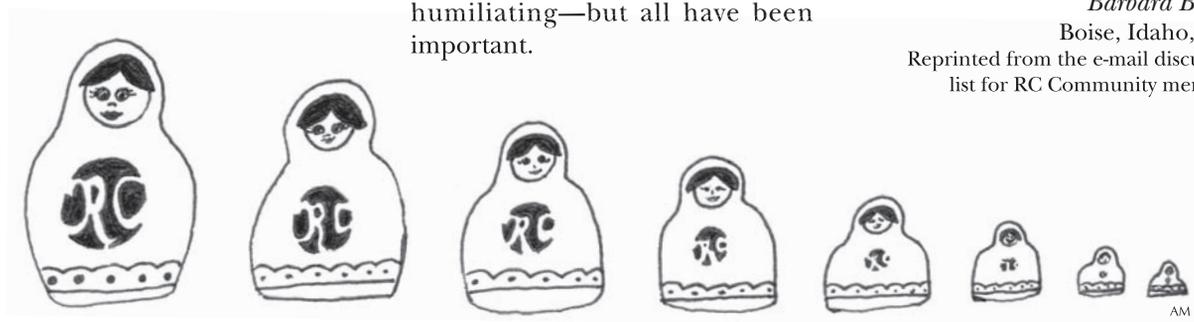
It is useful to work, as often as possible, on our chains of embarrassing and humiliating incidents. When I started working on mine, I was unable to discharge on incidents that had happened to me—I could only discharge about things that had happened to other people. I have since been able to work on all of the incidents that have come out of occlusion. Some have been embarrassing, some humiliating—but all have been important.

Most important by far has been something I decided long ago: that in RC settings, if I felt “too humiliated” to do something, I would go toward that thing instead of avoiding it—for example, talking in class; volunteering for a demonstration; talking to a workshop leader; telling my regular Co-Counselor absolutely everything about me, including sexual feelings I’d had about someone in RC; and so on.

I’d like each of us to become “unhumiliatable”—that is, to discharge enough that we are free of confusion and can never be humiliated again, no matter what happens or what mistakes we make. (If we’re not making mistakes, we may not be trying anything very interesting!)

Barbara Boring
Boise, Idaho, USA

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



Be Less Critical with Spouse

Thank you for your long letter. I’m sure it did you some good to write it. It’s hard to tell¹ what’s going on when anyone feels as frustrated as you obviously do. Certainly the best lead I could give you is to approve of S— wholeheartedly. If she is making serious mistakes, a critical attitude will only tend to increase them, while if you simply approve of her and validate her—without mentioning any mistakes you notice, and keeping the tense look off your face—chances are she’ll be able to think about them and correct them herself.

The reports I have on her are not as bad as the ones you give me, and I wonder if you haven’t settled into a critical pattern of some sort. How about scanning over all the times anyone was critical in your life, or dissatisfied with your performance, and then taking some kind of direction, such as, “I couldn’t do better myself. My,² she’s wonderful,” and see if that makes a difference.

*Harvey Jackins*³
From a letter written in 1973

¹ In this context, tell means know.

² In this context, my is an interjection that expresses surprise or adds emphasis.

³ Harvey Jackins was the founder and first International Reference Person of the Re-evaluation Counseling Communities.

Overcoming Distress About Play

Ever since I learned about the immense power of playlistening,¹ I have tried to playlisten with my two sons—not without difficulties, however. Gradually I found myself creating excuses and refraining from playing. I even convinced myself that it was indeed hard to play after a long, tiring day at the office and that only if I withdrew from my sons would they learn to play by themselves.

The opportunity to re-evaluate came my way when I attended the recent Pre-World Conference, led by Tim Jackins and Diane Shisk, in Pune (India). Everyone played for at least a half an hour before every class. On the first day I pretended to be absorbed in the play, but in my heart I resented it. I felt

as though as an RCer I *had* to be comfortable playing. In one of the mini-sessions that followed, I listened to another person who seemed to feel the way I did, and I was reassured that I wasn't alone.

On the next day I purposely arrived late for the classes so that I wouldn't have to join in the play—but I did not escape! Tim threw a ball at me, and I had to respond. This time I dared to show how I felt, and soon some of my earliest memories related to play started coming back to me.

My father had always dreamt of me becoming a sportsperson, but in the badminton hall my racket would rarely touch the shuttle. My father would look at me with anger and disappointment, and refuse to talk to me for several days, after I didn't fare well on the badminton court. I was flooded with memories of how playing had been about winning and how if a person lost a game, he or she was

considered incompetent.

I felt a combination of rage and grief, and knew that as a child I must have craved play in which I would be allowed to *just be*, and be loved.

As I discharged, another memory popped up in my mind. I was surprised it could be so intact, as if it were frozen in time. I must have been about four years old. My parents had taken me to a play park where there was a jungle gym² with two ladders placed vertically some distance from each other and a third suspended horizontally between them at a height that seemed scary to me.

continued . . .

²A jungle gym is a structure for children to climb on.

¹ Playlistening is a type of play in which the adult playfully takes the less powerful role, watches for the child's laughter to break through, and then continues the play so that the laughter keeps rolling. The adult carefully follows the lead of the child's laughter, is good-natured and affectionate, and does not tickle.



CORDOBA, SPAIN • DAVID PRICE

COUNSELING PRACTICE

continued . . .

Still, I dared to climb all the way to the top and crawl from one end to the other, greatly enjoying my adventure. My father, however, insisted that I suspend myself from the horizontal ladder and move forward, one hand at a time, to reach the other end. I had no way of showing him how upset and scared I felt. Finally I succumbed and went a short distance, but my arms felt too weak and I fell down hard on the ground. My heels hurt from the impact, and feeling shocked and enraged I started crying. My father, wanting me to "learn to be tough," didn't reach out, which only aggravated my feelings of terror and isolation.

The next morning at the workshop I instinctively went early to the hall, eager to play. Tim played ball and fought pillow fights with me until I grew red, sweated and laughed a lot, and eventually broke down in tears while he held me tightly. I cannot explain how light and relieved I felt after that.

Since the workshop, I have played consistently with my sons. I have made a point, however, of it never being about winning or losing and have ended every play session with warm, caring hugs. Thank you, Tim!

Looking back, I realize that adults often try to fulfill their own unfulfilled wishes through their children, and that this can create an uphill struggle for the children. And because information about caring through play hasn't been very available, adults often force children to play games in which only one person or team can win, while everyone else, who loses, feels miserable, incompetent, and left out. In response, many children try to show their upset and are then told to be a "good sport."

I hope other parents who, despite their best intentions, find it hard to play with their children get to understand that having such a difficulty is not their fault, that it is due to what was acted out at them, and, most important, that it can be counseled away!

Megha Deuskar
Pune, India



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La Lista, por Harvey Jackins

"Todo lo que sé sobre RC y el mundo,
hasta ahora."

Este práctico, extenso y bien organizado manual de referencia podrá proporcionarle respuestas a la mayoría, o a todas sus preguntas relacionadas con RC.

Harvey escribió en el prólogo a *La Lista*: "Mientras la teoría se ha desarrollado, muchos libros, folletos y revistas se han publicado para comunicar diferentes aspectos de la misma. Pero al mismo tiempo, cada vez mas se hace necesario contar con un resumen general. Siendo yo la persona que ha estado vinculada con el Proceso de Reevaluación desde sus inicios, se me solicitó elaborar dicho resumen."

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Para ordenar, vea la página 109.

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"Everything I know about RC and the world,
until now."

This convenient, comprehensive, and well-organized reference "manual" will furnish answers to most, if not all, of your RC-related questions.

Harvey wrote in the foreward to *The List*: "As the theory has developed, many books, pamphlets, and journals have been published to communicate different portions of it. Increasingly, it has seemed that a general summary is needed. As a person who has been associated with Re-evaluation Counseling from its beginnings, I was asked to produce such a summary."

\$25 (U.S.) plus postage and handling.
To order see page 109.

The following ten pages contain excerpts from a discussion, on the RC e-mail discussion list for leaders of parents, about children's sleeping and nursing.

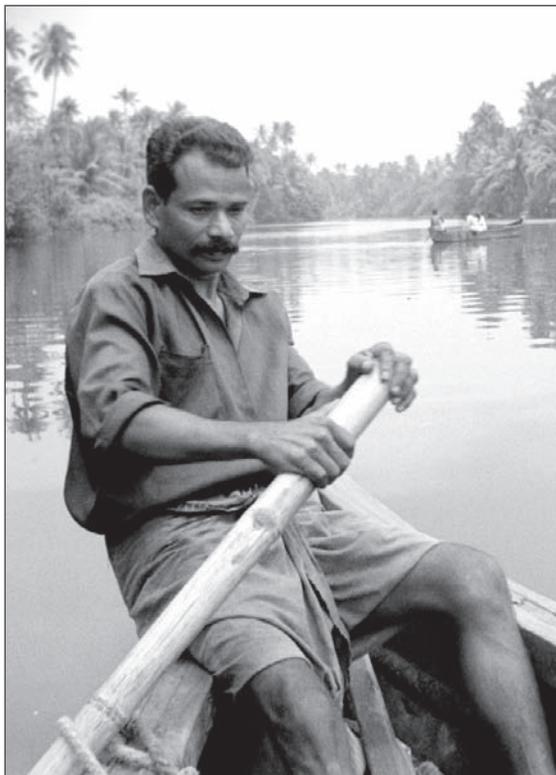
Children and Sleep

I am looking for insights about children sleeping for longer stretches in the night. My daughter is eight months old and typically wakes up, wanting to nurse, from two to six times a night. In the early part of the evening, she sometimes cries out but then goes right back to sleep, either by herself or with someone close. After she's slept for three to seven hours, however, whenever she wakes up she seems to want to nurse.

I have friends who advocate leaving children to cry by themselves for short and then longer periods. They all seem reluctant to do it but say that after several nights their children sleep all the way through the night and are happy during the day. That seems like teaching children that they can't count on¹ help when they need it. What confuses me are the reports of how happy the children seem to be. I would think they would have given up on² their parents in a big way.

I have read Patty's³ articles suggesting that children may need to discharge at night. I could be wrong, but it doesn't look to me like my daughter is trying to work on something. I don't want to lay in distress by not feeding her when she's hungry, but the frequent night wakings are taking a toll⁴ on me. They're interfering with my functioning well.

My daughter still doesn't eat much solid food and nurses frequently during the day. She's also getting teeth and starting to crawl, which I know can affect night wakings. I'm hopeful she will gradually, on her own, shift to sleeping longer. This has already happened several times, but I wonder if I'm missing something.



KERALA, INDIA • MARTIN URBEL

I would love more RC perspectives on helping children fall asleep on their own.⁵ At what age is that even a worthy goal? I read a long historical, anthropological perspective that indicated that for most of human history babies have slept with their parents and nursed frequently both day and night, until at least one year of age, and that there is a much lower incidence of SIDS (sudden infant death syndrome) in cultures in which this happens. The author seemed to believe that sleeping more deeply and waking less (the goal in the United States) may go against how babies are hard wired.⁶

Thanks for sharing ideas!

N—
USA

¹ Count on means rely on, expect.

² Given up on means stopped expecting anything from.

³ Patty Wipfler, the International Liberation Reference Person for Parents

⁴ Taking a toll on me means being hard on me.

⁵ On their own means without help.

⁶ How babies are hard wired means babies' basic physiology.

Nursing as a Contradiction to Distress

I am the mom of an eight-month-old son who wakes quite frequently throughout the night, seeming to want or need to nurse. He sleeps right next to me in bed, and I am usually able to offer him my breast before he or I have fully awakened. Then both of us can easily fall back to sleep.

This routine has worked pretty¹ well for us, but I have often wondered if he is waking up because he is trying to work on (discharge) something and I am assisting him to stuff down (suppress) his feelings with food rather than discharge that piece of distress. It has been a dilemma. On the one hand, I certainly want to help him discharge anything he needs to. On the other hand, I want to get a good night's sleep. My fear is that if he fully wakes up, he might not go back to sleep.

A few nights ago I had an experience that helped me to put my worries aside. My son awoke fussing (seeming upset) more than usual. I offered him my breast, but he would not take it. Instead he cried hard for about five minutes, while I held him close.

Then he opened his mouth, searching for my breast, which I gave him. He stayed latched on for about thirty seconds then cried hard for another five minutes. Then he stopped and searched once again for my breast and latched on for about thirty seconds. The cycle continued for about a half hour. When it was over, he fell back into what seemed like a peaceful sleep.

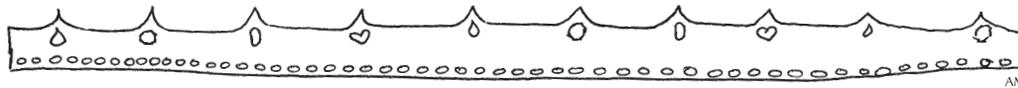
He clearly had something to discharge and could do it effectively for about five minutes at a time before needing an extra dose of benign reality: my breast. I loved watching him use my attention and body as the contradictions² he needed, and I saw that when he needs to discharge, he probably won't simply take my breast for comfort.

I have read that trying to impose adult sleep patterns on children is a newer phenomenon and probably not that healthy. I am curious to read what other RC parents have to say about night wakings and feedings. Thank you for initiating this discussion.

R—
USA

¹ In this context, pretty means quite.

² Contradictions to distress



Small Steps to Complete Self-Appreciation

Yes, people's patterns do misuse complete appreciation in every possible way. The person attempting to completely appreciate himself or herself will settle for appreciating a neat fingernail trim or other limited things,

but these are attempts to go against the pattern, and they represent some sense of reality. They are like steps out of the cellar. Though we should never settle for them long range, I think we have to be patient with them as they occur, because people do get a lot of discharge just by doing that much.

My own example was when they tried to get me to say, "I'm wonderful," and I couldn't find any reality in it. However, when I finally said, "I'm not the worst

so-and-so* that ever lived," I began to yawn.

A direction not to be satisfied with these very partial contradictions is good, but at the same time people are making an effort, and that is fine for a start.

Harvey Jackins
From a letter written in 1973

* So-and-so represents some derogatory, perhaps profane, term.

Ask Dad to Listen

When my daughter was a baby, and I was tired, I would ask her dad to listen to her cry. That seemed like a good solution.

Regular “special time”¹ and sessions for her (at that age, almost daily) were always helpful in working through the kinks of life.

Getting sessions as a parent is also so important. There are many subtle yet potentially pivotal decisions to make. It is such a big job! Also, refusing to be hard on oneself and reading the parents’ commitments² can be good directions.

K—
USA

¹ “Special time” is an activity, developed in RC family work, during which an adult puts a young person in full charge of their mutual relationship, as far as the young person can think. For a specific period of time, the adult lets the young person know that he or she is willing to do anything the young person wants to do. The adult focuses his or her entire attention on the young person and follows his or her lead, whether the young person tells, or simply shows, the adult what she or he wants to do.

² Two RC parents’ commitments:

- 1) I am a good parent. I love my child/children. From this moment on, I will relish my excellence as a mother/father; enjoy my precious, resilient child/children; and discharge my every regret. I hold myself and my fellow parents blameless for the struggles we still face due to our heavy oppression. I am proud of the goodness and commitment of all parents and am proud of the vital work we do. As a mother/father, I will remember that there will be time to pursue every goal that is dear to my heart.
- 2) I promise to remember always that I am a good parent, that I always have done the best I could, that I have passed on to my child/children as few of the hurts that I endured as a child as I could possibly manage, and that someday I’ll get a little rest.

Deciding to “Night-Wean”

When I decided to night-wean, my child was over a year old and it looked like the nursing was keeping him from sleeping well. My husband couldn’t handle lots of middle-of-the-night crying, so we waited until we visited my mom. Then when my child woke up for night nursing, my mom and I woke up with him and explained to him (as we had earlier in the day) that we thought it was time to stop. He woke up a number of times during that night, crying and wanting to nurse.

The same thing happened the next night, though the “sessions” were of much shorter duration. Then we were done. For a while I did have to wake up earlier than usual, at 6:00 AM, to nurse him in a big chair (no more nursing in bed), but we all slept much better after ending night nursing, especially my child.

Here are some things that were important for me:

- My child was old enough that I knew that nursing at night was just for comfort or to keep feelings at bay.
- My child was able to talk about it with me.
- I stayed with my child. I think it can be useful for someone else to handle bedtime if the nursing parent isn’t able to deal with discharge in that situation. But if she is, I think it makes sense for her (and the other parent, if that’s possible) to stay with the child.
- I was ending nursing, not a close physical relationship with my child. Staying close while ending nursing reinforced that he was not losing me, just nursing.

J—
USA

“Children Know What They’re Doing”

With both our daughters, we were seriously impaired from sleep deprivation by the time they were eight months old. Right around the one-year mark, they each began sleeping through the night. My sense is that they had developed enough physical mass at that point that their systems didn’t need refueling to get them through the night. Being so small, and with their systems running at such a high speed to fuel growth, they were quickly burning everything they took in. It makes sense that they needed to eat often.

With our second child, I experimented with feeding her expressed breast milk when she woke up at night, so my wife could sleep. That didn’t work. She clearly wanted both: milk and Mom. They were intertwined for her. When I tried to feed her, it would turn into a session. She would refuse the bottle, and cry and rage until she got to have the breast. The sessions were fine, but the crying kept my wife awake so after a while we gave up that experiment.

It looked different when our children would wake up because of distress or the need for reassurance. They would either refuse to nurse (crying all the while) or nurse very little and then fall back asleep. I felt much more urgent that our first child get the sessions

she was looking for, no matter what impact it had on us. I think that was a mistake. I was more relaxed with our second child. I could tell¹ that if she didn’t get a session in the middle of the night, she’d find a way to get it during the day.

I’ve always been amazed at how smart our children are about what they need. My fears tend to tip me in the direction of worrying that there is something I need to be “doing” in response to their apparent distress. But after two children, it looks to me like every child knows exactly what she or he needs and that it will likely look different from what the parents expect and from what another child may need at that same point in time. I continually have to re-learn this basic fact. My main challenge is being willing to set aside my own perspective and assume that my job is to notice what theirs is, and figure out what it means to support it.

An example of this was potty training.² My oldest was approaching the age when some children stop using diapers. I had no idea how the transition should happen. Was it my job to “train” her to use the toilet? And, as with all things that

parents find restimulating, there was a veritable mill of published ideas on how to do it.

I had just begun to think about it from the perspective that it was my job to figure it out, when my daughter walked onto the front porch, carrying her children’s toilet, and announced, “I don’t want to wear diapers anymore.” I said something like, “Great!” and proceeded to explain what it would mean if she gave up diapers (she would have to notice the feeling of needing to pee³ or poop⁴ and go to the toilet; she would have to not pee at night while sleeping). She replied, “I know.” That was the last day she ever wore a diaper.

It looks to me like young children, even very young children, know exactly what they’re doing. When we get worn out by the demands of parenting, or restimulated, we start to worry that there’s something wrong, or something we have to figure out for them. However, it’s usually that we parents need more opportunities ourselves for rest and sessions. Then it becomes clear that they’re fine, that nothing is wrong.

¹ In this context, tell means see, notice.
² Potty training means training to use the toilet.

S—
 USA

³ Pee means urinate.
⁴ Poop means have a bowel movement.



Many Roles in a Recording

There are many different attitudes and roles in a distress recording. This is apparent even when a person is the only human involved in a distress incident. I have seen clients fly out of the incident into the role of God, or the turkey buzzard that was circling over them, or even a grasshopper or a cactus bush. Anyone or anything in a distress scene can be a role into which the harassed client mentally escapes for comfort and suppression of the distress.

Harvey Jackins
From a letter written in 1973

A Life of Increasing Closeness

I want to emphasize how useful it was to wait to wean until my child could understand what was happening, and some of why it was happening.

I think it is helpful to communicate to a little one that he or she will not only discover all kinds of new and wonderful ways to be close to Mom and other family members, but that his or her world will continue to expand to include an infinite number of ways of being close to a growing number of loving and interesting human beings. Yes, one particular kind of closeness with one particular human being is ending, but overall, if things mostly go well, he or she will get to have a life of increasing closeness.

B—
USA

Sleeping Together Has Worked Well for Us

I'm not in the position of having a nursing child but rather a five-year-old, adopted at one year of age, who has slept with my husband and me since she first joined our family.

Before that she had been in a foster family and almost certainly been sleeping with some member(s) of the family (based on photos we have; we think they lived in a one-room house). For the first several nights we spent with her, in a hotel room, we walked her to sleep and then put her in a crib. She woke up an hour later, crying, and ended up in bed with us, where she slept through the rest of the night without waking. After three nights, we skipped the crib step and found she generally didn't wake at all.

Two nights ago she and I were lying in bed in the evening, talking about sleeping, and I told her that when I was little, I slept in my own room from the very beginning. She was horrified at the idea and decided we needed to talk to my mother (her grandmother) about why she had done that to me. It's reminders like that that help me hold on to the idea that sleeping alone is a particularly odd "developed"-world construction that doesn't make a lot of human sense.

I have no doubt that my daughter will move to her own bed—probably in our room first, then in her own room—when she's ready. I'm also seeing increasingly clearly that for her, being forced to sleep on her own prior to that would feel like torture.

Sleeping together has not been without its compromises, and I still regularly work on it in sessions. My material¹ about sleep is constantly being restimulated by the fact that I no longer have full control over when and how I sleep. Nonetheless, I think overall it has worked well for us—in part, because I'm forced to discharge on my sleep material. But this doesn't mean that I don't keep second-guessing² myself. I'd love to hear what other families are doing.

M—
USA

¹ Material means distress.

² Second-guessing means questioning, doubting.



Discharging on Nursing

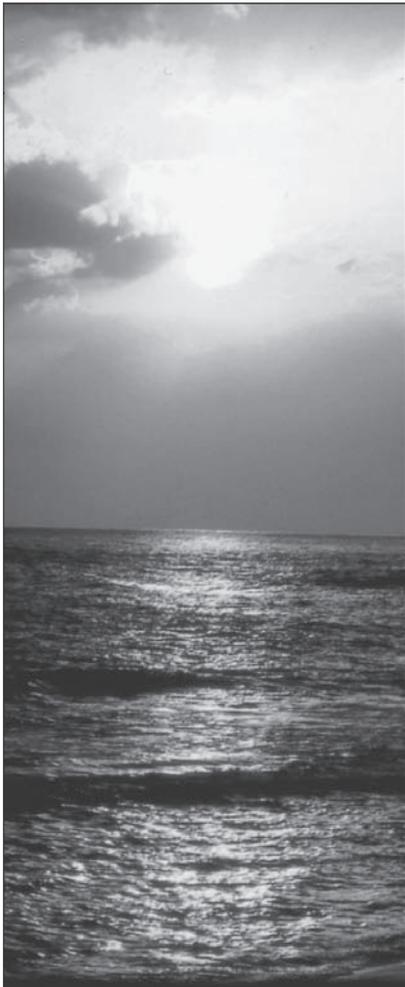
My three-year-old sleeps with us and will wake once at night and then early in the morning to nurse. A few times she has fallen asleep when I wasn't there and awoken to her dad, and cried for two hours. (Her dad is not a Co-Counselor, but he gives her lots of sessions.) I have decided that we don't have enough resource to give her the sessions she needs to night wean.

I plan to spend a lot of time in my sessions working on that decision. I want to counsel on what I love about nursing—how much it confirms that I'm female, contradicting all the messages I got that I wasn't quite female enough. I want to look at what I thought about nursing before my daughter came along, and how sleep was for me at her age and younger. I want to look at any place where my daughter's discharging is hard for me. And I know I need to discharge on how much I love being the only one who can get her to sleep, and stay asleep.

It would have been helpful to work on these things all along or periodically, but I needed to discharge other distresses before I could come up with* this action plan.

W—
USA

* Come up with means think of.



JENENE COOK

Communicating with People Who Are Dying

I can't tell you much except some of my own experience with people who were dying. I have said to them that there was nothing correct about their dying, even if they wanted to comfort themselves with the glories of the hereafter or something like that; that I was very sorry they were dying; that I didn't think they should; and that I thought that human beings ought to find a way not to die, but that it was nothing to be terrified of essentially. When they have discharged a lot, they've always agreed.

The important thing, it seems to me, when it isn't possible to interrupt the illness and death, is to let the person know that you admired and respected them, that their life was worthwhile ("it is better to be alive—even for an instant, and even in agony—than to never be alive at all"), and finally that you are there, that there will be a hand to hold when they go out into the dark, that they won't be alone. That has seemed to make a great difference.

* A quote of Harvey's

Harvey Jackins

From a letter written in 1974

Nursing and Counseling

It is fun to read about all the good thinking people are doing about sleep, nursing, and counseling.

My son is now twenty-three years old, so it was quite a while ago that I was nursing him. Here are a couple of the things I tried to do:

- 1) I tried not to nurse him if it looked like he was feeling feelings, not hunger. The difference seemed clear fairly early on, although I'm sure that I guessed the wrong way a few times. After a while, if I guessed wrong and offered to nurse him, he would cry instead.
- 2) I didn't do my best counseling in the night, so I tried to use the opportunities he offered during the day to let him discharge. (This works great unless a child's feelings are tied to nighttime. My son's didn't seem to be, so perhaps I was lucky.)

I enjoyed sleeping with him. I also got a lot of information about how life was going for him by how he slept. When I became involved in work that kept me away from him more in the daytime, he would soak up attention at night by sleeping very close to me. Then he would happily go about¹ his days. He and I never struggled with nursing at night. When he was little, he would wake up once or twice in the night to nurse, but because he was sleeping with me, neither of us would wake up fully. When he was about a year old, he would nurse before bed and in the morning—rarely at night unless he was ill. Until he was two, he would also nurse a couple of times during the day. If I wasn't there, he was with his dad. They would get a snack and cuddle.

¹ Go about means conduct.

At one point in his third year, I was away more often at bedtime and he started to forget to nurse, even when I was there. Nursing just faded out. There was no weaning process. He just got less and less interested, although he and I continued to sleep together and cuddle a lot. When he was sixteen, someone commented to me at a teen workshop that it was interesting to watch us during class—he would snuggle up with me, looking as relaxed as an infant, even though by that time he was taller than I was by almost a full head.

It has fascinated me that he doesn't worry or seem bothered about being hungry. When I get hungry, I can feel a panic—like I have to eat *now*. He can be hungry for a long time and not feel like he needs to eat; there is no urgency about food. I guess I was right often enough about when he needed to discharge and when he needed to eat.

As parents we just have to keep discharging on all the challenges before us and try to think freshly. What is considered "proper parenting" in our cultures changes over time. We want to think from the bases of what we know about humans, from an RC perspective, and figure out what we can pull off² with the resources we have. It will be a bit different for each of us, because we each have different strengths, different distresses, and different demands on our lives. Loving and delighting in our children does a lot to offset whatever distresses we haven't discharged yet.

D—
USA

² Pull off means manage to do.

My humanity is bound up
in yours, for we can only be
human together.

Archbishop Desmond Tutu



ELLIE PUTNAM

Staying Close at Night

Our son has slept in the same bed with us for almost three years now, and I've learned that he is smart about his needs for closeness and attention at night.

Each time he approaches a new milestone (crawling, walking, weaning, starting to use the toilet), he suddenly needs many more sessions. He also wants to sleep in complete physical contact with me, which is different from his usual roll-over-and-snuggle behavior. He will lie on top of me, with his head on my chest or stomach, as he did as an infant, and put his hands inside my shirt to find some soft skin. Seeking the reassurance of skin-to-skin contact seems instinctive to him.

His milestones tend to occur at times when I am the most stressed, sleep deprived, and challenged by the new and shifting demands of parenting. Having a session or two with my head on someone's shoulder or chest, and my hand on the soft skin of an inner arm, helps me to cope better.

A Co-Counselor who lived somewhere in Africa for a time said that the closeness of family beds there seemed to compensate for interruptions in sleep. I'm not sure that applies here—given the busy, overworked parents of Western cultures. I am still figuring out how to get enough good-quality sleep.

I don't regret our decision to have a family bed. We will continue to sleep that way until our son wants to make a change.

C—
USA

Short Talks by Tim Jackins, on CD

Rational Island Publishers is producing a series of CDs of talks given by Tim Jackins at recent workshops. They are intended primarily for RC teachers but can be ordered by anyone. A new CD is produced each quarter. The series is called *RC Teacher Updates*. Listed below are the CDs that are currently available.

The following CDs from 2009 are available for \$10 each:

- An Effective Way to Work Early
- Understanding Our Present Abilities and Challenging Past Confusions
- Deciding to Challenge the Effects of Early Distress

The following CDs from 2008 are available as a set or separately:

- A Recent Introduction to RC
- The Early Years of RC
- Fighting for Ourselves
- Overcoming Early Defeats

The following CDs from 2007 are available as a set or separately:

- White People Continuing to Move Against Racism
- Overcoming Early Distress
- Perspective and Decision
- RC Leaders, on Class Issues (DVD)

The following CDs from 2006 are available as a set or separately:

- Oppression and Sex
- The Uses and Limitations of Reassurance
- Participating in the RC World Conference 2005
- Moving Forward Together: RC Pre-World Conferences 2005

The following CDs from 2005 are available as a set or separately:

- Together for Larger Lives
- Ourselves and Our Societies
- A Human Perspective
- Three Steps Forward

The following CD from 2004 is available for \$10:

- Perspectives on Ourselves and Our Communities

Anyone can order any of these CDs for \$10 (U.S.) each, plus shipping and handling. The entire 2005, 2006, 2007, and 2008 4-CD sets are also available to anyone, for \$25 per set, while supplies last. If you are a certified RC teacher, the upcoming four CDs per year are available on a subscription basis, one calendar year at a time (but mailed out quarterly as they are released), for \$25 a year. (For ordering information, see page 109.)

Parenting in Western Societies

How much of this discussion is really about the society we live in, and parents' oppression as it exists here in this country?

Apparently most children around the world sleep with their parents and wake up during the night to eat. It is only in Westernized countries that not sleeping through the night has become such a huge problem. I think it is because parents in these countries need to get up in the morning and do other things besides just parent. Exhausted parents need sleep and more discharge—this is clear to me, so very clear.

As for consistency, I used to say about my parenting that the only consistent thing was my inconsistency, that I needed a schedule! I needed to know what my limits to being awake were. I needed to know the limits to the amount of time I could give to a child.

However, once I got enough discharge, I could handle so much more. It seems to me that to put all these issues onto the child may be a bit too much. I do not mean to put anyone down* here, or anyone's parenting down. I



HARVEY JACKINS

am just talking about myself. When I have had enough sleep, when I have had good food and a good eating experience, when I have had enough discharge, when I have had some play time for myself, then I am a happier parent (or, these days, grandparent) and the young ones around me spend much less time clienting—and when they need to discharge, they get at it much more quickly.

Marcie Rendon
Minneapolis, Minnesota, USA

* Put anyone down means invalidate anyone.



BOB ROMERO

Reassurance About Fear

Your problem with the panic, A—, is that once you start to move out of it, you begin to feel the material* that usually engulfs you in a frozen state, and there are terrible feelings. But the only thing to do is to bend your head and go right ahead.

I send you all the reassurance in the world about your fear. Just line up lots of good Co-Counseling, keep working at it steadily, and know ahead of time that you're going to feel more afraid as it starts to work. After a while you'll pass a nodal point, and the discomfort will decrease instead of increasing, but it's not at all unusual for it to increase for quite a while. I hope this is some reassurance. Write me again whenever you feel like it.

Harvey Jackins
From a letter written in 1972

* Material means distress.

Parents Need to Sleep

This sleep discussion has been rich indeed! I have a few thoughts to add that I didn't see come up anywhere.

First, I think it is *very* important that we take sleep deprivation seriously. It compromises our ability to think, it compromises our judgment, and it sets us up¹ to be accident-prone. When you notice you're sleep deprived, it's time to change something. It's time to recruit someone else to take over on some nights so that you can get a motel room somewhere, or sleep at a friend's house, or buy earplugs and sleep elsewhere in your own house—something! When you, as a parent, after discharging on your end of the restimulation about interrupted sleep, still feel like your quality of life is going downhill, it's time to counsel your child. You can't be the parent you want to be during the day if your mind is slipping, as it will if the sleep deprivation goes on long enough. If co-sleeping is not working for you or your partner, it's not in your child's best interest. And, in any case, it's in your child's long-term interest for her to learn to sleep through the night.

Very young infants do need to feed every couple of hours—for several months, sometimes even longer if they were born early or have had medical difficulties. Support for parents who need sleep should be part of our culture, but since it's not, we parents would do well to find people to help during the first few months of our children's lives so that the nursing mom, in particular, can get an uninterrupted stretch of sleep on a regular basis.

I've been watching lots of families over many years now,

and what I've found is that both children who have co-slept with their parents and children who haven't can be very close to their parents and turn out² just fine—if the parents understand and work with their children's needs for limits, discharge, play, and closeness. I was biased toward co-sleeping when my own children were growing up, but I know many families who didn't co-sleep past the first few months of their babies' lives, and their children are close to them, are relaxed, have good judgment, and are really, really smart. I have looked hard for some detrimental effect of not co-sleeping, and I haven't found one.

When a child is waking often, you can guess that she is sitting on some fear. If she doesn't discharge the fear during the day, it will bubble up at night and no one will get much rest. With some children, the case is clear: I knew a mom through my wide-world work whose four-month-old hadn't slept for more than forty-five minutes at a time *ever*. Once the mom started listening to her cry, and supporting her and telling her that she'd made it,³ that whatever had frightened her was over—instead of rocking or feeding or holding her in a dark room, hoping she would sleep—the baby's stretches of sleep became a lot longer and the mom was able to get some much needed rest. After about six weeks of sessions, the baby was sleeping almost normally.

The intervention I didn't see mentioned in this discussion, and that can work well for longer sleep, is engaging in physical play that leads to laughter. Laughter and physical play help children feel reassured, help to lift their fear, and sharpen the deeper sessions they have on fear. When a child has sleep issues, a good time to do vigorous physical play is right before bed.

With an eight- or nine-month-old, this means bouncing, jostling, or playing games like rocking her off your tummy over and over again while she "falls" three inches to the bed or the carpeted floor, landing in your arms. Or playing bucking bronco, gently. Or putting her in your arms and bouncing her through the house. Lots of little, safe, survivable challenges that let her laugh and laugh and laugh. It's not the usual bedtime activity, but it's much better than stories for reassuring a child that she is indeed sturdy, that she has survived, that her body is strong, and that all is well. Then when she wakes, if it's fear she's working on, it will be more apparent. She will wake screaming. Or if you say, "Honey, I'm not going to nurse you for a few minutes. I just want to see what's happening with you," she will show you. The vigorous play sets her up to work on the fears with more reassurance in her back pocket.

So if you're losing sleep, and life doesn't feel good, and you've worked on your distresses about it, then whether your child is feeling fear or not, she is old enough at nine months to learn to sleep through the night and get her feedings during the day. You can set out⁴ to listen to her about the feedings she needs to give up.⁵ She'll shift and get her needs met during the day, and you'll be better able to meet her needs.

I hope this helps!

Patty Wipfler
International Liberation Reference
Person for Parents
Palo Alto, California, USA

¹ Sets us up means predisposes us.

² Turn out means end up being.

³ Made it means survived.

⁴ Set out means plan.

⁵ Give up means let go.

Where Have You Been? What Have You Seen?



THE ALHAMBRA, GRANADA, SPAIN • RAMI BEN-MOSHE



LK



GALE PICKER



AM



SØREN HOLM

Many of you, from all over the world, have sent in to *Present Time* lovely photographs of your local environment and beautiful artwork from your vivid imaginations. We hope you continue to do so! And we hope to receive artwork and photos from others of you, too—especially if you live outside the United States.

You don't need to be someone who thinks of himself or herself as an artist or a photographer. We welcome all kinds of art—that focuses on the benign reality and helps us to remember the real world. This includes, but is not limited to, drawings and photos of people working, playing, or doing other activities; buildings; scenery; plants and animals. If you are a parent, we would love you to send us (with their permission) artwork created by your children.

When sending in artwork and photographs, please keep the following guidelines in mind:

- Ideally, drawings and paintings need to be scanned at a resolution of 1200 dpi. If your scanner does not scan at that high a resolution, any resolution higher than 600 dpi will work.
- Photographs need to be scanned at a resolution of 300 dpi or greater.
- You can send photographs taken from cell phone cameras that are 2.0 megapixels or higher.
- If you send a photograph, please include the photographer's name and the location of the photo (being as specific as you can). We like to share this information with the readers.

You can send scanned photos and drawings to <photos@rc.org> or mail hard copies to Rational Island Publishers, 719 2nd Avenue North, Seattle, Washington 98109, USA. (We won't be able to return hard copies.)

If you have questions, please contact us. We can be reached by phone at +1-206-284-0311 or by e-mail at <photos@rc.org>.

Thank you!
The Present Time Staff



JULIE ANNE FORGIONE

Open Questions at the Pre-World Conferences

—Tim Jackins

We have all learned RC from different people, and every one of those people gave us as full a version of it as they could. Some of RC they knew well, and they could give examples of it from their own Co-Counseling experience. Some of it they didn't have much experience with yet, and they could only talk theoretically about it. And some of it they had had only restimulating experience with, and they talked very stiffly about that.

So our learning of RC has not been uniform. One of the benefits of being at a workshop with many people is that we can see how other people understand parts of RC a little differently than we do. That's also a benefit of an "open questions" time.

I'm a good person to ask questions of. This doesn't mean that I'm right; but I've tried a lot of things, and I've had enough experience that I'm worth listening to. No matter what I say, I want you to think about it. Don't just accept an answer. You have to think about it, and try it in practice. Re-evaluation Counseling exists in practice. The pieces of RC you teach best are the ones that you can make work best. They are the ones you understand most completely. Through practice, you get a full understanding of what is involved. Our theory leads us to the practice, and it's the practice that proves the theory.



DIANE SHISK

Guiding the Upcoming Changes in Society

*East Coast North America
Pre-World Conference—
Storrs, Connecticut, USA, June 2009*

Question: With the collapse of the economic system, what is your picture of the new order?

Tim: I don't have a very precise picture, and I don't try to. When large things become unstable, you enter into a time of chaos. In the mathematical sense, chaos is when small changes at one moment cause large changes later, and it is beyond our capability, and probably theoretically beyond capability, to predict precisely what will happen and when those things will happen. While we might feel reassured by having a blueprint of the future, I don't think we need one. I think we need the ability to push aside our fears, think as things change, and guide the change—rather than having a fixed end object in our minds ahead of time. Change is going to happen, and the more people there are who can think and talk about what is happening, and about the ramifications, the more people there will be who get to guide the events in directions that lead to good possibilities.

I think we have a rough idea of the foundations we want to end up with. We want a society in which it is unacceptable that anybody be exploited for any reason. Period. On any basis at all. That has to underlie every structure we try to construct. Then we have to figure out how to guide the vast amount of productive capacity, and its organization, that have already been achieved, and the progress that has been made in communication and in science. How do we spread access to these accomplishments? How do we use all that has been developed, with such great intelligence and effort? How do we lose as little of that as possible? How do we reconfigure everything that has been done so as to aim it in a direction that lets everyone prosper?

It's clear that in spite of our still being stuck in confusion about reproduction and unable to think about how many of us there should be, we have

the capability of providing well for all of us. We are capable of providing well, not just materially but also educationally and in many other ways, without doing gross damage to the environment. We have that ability now. It is not being used, because it's not profitable. However, as we undo the confusions that are part of our economic system, all the abilities will remain. What will be necessary is our figuring out relationships. How big a group can we think about in such a way that the interests of everyone in the group are as important to us as our own interests? The bigger that group gets, the clearer we will be in organizing and the better we will be able to do things.

There's a movie, *The Take*, about workers taking over¹ the factories in Argentina. A group of workers takes over a factory that closed down because the owner couldn't make enough money off of it, which left the workers without jobs. It's an interesting movie. You get to see the struggles, the discouragement, and the determination. What seems unbelievable here in the United States is that the workers get their country's legislature to give them the factory to put back into operation. Not many of us are hopeful enough to even think about that being possible, but clearly it worked there. There were a number of other factories, too. Some of them got lost again, but people have been able to continue thinking about taking on² these struggles. What were the relationships there? Some of the factories decided to pay everyone equally, no matter what they did; some of them didn't; but people got the chance to figure these things out. There is all of this ability to produce and distribute. None of it has to be lost, but it has to be managed intelligently.

So, we'll have to be good at going after³ people, and communicating well enough, listening well enough, and counseling well enough that they dare to think about and trust our picture. This is part of why leaders are important—people recognize good ideas before they have them themselves. At this point in the struggle with confusion from distress, it's easier for people to recognize a good idea than it is for them to create their own. So people

will follow leaders, especially in times of turmoil, crisis, and chaos, when they recognize that the old solutions aren't working and cannot be relied upon, hid behind, or blindly fought against and that we actually have to do something different. These are the times when people who have worked hard to reclaim their ability to think have to dare to say their thoughts out loud. Whether you're right or wrong is not the first issue. It's whether you show your mind. You can make all kinds of mistakes, as long as they're out in the open and you recognize them and correct them. People will understand that. But unless someone comes out with thoughtful attempts at good solutions, things will get desperate and old reactive and failed solutions will be attempted over and over again.

Things happen that we don't expect. A good example is the present President of the United States. Two years ago if I had asked you, "Do you think we will have an African-heritage president in your lifetime?" you would have said no. And yet something changed very quickly, which means that a

continued . . .



TIM JACKINS

¹ In this context, taking over means assuming ownership of.

² In this context, taking on means undertaking.

³ Going after means pursuing.

continued . . .

lot that we couldn't see was changing for a long time. Often all we see is the discouragement that is put out continuously. But then something shows itself that is unstoppable and moves the world forward.

People everywhere are now having to ask themselves questions. Questions that could not be asked before are commonly being asked. People try new things in a crisis, even though they are terrified, and so great learning takes place in spite of the distress. All of the minds needed for change are out there—covered in distress but still functional, especially when things are shown clearly enough. People often think more clearly in a crisis. Will there be enough people thinking clearly before things can no longer be propped up? It's impossible to predict. We will have as many as we have, and the more we have, the better we'll be able to guide things.



INDIA • DIANE SHISK

The Difference Between Anger Discharge and Dramatization

India Pre-World Conference—Pune, India, February 2009

Question: How do you recognize the discharge of rage, of anger, of frustration? How can you distinguish actual discharge from dramatization?

Tim: The two things are really very different, but as long as we are scared, that's hard for us to see. If somebody makes a loud sound, we get scared and stop thinking.

Adults may feel and sound angry, but they are rarely discharging anger. When people don't have the chance to discharge, they tend to get mad instead. They're not actually discharging anything. Sounding angry doesn't mean the discharge process is working. Many of us have a pattern of sounding angry. It's more common in men, but some women have it, too. It's a pattern that can occur when a person is not allowed to discharge.

Most of us don't have that pattern, so if our counselor asks us to try to sound angry, it contradicts our patterns of helplessness and we begin to cry. Or sometimes we begin to shake or laugh.

If we're not too scared as counselor, it may work to ask someone to sound more angry than he or she ever has before, or to hit us with a pillow. But if people have a pattern of sounding angry, it doesn't help for them to act it out again. So we go a different way. We ask them to softly say a phrase like, "Please don't do that," or, "Why did you hurt me?" We are having them show how hurt they were instead of trying to defend themselves.

What we all really need to do is discharge on being scared of angry-sounding people so that we can hear the difference between discharge and dramatization. We need to work on all the times someone sounded mad when we were small, on all the times they got mad and hit us or yelled at us or locked us in a closet. We were so small that it was dangerous if somebody was that irrational and aimed it at us. We carry lots of fears about that. Now we are big, powerful, intelligent, and not often in danger, but we can feel just as scared as we did back then.

One way to work on the fears is to try to sound angry. Fear discharges more easily when we are not acting fearful, when we go against feeling small and in danger and sound mad back. A lot of us, when we try to sound mad, immediately burst into shaking or tears. Once we've discharged some of that, we start to hear the differences. When people are dramatizing anger, they are usually very scared. There is something frozen in the sound. It's not alive. It's dull and repetitive. There is a heaviness to it and it doesn't change. The people dramatizing don't become more alive by making that sound. They get stuck by making it.

If people are actually discharging frustration and anger, there is something very alive about it. They may be mad at the way the world is. They are not trying to hurt anybody. Their eyes are flashing, and their thoughts keep changing. Part of the time they even laugh. It's much, much more alive.

How Do You Influence Policy in RC?

*Australia/New Zealand
Pre-World Conference—Sydney, Australia,
February 2009*

Question: How do you influence policy in RC?

Tim: First is the question of what is policy. Most of us have no policies. We just go along, do the best we can, and don't have much guidance in it. Policy is an attempt to clarify our best thinking and use it as a guide. We're trying to set down what we know—not as rigid rules but as guidance for the times when we're not thinking well, as a way to try to get our minds started again.

There are different kinds of policies in RC. The word policy isn't always used well, and it's used for several things. For example, members of each constituency are encouraged to think about themselves and develop a policy for their liberation. These policies are our best thinking in those areas and are not binding on anyone.

There are also policies for the operations of the Community. These are the *Guidelines*. They are what most of us think of when we think of RC policy. They have been thought about by a large number of

people and have been developed over many years. Every four years we ask for everyone's input. For example, tomorrow we'll get into groups and work on the Community's goals. We'll think about the goals we had in 2001 and 2005 and share our ideas for new goals for this year. People also e-mail in suggestions. The final proposals will be taken up⁴ at the World Conference.

If you have thoughts about Community policies, the first step is to test your thinking. For example, you can set up a discussion group at a workshop meal table and get other people's thoughts. That will help you to think about your idea from more than one perspective. Then you can do a lot of Co-Counseling sessions. If your idea involves modifying some existing policy, you can try to find out where the original policy came from. Why is it the way it is?

You want to test your thinking, and try not to push it on anyone or be defensive about it. You want to find out if people can catch your thought. If it catches on, if people can think about it, then it spreads and we all hear about it. Then we take it to the World Conference. Or if things need to change quickly between World Conferences, it's my job, as the International Reference Person, to set policy temporarily. I listen and try to figure out the best thing to do. I don't do a lot of that, but when it makes sense to do something quickly, I may set policy. That policy is then taken up at the next World Conference, and either confirmed and put in the *Guidelines*, modified, or rejected.

continued . . .

⁴ Taken up means discussed.



NEW SOUTH WALES, AUSTRALIA • TIM JACKINS

continued . . .

Addictions, and Figuring Out Our Own Cultures

*Latin America Pre-World Conference—
Santiago, Chile, March 2009*

Question: I know that we do not want to have addictions, like smoking and drinking coffee. I want to ask you about the coca, which is a natural leaf that we use in my culture in a natural way. We use it to be less tired, and we eat it in candies and cookies. It is not a drug. It is a stimulant.

Tim: The question isn't whether or not it's natural. A lot of good things are natural, and a lot of horrible things are natural. So that doesn't tell us anything. And many things that are hard on people have become part of many cultures. Alcohol is part of a lot of cultures. One thing to ask is, "Does it affect our brains?" Our experience has been that anything we ingest that affects our brains causes problems. It tends to put in distress patterns. One way we can tell⁵ if that is happening is that if we stop using it, things seem to get worse. We *feel* a lot worse. If that happens, we have to be suspicious. The real way to tell, of course, is to have sessions—to not

ingest it and to have sessions on everything that comes up.⁶

There are a lot of drugs that people take. Some have big effects and some have small effects. If they interfere with our thinking and cause distress, then we question them. I think you probably need to question this one. And no matter what I say, *you* have to figure it out.

It's not my job to decide about your culture; it's your job to clean up your own culture. All cultures have wonderful things in them. Each of our peoples did wonderful things and passed on to us important information and perspectives about the world. And all of our ancestors had hard enough lives that they acquired many distresses, and some of those—sexism, punishment, war, drugs, and so on—became part of our cultures.

Each of us gets to figure out our own culture. Which parts do we want to cherish and carry on⁷ forever, and which do we need to discharge on and help our culture get over so that we don't stay stuck in the same place forever? We try to learn enough Co-Counseling that we can each do this job in our own cultures. You will figure it out.

⁵ In this context, tell means notice.

⁶ Everything that comes up means all the feelings that surface.

⁷ Carry on means continue with.



MACHU PICCHU, PERU • DIANE SHISK

Mothers' Day, and RC

Mothers' Day is celebrated in the United States this week, and this, along with related messages on the RC women's e-mail discussion list, has inspired me to write about my parenting.

For twelve years (from 1990 until 2002) I educated parents at Planned Parenthood of Austin (Texas, USA). Since then I have taught parenting classes for a variety of non-profit agencies. I also teach parents in RC. I am sure these classes have made a difference for many people. However, on Mothers' Day, the calls and cards from my children, grandchildren, and great grandchildren helped me to notice the influence I have had on my family community.

As the International Liberation Reference Person for Elders, I encouraged elders in RC to focus on building relationships with their adult children. This served as a basis for my building and rebuilding the relationships I have with my own adult children and grandchildren. I had to have many Co-Counseling sessions on forgiving my parents for real or perceived hurts. Then I had to forgive myself for the mistakes I made as a parent. Doing this left me with much more attention for my children. Sharing and modelling RC information—about rational parenting, internalized racism,

goal setting, and feeling good about oneself—has made a difference.

Two of my children learned RC in classes that I taught. (Others absorbed some theory simply from being around RC.) It was incredible counseling these two on their early memories as if I were just a counselor, not their mother. I could assist them in seeing the reality of what had actually happened because I had been there. I watched them heal early hurts that I had felt guilty about for many years.

I've realized that I cannot meet my children's frozen needs,¹ even though I might have been the one who didn't meet them in the first place. I can, however, help them to heal the hurts that put those frozen needs in place. I give my children the opportunity to talk to me, ask questions, and be angry or sad if they need to. It is difficult, but I try not to get defensive or explain my actions. I just listen and only give them the information they need to understand the circumstances surrounding early events. For example, a neighbor they had been close to moved away and they never heard from

¹ Frozen need is a term used in RC for a hurt that results when a rational need is not met in childhood. The hurt compels a person to keep trying to meet the need in the present, but the frozen need cannot be met; it can only be discharged.

him again. They were hurt. I hadn't told them that he got killed shortly after he moved; that otherwise he would have been in touch.² Telling them made a difference.

Making myself available to my sons and daughter in this way has brought us closer, and they are using my model to build relationships with their own children. I have made many mistakes, and I still make mistakes, but that's part of the journey.

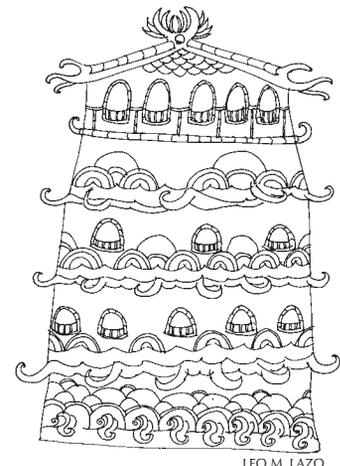
I have six children, fourteen grandchildren, twelve great grandchildren, and two great-great grandchildren. Five generations have benefited from what I have learned and the love I have to give.

Dottie Curry
Austin, Texas, USA
Reprinted from the RC e-mail
discussion list for leaders of women

Conditioning/Counter-conditioning

Counter-conditioning is just as bad as conditioning. We want no conditioning at all. It is safe to hold a rigid direction in counseling only because we carefully choose the direction to be one that counters an existing rigidity and leads to discharge. This is the important thing. We only use it for discharge.

Harvey Jackins
From a letter written in 1974



² In touch means in contact.

Imagine

Imagine a life with less worry,
Imagine a life with less hurry,
No running, no rushing,
No screaming, no shushing,
Just living in the present. Hooray!
Imagine!
Imagine no fighting,
No scratching, no biting,
No trashing yourself, no fear,
No blaming, no shaming,
Just reality claiming,
Imagine your mind so clear.
You'll be singing and dancing
And laughing and prancing
And finding your way thru* the world.
Your heart will be open,
You'll cry when it's broken,
And celebrate life each day. Hooray!
Imagine!

Betsy Abrams
Jamaica Plain, Massachusetts, USA

* Thru means through.

After Making a Mistake

I often feel horribly bad when my wife (who is also in RC) gets upset at something I say or do that is either thoughtless or perceived that way. In those moments, remembering that I am good is valuable. Later, in Co-Counseling sessions, I can say, "It sometimes happens that a woman gets upset at a perfectly good man."

When we are arguing about something I said that was insensitive, my wife sometimes suggests ways that I could have said it in a non-oppressive fashion. If I take her suggestions and role-play them, it produces laughter—especially if I do it in a dramatic way. If we treat this as a session for me, it doesn't reinforce the bad feelings and instead becomes useful for our relationship and my re-emergence.

It has also been useful to give my wife a session immediately after I make a mistake that hurts her feelings. Instead of fighting for my own sense of worth by being defensive, I can sometimes remember my total goodness and act as counselor.

Mike Lyons
Austin, Texas, USA
Reprinted from the RC e-mail
discussion list for leaders of men



MIKE SPRING

To Present Time Subscribers:

Overwhelmed with tasks and detail,
Folks move slowly, like a snail;
Yet some items need attention
So we'll bother you to mention
Facts relating to PT—
They're important, you will see:



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Is It Really This Easy to Change the World?

Soon after the Wide World Changing Workshop in Denmark in June, I tried on my older brother the listening experiment Julian Weissglass¹ had suggested. Here is the report.

My brother is ten years older than I am. He is an electronic engineer and lives the life of a Westerner in Asia, which means having a nanny and a housekeeper, and so on. He is intelligent, politically conservative by Swedish standards, and rejects activism.

Since my early childhood and through my teens I played a lot with my brother, even though he was already a teenager when I was a toddler. Mostly we engaged in ball games and other sports that we invented together. Our games were always competitive. When I was younger, my brother would try to level out the odds by giving me some kind of advantage, but he almost always won. I am not very competitive, but he is, and since he was the elder we played on his terms.² We did have a lot of fun and created some “crazy” games. Ours was a playful kind of competition; I can’t remember either of us ever getting angry. I’m grateful that he took an interest in me and showed me so much love, but I still have a hard time identifying as a winner.

After the workshop, during a family holiday, I asked my brother a question: “Do you think it’s possible to create a society that is not based on greed?”

He took the question seriously (problem solver that he is) and spoke for a long time. It was hard not to argue with him, but I did well at just listening. He started out by saying that he had always viewed capitalism and profit making as natural forces, but it seemed that as he spoke those words, he had already started questioning them.

At one point I asked, “Do you think competition is a more natural human activity than cooperation?” He then got intensely involved in thinking about how an alternative society could work, and came to some good conclusions. Finally he said that he was completely exhausted, because he was not used to thinking about these things. I could tell³ that he had activated some new thinking and would keep engaging with the questions.

¹ Julian Weissglass is the International Commonality Reference Person for Wide World Change and was the leader of the workshop.

² On his terms means the way he wanted to.

³ In this context, tell means see.

A little later my son and I were going to play frisbee golf, one of the games I used to play with my brother. My son wanted my brother to join us, so we asked him to. He said he would rather read and went into his room, but after a few minutes he came out and told us he had changed his mind. He said, “I’ll play with you. But this time let’s try a different way. Let’s see what happens if we cooperate instead of compete.” So we did. It was unheard of,⁴ but we all enjoyed the game. Then we played a few more rounds in the collaborating way.

That evening while I was doing the dishes, I overheard my mother and two brothers having a long conversation about war. They usually avoid hard topics, but this time it was different. They were listening well to each other and expressing the horror and sadness they felt. I’d never before heard a conversation like that in my family, and I couldn’t help thinking it had something to do with my brother’s “session” earlier.

Later in the summer when I told my sister (also in RC) about all this, I realized how big it was. She was completely shocked that my brother had suggested cooperation in a game. We both discharged.

Is it really this easy to change the world?

I have asked more people the same questions, and will keep on doing so.

*Mathias
Scandinavia*

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

⁴ Unheard of means something that had never happened.



ERIE CANAL, NEW YORK, USA • STEVE BANBURY

Struggle and Violence

Struggle, of course, is completely necessary. Violence is the most stupid form of struggle and should be avoided whenever possible. But there certainly are occasions, in a distressed society, when it cannot be avoided as a defensive tactic. I think anyone who has had any practical successes in social struggle has reached this same position. However, when one has to resort to the use of violence or counter-violence, one has usually missed fifty earlier opportunities to take a better road to a more effective means of struggle.

Harvey Jackins
From a letter written in 1974

Fighting on All Fronts

(Every Battle Is Both Societal and Personal)

I'm writing this in case there are people out there who are being hard on themselves (blaming or being critical of themselves) for their difficulties in the current times.

Some of us in the United States and other First World countries¹ have been "sheltered" from some of the harsh realities of class and economic oppression. Many people in the world, particularly people of color and Indigenous people, in even the most wealthy of countries, have not been sheltered. Neither have elders, or people with disabilities, or people in other groups "targeted for destruction." However, the crises are becoming more widespread, crossing over class and national lines, and though I am not informed about the situation for all the peoples of the world, it is my sense that the crises are driving deeper into all groups of people.

¹ First World countries are the technologically highly developed, industrialized countries of the world.

At the same time, they are creating many opportunities. Large masses of unemployed working-class, "declassified," and young people now have time free to organize, and plenty of incentive to do so. People in many parts of the world have thrown off the illusion that help will be coming from wealthy nations and are taking their economies into their own hands. Although there are always many reactive movements during such times, there are many liberating ones as well.

After thirty years of employment as a wageworker, I have recently taken a "voluntary retirement package." This has left me with less income and fewer health insurance benefits, but more time.

NOT "IMMUNE"

More and more people around me are in crisis. All of the hundreds of people I worked with in my last job have been affected. Some of them are working as few as half the hours they used to, and the



JO ANNE GARRETT

demands on them in their jobs are greater. There will be layoffs and job eliminations soon, and people are afraid. The situation is similar for many people in my community. Friends who are self-employed or have small businesses are being severely challenged.

Over the years I have somehow convinced myself that because I Co-Counsel, make full use of RC theory and practice, and “know” about oppression, and because I have had the “advantage” of a university education, I am “immune.” In some funny² way I have thought that nothing bad will ever happen to me because I can discharge and think and recover somewhat.

I have taken on³ this attitude of “immunity” in order not to be overcome by the discouragement, disrespect, demeaning treatment, and physical damage I have had to push against in my work. My Co-Counselors have occasionally, but not often enough, reminded me, “No, D—, you are oppressed. You are just like the other factory workers, and, like them, you are beaten down by the oppression. It has taken a toll on (done damage to) you.” I am still clueless⁴ about this.

I suspect that many middle-class, owning-class, and First World Co-Counselors have similarly bought the illusion that they are doing “fine” while at the same time they are constantly feeling bad about themselves and battling addictions they just cannot shake.⁵

² In this context, funny means strange.

³ In this context, taken on means adopted.

⁴ Clueless means ignorant, bewildered, unaware.

⁵ In this context, shake means rid themselves of.



IRAN • ANTHONY TASSI

I suspect it never occurs to them that these difficulties are not their personal failings but the effects of oppression. The belief that “I have it so much better than anyone else” is confusing.

RESISTANCE TO USING THE DISCHARGE PROCESS

My retiring has brought up huge amounts of fear that my “mind” won’t accept. My “mind” says, “I have worked on working-class oppression for thirty-five years. I am an expert on it. I have a handle on things (I have things under control).”

The part of my brain that wants me to pay attention to reality, and that controls my bodily feelings, has another opinion—and it is having its way. I have been forced by physical symptoms to discharge fear I did not know was there, fear that my “mind” still does not accept. My most aware counselors have almost had to beat me with a stick: “D—, this is *huge!* This retirement, this change in your life, this separation

from the people you have worked with for thirty years, is *enormous!* The oppression is *real*. And this stuff you are working on is early distress. Go after⁶ it.”

Joanie Parker, the International Liberation Reference Person for Trade Unionists, has been generous and helpful to me, particularly regarding the “early stuff.” But my working-class internalized oppression says, “Quit crying about your own sad state and *do* something!” (And yeah, yeah, someone will say it’s my male stuff, too.) After I get a few Co-Counseling sessions and can “function” again, I want to get on⁷ with life and not have so many sessions “interrupting” it. I want to “get things done.” I am one of the most dedicated RCers I know, and still my resistance to fully using the discharge process is enormous.

continued . . .

⁶ In this context, go after means pursue.

⁷ In this context, get on means move forward, continue.

WIDE WORLD CHANGING

continued . . .

WE ARE ALL OPPRESSED

I think it would help if we all took the view that we are all affected by economic oppression, in a very personal way. In a recent RC class, a middle-class person dismissed some of her actions as being based on “middle-class guilt.” I had seen people do that before, but for the first time I understood it as internalized oppression of the middle class. I interrupted her to say, “I don’t think it makes sense for you to dismiss your actions as being motivated by guilt, or to stop them because they may be. What you would call guilt, I would call caring. Caring is a fine thing to be motivated by. Other distresses may be attached to it, but you can clean them up as you go along. None of us should hold ourselves back from actions because they may be motivated by so-called guilt. I think that is just the oppression talking, and its effect is to immobilize us and keep us from playing a good role.”

I also want to make sure we are not being “secret” about any of our personal struggles, particularly our economic ones (even if we are First World, middle class, owning class, or white). We need to work on them. No struggle is insignificant.

NOT PERSONAL DEFECTS

What I say to other working-class leaders is, “What you experience as your distresses or your personal struggles are not *your* distresses. They are the tracks left on you by an oppressive society. They are not personal defects in your character.”



JO PERRY

This is a much kinder perspective from which to work on the material⁸ we carry.

What I started out to write was a reminder to people that the difficulties they are having are probably not just their own. Probably lots of other people are having them, and even if they seem unrelated to the current economic situation, they are probably a feature

of the times. There really *are* more challenges out there. Take the time to acknowledge the situation around you, and do not try to function “over the top” of (ignoring) it.

THERE IS A LOT WE CAN DO

There is a lot we can do about the external situation. I have been using my extra time to give more help to people in crisis. It often doesn’t take that much good counseling to

⁸ Material means distress.

restore hope. I can easily think of at least twenty people who I spend short amounts of regular time with and for whom that works well. (The number I influence is probably in the hundreds, if you factor in my working-class humility in making the count.)

Sometimes it does take a lot of time to fix things. With my mother-in-law, for instance, who is battling increasing disabilities and heavy oppression surrounding that, I have had to spend time directly with her and also with people around her who are offering support.

How do you decide how much time to put into what struggles? Not my question to answer for you, but I would say, “Fight all of them in some way.” Settling for just one small piece of reality is never good enough. If this is confusing, spend at least part of a session saying, “I want *everything*.” Of course you do, and it is not unrealistic to expect to have everything, or to want to fight for it.

How to organize one’s day is a question that needs attention, too. I sometimes answer it by saying, “Put out the first five fires (do the first

most essential or urgent things), and then see what you want to do with the rest of your day.” And personally, up against that I put Harvey’s⁹ direction to me: “If you get a chance to do nothing, take it.” I will find some time today to do nothing—maybe just walk outdoors and notice the color of the sky.

SHOWING THE FULL NATURE OF THE STRUGGLES

All of the effort I have put into not losing my people, whom I have worked with for thirty years, and all of my struggle against this fear I am feeling, which I do not understand, was useful in leading a recent workshop. The good people there had experienced some discouragement about working-class liberation, and I was successful in my goal of bringing them some hope. I think what was most successful was showing fully the nature of the struggle we are in with class and economic oppression. I showed it by struggling hard myself (it was one of the hardest workshops I had ever led) and by persisting in drawing individual

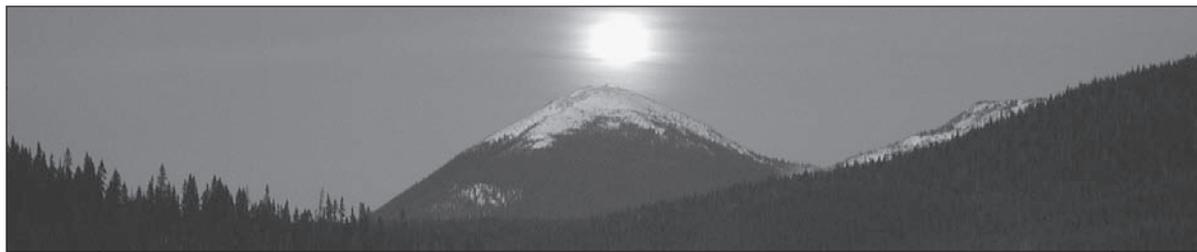
⁹ Harvey Jackins’

people in close to me—into my struggle, and into the struggles we shared—and thereby drawing them closer to each other. With each other, anything is possible.

People seem to be reassured when they are shown the full nature of the struggles we are up against, and when they see someone struggle fully and openly and succeed. I don’t think anyone came away from that workshop thinking we had solved the world’s problems, but I think people came away seeing that the current situation is not one we are unable to think about, and that we don’t have to let it beat us down.

I am reminded of an appreciation of my leadership from a closing circle years ago: “You are not very reassuring—and I find that very reassuring.” I think the person meant that I clearly present the nature of the struggles we face but am not hopeless about them.

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



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We must shine with hope . . . glow like lanterns borne before a procession. Who can bear hope back into the world but us”

Marge Piercy

Allow People to Grieve

The following is a letter of mine that was printed in the San Francisco* Chronicle¹ Letters to the Editor section on April 18, 2009. Sandra Cantu was an eight-year-old girl who was recently murdered.

A Chronicle article about Sandra Cantu's murder said, "When a police captain notified Sandra's family, the girl's mother and grandmother were so devastated that they had to be taken to a hospital in ambulances and sedated."

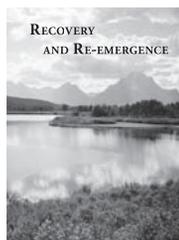
I was appalled that two women who were obviously expressing extreme feelings about such horrific news were not allowed to grieve normally. Instead their normal responses were treated as a medical emergency and they were drugged . . .

This is adding insult to injury. We as a society need to let people grieve however they need to, and stick with them²—not rush them away and do whatever it takes to stop the grieving.

Nancy Lemon
Berkeley, California, USA

¹ The San Francisco Chronicle is a newspaper in San Francisco, California, USA.

² Stick with them means stay with them, not abandon them.



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Taking a Longer View in Union Work

From a discussion on the RC e-mail discussion list for leaders of trade unionists

*I am working for a transportation company in France, and I also work part-time as a union rep.**

In January there was a national inter-union strike, in response to the government's planned response to the economic crisis, with some success in obtaining measures for unemployed people and a re-education fund to allow people to change jobs.

Another strike is planned in March. I don't agree with all the demands, but maintaining pressure on the government (and the bosses) to think better, and showing solidarity with the people caught in the crisis, seem to be good ideas.

I would like to hear from you, too.

Frédérique Braguier
Pau, France

* Rep means representative.

Social Change and Reform

When I distinguish between “social change” and “reform,” I am trying to point out an important principle for organizing in an unworkable society that is collapsing because of internal contradictions. That is, though one must struggle for immediate gains, the nature of the overall society is such that without continuing struggle, the gains will be lost very quickly. (For example, workers can win a wage increase, but inflation will quickly rob them of the benefits if that is all they do.)

The permanent gains one makes from organizing and fighting for short-range goals and specific reforms are the building of one's organization and the education of its members to the necessity of profound social change.

The nature of the capitalist economy—the fact that capitalism can never bring to the marketplace enough purchasing power to purchase all the goods it brings to the marketplace (if it did, it would make no profit)—means that the system is fundamentally unworkable. And it is rapidly becoming more so, so that attempts to reform it or patch it up will not work, except as preparation for fundamental and thorough-going change.

Harvey Jackins
From a letter written in 1976

You raise a great issue.

On Friday last week I found myself with my union in a legislative hearing, preparing to testify on the opposite side of an issue from people whose causes I usually support. It was an environmental issue, and the outcome will have a significant impact on the jobs of the workers in my union, and my sister unions.

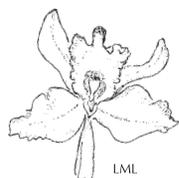
I had a great Co-Counseling session yesterday, crying hard about the terrible system that pits workers against the environment. I've had good sessions in the past when my union has taken positions that weren't fully consistent with my other values. I can see that neither “side” is completely right, and that we must keep talking and working together to get to where we don't have to make such “choices.” The sessions I've had about the “choices” have been essential to my continuing to think, rather than just react.

Actions I've taken as a result of my sessions are in the context of taking a longer view of the situation. It isn't just one issue at one moment in history that will determine a “right” or “wrong” outcome. I have worked within my union to foster participation when we've had opportunities to work in coalition with groups we often disagree with. We can learn from each other.

I will soon be organizing a meeting between leaders of labor and leaders of an influential environmental organization (of which I am a long-time member and supporter). We will discuss where our positions diverge and see how we might work together, earlier on, from common positions. The respect I have built over the years in these two communities will give me credibility in the dialogue and I hope will make some things possible.

When “sides” are required (as in a campaign to pass or defeat legislation), I have found that my most productive move is to stand proudly with the side I have chosen, while continuing to talk about the bigger picture and have sessions about the choices.

My re-evaluations tell me that the work we do between the periods of having to take a side is what will make it possible to ultimately arrive at a rational position together.

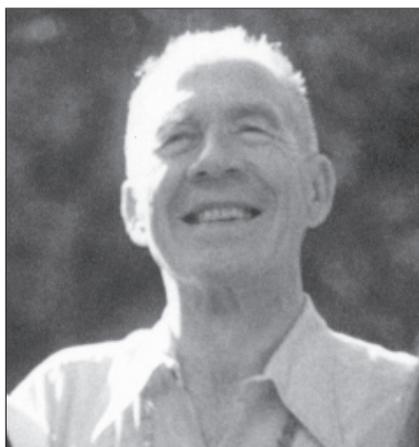


Cynthia Phinney
Livermore Falls, Maine, USA

START OVER EVERY MORNING

by *Harvey Jackins*

The important insights that developed between 1987 and 1989 in the worldwide Re-evaluation Counseling Communities



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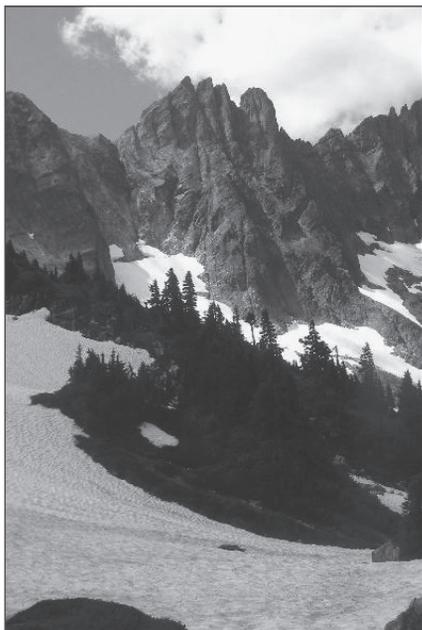
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FROM START OVER EVERY MORNING:

Being a Dependable White Ally

... Another “block” that you’re going to hit is that sometimes the person of color “doesn’t want” a relationship with you. You may have to listen to quite a bit of how much they don’t want it. “Get out of my yard and don’t ever bother me again.” “Stay out of my part of town.” Just be logical about it. If you were a person of color living under racism all the time, think what an advantage it would be to have a decent white ally. Of course it’s of great advantage to him or her! He or she may not be able to say so, certainly even think it, let alone act like it until much of the accumulated grief, fear, and anger from being a victim of racism is discharged out of the way, but, given the oppression, alliance with you has to be very desirable, if it’s a real alliance and not phony.



CASCADE PASS, WASHINGTON, USA • LISA KAUFFMAN

To have one or more dependable white allies gives one a different picture of the world. If you can see a white person really acting like a human being, that is entirely different than the picture you’ve gotten most days of your life, up till now. It gives one a little hope. Remember when you first heard that patterns weren’t people, how your heart lifted up? This is parallel to that.

I think we need to set a practical goal that if you are an RCer, and you have any chance of making contact with a person of color in this racist society, you do it. I propose that in these situations, to be an RCer is to give priority of attention to any person of color when you are with them, is to seek them out in your community, is to make close friends of them, is to be an ally to them. This is not to get them into RC, not necessarily to help them build black RC or Asian RC or Latino/a RC, but to clean our lives of racism. This is so we don’t hate ourselves in the strong undercurrent of our feelings so much of every day and every night for living in a restricted world and tolerating it, for living in an unfair, unjust, destructive world and tolerating it.

Excerpted from “The Realistic Way to Eliminate Racism,”
pages 205 to 207

FROM START OVER EVERY MORNING:

Enormous Opportunities

... *The economic crisis is creating enormous opportunities. Everybody is in trouble. (Laughter) Everybody. The collapsing society is collapsing on the necks of a large number of people, not just the hopelessly discouraged permanent poor, who are supposedly trained to just die quietly. The damage is reaching all sections of the population . . .*

We’re out to change the world in every possible way that makes it safer for people to live. I don’t think we’ll have any trouble if we move boldly and confidently, using the tools that we’ve had a chance to learn . . .

Excerpted from “A Favorable Situation for Reaching Out,”
page 115

UER at the White Privilege Conference

Greetings from the tenth annual White Privilege Conference.¹ We are a United to End Racism (UER) delegation of twenty-three RCers, led by Barbara Love.² This year the conference is in Memphis, Tennessee, USA, and one of Barbara's goals is to use it to help build Southern³ RC.

We have an opportunity here to address the history of racism in the South and its damaging effects on both people of African heritage and white people. Unlike some conferences, that people come to for educational information, this one seems full of people yearning especially for opportunities and tools to heal from the effects of racism.

This is the sixth year that UER has sent a delegation to the White Privilege Conference. We have had an impact over the years. People stop us in the halls and tell us how our workshops have affected their lives. Wherever we go, there is instant recognition.

On Tuesday, before the conference began, Barbara led a workshop for the members of our delegation. She laid out her goals, and got us ready to go out and make connections with people in a way that would encourage them to become part of the RC Community.

So far at the conference we have led a day-long institute and two workshops. The institute, *The Role of Listening and Emotional Healing*

in *Ending Racism*, led by Rachel Noble⁴ and me (Veronica Lacrue), had about fifteen participants. In the introductions, people shared how racism had affected their lives. This led to instant "sessions," even though we hadn't yet given any RC theory. Every person in the institute, seven of whom were Southerners, expressed an interest in getting involved in the RC Community.

On Thursday morning, Eunice Torres⁵ and I (Veronica) led a workshop called *Ending Racism and All Other Oppressions: Listening and Emotional Healing as a Tool*. It attracted seventy participants. Despite the large numbers, Eunice and I were able to create instant safety, and discharge was occurring spontaneously throughout the room. There were four demonstrations, three mini-sessions, and a panel with five young people—all in an hour and a half. Eunice and I also took time.⁶ Many people discharged through the whole workshop.

That afternoon Rachel and Nelson Simon⁷ led a workshop, of about forty people, on ending internalized racism. Before sharing any RC theory, they got several people to tell their stories of how internalized oppression had affected their lives. They did a great job of explaining internalized racism, basic RC theory, and how all oppressions support the class structure. As they talked, they each showed themselves fully and connected directly with the people in the room.

Our delegation has also had an exhibit table, which has proved to be a gathering place where many people have learned about our work, been listened to, and had sessions.

We've added listening projects⁸ this year, and Sparky Griego⁹ and Debo Powers¹⁰ led the first one this morning. The UER listeners were knee-deep in people¹¹ wanting to answer the questions on the signs. One woman went from one UER person to another, to be able to answer all the various questions.

Another goal Barbara had was for us in the delegation to deepen our connections with each other in a way that would push our leadership. Teams have supported the leaders of each workshop. And the leaders have felt they could push themselves, because they've known they had a team of supporters in the room.

In the evenings we've led support groups that have been open to all the conference participants. Many people, some of whom have sworn they would not, have discharged in their groups.

Veronica Lacrue
Denver, Colorado, USA
and *Eric Braxton*
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, USA
Reprinted from the e-mail discussion
list for RC Community members
involved in eliminating racism

¹ The White Privilege Conference took place in Memphis, Tennessee, USA, April 2 to 4, 2009.

² Barbara Love is the International Liberation Reference Person for African-Heritage People.

³ In this context, Southern means of the South—the states in the southeastern part of the United States.

⁴ Rachel Noble is the Regional Reference Person for Oregon, USA.

⁵ Eunice Torres is an RC leader in Belchertown, Massachusetts, USA.

⁶ Took time means took a turn to discharge with the attention of the group.

⁷ Nelson Simon is an RC leader in Brooklyn, New York, USA.

⁸ In an RC listening project, several Co-Counselors go to a public place and offer to listen to passersby about some important issue, such as racism or a current war. They may hold signs that invite people to share their thinking about that issue.

⁹ Sparky Griego is the Area Reference Person for Santa Fe, New Mexico, USA

¹⁰ Debo Powers is the Regional Reference Person for Florida, Georgia, and Alabama, USA.

¹¹ Knee-deep in people means surrounded by a crowd of people.

Another Great Day at the White Privilege Conference

The United to End Racism (UER) delegation has had another great day at the White Privilege Conference, in Memphis, Tennessee (USA). We are continuing to stretch ourselves to share Re-evaluation Counseling fully and invite people to use it as a crucial part of a program to end racism and all oppression.

This year Tim Jackins asked each of us to continue to make lots of connections but to focus on one or two people with whom we would maintain contact throughout the year, to help them become part of the RC Community. It is a challenge to make strong connections with people we are just meeting. It continues to expand our conception of what it means to be fully human.

Today we held four UER workshops. The first was an RC introduction led by Nelson Simon¹ and Cornelia Cho.² They did a great job of talking about how they had used RC in their lives. Cornelia used her experience as a pediatrician to talk about what we know about young people and healing.

The second workshop was The Role of White People in Eliminating Racism, led by Apryl Walker³ and Russ Vernon-Jones.⁴ Right from the beginning, Apryl told people that we wanted them to join us and that if the white people wanted to be in alliance with people of color and dismantle racism, they needed to do this work. Russ talked openly about what he had to look at, as a white man, to take on⁵ racism.

Barbara Love⁶ and Debo Powers⁷ led a workshop for Southerners,⁸ on ending racism. Nineteen people came, most of whom were from the South. Five or six were from Memphis. Barbara laid out a vision of the South playing a leading role, in the United States and the world, in eliminating racism. Debo modeled being proud of being a white Southerner. Many of the participants were interested in getting involved in RC.

¹ Nelson Simon is an RC leader in Brooklyn, New York, USA.

² Cornelia Cho is the Area Reference Person for Atlanta, Georgia, USA.

³ Apryl Walker is an RC leader in Belcamp, Maryland, USA.

⁴ Russ Vernon-Jones is the Regional Reference Person for the western part of Massachusetts, USA.

⁵ In this context, take on means engage in eliminating.

⁶ Barbara Love is the International Liberation Reference Person for African-Heritage People.

⁷ Debo Powers is the Regional Reference Person for Alabama, Georgia, and Florida, USA.

⁸ Southerners are people from the South—the states in the southeastern part of the United States.



WHITE PRIVILEGE CONFERENCE, 2009 • DVORA SLAVIN

The final workshop today was The Role of Young People in Ending Racism, led by Valerie Jiggetts⁹ and myself. Valerie and I were pleased that the majority of the approximately thirty participants were young people of color. Valerie did a great job of opening the workshop by thanking the Southerners for hosting us and by recognizing that we were in Memphis, an important site of the U.S. Civil Rights Movement—a movement led largely by young people of color. I talked about how using the tools of RC had helped a group of young people in Philadelphia (Pennsylvania, USA) come together and organize to stop the privatization of their schools.

In the afternoon, Sparky Griego¹⁰ and Debo Powers led a listening project.¹¹ People from the UER group held signs asking passersby how their lives would be different without racism and what they thought of the idea that people could end racism. As soon as the UER listeners stood up, they were swarmed¹² by people wanting to tell their stories and discharge. People here have been so eager to use the discharge process.

Tomorrow is the final day of the conference. We are looking forward to our last workshops and to making more connections.

Eric Braxton

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, USA
Reprinted from the e-mail discussion
list for RC Community members
involved in eliminating racism

⁹ Valerie Jiggetts is an RC leader in Washington, D.C., USA.

¹⁰ Sparky Griego is the Area Reference Person for Santa Fe, New Mexico, USA.

¹¹ In an RC listening project, several Co-Counselors go to a public place and offer to listen to passersby about some important issue, such as racism or a current war. They may hold signs that invite people to share their thinking about that issue.

¹² Swarmed means eagerly surrounded.

Opposing Anti-Jewish Oppression at the White Privilege Conference

One (non-UER) workshop at the White Privilege Conference was titled *Confronting Zionism as a Form of Racism*. Rachel Noble,¹ Susan Whitlock,² and I decided to attend it, hoping to insert some understanding about anti-Jewish oppression. Most of the participants were white Ashkenazi Jews,³ many of whom were young adults. The workshop was led by three young-adult Ashkenazi Jews.

The participants were invited to introduce themselves and say where they “positioned” themselves on the issue. I said I believed that a two-peoples/two homelands position was the only logical one at this point in history and that our key work as U.S. Jews was to fight for rational U.S. policies in the Middle East. Rachel said that if we were going to talk about dismantling Israel, we needed to talk first about dismantling the United States. Susan said that a lot of conversations would start with some talk about the role of U.S. imperialism in the Middle East but then shift to putting the whole focus on Israel and that that was a manifestation of anti-Jewish oppression.

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

² Susan Whitlock is a Co-Counselor in Atlanta, Georgia, USA.

³ Ashkenazi Jews are Jews of Central and Eastern European descent.

The workshop facilitators spent the next hour and a half on a timeline that showed the development of Jewish Zionism and that included many inaccuracies and biases. Several of us spoke up and corrected some of the misinformation. I repeatedly emphasized the dominating role that Western powers had played in the Middle East. I mentioned England, with its strategy of divide

of almost every other nation state. I said that backing⁴ Israelis who were fighting to change the racist policies of their government made sense but that to call for the dismantling of the state of Israel without also calling for the dismantling of the United States, England, France, Australia, and many other countries was to isolate Israel and that that was anti-Jewish oppression.



WHITE PRIVILEGE CONFERENCE, 2009 • DVORA SLAVIN

and rule (pitting the Jews and Palestinians against each other), and talked about how the current U.S. strategy was to continue using Israel as a middle agent to do the dirty work of and be the “front” for U.S. domination.

I acknowledged that creating the state of Israel had displaced many people, as had the creation

At one point the workshop broke into small groups. Someone in one of the groups said that Jewish Zionists had pressured the United States and other countries to turn Jews away in order to force them to go to Palestine and increase the numbers of Jews there. Rachel responded that the United States would never do anything it perceived was not

⁴ Backing means supporting.

in its self interest and that blaming Jews for that U.S. policy was an example of how Jews are set up to be the “fall guys.”⁵

I said it was clear to me that all of us in the room carried a tremendous amount of pain and grief about the

⁵ A “fall guy” is someone who is blamed for the mistakes of others.



WHITE PRIVILEGE CONFERENCE, 2009 • DVORA SLAVIN

situation in Israel-Palestine and that we needed to find places to heal that pain if we were going to find solutions that would be good for every group living in that part of the world—and that we could do it.

Most of the people in the workshop had come with their minds made up,⁶ but a handful had come wanting a better understanding of what was happening in Israel-Palestine. We supplied them with an alternative perspective and helped to foster a climate in the room that allowed

⁶ With their minds made up means not open to a new point of view.



WHITE PRIVILEGE CONFERENCE, 2009 • DVORA SLAVIN

people to acknowledge differences and still keep thinking.

I was most pleased that I could think about what to say, and when to say it, and speak my mind without getting defensive, confrontational, or disrespectful. A facilitator thanked me for doing just that, even though we did not agree.

Dvora Slavin
Seattle, Washington, USA
Reprinted from the e-mail discussion list for RC Community members involved in eliminating racism



WHITE PRIVILEGE CONFERENCE, 2009 • DVORA SLAVIN



ALAN SPRUNG

Living Well— But Not at Others' Expense

It is good to live near one's work, it is good to live where one can garden and craft, and these are things to be worked out—not just for the middle-class elite but for all people eventually. It is all right to work them out individually, as a model of good living, as long as one does not become contented with living well at the expense of and in neglect of other people.

Harvey Jackins
From a letter written in 1974

Tired But Excited

Our United to End Racism (UER) team has just completed the final day of the White Privilege Conference. We are all a little tired but also excited about the connections we have made. It is incredible how hungry people are for the tools we are offering. We are especially pleased about all the contacts we have made with Southerners¹ and hopeful that this will help spread RC in the South.

We led three workshops today. The first was The Intersection of Racism and Anti-Semitism, led by Dvora Slavin² and Nima Samimi.³ Dvora gave a clear and understandable two-minute history of two thousand years of anti-Jewish oppression. Nima gave a thorough description of UER's work on ending racism. Both leaders talked about and demonstrated how the tools of RC can be used to eliminate racism and anti-Jewish oppression.

The second workshop was School Leaders as Proponents for Ending Racism, led by Russ Vernon-Jones⁴ and Sparky Griego.⁵ Russ put out the perspective that every school and classroom can be a force for liberation. Both leaders did a graceful job of handling a small attack by responding in a clear, non-defensive manner. Sparky, especially, found this challenge to be a highlight of her leadership.

The final workshop today was Backing⁶ Black Leadership, led by Barbara Love,⁷ Thee Smith,⁸ and Apryl Walker.⁹ People in the workshop were taking down¹⁰ every word as Barbara described the six keys to backing black leadership. Thee talked about the history of black leadership. Apryl presented basic RC theory and tied it to how people get confused about black leadership.

¹ Southerners are people from the South—the states, in the southeastern part of the United States, that seceded from the United States in 1860 and 1861, leading to the U.S. Civil War.

² Dvora Slavin is the Regional Reference Person for South King County, Washington, USA, and Hawaii, USA.

³ Nima Samimi is an RC leader in Jamaica Plain, Massachusetts, USA.

⁴ Russ Vernon-Jones is the Regional Reference Person for western Massachusetts, USA, and the Information Coordinator for Education Administrators.

⁵ Sparky Griego is the Area Reference Person for Santa Fe, New Mexico, USA.

⁶ Backing means supporting.

⁷ Barbara Love is the International Liberation Reference Person for African-Heritage People.

⁸ Thee Smith is an RC leader in Atlanta, Georgia, USA.

⁹ Apryl Walker is an RC leader in Belcamp, Maryland, USA.

¹⁰ In this context, taking down means writing down.

In the afternoon we did a listening a project.¹¹ We held signs with questions on them that asked about people's next steps after the conference. It continued to amaze us how eager people were to tell their stories.

Over the years of doing various UER events, we RCers have gotten clearer that we want people to join the RC Community. In the past we were sometimes good at explaining RC but shy about encouraging people to join us. At this conference we took big steps against that shyness. Not only were we clear that we wanted people to join the RC Community, we set up buddies to follow up with specific people. We will meet in a few months in conference-call support groups to see how the buddies are doing in connecting with our contacts.

Doing this work has pushed our leadership ahead in many ways. We have had to learn how to be open and loving with complete strangers, work on a multi-racial team, and communicate RC fully in short amounts of time. We have also been learning how to communicate that RC is not just a self-help movement but a crucial part of ending racism, while at the same time emphasizing the importance of the discharge process.

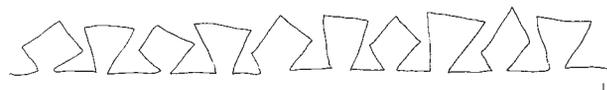
Most exciting is that we have met people from all over the country who are excited about learning to use RC and sharing it with their communities.

Barbara and Dvora were a great team. (Barbara led the delegation and Dvora organized it.) Barbara not only thought about the team and how to use our work to build Southern RC, she also paid attention to every person and communicated appreciation to us all at every turn.¹² Dvora handled elegantly the million details of the delegation. This was one of the best White Privilege Conferences/UER projects yet.

Eric Braxton
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, USA
Reprinted from the e-mail discussion
list for RC Community members
involved in eliminating racism

¹¹ In an RC listening project, several Co-Counselors go to a public place and offer to listen to passersby about some important issue, such as racism or a current war. They may hold signs that invite people to share their thinking about the issue.

¹² At every turn means whenever there was an opportunity.



LK

How RC Supported Me to Be the Best Possible Me

Last August I took a trip to Berkeley, California, USA, where I had lived nine years ago. I also attended a mediation training in New York (USA) and participated in a peace conference in Israel. I travelled to all of these destinations alone. However, I travelled in the company of “RC teaching.”

“RC teaching” helped me approach each of these situations with the mindset of what I could give rather than what I could get. It allowed me to travel with the knowledge that I belong everywhere, am welcome everywhere, and am safe and connected to everyone.

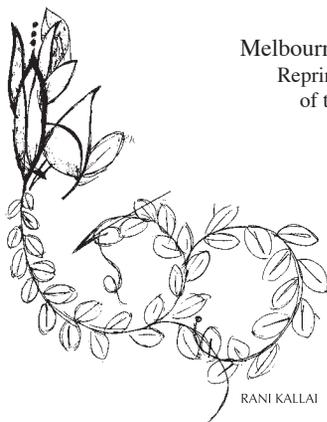
Having “RC teaching” as my companion, I was able to have positive and fulfilling experiences. I was able to reach out to people confidently and lovingly, and assist them and get the assistance I needed. I was able to notice people I might otherwise have felt threatened or repelled by. I was able to reach out to people who seemed both attractive and unattractive according to my own distress recordings.

At the peace gathering my “RC companion” helped me notice how easily I could have used cultural differences to create a distance between me and the less familiar cultural group. For example, when I witnessed that group disposing of rubbish in unconscious ways, I felt like using it as proof that they were different from me and that my group was better, and as justification for our not being able to live together.

I noticed how easily I attributed acts of individuals to the whole group and how my racism threatened to keep that in place. However, thanks to my trusted “RC companion,” I was able to decide to reach out, using a kind and loving tone; explain what my concerns were; and move from the issue to the relationship. This challenged me to confront my feelings, and face theirs, instead of staying separate and angry.

I was also able to notice that yes, we do have different approaches to the environment, but that “building bridges” is not about expecting the other group to allay my discomfort by conforming to my standards or sharing my perspectives. Building bridges means noticing the differences, even when they feel threatening, and deciding to stay close.

I want to thank each and every person who has made RC part of his or her life, and in doing so has collectively become my trusted companion.



Sha'ron Haviv
Melbourne, Victoria, Australia
Reprinted from the newsletter
of the Melbourne, Victoria,
RC Community



SERAP KANAY

Capitalism Not Workable

If people weren't patterned, capitalism still would not work—because of its basic built-in contradictions, which every class system has and has fallen because of. With capitalism, the essential contradiction is that in order to allow profit, there is never enough money in the open market to purchase the goods that are brought there for sale. As a result, economic crises repeat time after time and become worse in the process. Since there is no essential rational reason why one person should live off the work of another, the sentimental attachment to capitalism that most people feel is, in any case, a little hard to justify.

Harvey Jackins
From a letter written in 1976

Social Activism and Middle-Class Fears

I would suggest that you counsel hard for a while on your attitude toward the reactionary social forces before you burst into print to many people. I think you are caught in the familiar middle-class fears of the strength of the reactionary forces. It is not justified by reality, but you're hardly likely to realize this on the basis of my saying it, or any discussion, until you get rid of some of your fear.



ANNE MACKIE

Actually, the reactionary forces are not in the ascendant; they are threatening, but they are rapidly weakening. Your social activism should not just point out with alarm the existence of exploitation and oppression, as if it were a brand new threatening discovery (the great masses of the people know all about oppression and exploitation, from the facts of their daily lives). Instead, insist on the possibility of social change, and confidently point the way toward cooperative, loving relationships between people that will lead to joint activity to bring about social change.

Until you get rid of your fear, I think you do a disservice to your readers, who will mostly be middle-class people with similar fears. You'll simply jangle them. One should never point with alarm without in addition proposing an alternative, and offering the confidence and reassurance that the problem can be solved—which is the common need of all of us who are victims of negative recordings.*

Harvey Jackins

From a letter written in 1973

* Distress recordings

Subscribe to an RC E-mail List!

We can banish “hopelessness”—
that pattern in deceiving dress.

All is well outside that bog
(that gloomy inner monologue).

Though, in general, time it takes,
everything a difference makes.

Here's one more thing
to rally hope
and end a tendency to mope:

Subscribe to an RC e-mail list!
(See page 86.)



Literature Review: *Logical Thinking About a Future Society*, by Harvey Jackins

I remember reading Harvey Jackins' *Logical Thinking About a Future Society* fifteen years ago, soon after I got into RC, and struggling to "get"¹ the meaning of it. When I opened it again recently, I found myself thinking about Barack Obama's² presidential campaign. As I read through the key points of one of the sections, "The Present Situation for Wide World Changing," I reflected on what Harvey called the "critical elements of an effective strategy in the current situation" and noticed how timeless and powerful they were, after thirty years.

This pamphlet is in six parts. The first, "Towards a Rational Human Society," is about the classist origins and purpose of nationalism and patriotism. It calls for us to take stock of a changing world situation and work for social change. It was written in 1990.

¹ "Get" means understand.

² Barack Obama is the newly elected president of the United States.

The rest of the pamphlet was written in the 1970s. The second part is "The Present Situation," mentioned above. It includes Harvey's thinking on present conditions; strategy; tactics; fresh language; consistent, correct policies on everything; critical review of the past; RC as the previously missing tool; the importance of unions; organising the unorganised; using electoral opportunities; making personal contact; speaking logically and positively; valuing gains in organisation and awareness; enhancing awareness of literary classics; workers in basic industry; people yearning for meaning; fresh approaches; unsolved questions; and the role of RC. Harvey mentions literary classics, but I find it hard to imagine a more intelligent, powerful, informative collection of information for anyone taking on³ wide world work.

³ In this context, taking on means undertaking.

The third part is "Propositions About Human Liberation" (also printed in the book *The Upward Trend*). The twenty-eight propositions are a succinct list of the basic theoretical positions from which we can take on wide world change.

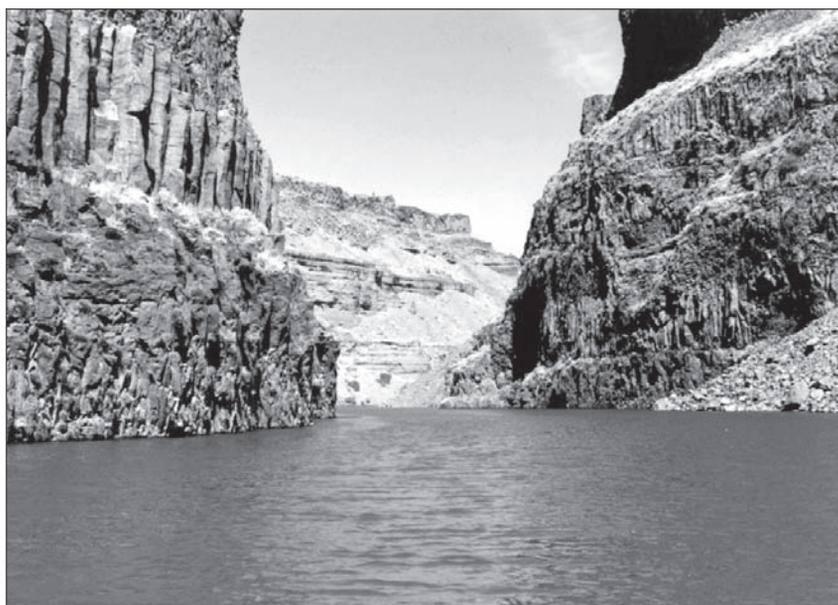
The fourth part, "Cherish the RC Community," sets out policy on wide world changing vis-à-vis the RC Communities. Harvey writes about the connections between wide world changing and RC liberation work, the leadership developing in the RC Communities, and the importance of integrating Co-Counselling and wide world changing.

The last two very short sections are "The Role of Re-evaluation Counseling in Liberation" and "The Elements of Oppression and the Struggle for Liberation." In the latter Harvey writes about forms of oppression and exploitation, the use of re-stimulation by the oppressive society, how people are exploited by the dividing of oppressed groups, and mechanisms to end oppression.

Now I think, "No wonder I didn't get it!" This pamphlet is the antithesis of pseudo-reality. At that early reading I had not discharged enough to be able to understand it. It's great to notice that because of the last fifteen years of discharge I can now see that this small book is a treasure beyond anything I could have imagined. It is a book for the times.

Anne Barton

Melbourne, Victoria, Australia
Reprinted from the newsletter of the
Melbourne, Victoria, RC Community



TARA JONES

Jewish/Arab Reconciliation Work

I am a Jewish woman who has been Co-Counseling for six years. I spend half my time in Florida (USA), where I am helping to build an RC Community, and the other half in New York City (USA), where I am part of the Brooklyn South/Long Island Community.

Before I started to Co-Counsel, I felt tremendous guilt and responsibility for the atrocities committed by the Israeli government against its Palestinian neighbors. This guilt made me feel helpless, hopeless, and frightened, and I was ashamed to be known as a Jew. I found myself working for the Palestinian cause without acknowledging my own hurts from anti-Jewish oppression. I was fighting for others without fighting for myself. It didn't work! Although I had many Arabic friends, I alienated my Jewish friends and in the process lost several non-Jewish friends, too.

With the help of other Jewish Co-Counselors, I came to understand that we Jews are good people who suffer the residue of centuries of oppression. We are good, but we are scared. I had to start discharging my own fears before I could help anyone else.

I have been discharging my Jewish distresses for a while now, and this has helped me to think more clearly. With a new perspective, I have been able to move forward and organize a Day of Dialogue for the

members of my reconstructionist synagogue¹ and the local mosque here in southwest Florida. The student rabbi² at my synagogue and the imam³ of the mosque will lead this event that will be *strictly non-political*. We just want to provide an arena in which Jews and Muslims can talk, socialize, sing, recite poetry, share commonalities, and eat.

I am particularly proud that I have been able to work constructively with members of my synagogue who in the past have been confused and had hateful feelings about Arabs. They are now convinced that this event is a great idea. They are willing to acknowledge their personal fears and are ready to move ahead in the name of reconciliation. I have spent hours listening to these Jewish congregants⁴ talk about their feelings about Arab people. After some discharge, they finally conclude with "let's give this a try." It's a baby step,⁵ I know, but nevertheless I consider it a great victory.

Myrna Charry
Port Charlotte, Florida, USA

¹ A reconstructionist synagogue is one that advocates a creative adjustment to contemporary conditions through the cultivation of traditions shared by all Jews.

² A rabbi is the leader of a Jewish congregation.

³ An imam is the leader of a Muslim congregation.

⁴ A congregant is a member of a congregation.

⁵ A baby step is a small step.

Dealing with an "Enemy of the People"

Certainly, in retrospect, I think that X— had become an "enemy," but we treated him the other way until he exposed himself, and that was better for all the people who were confused by him because our patience revealed to them the incorrectness of his behavior and policy.

People sometimes get lost and don't find their own way back, and pass over from mistakes to determined adherence to an incorrect policy—for usually concealed but fairly base motivations. In every case, one would be faced with a dilemma of deciding if this had happened. Then most of us would be faced with going against our patterns, even when the evidence was overwhelming, because we tend to want to plead with the clearly revealed enemy to be a nice guy and become a friend.

On the other hand, there are patterns that wish to treat any difficulty in carrying out policy, any confusion or difference of opinion, as if it were something to be ruthlessly stamped out. This is the "leftist deviation from the correct line," as the political people say.

Harvey Jackins
From a letter written in 1974

A Catholic Talks to Unitarians About UER

My close friend invited me to talk to her all-white, mostly owning-class Unitarian Fellowship about racism. After visiting a service to meet people and attending a film and discussion about racism, I spoke at a Sunday service about United to End Racism (UER), about what we in UER have learned about how racism works, and about RC and how to heal from racism. People asked questions and did three-way mini-sessions on “How has racism affected your life?” or “What is your earliest memory of skin color?” After my talk several people came up to me with questions they did not want to share in the group, such as, “My boyfriend’s ex-wife makes racist comments in the presence of her two young daughters. What can I do about this?”



IRELAND • TIM JACKINS

Here is what worked well:

- Asking my friend to listen to me for half an hour the night before the talk as I screamed in terror at facing the Unitarians, who apparently didn’t share with me any beliefs about religion, and loved to discuss and analyze ideas. I also asked her to introduce me and then sit next to me. Our close relationship and obvious love and respect for each other made a difference.

- Starting the talk with, “For a Catholic girl from St. Paul (Minnesota, USA) to be here with the Unitarians in Shorewood (Minnesota, USA) feels like an act of unity.” They laughed and agreed.

- Appreciating them as a group for figuring out important things like how to treat each other well, respect and include young people, and be willing to look at racism.

- Making sure we all held our own goodness in hand as we looked at the places where we act oppressively.

- Not being liberal when answering questions about “reverse” racism (a term some USers use when, for example, a job or a place in a university is given to a person of color instead of a white person) or when a white person wanted to client at a person of color. Instead I firmly stated policies that made sense to me: defining racism as oppression targeted at people of color, and not expecting people of color to listen to white people’s racism.

- Telling personal stories about how my life had changed as a result of my decision to eliminate racism.

- Suggesting some next steps for those who wanted to continue the work. Basically, I recommended a support group and offered to assist them in getting one started.

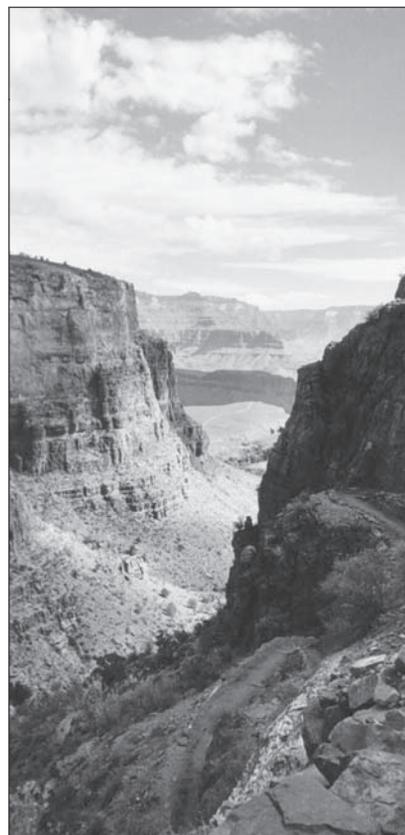
The talk went well and was fun to do. I had to take my thinking and experience seriously and decide that I had something worth saying. My friend and the leader of the group were pleased. The best part for me was being relaxed enough to let show my love of people and my hope and excitement about the UER project. As Harvey* demonstrated so often, tone makes a big difference!

Rita Davern

St. Paul, Minnesota, USA

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

* Harvey Jackins



GRAND CANYON, ARIZONA, USA • VICTOR NICASSIO

Si tu déménages . . .

et que tu ne nous donnes pas ta nouvelle adresse à l'avance, les services postaux nous renvoient ton exemplaire de *Present Time* en port dû. (Ils ne font pas suivre le courrier expédié en masse.) Nous devons alors t'expédier un nouvel exemplaire à un tarif bien plus élevé. Ceci ne se produira pas si tu es assez aimable de nous faire connaître ta nouvelle adresse à l'avance.

Merci,
*L'équipe de Rational
Island Publications*

*(Traduit de l'anglais
par Régis Courtin)*

*(Translated to French
by Régis Courtin)*



If you move . . .

and don't tell us in advance of your address change, the post office returns your copy of *Present Time* to us with postage due. (It does not forward bulk-rate mail.) We then have to pay a much higher rate to mail you a second copy. This need not happen if you will kindly let us know of your address change well in advance.

Thank you,
*Rational Island
Publishers Staff*

Knowing Just What to Do

My friend Dick is in his eightieth year. He had an auto accident and decided to stop driving, and then eating became a problem.

A number of Dick's friends helped him get connected with a free meal delivery service, but Dick soon developed a distaste for the too abundant food that kept accumulating in his refrigerator. He started feeling listless and not eating well. One friend declared that we should not "enable" him—that he should be left with his delivered meals until he got hungry enough to start eating them.

One evening I brought over some salmon for Dick and me to poach together. At first Dick seemed sluggish and not interested in eating. However, as we talked and prepared the meal, he grew animated and hungry—and we had a jolly three hours together. I got the message. Dick, who was basically a non-cook, had been used to dining out with friends or, if alone, at restaurants where he knew the waitresses. Now he had lost that. More than food, Dick needed company and human closeness.

I organized Dick's many devoted friends, scheduling them and me so that every evening Dick had dinner out or cooked at home with one or more of us. Of course, it worked.

More recently, I flew to Los Angeles, California, USA, to say goodbye to one of my oldest and dearest friends, Don, who had been in a coma for most of

three weeks. I got to visit him in the hospital every day, talk to him, cry, hold his hands and feet, stroke his head and chest, and cry some more.

On the day set for removing his breath support, I and seven others of his closest friends gathered outside his room and then went in one at a time to bid him farewell. The plan was to then leave while the nurse did her job. I decided to stay. I did not want him to die alone; I wanted to be with him for his final minutes.

I got to see his body's final struggle and the sudden whiteness that told me the struggle was over. Afterward someone commented on how brave I was, but I didn't feel brave—just clear that it was important to be right there with Don the whole way, as I would want for myself.

Later the group of us gathered at Don's house to talk and enjoy some food. We were standing around in pairs and trios, talking of this and that, when I suggested that we come together as a group. We took turns telling how we first met Don and recounting memories of happy times together. Some of us cried.

In the lives of my friends Dick and Don, RC's wisdom about staying close guided me wonderfully well in knowing just what to do.

D.S.
Syracuse, New York, USA
Reprinted from the newsletter of the
Syracuse, New York, RC Community

The Oppressive Society Isn't "Natural"

I had a wonderful conversation with a co-worker today, about the oppressive society. She and her husband had been having a hard time making enough money to care for their family. After listening to her for some time, I started sharing my own ideas. For example, I said, "Why do we have to pay for electricity? We already pay taxes. Shouldn't we expect to just have it available to us?" and, "Why do we have to pay for a college education, when our education is already guaranteed from kindergarten to high school?" I think questions like these can help contradict the idea that the oppressive society we live in, capitalism, is "natural."

Sometimes I talk to people about how things have changed, for example, how in the United States it used to be considered "natural" to work twelve hours a day and for women not to be able to vote.

I hope I can have conversations like these every day. I want to communicate to people the fundamental concept that what is really "natural" is to care for and cooperate with each other.

Jeremy Hobbs

Riverside, California, USA

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

UER Posters and Pins Available

United to End Racism (UER) posters and pins are available for purchase.

The design printed below is available as a poster. Three additional designs are also available. You can download color versions of all four posters (in limited-quality PDF file format) from the web site <<http://www.rc.org/uer>>. Click on "Fundraising" and then on "UER Posters."

These images can remind us of the hopefulness of our work. They can also be used to help get other people thinking and involved. Please bring the posters (and pins) to your UER going-public events.

Each poster costs \$3.00 (U.S.), plus shipping and handling. (Washington state residents pay \$3.29 to include sales tax.)

United to End Racism pins provide an excellent opening to talk about United to End Racism and to listen to people's thoughts and feelings about racism and the possibilities for eliminating it. People can also buy the pins as a way of supporting the work of United to End Racism.

The pins cost \$5.00 (U.S.) each, plus shipping and handling. (Washington State residents pay \$5.48 per pin to include sales tax.)

For ordering information, see page 109.



"Their Eyes Light Up"

I work in a "mental health" programme in which I lead a weekly diary session. People say what's going well and what's hard. The agreement is that we listen, keep confidentiality, and welcome emotions. (The leader of the programme is a Co-Counsellor, and so is another worker.) Some of those participating have brain damage and either cannot speak or have very little language. I love it when the group's attention is turned toward one or another of them. Their eyes light up, and they smile and seem to love

it. They are a great example to the rest of us of how to use attention, release emotions, and claim our thinking. Some people who have never learned to read or write are using the group's attention to learn. They are blooming. Last year we produced a newspaper in which everyone had a chance to see his or her own story in print.

Brian Smeaton

Letterkenny, County Donegal, Ireland

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

Appreciating PRESENT TIME

I loved the January 2009 PRESENT TIME and the words that Harvey wrote: "It's okay not to be perfect."

I also loved Lao Tzu's "Being deeply loved by someone gives you strength, while loving someone deeply give you courage," in the April PRESENT TIME.

Kamal S. Bishara
Yafia-Nazareth, Israel



AG

Thanks for all the effort put into making PRESENT TIME such a delicious gift every quarter!

Pat Fischer
Chapel Hill, North Carolina, USA



XM

PRESENT TIME arrived on May 1st. What a moment of gladness! What a wonderful cover photo!

Vera-Margrethe Levin
Tel Aviv, Israel



STEVE THOMPSON

I very much enjoy the excerpts from Harvey Jackins. I'm proud of PRESENT TIME—it's a fantastic resource, going from strength to strength.

Caroline New
Redcliffe, Bristol, England



FK

This last issue of PRESENT TIME is extraordinarily beautiful, not only in its articles and poems but in the artwork and photographs that seem to get increasingly delightful.

Maryhelen Snyder
Vienna, Virginia, USA



ND

I am glad that I leave PRESENT TIME issues lying all over the house. I just picked up July 2007 and read, "The notion that each moment can be the completely fresh start of a completely new future continues to thrill me and inspire me, whenever I remember it." (Harvey Jackins)

I shall discharge on that tonight—as I contemplate Harvey's humility, self-awareness, knowledge of patterns, and desire to describe reality accurately. It is during discharge that I realize (again) that the brain represents one of evolution's and creation's miracles and that the mind for which it is the vehicle is perfect (something I forget often) and therefore yearns for perfect accuracy. How can I fail to feel grateful that I have relearned the preciousness of discharge, which integrates thought, emotion, and memory and regularly inspires me to be as precise as I can be, as I choose and act in this reality—in this awesome opportunity to be alive.

Soon I'll be reading the April 2009 issue. Food for the mind and spirit. I intend to discharge as I read it and underline all that evokes emotion. Also, I will be reading selections to others.

Pam Maccabee
Glastonbury, Connecticut, USA

About PRESENT TIME: I used to read it religiously the day it arrived. Then I got out of the habit of reading it. I just began reading it again. Wow! What a resource. Even when I've already read a lot of the articles on the e-mail discussion lists, reading them edited and together is always a way to get my attention out. I had forgotten what an amazing journal it is. Thanks.

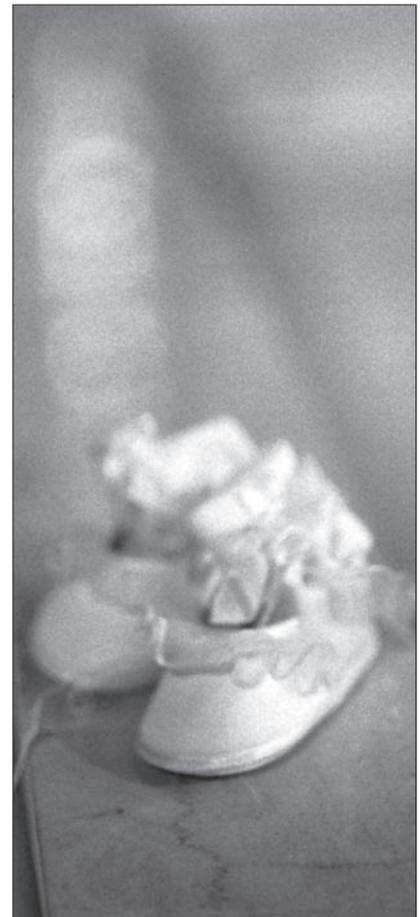
Mimi Jefferson
New York, New York, USA



RK

As always, PRESENT TIME is a breath of fresh air—wafting hope, energy, and encouragement to think freshly. The articles provide great material for discharge, too. Yea!

Penny Ives
Minneapolis, Minnesota, USA



LAURIE RHODES

A PRACTISING CATHOLICS' WORKSHOP

I attended Joanne Bray's¹ Practising Catholics' Workshop, in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, USA, in October 2008. I had also attended the first Catholic workshops she led in Ireland and England, and I remember the elation I felt when I finally understood the oppression of Catholics, the burden of colonisation, what had felt like the genocide of my people in Ireland, and that all of my feelings were not "just me." I had not understood how other people could be so active and joyful. Finally I got the picture of how the defeats, oppression, emigration, and quieting aspects of Catholicism had meant that at times I was hanging on to reality by the tips of my fingers.

Conformity, pretence, silence, and giving in to sexism had been ongoing experiences for me since I was a little girl. I had seen them in the faces of the congregation when I had walked down the chapel from communion on Sunday mornings.

The treasures I have uncovered under all the oppression are many. I found at the workshop the kindness and generosity of my family. (I find it in the Catholic rural community I work in, too.) How glad I was to be in the midst of it—quite a homecoming. That kind of generosity has persisted in Ireland, despite



MOZAMBIQUE • ROSLYN CASSIDY

our harsh experiences. I had a conversation about it with a young black African student on the campus where the workshop was held. He and I talked about kindness, sharing, and the experience of living with people who look out for each other. He told me his people were called "primitive" for it, and we both smiled in recognition of the richness we possessed, which has been devalued by the greed of capitalism and the headlong pursuit of competition.

¹ Joanne Bray is the International Liberation Reference Person for Catholics.

Another hallmark of the workshop was the opportunity to be myself as a practising Catholic. In the past, practising my religion has attracted derision. I have been scorned as deluded and indulging in "the opium of the people" (words I first heard at school when debating Communism versus Christianity). Given that derision, it has been difficult to talk with people about what I believe, what is puzzling, and so on.

Being myself allowed me to be bold (which means naughty in my Irish upbringing) and delight in the richness we have developed in Ireland through organised religion. I believe the word "catholic" means wide or universal. Humour, clear thinking, insights, histories, songs, and photographs filled the workshop so that at last we felt at ease, celebrating our likenesses and differences. Hearing the joyful singing in Spanish at Mass on Sunday morning, as we all joined with the Latina women, was a joy that reached far beyond the oppression. Nobody can oppress our spirits.

Someone asked why the people of El Salvador had been close to their church during their war and the Irish had not. At the time I thought it was because of class differences. Later I realised it was because the church in Ireland had not backed² the Catholics when they were hit the hardest with oppression. The church had taken a middle line, trying to stay connected to the establishment in order to secure the church's tenure in the state. By contrast, liberation proponents in the church in El Salvador, such as Archbishop Oscar Romero, had backed their people.

At the workshop there was lots of space to ask questions. The experience of most of us Catholics is that nobody ever asks us

continued . . .

² Backed means supported.



ELLIE PUTNAM

LIBERATION

continued . . .

what we really believe. Last week I asked that of one of the men in our parish choir, and he said that the last time anyone had asked him was when he was a child in the classroom. So here we all are, with private beliefs, silenced by the sound of the bell on the altar and on the grand occasion by the sweeping past of mitred hats on mighty men in purple and red silks. Only the occasional sideways glance, or outburst of frustration from a child restricted to a chapel bench, breaks the silence. Nowhere is there wide discussion of what we really believe or think or feel.

Thus to be in the heart of that workshop was “heaven” itself. To be accepted when I thought something different from my colleagues, to finally feel togetherness despite the differences, was quite something. Commitment, loyalty, kindness, generosity, and cutting-edge questions were the currency of the workshop.

Back at home now, I am more relaxed. I can laugh about some of my Catholic experiences. I’m mischievous and willing to say “unthinkable” things among my Catholic friends, especially when we gather after Mass on Sunday. I think we Catholics need a forum in which to talk about our experiences of the war and the marginalisation, the heartbreak of being left on our own³ without resource when we needed a voice from the outside to stand up for us.

I am reclaiming the rightfulness of generosity and kindness, without the selflessness I had previously associated with them. I am speaking up about the habit of greed in our society and asking at work and in my

family that we look to the wider good in our engagement with other people and the environment. All of this I first learned in my Catholic childhood—the paydirt⁴ amid the rubble!

It’s been a journey to finally realize that the human values I learned are indeed intact, correct, and just what is needed for changing the world around me for the better. My heart is lighter, my fear is diminishing, and I am back in the outdoors—walking Benbradagh Mountain in the sharp, clear, frosty air and riding a horse at a nearby farm. My grandson is an inspiration as he turns pieces of the world over in his tiny hands.

I have been digging up the terror associated with conflict and Catholic oppression, and this has given rise to nightmares in which I am being hunted and our land is being overrun and invaded. So useful for discharge!

So here’s to tomorrow! Let’s work together and renew our hope. Barack Obama⁵ has started the work. I am committing myself to working alongside him, keeping my patch in order, and accompanying Joanne Bray and all of you who get out of bed and make the best of each day—reclaiming your lives, your thinking, and your freedom of spirit. Thank you all!

Sheila Fairon
Regional Reference Person for Northern Ireland
Portrush, County Antrim, Northern Ireland
Reprinted from the RC e-mail
discussion list for leaders of Catholics

³ On our own means alone, by ourselves.

⁴ Paydirt means reward.

⁵ Barack Obama is the newly elected president of the United States.

Help Keep the Lists Up-to-Date

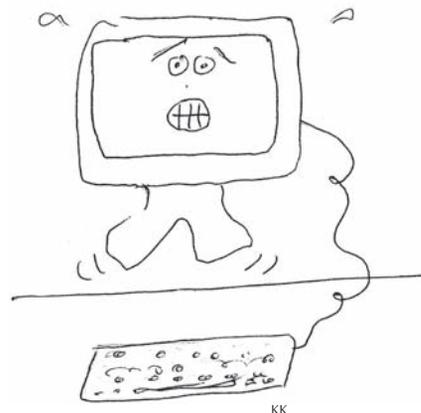
Discouragement is always old.
It makes a difference when you’re bold—

So here’s a way to be proactive
and enhance things interactive:

Someone’s looking for a teacher.
You can help that person reach her.*

This, a small step for RC,
Brings growth to our Community.

*Please help us keep the lists in the back of Present Time up-to-date.
People all over the world depend on them for accurate information.*



* or him

Irish Oppression

I loved the report from Sheila¹ about Joanne's² practising Catholics workshop.³ How she described the effects of being a colonised Irish Catholic was useful for me and touched me deeply. It gets confusing for me trying to separate the effects of being colonised and being Catholic. Sheila made it clear how closely bound up they are.

When I look at Irish history, a number of things stand out. One is the brutal way in which the native Irish people, who were almost all Catholic, were dispossessed of their land. Between 1641 and 1652 the Englishman Oliver Cromwell led a campaign in which at least 616,000 people, almost half the Irish population, died—by the sword, by plague, or by artificially produced famine. Some say that as a result of those eleven years of war the population of Ireland fell to about half a million.

Under the Act of Settlement of 1652, all Irish landowners, most if not all of whom were Catholic, had their lands confiscated and were ordered out of their homes and holdings. The confiscations were used to pay Cromwell's officers and soldiers, and those in England who had financed the war. The dispossessed landowners were told, in the words of Cromwell, that they could "go to Hell or to Connaught." (Connaught was a province west of the river Shannon in which the land was mountainous and poor.) Those who were not landowners were allowed to stay as labourers on the land.

The ultimate effect of the policies of Elizabeth I,⁴ James I,⁵ and Cromwell

was to place almost all the profitable land in Ireland in the hands of a conquering class that represented less than twenty percent of the population.

After taking the land, the English brought in the Penal Laws, which could be summed up by this statement of the senior judges: "The law does not suppose any such person to exist as an Irish Roman Catholic."

Below are some of the provisions of the Penal Laws:

- No Catholic was allowed to buy land, inherit land, or receive land as a gift from a Protestant.
- If a Catholic secretly bought land that had been taken from him, or land owned by a Protestant, the first Protestant who informed against him became the owner.
- When a Catholic landowner died, his estate was divided equally among his sons, unless the oldest son had become a Protestant, in which case that son got the lot.
- A wife who became a Protestant was immediately freed from

her husband's control, and the Chancellor was empowered to assign to her a certain proportion of her husband's property.

- If any child, however young, professed to be a Protestant, he or she was taken away at once from his or her father. The Chancellor (or the child, if he or she were an adult) could then force the father to produce the title deeds of his estate and give a proportion of it to the child.
- Any Protestant woman landowner who married a Catholic was immediately deprived of her inheritance, which passed to the nearest Protestant heir.
- Minor⁶ children of a deceased Catholic had to be brought up as Protestant, any property thereby eventually passing into Protestant hands.
- Anyone who provided shelter or protection for an unregistered priest or a banished dignitary was

continued . . .

⁶ In this context, minor means non-adult.



JO PERRY

¹ Sheila Fairon, the Regional Reference Person for Northern Ireland

² Joanne Bray, the International Liberation Reference Person for Catholics

³ See previous article.

⁴ Elizabeth I was Queen of England from 1558 to 1603.

⁵ James I was King of England from 1603 to 1625.

LIBERATION

continued . . .

liable to fines. A third offence meant confiscation of all goods and in certain cases death as a felon.

- The Oath of Abjuration empowered any two magistrates to summon before them any Irish layman and tender to him an oath that pledged him to perpetual loyalty to the Protestant line. Refusal meant imprisonment. If the oath was tendered three times and still refused, the Catholic was liable to life imprisonment and the confiscation of his property.

Although these laws were not always applied, the negative messages they conveyed about the worth of Catholics were overwhelming. It was not until 1829, after much struggle, that the Catholic Emancipation Act was passed, but in it the right to vote was limited to about fourteen thousand people (who owned their land), out of a total population of seven million.

The native Irish who were tenants on the land were important only in so far as they contributed to the profits of the landowners. When that was not the case, they could be removed. When it became profitable, due to falling prices for tillage crops, to use the land for grazing cattle, landlords cleared tenants off of large areas of cultivated land and converted it to pasture. And when, after 1846, cheap corn from America became available, some 373,000 families (about two million people) were evicted within a decade.

Famine struck Ireland in 1845. The diet of the ordinary tenants and labourers was based on the potato, and when the potato crop failed, about a million people died and another million emigrated. The authorities had done little to prevent this.

Running through all this history was the message that we Irish people were expendable, that our lives were not important, that it did not matter if we died. It was genocide by neglect.

All of this underlies the sense of total insignificance I struggle with. When Sheila wrote about not being

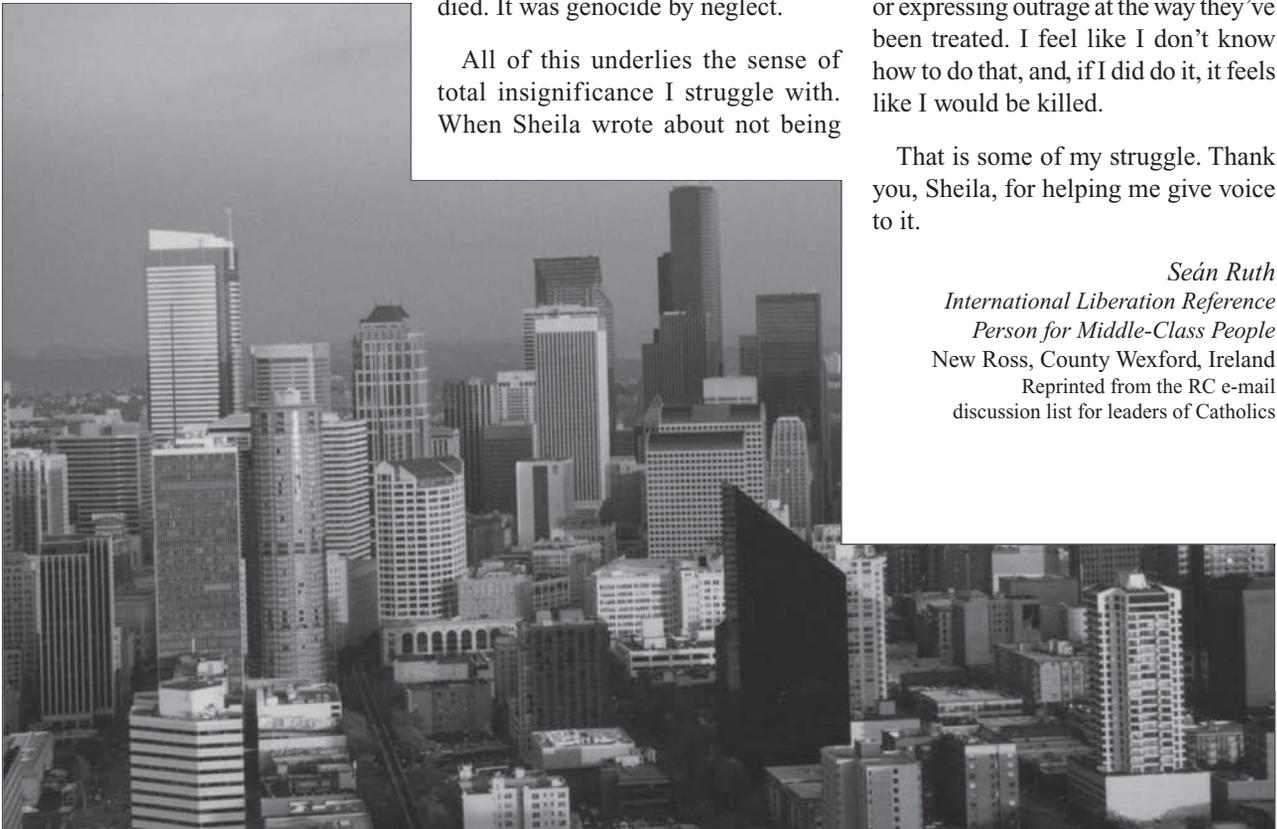
able to understand how other people could be so active and joyful, when she described the effects of defeats, oppression, and emigration and the quieting aspects of Catholicism, I knew exactly what she meant. I struggle with being able to acknowledge the scale of what happened to my people—and not to see my feelings as a personal failing. Historically, we Irish people did not have many allies. I have no conception of someone being outraged about our oppression. I don't expect anyone to see it as important or to do the work of becoming an effective ally.

As a Catholic I was encouraged to be patient and to "offer up" my struggles as a sacrifice to God—to be moderate and humble and to "know my place." I was encouraged not to think, but to have faith and to trust in the wisdom of priests and the institutional Church.

With that kind of background, it sometimes shocks me to see other oppressed people fighting to be heard or expressing outrage at the way they've been treated. I feel like I don't know how to do that, and, if I did do it, it feels like I would be killed.

That is some of my struggle. Thank you, Sheila, for helping me give voice to it.

Seán Ruth
International Liberation Reference
Person for Middle-Class People
New Ross, County Wexford, Ireland
Reprinted from the RC e-mail
discussion list for leaders of Catholics



SEATTLE, WASHINGTON, USA • THERESA D'AMATO

Research on Aging

I have been hoping that some of the biochemists in RC would get interested in aging. My natural optimism leads me to ask why we should accept the present “fact”^{*} that adult muscle cells and nerve cells cannot divide anymore—why it should not be possible to find a way to stimulate division without, of course, causing cancerous difficulties. If these cells can divide at an early stage of their existence, is it not likely that it is their environment and their relation to other cells that inhibit them from dividing or reproducing during maturity, rather than any built-in programming?



LK

I look forward to correspondence with you on this subject, not just because I’m fifty-seven-and-a-half years old, but because it seems to me that this is one of the crucial avenues for human ingenuity and the

^{*} Scientific studies have since shown this “fact” to be incorrect.

A New Resource for Beginning Teachers of RC

Rational Island Publishers has recently published a new book, a *Fundamentals Teaching Guide and Class Outline*, to assist beginning teachers of RC fundamentals classes. It is intended especially for those teachers who are far from established RC Communities. (As RC spreads, some teachers are in places so far removed from where RC has already been that they have never had the chance to be in a fundamentals class themselves.)

This new book (twenty-six chapters, a hundred and eighty-four pages) covers more than enough topics for a first series of fundamentals classes. It also includes readings on each topic for the students, readings on each topic for the teacher, and page-sized posters of related RC ideas. The teacher has permission to make copies of the readings for the students.

It is not meant to prescribe what someone is to teach in a fundamentals class, nor the order of topics, nor how a teacher is to teach. It is intended to give beginning RC teachers something solid to help them think about what they want to teach and how they wish to share those ideas.

It is available from Rational Island Publishers for \$25.00 (U.S.) per copy, plus postage and handling. (For ordering information, see page 109.)

Challenging Fear to Work on Ending Racism

I am writing about my Co-Counseling experience surrounding the 2008 U.S. presidential election.

I had been living in Japan since 2006, and it had been both challenging and rewarding to be part of a new Community, where there were distresses I wasn’t familiar with.

I had noticed that not much work had been done on ending racism. As the only African-heritage and Latina RCer in Japan, this had often restimulated my loneliness and internalized racism. My Co-Counseling sessions had often consisted of hopelessness and feeling sorry for myself. I had felt like this Community would “never understand

me.” Instead of getting close to people, I had often just given up. And I’d felt that since I couldn’t discharge fully on my black heritage, how could I possibly discharge well about Barack Obama becoming the president of the United States?

At an East Coast USA Black Liberation Workshop, in July 2007, I attended a lunchtime topic table, led by Barbara Love,¹ called “Discharge on the Presidential Candidate, Barack Obama, and the Election.” After that, something changed within me. Before, part of me had been afraid to discharge on the

election for fear of all the feelings that would come up—about being a black young-adult U.S. woman, and having no resource or space to discharge on all of that. But when Barbara announced the topic table, I practically ran there. I listened intently. I was scared and worried for Barack Obama but noticed that many of the other black Co-Counselors seemed happy and hopeful. It made me realize how numb I was about racism and especially about being black, even when there were victories in store for us, and how the numbness had compounded my hopelessness about being understood by my RC Community.

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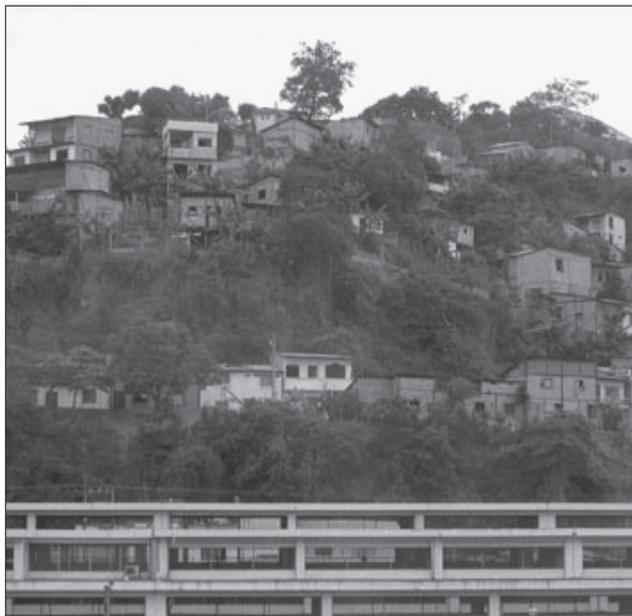
¹ Barbara Love is the International Liberation Reference Person for African-Heritage People and was the leader of the workshop.

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It's not surprising that when I got back to Japan I was disappointed (again) to find no one thinking about the election in a way that I found relevant to me as a black person. I was expecting a lot of allies and support, and happiness that a black man was probably going to be elected U.S. president and what that would mean for the United States and the entire world. I was wanting people to offer me attention and give me the space to be happy about being black, and to work on my fears.

Why didn't I get the reactions I was expecting? I concluded that it was because of the Japanese Community's internalized racism and its patterns of disconnection from U.S. people of color, probably as a result of U.S. cultural hegemony and language oppression and the history of Western powers dominating and waging war on Japan. I noticed myself feeling bad as a U.S. person and a black person. I felt bad when I was proud of my country, and bad again when Japanese people's patterns did not "let me" feel proud. One can see how hard it was to think logically in that situation.



MARITZA MOSQUERA

I decided that enough was enough—that it was time for all of us to discharge on these topics. I asked one of my Co-Counselors to help me organize a gather-in about the U.S. presidential election, which I would lead and in which we would work on feelings about the election: racism, hopelessness, fear, happiness—everything. I called as many people as I could, and a lot of people showed up²—more than I expected. I was nervous. A distress recording kept telling me, "This is not important, so why am I going to talk about it? They are not going to get³ it anyway." That is how tricky racism and internalized racism patterns are—they force us to feel bad, and to feel like feeling bad is "normal" or something we shouldn't bother talking about.

People seemed to expect me to give a detailed account of Obama's life, and explain the election rhetoric, but I told them that this group was about discharging on racism. First we had mini-sessions. Then I asked them to discharge on why they had come and what they had hoped to achieve by focusing on the topic. I also asked them

to discharge for five minutes each in front of the whole group on their first memory of a black person. That made me feel closer to them. I was expecting a lot of negative accounts, but there were many positive ones. It reminded me that only the illogical

² Showed up means came, attended.

³ In this context, get means understand.

oppression and confusion of racism patterns make us feel like we are so different from each other and can't be allies.

After that I talked more about how racism works in the world, how we African-heritage people are placed at the bottom, and how we may have patterns that other people don't understand or have much attention for. I reminded the group that it is because of racism that many people are expecting Obama to "fix" the world—for example, to end racism and other oppressions—which doesn't leave space for him, or other black people, to discharge the hurts of slavery. Many participants seemed to understand this.

I was glad (and of course nervous) to take on⁴ this leadership role, and I'm proud of everyone who was brave enough to think with me.

I don't know much about the school system and government in Japan, but I do believe that, as in most countries, most of the population isn't given enough information about how oppressed people are. I'd like more ideas for ways our Community can discharge to end our racism and internalized racism patterns. How can I assist Japanese people to be allies to black people around the world (which will also give me more space to discharge as a black woman)? How do we become effective allies for each other, if racism makes us both "go victim"? I guess the answers include continuing to challenge, take chances, and be close. And I do feel much closer to everyone.

Tatiana Elena Williams-Rodriguez
Saitama, Japan

⁴ In this context, take on means assume responsibility for.

Disability Oppression and Anti-Jewish Oppression

My experience of the intersection of disability and anti-Jewish oppressions began the day that I was born. I have arthrogryposis, a congenital restriction of the joints resulting in my limbs and jaw not looking “regular” or straight. When I was in the womb, the science of pre-natal screening had not yet been developed so my parents did not know that I would have a physical impairment, noticeable to others, until I was born.

My parents were both Mizrahi Jews¹ (from Syria and Iraq) who had immigrated to England a few years before I was born. They had not been directly affected by the Holocaust but had internalised the terror of centuries of oppression. They had very much wanted another child (I have an older, non-disabled brother), but when I arrived and they noticed my impairment, they decided to leave me at the hospital. I believe I then would have either been placed in an institution or possibly killed (at that time, some disabled children were being killed, or allowed to die from neglect). However, after a week my mother changed her mind and returned for me. Without the terror from the anti-Jewish oppression they had internalised, my parents would never have contemplated abandoning me.

LANGUAGE AND DISABILITY

First, a note on language. Re-evaluation Counselling has played a key role in distinguishing objective facts about identities from oppressive misinformation about them. Similarly, many disabled people have chosen to adopt, as a key part of their liberation, what in the wide world is known as a “social model” understanding of disability. This model distinguishes a person’s impairment (the medical or quasi-medical condition that affects him or her) from the oppression that he or she faces in connection with having an impairment. In other words, it’s not necessarily the medical condition that is the problem but the oppression related to it. Accordingly, I use the word “impairment” to describe the medical or quasi-medical condition a person has and the words “disability” and “disabled person” (or, as in the United States and some other countries, “person with a disability”) to describe the experience of oppression. For example, a person’s impairment may be cerebral palsy, whilst his or her disability may be unemployment, poverty, lack of closeness, and so on.

¹ Mizrahi Jews are Jews who are descended from the Jewish communities of the Middle East, North Africa, Central Asia, and the Caucasus. They often identify as people of color.

In addition, I avoid oppressive descriptions of disabled people, such as, “X— suffers from haemophilia,” since X— may not suffer at all from the impairment (albeit he may “suffer” from oppression) or, “Y— is wheelchair-bound,” when Y— may consider her wheelchair liberating rather than “binding.”

Virtually everyone has an impairment, but not everyone is disabled, since some impairments are less likely to affect a person’s ability to succeed in the roles that he or she is expected to play under capitalism, and thus he or she may not face oppression, or at least not heavy oppression. Whether or not a person identifies as disabled is something that person must decide, although he or she needs to be aware of any patterned motivations for wanting or not wanting to identify as disabled.



MARION OUPHOUET

DISABILITY OPPRESSION

Disability oppression is the mistreatment, exclusion, and devaluing of a person on the basis that he or she has an impairment. It may be manifested in direct mistreatment, such as violence or choosing not to associate with a disabled person, or in more subtle ways, such as “feeling sorry” for or pitying a disabled person. (It is sometimes hard for disabled people to distinguish genuine love and caring from distressed

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LIBERATION

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admiration or pity.) The oppression may include overt or covert denial or doubting of a person's right to be alive or to have close relationships with other people, especially non-disabled people. It can take the form of intense interest in a person's impairment—what it is, what caused it, why or how it happened, and how the person “manages” with it—especially when that is irrelevant to the relationship in question. As with any oppression, no one would mistreat a disabled person unless he or she had first been mistreated himself or herself earlier on.

Disability oppression is not the same as elders' oppression, “mental health” oppression, or indeed any other kind of oppression, although elders, “mental health” system survivors, and others may, of course, also be disabled or their oppression may be similar or overlap (for example, the oppression that defines who is a perfect, beautiful, admirable, or desirable person).

The oppression of disabled people affects us all. As long as disabled people are oppressed, no one will feel safe and everyone will feel “incomplete” or “flawed”—since no one can attain the pseudo-reality of a “perfect” (in capitalist terms) human being. Allies' work includes discharging on where they feel bad about themselves, particularly on where they were told that their bodies or minds were not good enough. It includes discharging feelings that disabled people are imperfect, unattractive, unintelligent, or not strong or “quick” enough. Allies also need to discharge feelings of pity, which reinforce fears of impairment, and of disabled people. A useful direction for everyone is, “I am/you are/we are perfect.” We all also need to work on young people's oppression, particularly the misinformation that a person must attain status in order to be acceptable.

The oppression says that if we are disabled, we must be cured, and that if we can't be cured, we must achieve fantastically. And that if neither is possible, we should be dead! Disabled people internalise this.



AMSTERDAM, THE NETHERLANDS • PETER STRATON

INTERNALISED DISABILITY OPPRESSION

Internalised disability oppression can also include hatred of one's own body, terror of separateness and rejection, hatred of difference, idealising “beauty,” a lack of a sense of self-worth, and an attachment to being a victim.

It is unlikely that any person born with an impairment will start out with distresses about any limitations arising from that impairment. For example, a person born with one arm is unlikely to start out with a sense of loss or “incompleteness.” Disabled people who have acquired their impairments may have some distresses about loss, especially if they have not had an opportunity to discharge the related physical and other hurts. All disabled people, however, may have distresses arising from being excluded, devalued, and demeaned.

As with other oppressions, disability oppression, when internalised, may be acted out at other disabled people. Also, because of the diversity of impairments, and when and how they were acquired, disabled people's internalised oppression may function like oppressor material.² For example, someone with cerebral palsy may act as an oppressor toward a person with a hearing impairment, but that is, in fact, internalised oppression.

People with impairments that could be “resolved” or “cured” may have different patterns from those whose impairments are “permanent.” They may have internalised oppressive messages that say that not being “well” is somehow their fault or that they should strive to “get better.” This is less likely to be the case for people with “permanent” impairments.

DISABILITY LIBERATION

A programme for disability liberation at the present time might have the following elements:

Working on “outsider” material: Because disabled people have experienced exclusion, many

² Material means distress.

have patterns that keep them on the outside so that they continuously experience exclusion, not being accepted, not belonging, and not being in charge. Discharging this material is key to unraveling the internalised oppression.

Working on having each other, particularly on having close relationships with disabled people who have a different kind of impairment, in order to discharge the internalised oppression that keeps disabled people separate.

Building allies work.

DISABILITY OPPRESSION AND ANTI-JEWISH OPPRESSION

Disability oppression intersects with anti-Jewish oppression particularly with regard to terror. Impairments may restimulate Jewish internalised oppression that says that Jews will be destroyed if they are not “strong,” and this in turn may restimulate disabled people’s internalised oppression that says they are not good enough or “complete” and that they, too, will be destroyed. Jews often feel great anxiety, and other overt or hidden upset, around disabled people.

Jews and disabled people share a history of mistreatment and oppression. Examples are eugenics (the false “science” that some humans are superior to others) in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and,

of course, the Holocaust. Because both Jews and disabled people have been targeted for destruction, both may find it difficult to feel trust and safety in the world and may tend to assume that other people have malicious motives. This is another way that each constituency can restimulate the other.

Both Jews and disabled people share feelings of shame and disgust about themselves, arising from oppressive messages that they are imperfect and wrong. This, too, can cause Jews and disabled people to restimulate each other.

As a result of these restimulations, disabled people are much more “out of sight”—more likely to be placed in institutions or communities away from their families and homes—in the Jewish community than in some other communities, as Jews seek to “hide” those with obvious impairments.

Because of the nature of disability oppression, it may feel overwhelming and disabled people may find it hard to notice and work on their other identities (including a Jewish identity). However, working on the intersection of terror, disgust, and shame is key for the liberation of both Jews and disabled people, and disabled Jews especially.

David Ruebain

London, England

Reprinted from the RC e-mail
discussion list for leaders on
disability, chronic illness, and health



“Playing the Other Role” in Oppression Recordings

Thank you for your letters. I think there is a real problem when people who are trying to work on oppression distress slip into the counter-dramatizing role and act as if they were “getting even” with their former oppressors. It’s similar to the “playing of the other role” in any recording and needs to be called* by whoever is thinking in the situation, just like any other pattern should be called.

Men are afraid to challenge women’s dramatizations, white people are afraid to challenge black people’s dramatizations, because of their own guilt. They fear they will be acting oppressive. That, of course, is a danger and needs to be watched out for. But if one is clear that one is really loving the other person, then it’s unlikely that one will be acting racist or sexist. The pattern should be interfered with, like any other one.

Harvey Jackins

From a letter written in 1976

* In this context, called means interrupted.

From an Ally

I am a Jewish female from a middle-/owning-class family, raised in a suburb of New York City, USA. My experience as an ally connects with everything David shared about the intersection of disability oppression and anti-Jewish oppression.¹

I was born in 1965 to parents who were born in the United States during the Holocaust. My parents were terrified (but mostly had to pretend they weren't). My father's family was committed to upward mobility and moved from being poor to owning-class in two generations. My mother's family was working-/middle-class, and it was important that my mother "marry up" (that is, marry someone from a more wealthy family than hers).

As I was growing up, upward mobility and assimilation continued to be important in my family. These were common post-Holocaust patterns among Jews, especially Ashkenazi Jews.² Many Jews internalized the belief that economic achievement and being "like everyone else" would provide them with security. (Yet, as Cherie Brown³ reminds us, our real security is in our relationships with other people.)

My family was proud to be Jewish. We were involved in a Reform synagogue⁴ and attended services regularly. However, we were also not supposed to be "too much," and I remember my mother discouraging

me from wearing a Star of David⁵ on a necklace.

Why am I telling you all this in a discussion about health and disability? Well, I was raised to "look good" and be "perfect" at any cost. I internalized the idea that how I looked on the outside and how I "behaved" (including getting good grades) were more important than what I thought or what mattered to me on the inside. I organized much of how I was in the world around that distress recording. At the same time I was skeptical that doing so was a good idea.

I was committed to the Jewish tradition of *tikkun olam* (repair of the world) and could sniff out injustice easily (though because I was scared and didn't want to be "too much," I often didn't do anything about it). I never understood why people were mistreated.

Because my life was so organized around "perfection," I was especially interested in the lives of people who, because of some "impairment" (to use David's language), could not be "perfect" in the way I was pressured to be. The discrimination, exclusion, and mistreatment of people with disabilities seemed particularly wrong to me, and I always felt like I could learn something important about what really mattered in life (beyond how one looked or appeared on the outside) by understanding "their" lives more. When I was young I was scared of becoming friends with disabled people, but I sure read a lot! I read tons⁶ of books by and about the lives of people with many different kinds of disabilities.

When I was sixteen I attended

a Jewish summer camp for deaf and hearing Jewish teenagers and started then to learn American Sign Language (I returned to studying it more seriously when I was in my thirties). As I became a young adult, I made friends with a wider variety of people, including people with disabilities. When I was in graduate school, I worked as a personal care attendant. In fact, it was my interest in disability liberation that got me connected to RC. I attended a wide-world event Marsha Saxton⁷ led in Boston (Massachusetts, USA). Then Marsha invited me to be in an RC fundamentals class she was teaching.

I have attended RC disability liberation workshops as an ally. I have stayed connected to Marsha—Co-Counseling with her regularly and backing⁸ her leadership. I agree with David that our key work as allies is to be pleased with ourselves and our bodies, to discharge fear, and to work on all the messages of disability oppression that we have internalized from the broader culture and that we run⁹ at people with disabilities.

We allies can learn and care about people with disabilities by being their Co-Counselors and friends as well as by reading books and articles. We get to face a whole bunch of feelings, not only about not being "perfect" but also about needing help, being close to people, what it feels like to be misunderstood or to not understand something, and urgency and feeling like everything has to be done quickly (thanks to classism and capitalism). This is such great stuff to work on!

Joan Ostrove

¹ See previous article.

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

³ Cherie Brown is the International Liberation Reference Person for Jews.

⁴ A Reform synagogue is the house of worship of Reform Judaism, the oldest and largest progressive Jewish movement in North America.

⁵ A Star of David is a symbol of Judaism and Jewish identity. It is made of two equilateral triangles that form a six-pointed star.

⁶ In this context, tons means a very large number.

⁷ Marsha Saxton is the International Liberation Reference Person for Disabled Persons.

⁸ Backing means supporting.

⁹ Run means act out.

Using My Body and Mind to Fight Sexism

Today I used my body and my mind together to fight sexism. What I ended up with was not only a day I will never forget but also a surge of inspiration to do what I can to smash down boundaries that interfere with women living their fullest possible lives.

What I battle today, and every day, is sexism in athletics. I train on a rowing team seven days a week, doing two to five hours of physical activity per day. My goal is to row in the 2012 Olympics in the lightweight women's double sculls event. Every day I have the opportunity to push my body to its limits, and every day I step into the realm of sports and competition, which only so recently were forced to crack open their doors to female athletes.

Since taking up rowing again last summer, after a two-year break, I have been using Co-Counseling as a component of my training and have noticed profound and exciting changes. For example, every morning on my way to practice I yawn. In between training intervals, I yawn. Pretty much whenever I can think to do it, I yawn. And although I am still often physically tired from the sheer volume of training, the quality of tiredness is different; being tired feels much less devastating and often completely manageable and satisfying. I have also noticed increases in my strength and stamina after I've discharged on sexism. Working on fear has helped me to approach hard and painful workouts with a confidence and belief in my body I have never felt before. I have learned that the pain I experience with physical exertion doesn't have to be scary and that it might be connected to a lot of old pain that I get to discharge and move out of the way. It's all exciting. I learn so much every day about my body, and how taking on¹ these physical challenges is connected to my re-emergence and reclaiming my mind.

Today I participated in a sport I started doing last year called biathlon. It is a unique endurance and precision sport that combines cross-country skate skiing with target

shooting. It became an Olympic event for men in 1960; it wasn't until 1992 that women's biathlon became an Olympic event as well. Even now, the women's races are shorter in distance than the men's, reflecting the misconception that women are slower and more fragile and cannot endure the same physical feats as men.

I had been thinking of ways to challenge this and decided last night that I would see today if I could race in the men's race instead of the women's. I immediately got scared about how I would approach the situation and what people might think and say. I didn't want to insult the local biathlon organization that has been so supportive in teaching me the sport (they simply follow the international distance standards). And going against the internalized sexism I anticipated would be restimulated in my female competitors was even scarier than what the men might think.

I started out my day simply by telling the two men I carpoled with, several of the other women racers, and the president of the biathlon organization that I did not like that the women had to race a shorter distance than the men. I ended up having a good conversation with the organization president about women in sports and how there is no good reason why they can't be entirely equal in their capacity to take on physical challenges. I could tell, however, that he was not interested in registering me for the men's race, and at that moment I was scared to ask.

Later on, up at the course, waiting for the men's twelve-and-a-half kilometer race to start, I decided to try again and said, "I want to race the longer distance," and in a moment of trusting my body's strength and capability I added, "Can I race in both races?" This turned some heads.² One of the men backed³ me and said that if I wanted to do it, why not. He went and asked the president. I was immediately labeled as "crazy" but was given the okay to race with the men.

Before the race I had a little time to think about and talk to the other women competitors (there were only six of us). I made sure it was clear to them that my desire to race in both races was not because I thought I was a better athlete than they were but because I didn't agree with the sexism associated with the distance discrepancy. One of the highlights of my day was the support I

continued . . .

¹ In this context, taking on means undertaking.



JOAN OSTROVE

The artist's task is to make the revolution irresistible.

Graffiti in Oakland, California, USA

² Turned some heads means alerted and surprised some people.

³ Backed means supported.

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continued . . .

received from my women comrades. Throughout the men's race they cheered me on, told me I was inspiring, and said, "We're living vicariously through you right now!" I reminded them that it was possible they could do the longer distance, too.

Another highlight was the men's reactions to my racing with them. There was some confusion about "reverse sexism," because the men couldn't race in the women's race. I also got accused of having a "big chip on my shoulder,"⁴ and some of the men showed a fear of being embarrassed if I were to beat them. Mostly, however, I received a lot of support and respectful comments, and I thanked the men for including me in their race.

I proceeded to finish in ninth place among sixteen men. Half an hour later, I won the women's ten kilometer race. It was as if the triumph over sexism uncovered the

extra energy I needed to do well even after I "should have" been too fatigued to race a second time.

Over the past couple of years since I started Co-Counseling, I have spent a lot of time thinking about competition and how to thoughtfully approach my big and competitive goal of being an Olympic athlete. Today was a great reminder that although the path I have chosen will involve a lot of winning and losing and comparison, my real objective is to keep women-and-physical-power work in the forefront and to see just how much I can push beyond my perceived physical limitations—for me, and ultimately for all women. I am grateful to have the tools of Co-Counseling so that I can keep my mind, as well as my body, engaged and active. The potential of our human intelligence is unlimited and uncharted, and I think that our physical capabilities can continue to expand, and push beyond any limits, right alongside our minds.

Abby Broughton
Seattle, Washington, USA

⁴ Having a "big chip on my shoulder" means being resentful and angry.



RANDALL SMITH

God

My own idea of God is one I came to very slowly. I started out a Norwegian Lutheran, which is a strict, fundamental kind of Christian. I rebelled for many years against the hypocrisy that went with it and was sort of anti-God, but I think at this point I now understand much better what God is. I think the notion of God was invented by human beings in order to keep their own good human nature out in sight when their troubles and the ways they acted because of them were covering it up.

I don't have any trouble being at ease with a member of any religion now, because I think that if there is a God, then certainly that God would be no less than the whole of the universe, and *that* certainly exists. So if someone wants to call that God, and I privately believe it is the universe, I have no objection to calling it God when I discuss it with him or her.

I am not so happy about organized religion, of course, because it is used for the organized repression of individuals and to pour new patterns of fear and shame on them. But as an expression of the best in the universe and the best in human beings, I can respect any notion of God and someone's worship of the idea.

Harvey Jackins
From a letter written in 1973

Keeping Fears in Perspective

Even after twenty years of leading working-class workshops, I often have big fears before and during the workshops, sometimes with big physical reactions.

One day before a workshop, I was agonizing over all of this and I said to my partner, Beth, * “Why is this such a big deal (so dramatic) for me? All these feelings seem so stupid.”

I found her answer helpful: “You are only trying to undo ten thousand years of human history.”

That has helped me keep things in perspective.

*Dan Nickerson
International Liberation Reference
Person for Working-Class People
Freeport, Maine, USA*

* Beth Edmonds, the Regional Reference Person for Maine, USA

Well-Being No. 6

Well-Being is the RC journal for exchange of information and ideas about health. The editor, Pam Geyer, writes, “It’s been nearly twenty years since the last issue of *Well-Being* was published. During that time much discharge, thinking, and communication has taken place. . . . At a workshop a few years ago one of the questions for introductions was, ‘How has your life changed since the last time we met?’ More than seventy percent of the participants replied that there had been a positive change in their physical well-being. I thought it was time to bring this work to the fore by putting out another issue of the journal.”

Well-Being No. 6 touches upon many aspects of health. There are articles on addictions, men’s health, eating distresses, drugs and alcohol, pain, anesthesia, counseling on specific conditions, and more.

\$3.00, plus postage and handling.
See page 109 for ordering information.

Wake up Sleeper
True love has no fear
Don’t be afraid
We are here

Wake up Sleeper
You’ve endured the pain
And played a game
That’s helped you survive

Wake up Sleeper
The time is here
Sleep no more
The world is yours

Wake up Sleeper
Don’t wait to live
Open your heart
And all will appear

Wake up Sleeper
The darkness is over
The light is here
You are the light.

*Steve Connor
Sydney, New South Wales, Australia*



LK

Coming Home as Native People

The following is a summary of notes I've taken on a number of Marcie Rendon's¹ talks, at her workshops.

Because of genocide, many of us Native people survived by marrying into other constituencies, assimilating into other cultures, and taking on² the patterns of other groups. All the things our ancestors did that helped to get us here to this day, alive, were successful strategies for dealing with policies of genocide.

All of us who are Native have work to do to reclaim those things that genocide took away from our families and people, whether it was by making us assimilate into other cultures or by bringing distresses into our communities through missionaries, boarding schools, foster care, or other outside forces.

THOSE OF US RAISED IN MIXED-HERITAGE OR NON-NATIVE ENVIRONMENTS

The following are steps that those of us who were raised in mixed-heritage homes or non-Native cultures and communities can take to get ourselves back fully and come home as Native people. (Some of them may be useful to those raised Native as well.)

- 1) Spend at least a year being completely pleased and totally proud of whatever culture (or cultures) or identity you were raised in—white, Latino/a, Chicano/a, black, Spanish, Asian, and so on. Discharge on all the things that were good and wonderful about growing up in that culture and community. Look at the patterns and struggles from growing up in that community, culture, and identity. Discharge any parts that are, for you or your family, based in distress. Hold on to the good things you got and be proud of everything human.
- 2) Talk to your family and find out everything you can about your Native heritage. Do not give up. If your family stopped being tribal, ask why. Find support to get information that terror and genocide have kept hidden.



NANCY FAULSTICH

- 3) If you don't live there currently, go back to the land of your original Indigenous people or peoples. See what the land looks like, smells like. Spend some time there. If your people are still there, spend time with your people. If not, find out where your people are today.
- 4) Go to events in the Indian community where you currently live. Go first in the identity that is real for you now—Chicano/a, white, African heritage. Connect and be present, then discharge on whatever comes up. See how it feels "sitting in" different identities as you go to pow wows, movies, gathering places. This will change over time, and the discharge will change with it. Things will evolve as you discharge on what comes up as you connect with Indigenous people.
- 5) Discharge, discharge, discharge.

Alison Ehara-Brown
Richmond, California, USA

¹ Marcie Rendon is the International Liberation Reference Person for Native Americans.

² In this context, taking on means adopting.

Finding Our Real Selves

To me it is simply the inevitable unfolding of the nature of the universe that we should find our real selves, and it was probably inevitable that we go through the millions of years of being obscured by patterns. After all, that is a small price to pay to struggle out to complete rationality from the pre-rational behavior and activity that living things were limited to before that.

Harvey Jackins

From a letter written in 1974



BILL GARZA

Reaching Out, in an Elevator

For about seven years I've lived in a building with an elevator. The building is located in a rapidly gentrifying part of New York City (USA). Many of the long-time residents are of African descent (like me), and many of the newer residents are white.

It's taken me some time to get accustomed to meeting and greeting my neighbors in a tiny enclosed space the size of a large closet. I live on an upper floor, so I often have several minutes to connect with people before reaching my destination.

A young man of European descent, and his family, moved into the building a few years ago. They are a "mixed" family in the sense that the father, according to the current U.S. political definition of the word, is "white" and the mother is African American.

The son is active and talkative, the mother is polite and friendly, and the father is shy to the point of sometimes appearing to have a rudeness pattern. I've given this some thought, probably as often as I've encountered him in the elevator.

Last Valentine's Day¹ I tried including him in a conversation I was having with a friend of mine. My friend was carrying a bouquet of flowers, and I joshed² him a bit, bringing a smile to the face of my shy elevator buddy. This seemed to have a short-term effect; he smiled the next several times we met but with a slightly smaller smile each time.

Tonight when he and I met in the lobby, his smile was completely gone. He was back to his old shy

¹ Valentine's Day is a holiday celebrated on February 14 by many people throughout the world. In English-speaking countries, it is a day on which lovers express their love for each other by sending Valentine's cards, presenting flowers, or offering confections.

² Joshed means teased good-naturedly.

self. On the elevator ride up, I spent the time mentally putting myself in his place, imagining what it might have been like for him to marry a black woman. How many battles might he have waged in his own family? How many hostile looks from total strangers might he have endured, just walking to and from the supermarket?

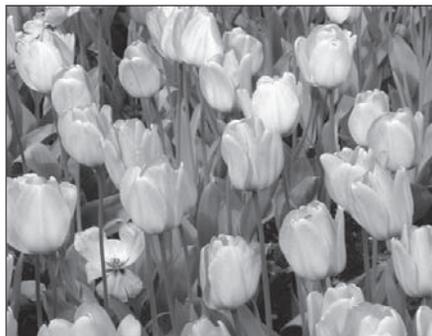
As the elevator neared my floor, I shared my name and apologized for never having introduced myself before. He responded by blushing. Then he reached out to shake my hand, and I saw him grin for the first time since Valentine's Day. His name is "Dan."

Ron Medley

Brooklyn, New York, USA



MONUMENT VALLEY, UTAH, USA • ANNE MACKIE



SØREN HOLM



KATIE KAUFFMAN



MARTIN URBEL

What used to be called Personal Counselors is now called Re-evaluation Counseling Community Resources (RCCR).

Hearing Assistive Devices

Since September 2004, Re-evaluation Counseling Community Resources (RCCR) has been renting out hearing assistive devices for use at RC workshops and other RC events. They work only in the United States and Canada. (Other countries use different radio frequencies.)

We've received good reports from people who have used the devices. No matter where they are sitting in the audience, people are able to clearly hear the speakers in front of the room.

The leader/speaker wears a microphone and transmitter, and the people with impaired hearing wear headsets attached to pocket-sized receivers.

Organizers of events may rent a set for \$60 (U.S.). A standard set includes one microphone/transmitter and two receivers with headsets. Depending on availability, additional receivers/headsets may be added to accommodate up to eight people.

Due to increased demand, organizers who wish to rent this equipment will need to notify Re-evaluation Counseling Community Resources at least three weeks before the event (earlier requests are given priority) to be sure of availability and to allow for shipping time. The equipment must be returned to us within two days of the event so that it will be available to others.

For more information, and to check availability, e-mail us at rcoffice@rc.org (put Hearing Helper in the subject line). Please include the title of the event, the event dates, the organizer's name and e-mail address, and how many people with low hearing you need to accommodate.

Re-evaluation Counseling Community Resources



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JULIE ANNE FORGIONE

Now Available—*The RC Teacher* No. 28!

The newest issue of *The RC Teacher* is long overdue. The previous issue (Number 27) was published fifteen years ago—in 1994.

The RC Teacher No. 28 contains 128 pages of excellent material (and because so many good articles didn't fit, we will publish an additional issue, *The RC Teacher* No. 29, within the year).

The RC Teacher No. 28 devotes seventy pages to teaching fundamentals. You will be inspired by the variety of ways RC teachers around the world have taught basic RC theory and practice. They share their successful classes and lectures, the creative ideas that worked, the mistakes they learned from, how they screened for their classes, their "naturalized" teaching, and much more.

The section on RC policies will help teachers present the *Guidelines* to their students. It also includes in-depth overviews of the "no socializing" policy and the RC policy on psychiatric drugs.

Following a section on RC Community goals, a number of teachers write about successful work in their classes and Communities on eliminating racism (Goal 1).

A final section focuses on counseling with attention away from distress. Harvey Jackins explains how to use the Understatement and the Reality Agreement for this purpose.

Whether you plan to teach RC in a class setting or one-to-one, or want to be ready to tell your friends what you are doing, *The RC Teacher* No. 28 is an invaluable resource.

E-mail Discussion List for RC Community Members Involved in Eliminating Racism

What began as an e-mail discussion list for people in United to End Racism has developed into a list for all RCers who are active in using RC to eliminate racism. This list is a way for us to exchange our thinking about and experience with using RC in eliminating racism.



ROSLYN CASSIDY

If you would like to be a member of this list, please e-mail us at <uer@rc.org>, telling us of your interest and including a short description of your eliminating-racism activities. Please also ask your Area Reference Person or Regional Reference Person to e-mail us with his or her support of your membership.

*Tim Jackins
and Diane Shisk*

Proud User

The oppressive role of the United States needs to be faced (as does that of any Western imperialist power), particularly in this period when the United States is the dominant imperialist power. But trying to deal with other people out of guilt is not in any sense useful.

I simply make it plain to everyone that I am a dedicated enemy of U.S. imperialism, even though I am a proud User, and this is something they can accept. To try to organize a chance for people to reproach you, or to say that “we” oppress them, is just wallowing in guilt and is of no help at all in my opinion. I would do some counseling on it and realize that one can be a proud User without in any way identifying oneself with imperialism.

Harvey Jackins
From a letter written in 1976

A Picture of Left-Handed Oppression

I’ve been thinking about what it meant for me to grow up left-handed and have done some mini-sessions and topic tables about it at workshops.

Like many left-handed people, I sometimes feel incompetent at writing from left to right. My hand obscures what I have just written, making it more challenging to track my thoughts, and I smudge the ink or end up with ink stains on my fingers. Some left-handed people have simply been told that writing with their favored hand is “wrong.” In more extreme cases, people writing with their left hand have been slapped or had their hand tied behind their back. Getting “switched” (being forced to use the right hand dominantly) can have all

manner of effects. It can literally change the way one thinks, because dexterity is connected to brain hemispheres (left-handers have a dominant right brain). “Lefties” have sometimes been labelled dyslexic, learning disabled, or schizophrenic. For these reasons, I consider being left-handed a “mental health” oppression identity. We left-handed people are often treated as if we think wrong.

LEFTIES: TOTALLY COMPETENT SCRIBES

At a men’s workshop last year I was on the scribe team.¹ The organizer had

¹ The people who take notes during talks and topic groups, for possible later publication

told me that he didn’t want to “scribe.” Sure enough, I discovered he was left-handed.

I shared with him my thinking that to put time and attention on writing by hand can be a huge contradiction² for a left-handed person. He and I did a mini-session, and then we both scribed effectively for the rest of the workshop—knowing we were there for each other.

Jacob Rosenblum
Olympia, Washington, USA
Reprinted from the RC e-mail discussion list
for leaders of “mental health” liberation

² Contradiction to distress

Being Left-Handed

At a recent RC workshop I attended, Jacob Rosenblum* led a topic table on the subject left-handedness and how he considers it an identity affected by “mental health” oppression.

The hurts surrounding being left-handed happen primarily when we left-handed people are young. Growing up left-handed can set in feelings that we are different, clumsy, not good writers or drawers, or are slow. There is often a message that we even think differently.

In any group there are similar proportions of people who are left-handed (about seven to ten percent). This is an issue in every culture, gender, and religion. Some young people are still forced to “switch” and to learn how to write with their right hand.

Having an awareness of left-handedness as a “mental health” identity can help everyone be allies to young people.

Jim Maddry
Portland, Oregon, USA

* Jacob Rosenblum is a Co-Counselor in Olympia, Washington, USA.



Working Together to End Racism
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Tim Jackins and others

a pamphlet by
Tim Jackins
and others

An introduction to RC from the perspective of ending racism

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Ordering information on page 109



MARTI HAYMAKER

My “True Self” Is Resurfacing

I’m not sure who is responsible for having written the Draft Middle-Class Liberation Policy. I am pretty¹ sure it was a group effort. But to whoever it was, *thank you*. I want to tell you how powerful it has been for me.

I started reading it in bed one night. Every night that week I had been reading one of the RC journals sent to me via the Pre-World Conference in Latin America. To tell the truth, I wasn’t particularly interested in or attracted to reading it. Even the title of the journal it was in, *Our True Selves*,² made no sense to me (a clear sign of my massive confusion surrounding

this issue). Just hearing the words “middle class” made me cringe and feel repulsed (another clear sign of heavy distress). I had spent my whole life overtly rejecting middle-class values and lifestyles, trying to convince myself that I was not middle class and never had been.

I had always used the excuse that since my parents ran a printing shop and we had little money (we were even on food stamps³ for a while), I could identify as working class—though I also had some confusing owning-class patterns, due to my grandparents’ and parents’ upbringing. Being an

immigrant in the United States, and having parents who were both extremely well educated, didn’t help to make things clearer for me.

Well, I began reading the Draft Middle-Class Liberation Policy, and from the moment I started in on the section about the oppression of middle-class people, and then went on to the mechanisms of the oppression, and then on to the internalized oppression, I was stunned. It was as if a huge, powerful spotlight had come down from nowhere and shown its full, intense light on me, and a voice had said, “This is *you*. This is *all about you*.” It was as if someone had seen all my deepest innermost feelings and expressed them precisely, specifically, intricately, and articulately. Every

¹ In this context, pretty means fairly.

² *Our True Selves* is the RC journal for communication among middle-class people and their allies.

³ Food stamps are coupons given by the U.S. government to low-income U.S. people for buying food.



COPENHAGEN, DENMARK • WYTSKEVISSE

single piece of information fell into my head like I was a jigsaw puzzle that had been missing key pieces and the whole picture was finally making itself seen—and I understood something I had never understood before.

I finally realized why I have felt so bad about myself all my life. I realized how huge the guilt has been for me about having “more” (although my family wasn’t even well-off⁴ financially, which shows how irrational the oppression is). A lot of the guilt has been tied up with being a U.S. citizen. I realized how difficult it has been for me to accept that I am good without having to *do* things that grant me the right to call myself that; how important appearances have been to me, although I’ve openly rejected superficial appearances and living like a mainstream U.S. citizen. And even though I have tried hard all my life to not have any pretense, I realized that it has been there all along—at a deep, hidden level.

⁴ Well-off means prosperous, affluent.

I read and I cried. I read and I shook. I cried and let myself remember people and things I hadn’t thought about in years. I thought about people in my childhood whom I loved dearly (almost all working class)—people who had shown me the difference between the classes and had made me long for something I didn’t have in my middle-class surroundings.

I am working on this in all of my Co-Counseling sessions now. Just claiming to have grown up a middle-class U.S. citizen brings up huge amounts of shame, guilt, self-hatred, and so on—and I discharge. Reclaiming my goodness and my connection to all people, shedding the belief that it has somehow been my fault that I got disconnected from them, make me cry from a deeper place than I have been able to before. It seems to me that all my prior sessions have been trivial in comparison to this work. This has been the missing piece for me—understanding the root of my self-hatred.

I had often asked myself why I felt so bad about myself. I could find plenty of other reasons (don’t get me wrong), but no one ever said to me, “Amy, this is your internalized middle-class oppression.” And, typically, as the draft policy pointed out, I couldn’t even figure out my class identity.

The deeper level of discharge I am accessing is paying off.⁵ I feel like something has shifted for me in the past couple of weeks. I am starting to get a glimpse of my true goodness. My “true self” is slowly resurfacing, after being buried deep-down for so many years.

Thank you for such brilliant and thorough thinking and explanations. I am so, so grateful.

Amy Tai
Cusco, Peru

⁵ Paying off means having good results.

Abortion

My attitude on abortion, or what I think a rational attitude would be, is that under the present desperate conditions we certainly must support the right of women to make decisions themselves about having an abortion or not. But it certainly should be recognized as a desperate choice, since abortions themselves are very harmful physically, emotionally, and mentally to the woman. An attempted abortion leaves the child in terrible shape. Children growing up in a culture in which adults will kill babies are horrified, and correctly so. So it is certainly nothing to support in the future—just under the present desperate conditions, as the better of some terrible evils.

Harvey Jackins
From a letter written in 1974



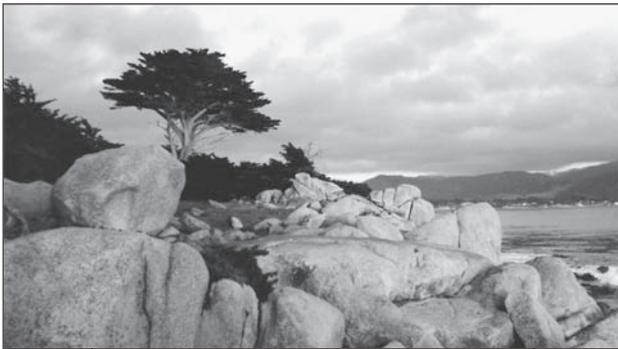
HARVEY JACKINS

For Observant Jews: Taking the “Work” Out of Workshops

In February 2008 I went to a North American young adult leaders’ workshop. The organizer met with the job leaders at different times to check in on how things were going and to offer directions. A thoughtful direction she offered, as a contradiction to working-class oppression, was to really notice the work that we were doing, and take pride in it.

As an observant Jew, that was somewhat challenging and confusing because the workshop, like almost all RC workshops, was taking place over Shabbat¹ and a huge component of Shabbat is not to work. Putting attention on how I was contributing work to the group exposed my discomfort with the idea of working on Shabbat.

¹ Shabbat is the Jewish Sabbath. It is observed from Friday sundown to Saturday sundown.



MICHAEL SHEADEL

Workshops generally are well within my comfort zone of things I am willing to do on Shabbat. At times they feel like the perfect thing to do. The issue for me is not what I am doing but rather how it is framed. I propose that for us observant Jews, organizers re-frame workshops on Shabbat as “playshops” or “retreats.” Rather than being a job leader, we could be a “thought leader” or a “gatherer” or a “point person.” Organizers could ask us if there are certain tasks we would prefer not to do; for example, many Jews prefer not to write or handle money on Shabbat.

I have found many ways to contribute work and still honor my traditions. At the last workshop I went to I was in charge of registration. I welcomed people and took checks until Shabbat entered and then handed everything over to someone else on my team.

As an observant Jew, I may not even know what I feel comfortable with on Shabbat, but it will definitely be a contradiction² for you to think about it with me!

Jacob Rosenblum
Olympia, Washington, USA
Reprinted from the RC e-mail discussion lists for leaders of Jews and leaders of young adults

² Contradiction to distress

* From Tim Jackins

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I Want You All to Be Leaders

From a talk by Tim Jackins at the East Asian Pre-World Conference, April 2009

We in RC know a set of powerful things. Knowing and using these things make it possible for people to have their own minds again. This is the first time in the history of our species that this has been possible. We have these ideas. Our work is to get them out to everyone in the world. That way everyone will actually have control over his or her life.

We've known these things for a little over fifty years. The first fundamentals class was taught in 1958. There were thirty people in it. Two of them are still in Co-Counseling—my older brother and I. The class was taught by my father. Only two people are left, out of thirty. So when you're thinking you lose too many people from your fundamentals classes . . .

We've had to learn how to teach these ideas. Re-evaluation Counseling existed only in Seattle until 1968. Now there are Co-Counselors in about ninety countries. I don't know for sure how many people are participating in RC Communities, but probably tens of thousands. And I suspect two to three hundred thousand have taken fundamentals classes. We haven't done badly in fifty years, but we still sometimes have difficulty involving people.

THE POWERFUL ROLE OF RC COMMUNITIES

Just knowing about these ideas is powerful. If you have a Co-Counselor, that is even more powerful. If you have two or three Co-Counselors around you, that's even better. If you have a class to be in every week, that's better

still. The more Co-Counselors you have around you, the better your counseling goes.

Our goal is to build Communities, like this group of people, in every place. How well would your counseling go if you had all the people at this conference around you on a regular basis? You know how much more powerful your sessions tend to be here than at home. That's because all of our minds and perspectives are here together, supporting each other. How fast could you discharge through your distresses if you had this many experienced Co-Counselors around you, and a workshop with them every two months? When I was building my first Community in the 1970s, I kept people in fundamentals classes for at least two years, and for a while I did a workshop nearly every month, so that we would get close to each other and have each other's resource. After thirty years, many of those people are still in RC. Three or four of them have become International Liberation Reference Persons. So I think it works to keep people together.

"NOT ENOUGH TIME" FOR RC

Things move faster when we have each other as resource. But it can be a battle to make that happen. It's hard to take enough time for it. The main problem, of course, is our distresses. It often *feels* like RC takes too much time in our lives. We forget that every good session seems to give us six hours, because afterward we do everything better and faster. We also forget that in capitalist societies time is continually being taken away from us; we are supposed to be doing more and more things. Sometimes we feel that skipping a Co-Counseling session will give us more time; sometimes we're happy when our Co-Counselor cancels. But nothing gives us back our lives or frees up our time the way discharge does.

If it weren't for the distresses from society, building a Community would be much easier. I think Communities would form and grow almost spontaneously. But as you know, they haven't always grown quickly and they take work.

continued . . .



JAYE ALPER

continued . . .

WE NEED LEADERS

Communities need people who will lead. They need people who will think about this whole project and the whole group, not just about themselves. People who lead don't need to forget about themselves; they just need to think broadly. Good leadership is not about sacrificing oneself; it's about figuring out the best way forward for oneself and everyone else.

We think everyone is capable of being a good leader. Each of you is capable of it. However, many people don't want to lead. I think this is because of confusion from distress.

Some people think the RCers they see leading were always as effective as they are, but they used to be much less capable. All of us who are leaders were much more confused by our distresses than we are now. But we moved through a lot of the distress, and much of that happened *after* we became leaders.

Before you become a leader, you are more isolated and can more easily get discouraged and give up. Once you become a leader, that changes. You have people all around you. The struggle against your distresses is not just about you moving forward; it's about everyone moving forward. You have a new, big reason to fight against your distresses. No one moves faster in RC than leaders do. It's not because they are different or better; it's because they are pushing themselves to lead. If you feel small and powerless, teach a fundamentals class and find out that you can change other people's lives.

We think everyone can be a leader. We think it's a natural part of being human. People want to try out their ideas and see what they can do.



MIKE ISHII

LEADERSHIP IN RC

What we think of as leadership in RC is different from leadership outside. Many leaders outside tell you what to do, and never listen to you. And almost always what they tell you to do is not in your interest. Leadership in RC is quite different. I am the most powerful leader in RC. It's true. And I can't make you do anything—and I don't try to. I try to communicate good ideas to help get your mind thinking. I collect ideas from all over the world and try to think about them. Then I bring what seems like the best of those ideas to you, for you to try. You Co-Counsel—not because I told you to, but because it works for you. You get to decide that and to decide, through practice, what works.

A leader's job is not to have all the good ideas; it is to collect the good ideas and present the best ones back

so that people can try them out. It is also to think about the whole group. In RC that includes helping to make sure that the things done in the Community are consistent with RC. (If you have a Co-Counseling session with someone in Poland or South Africa, that person will counsel like you do, almost.)

I want you to join us and be a leader. It's a lot of work and a lot of fun, and life gets bigger and bigger.

If you're going to be a leader in RC, you'll have to work on your distresses about leadership. You'll have to counsel on your parents, your teachers, government leaders—all the people who have acted out their distresses and called it leadership. You'll have to counsel on the feelings that make it hard for you to follow someone else's leadership.

Would you follow me? You have some picture of who I am, and I hope you understand that I have your interests in mind. If you're going to follow me, you're going to have to decide that I might be right—even when you think I'm wrong. I don't want you to stop thinking, but I do want you to have sessions on why you think I'm wrong. As a leader, I promise to make you uncomfortable. Part of a leader's job can involve things that push people against their distresses, so I will sometimes have to bring you good ideas that restimulate you.

How do you tell the difference between a bad idea and a restimulating good idea? Partly you think about where the idea has come from. Has that place been a source of good ideas in the past? Ultimately, you have to have sessions on the idea and why it makes you uncomfortable. If I say we should challenge our isolation and all pile up together on the floor, is that a bad idea or a restimulating good idea? Only sessions will let you figure that out.

I want you to trust me enough to take chances on my ideas. I promise that none of them will kill you, but if you try them, some of your distresses may make you feel like you're going to die. I want you to dare to take that chance. Sometimes trying scary or uncomfortable things is the best way to begin discharging on a distress.

I want you all to be leaders. I'm sure that each of you can be a good leader. I know that we all still have lots of distresses about leadership, but those distresses don't have to

stop us. The sooner we decide to take the necessary steps, the faster we will go.

We have a long way to go together, and you can be as big and powerful in that as you choose to be. I want you to be big and powerful. Everything I know and do, you can know and do. It only takes using the discharge process to get the distresses out of the way. The more we discharge, and become both aware enough and brave enough to get close to each other, the faster it will go.



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Our "Working Capital"

Our accumulated literature is our basic stock of working capital. Its systematic distribution, spread, study, and use will mean that the ideas contained therein will eventually triumph over the complex of patterns surrounding and infesting the population.

Harvey Jackins
From *The List*, page 106

RC Teachers as Models

The position of teacher or leader in the RC Community is quite different from that of Co-Counselor. Being a teacher or leader in RC requires assuming the role of model and being aware of the great impact on other people of everything one does. This is quite a different level of responsibility, and people who wish to assume it must live up to it.

Harvey Jackins
From a letter written in 1974



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- DVD #225 Counseling with Attention Away from Distress
- DVD #228 The Understatement

For ordering information, see page 109.

** Because many RCers did not have a chance to learn RC directly from Harvey, these DVDs provide a "foundation" of contact with Harvey and his thinking.*

A Session, and a Breakthrough

I am a black woman born, raised, and living in England who has been learning RC for two years. I have been able to talk about RC to some of my friends who are also targeted by racism, but I have struggled to talk about it with my white friends. It has also been easier for me to introduce RC concepts to my friends who live far away (in other English cities) than to friends who live close to me in Cambridge.

I recently had a three-way Co-Counselling session in which I discharged on my feelings about communicating RC to my white friends and my friends who live close to me. I was glad to be looking at it but did not think I was any closer to being able to think better about it.

Then I went to see the film *The Reader* with two of my white women friends who live close to me in Cambridge. I had known one of them for over ten years; the other is a close friend of hers whom I had met several times. I had never spoken to either of them about RC or mentioned, in any meaningful way, how racism affects my life.

The film is about a Nazi German guard who is put on trial twenty years after the end of the Second World War for her role in the concentration camps. At the end of the film one of my friends was crying. She talked a little about the film and then mentioned her ongoing confusion about how people can be violent toward others.

I said that I had some thoughts on that and asked my friends if we could try an experiment; they agreed. I had us each do a minute-and-a-half-long mini-session on our earliest memories of Jewish people. Both women had good sessions. One was able to talk for the whole time; the other struggled to fill the time but appreciated getting the chance to feel both awkward and cared for.

I took my session last and made sure that I mentioned some memories related to anti-

Jewish oppression—for example, images in the media. Then we each had an additional three minutes during which both women seemed to feel more relaxed talking about the hurtful things they remembered.

Afterward I explained how the hurtful messages affect us as human beings and how, if they are not cleared up, they are always available in our minds to fuel anti-Jewish oppression. I talked about how anti-Jewish oppression has been used to divide Gentiles and related it back to the events in Nazi Germany. I explained about Co-Counselling sessions and reclaiming our minds and how we all would naturally have been loving toward each other, and united, if our minds had been free. They enjoyed being listened to and learning new concepts, and wanted to try it again sometime.

We continued to talk together about oppression and our lives. My friend remembered how, on a week-long holiday to Ireland that she and I had taken together ten years before, on the very last day I had seen a black person and had said to her, “There’s another black person!” That memory had stayed with her, and she had wondered what it must have been like for me to have been the only black person around, up until that moment.



ANDY SMITH

Women Counseling Men

If you decline to enter into discussions with men about their difficulties, you leave them quite ignorant that there is any other viewpoint. It may be hard work, but the first task of any leader is to patiently explain, explain, explain. Somewhere along the line, such discussion will give you a chance to counsel. There may not be anything fair about you having to do the counseling to straighten men out, but it sure is the situation in reality.

Harvey Jackins

From a letter written in 1974



LAURIE RHODES

An Early Morning Leaders' Group

There are now four other people of color joining me in my Area* teachers' and leaders' group, which meets from eight to ten on Sunday mornings, once or twice a month. One woman proposed that we meet even earlier, at 7:30, to have a chance to discharge together as people of color. The early time works well for us—the rest of the day is available to spend with our families.

Yolanda Provoste-Fuentes
Santa Cruz, California, USA

* An Area is a local RC Community.



FRED KELLER

これについてもっと読みたい!というトピック、ありますか?

オンラインでプレゼントタイムの検索システム
完全版が利用できるようになりました。

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検索システム作成に関わってくれたボランティアの皆さん、ほんとうにありがとう!

翻訳: ひびのゆうこ

(translation by Yuko Hibino)

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Thanks to the volunteers who made this possible!

Workshop Participation for Parents with Nursing Infants

The birth of a child is a time in the life of a parent when everything in the parent's relationship to the rest of the world changes. The parent has a large amount of intense work to do to build the nurturing relationship the infant needs, and in the process he or she rethinks, reprioritizes, and rebuilds his or her whole life. Now the parent is responsible for someone whose needs and vulnerability are great.

In addition, an infant in the family restimulates feelings from the parent's infancy. New parents find themselves with a newly intense emotional life, a newly intense need for the discharge process.

We, as a Community, want to have our workshops and classes be as accessible as possible to parents at this formative and important time in their lives. We also need to include

the parents (and their infants) thoughtfully, so that the safety to discharge and the haven from day-to-day restimulation in a class or a workshop are maintained for all.

CAREGIVERS FOR INFANTS

In order to preserve the effectiveness of our Co-Counseling relationships, a parent may not hire another RCer to take care of his or her infant during a workshop or a class unless the parent knew that person before RC. The beauty of the RC "no socializing" policy is that it keeps us headed in the direction of building our outside-RC support networks, even when we feel too afraid or too tired to do so. Discharge and good counseling will help a parent think of, and develop relationships with, people whom he or she already knows who

could be called upon to help with an infant and for whom exposure to an RC workshop could be interesting and perhaps beneficial. We need to reach into our lives to build the infant care we need.

It's understandable that we parents long for RC-based attention for our infants. We have a passionate love for our children, and we want every moment in their lives to be the best possible moment. But our love also gets mixed with restimulation from the hard parts of our own lives as infants. We can easily feel like our baby is on the edge of danger. This can make it hard for us to trust people outside of our immediate family, or even to trust our own partner, with the care of an infant. Infants do need thoughtful care, to be sure, but we are able to be more relaxed and have better judgment about others who might care for our babies when we work hard and deeply on our fears about "what could happen to them" in the care of someone else. Good, confident counseling on the certainty that trustworthy people can be found is helpful to a new parent who is at a loss for choosing someone outside RC to help with infant care during a workshop or a class.

For a baby's first two years it's important, whenever possible, for him or her to have close access to his or her parents. Interrupting the frequent parent-child closeness that comes with nursing and daily care can lay in hurt. Thus it may

continued . . .



INCA TRAIL, PERU • JANA CHRISTOPHER

TEACHING, LEADING, COMMUNITY BUILDING

continued . . .

make sense to accommodate parents with nursing infants at weekend workshops.

Our goal in RC is to bring the perspective and discharge RC offers to people of every kind, in every situation. This is “inclusion.” But it does not mean that everyone is ready right now for a weekend workshop experience.

Infants are not able to make use of most of what happens at a weekend workshop. The group meetings are not designed for their needs, nor are the support groups or Co-Counseling sessions. Loud, uninhibited discharge on the part of adults can frighten an infant and create new distress.

Excluding infants from sessions and most classes at workshops is an acknowledgement that their needs for attention and safety must be met differently from the needs of the adults.

In order for the infant’s and the parent’s needs to be met, and for both to do well in a workshop environment, the parent needs to bring along an adult ally for the infant. This person may be the child’s other parent, a friend, or a care person hired by the parent. He or she does not need to know RC, but unless the parent explains RC to him or her ahead of time, and gives him or her an idea of what people will be doing, the person will not understand what he or she sees and

hears at the edges of the workshop. The parent must also pay for the ally’s food and lodging.

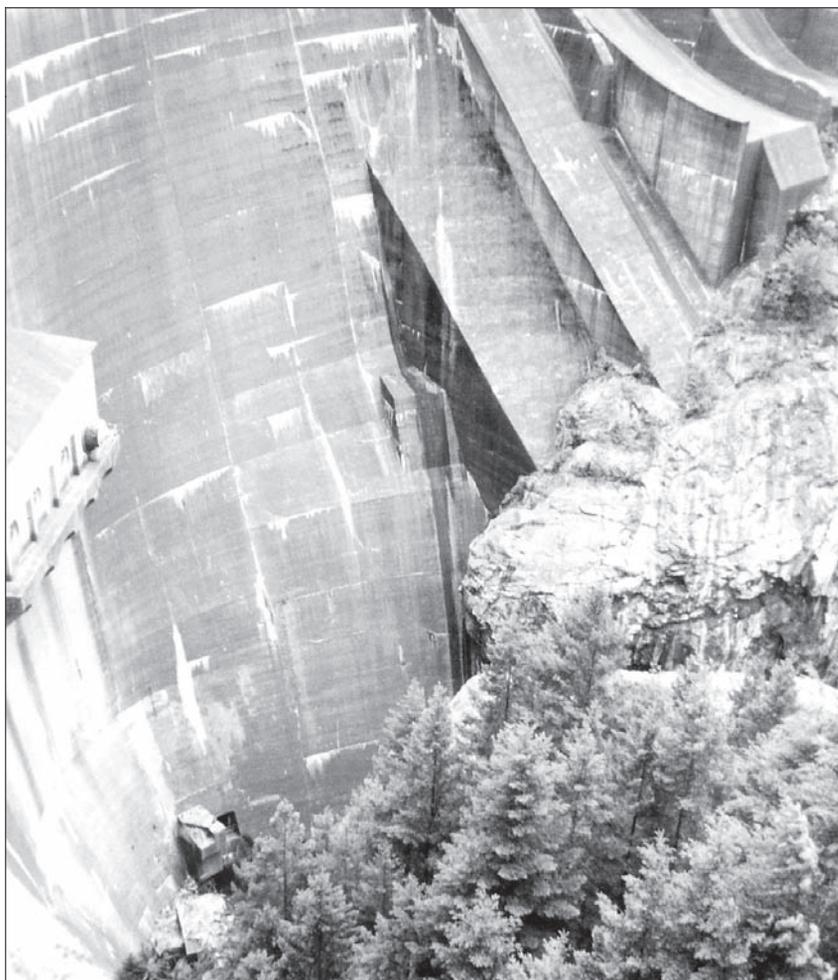
CAREGIVERS FOR CHILDREN OVER TWO YEARS OF AGE

I don’t usually give permission for parents to attend my workshops with children over the age of two years. Children two and over are generally able to stay overnight with a trusted caregiver, away from the parent, without setting in big distress recordings, as long as they have chances ahead of time to discharge their feelings of separation and to build a secure relationship with the caregiver. (Exceptions might be appropriate for children who have had early traumatic experiences.)

By the time children are two, parents have been working hard for a long time and can use a break from parenting. However, they often feel so sympathetic toward their children’s feelings about separation that they find it impossible to leave their children with someone, even for an evening. Setting two years as the age limit for bringing young children to workshops can encourage parents to help their children tackle the distresses surrounding separation—at home, bit by bit—until they have secure relationships with other caregivers and the parents can indeed leave for an overnight or two.

A DRAFT POLICY

The following is a draft policy on infant care at workshops. It is meant to be a guide for workshop organizers, parents of infants, and Community members who are working hard to be thoughtful of parents in this “intensive care” period of parenting, when leaving an infant with others for long periods is confusing and possibly hurtful to the child. I hope it is helpful.



IN THE CASCADE MOUNTAINS, WASHINGTON, USA • WALTER SCOTT

Draft Policy on Bringing Nursing Infants to RC Workshops

1) If a parent is considering bringing an infant to an RC workshop, the first step is to talk with the organizer and the leader. Not every leader is in a position to welcome parents with infants, and not every workshop site will have the separate space that the parent, infant, and possibly the caregiver will need. The success of including a parent and infant depends on the leader's agreement and on the care with which arrangements are made.

2) The parent should get the workshop schedule in advance so that he or she can think about who will be with the child during each part of the workshop. What is workable will depend on the child's age and needs and the stamina of the caregiver.

3) The parent needs to carve out some time in the schedule, each workshop day, to give his or her infant his or her undivided attention. The child will be confused and hurt if the parent is nearby but does not spend time with him or her. I recommend some special time* in the morning and again at another time later in the day.

4) The parent needs to give the caregiver time off during each workshop day. I suggest that, at a minimum, the caregiver have breaks during mealtimes plus have another block of time off, such as an hour or two in the afternoon. If the caregiver is a friend or a co-parent

* Special time is an activity, developed in RC familywork, during which an adult puts a young person in full charge of their mutual relationship, as far as the young person can think. For a specific period of time, the adult lets the young person know that he or she is willing to do anything the young person wants to do. The adult focuses his or her entire attention on the young person and follows his or her lead, whether the young person tells, or simply shows, the adult what she or he wants to do.

who also knows RC, then arranging session time for him or her will make a big difference in how well the weekend goes.

5) The workshop organizer needs to know if the child is likely to wake up crying in the night. If so, sleeping accommodations need to be such that other workshop participants will not be awakened. In every case, the parent needs to create a plan for preserving the sleep of others in the event that his or her child wakes up unexpectedly.

6) The parent should not expect the workshop participants to meet his or her needs for infant care. Being at a workshop can bring up feelings of need and desperation and a sense of the injustice of parents' oppression. These need to be discharged. People may offer to help, and the parent may certainly agree to accept their help, but it is the parent's job to see that he or she has the help that is essential for the weekend to go well. It's often a good idea for the parent to have a Co-Counseling session or two before the workshop in which to discharge any feelings of need so that they don't get pinned on particular Co-Counselors or the workshop leader.

7) The parent needs to anticipate that his or her attention will be split between the workshop and his or her family and that the experience won't be like attending a workshop without a child. It would be good for the parent to discharge on this ahead of time so that he or she can enjoy being with his or her child during the times arranged for that and enjoy being in the workshop when the caregiver is with the child. The parent can arrange to get reports from others about the parts of the workshop that he or she isn't able to attend.

8) It's not reasonable to expect that because it's an RC workshop it will be a weekend free of restimulation. It works better if the parent considers the workshop a learning experience. If he or she attends as a learner, he or she

will see what improvements need to be made the next time, discharge his or her disappointments, and communicate to other parents of infants how to approach being at a workshop with an infant.

9) It can be permissible for a nursing or sleeping infant to attend group meetings, as long as no one is discharging heavily and the participants and workshop leader aren't distracted by the presence of the child. An adult yelling, screaming, or making distressed noises in order to get to discharge can be confusing and possibly hurtful to an infant. The infant has no idea where the distress comes from and doesn't know that it's being handled well. During demonstrations infants should be elsewhere, where the environment is designed for their needs. The workshop leader needs to be asked specifically whether he or she can lead a meeting well with a nursing or sleeping infant in attendance. Infants should not be present in Co-Counseling sessions or support-group meetings, as these activities are designed for discharge only.

Patty Wipfler
International Liberation
Reference Person for Parents
 Palo Alto, California, USA



PAT GREGORY

RC and Me

I can remember the first time, about fifteen years ago, that I tried to explain RC to a colleague. I sweated a lot and mostly used phrases like “well it’s kind of like,” “sort of,” “kind of thingy,” and “do you know what I mean?” We both laughed at my inability to articulate this “thing” that I did that I claimed was so important to me. My colleague did not get an accurate picture of Re-evaluation Counselling that day.

I am glad to say that things have changed considerably for me since then. Leading RC introductory evenings each month until I had enough people to teach a class gave me the opportunity to learn how to talk about RC clearly. Getting to tell my “mental health” system story and discharging systematically on “mental health” oppression over the last couple of years have given me more slack in ways I did not realise would be possible. I am much more solid (I don’t go weird¹ as readily as I used to) around people’s restimulation generally, and particularly when I talk about RC.

One of my goals this year has been to be more open with friends and colleagues about what I do. I had noticed that I was evasive and shy when they would ask me how my weekend went or what I did in my spare time. Discharging on “mental health” oppression has given me the ability to share with people what I actually do, and what is important to me, in a relaxed and friendly way. My face doesn’t scrunch up with tension. I also have more attention to listen easily to and ask questions of my friends about their interests. And because I do a lot of Co-Counselling, I talk about the workshop or the class I went to. I use this time with friends as a way of showing myself and practising telling people about Re-evaluation Counselling. I think of it as a mini-RC introductory talk.

In Louisa’s² Saturday afternoon class we have been discharging on the restimulations that we attached to RC when we first heard about it. This has been hugely useful in shifting a large chunk of my timidity

about talking about Re-evaluation Counselling. I heard about RC from a friend, and the first thing I said to her when she told me about it was, “I think that’s a waste of time.” It wasn’t until two years later—after sharing a house with her, being listened to by her, having people come by for Co-Counselling sessions and support groups, and listening to her talk enthusiastically about a class or a workshop—that I did my first fundamentals. I loved it, and haven’t looked back. These past few weeks I have been discharging about how I used to feel that RC was a waste of time and how it is now the most important thing in my life. Because of discharge, I now see that my earlier “*thinking*” came straight from internalised “mental health” oppression, and that it is that same oppression that has kept me less than bold when talking about this amazing resource.

Today, after telling them about my weekend, I invited three people to my next RC introductory evening. I am quite proud of myself. There are now at least three more people in the world who have a pretty good idea about RC. They may not ever come to one of my introductory evenings, but they will always know that Re-evaluation Counselling exists.

Tony Smith

Melbourne, Victoria, Australia
Reprinted from the newsletter of the
Melbourne, Victoria, RC Community

Easier to Be a Leader Than Not

I am not surprised you are finding yourself relaxed with being a leader. A good deal of powerlessness is not being in charge, not feeling that we have the right to initiative. Part of it is patterned with me, but I am much more comfortable when I am sure that I can have input into a situation.

Harvey Jackins

From a letter written in 1976

¹ In this context, go weird means get restimulated.

² Louisa Flander, the Area Reference Person for the Melbourne, Victoria, Australia, RC Community

“The Universe Will Organize Things”

I just got back from a workshop led by Barbara Love, the International Liberation Reference Person for African-Heritage People. It was awesome.

I got to drive up with V—. We counseled and discharged most of the way—feeling the jitters of starting a new Co-Counseling relationship, having inaccurate driving directions, and thinking about how we wanted the workshop to go for us. There is nothing like another human being to make you feel connected before a workshop.

We were tired by the time V— pulled into the camp. Barbara was outside waiting on us,¹ waving a flashlight to welcome us (it was somewhere between 2:00 and 3:00 AM).

Barbara was on it² that weekend. On Saturday she asked, “What are you organizing your life around?” What a question! Were we organizing around our or other people’s distresses? That brought good discharge for me. It is easy for me to be thinking about what others are thinking and doing, and wondering how that’s impacting me. Always wondering how to protect myself is definitely not going to move me forward. Barbara also encouraged us to think about our vision for our lives. It is easy to allow our lives to just happen to us. When we have a vision, it gives us direction.

Remember how, when we first started RC, we were encouraged to tell our stories? Once we got the hang of³ Co-Counseling, we often stopped

doing that. Barbara reminded us to do it. We have all these wonderful Co-Counseling relationships, and our Co-Counselors often do not know our stories. She also asked us which of the early decisions we had made were no longer useful. I remembered that early on I learned to play it safe with people older than I was (especially black women) and to not make demands or be a nuisance.

Barbara gave us journals and encouraged us to write down what she was saying. She said that writing things down and reviewing them are powerful.

We discharged about being connected. My distress said that I was on the fringes of the workshop, but I realized that I knew the majority of the people there. Barbara reminded us that we know each other, and we have each other, and we could call any person in the room and discharge with him or her.

On Sunday she reminded us that we deserve to have a life that blesses us, and that we need to stand at the center of our lives. Wow! Black people at the center of their lives—that could be a whole weekend workshop! (Each direction she gave us could be a weekend workshop.) That led into her reminding us that our health is worth counseling about and that we deserve to have lives filled with joy.

As a result of these directions, and my discharge, some big things happened for me. I had a Co-Counseling session with an older black woman who encouraged me to make demands on older black women. I discharged about how “crazy” she was for saying that. Immediately afterward, I got a chance to sit and talk with another older black woman. She reinforced my direction of making demands. She and I also talked more “rough” than I would have ever dreamed of talking with a black woman.

continued . . .



¹ In this context, waiting on us means waiting for us.

² In this context, on it means doing a great job.

³ Got the hang of means figured out how to do.

continued . . .

I had a goal of meeting with other social workers to discharge and think about being social workers. It came together without all the effort I had anticipated it taking. It's like I asked for it and the universe organized it to happen.

I was lying in bed Sunday morning, wanting to be connected but feeling stuck in the bed. I saw several people get up and leave but felt scared to ask to go with them. Then I made a decision to get up and go to the cafeteria. There sat M—, paying the bills for the workshop. In the past I would have thought I was

interrupting, but I decided I would risk it and went and sat with her.

I also wanted to get people together to think about young people. It kept seeming like it was not going to happen, but I looked up and D— told me that we were meeting at lunch.

My re-evaluation was that I just have to ask, and the universe will organize things with the ease with which nature allows things to grow.

After the workshop I got to ride home with V— and counsel and

think about what I had learned, and continue building our relationship—staying connected all the way home instead of that ending at the campground.

I have been on fire⁴ since the workshop—calling people and mini-ing⁵ all over the place.⁶

Juone Darko
Manassas, Virginia, USA

⁴ On fire means active and excited.

⁵ Mini-ing means having mini-sessions.

⁶ All over the place means a lot, a great deal.



SUZANA KURTEK

One-to-One Teaching, on Skype

Teaching RC fundamentals to leva Zarina of Latvia is going well. For the last three months we have been meeting weekly, for about an hour, on Skype.¹ We start with a mini-session. Then a typical class includes a segment on getting closer, by asking each other questions; session reports; a discussion about the week's reading; and, most recently, questions relating to organizing the workshop Kaisli² is going to lead in Latvia next month. (leva is assisting the organizer.) After we talked about leadership, leva began leading the "getting closer" segment. We close with highlights or appreciations.

¹ Skype is a software application that allows users to make telephone calls over the Internet.

² Kaisli Syrjänen, the Area Reference Person for Finland



LK

leva invariably is prepared with questions that show total engagement with the material. It is lovely for me to read along with her, and offer my thinking about the theory in the context of her questions. She takes initiative to shape the class to her needs. She is also counseling me well and discharging reliably.

As we go along, leva is translating the articles in the pioneer book³ into Latvian. This will make for quite a body of RC literature in Latvian, for her future Community.

We will be done with the pioneer course in a few more weeks. I am thinking about how to continue our relationship afterward.

Glen Hauer
Berkeley, California, USA

³ The pioneer book is the new *Fundamentals Teaching Guide and Class Outline*, a resource manual for beginning teachers of RC fundamentals classes. For more information, see page 53.

Being Part of This Black Family

The four days I spent at the April 2009 Teachers' and Leaders' Workshop, in Nairobi, Kenya, under the leadership of Diane Shisk,¹ were a refreshing moment in my life.

As I planned and prepared to attend the workshop, I had lots of challenges that made me feel bad and no longer see myself as a person who could reason well or think clearly. Pressure within my work environment, and from my family, clouded all my senses of reasoning. Thanks to my Co-Counselor, Anayo Nkamnebe,² who gave me a session in which I shook and cried about my helplessness, I started looking forward to meeting the other Co-Counselors from across Nigeria. The next day at the airport, I felt a wonderful connection as we all hugged and laughed, looking directly into each other's eyes. It was obvious to all around us that we connected well, and some people asked me, "Who are you people, and why such happiness?"

When we landed in Nairobi, Janet Wambui³ told me that my name had preceded me, because of the commitment and leading I had put into the growth and development of RC in Africa. I loved her for helping me out of my cloud with that statement.

When we arrived at the venue of the workshop, it was past suppertime and the early arrivals were doing introductions. Guess what happened when we entered the room? Everyone burst into shouts of joy and excitement, and hugs, kisses, and laughter. It was so exciting that the staff of the venue came running to find out what was happening.

¹ Diane Shisk is the Alternate International Reference Person for the Re-evaluation Counseling Communities.

² Anayo Nkamnebe is an RC leader in Aroka, Nigeria.

³ Janet Wambui is an RC leader in Nairobi, Kenya.

It was great fun to be back in Kenya. I recalled my first International RC workshop (it, too, was in Nairobi). I was a greenhorn⁴ then, but now I can proudly say that I have been well taught from 2001 to date and my horn is not green anymore.

I tell you, my friends, the workshop was a smash⁵ for us all. What really strengthened my commitment to leading, teaching, and using RC was Diane's demonstration of handling powerlessness. She gave me time up front and encouraged me to fight for myself and let everyone know that the workshop was for me, and that I was loved and cared about, too.

Another of my highlights was my support group. I took time to explain how we had developed RC in Communities across Nigeria. The group reached a consensus that we all would go back home and make our various RC Communities feel the benefit of our

continued . . .

⁴ A greenhorn is an inexperienced person.

⁵ In this context, a smash is a striking success.



BETH KRUSA

TEACHING, LEADING, COMMUNITY BUILDING

continued . . .

having come to the workshop. I'm convinced that the impact of the sessions in the support group will be felt in the development of RC in Africa.

I experienced a sense of fulfillment when I had a session with Jane Lucy,⁶ whom I introduced to RC during my last visit in Kenya. I was her first contact with RC, and she now leads a group in southern Sudan and also helps Wanjiku Kironyo⁷ in Kenya.

Before the workshop came to an end, we had Diane tell us about the commitment of RC as a whole to Africa. She was passionate as she spoke, and I could not hold back my tears as I sobbed deep-down in my heart for the liberation of Africa and its leaders. The hunger burns in me, and all around me. The resources

I found at the workshop, among my fellow African RC leaders, had a huge influence on my recovering my pride in being an African.

Re-evaluation Counseling has remained a big source of change in my life. It has been helping me manage my life in many ways. More specifically, my Community and Co-Counselors have always reminded me that I am fully good and intelligent. I am connected to a lot of people, and I make a lot of difference, too.

I want to thank Tim,⁸ Diane, Melphy,⁹ and Chioma¹⁰ for being there always.

Kingsley C. Ibekwe
Umuahia, Abia State, Nigeria

⁶ Jane Lucy Gachihi is an RC leader in Nairobi, Kenya, and the Sudan.

⁷ Wanjiku Kironyo is the apprentice Regional Reference Person for Kenya and surrounds.

⁸ Tim Jackins

⁹ Melphy Sakupwanya, the Regional Reference Person for sub-Saharan Africa

¹⁰ Chioma Okonkwo is an RC leader in Isolo, Lagos, Nigeria.

Develop the Skills to Reach People One-to-One

I feel quite strongly that you need to solve the question of your personal relationships with people before you undertake driving hard again in the political scene. Go to meetings, read, belong to things, and so on. However, in order for you to be really effective, your basic effort should go to being warm and outgoing and uncritical. The direction of being a soft, cuddly little lap animal could stand a lot of attention. Otherwise, there will be interference with your noble goals. Reaching people effectively one-to-one is the only way people are ever reached. You have the dedication already, but you need to learn to like people effectively, and let them like you.

Harvey Jackins
From a letter written in 1974



JAMAICA • LUKE DANIELS

Read Your Way Out!

Feeling bad about you
is simply an expression
of internalized oppression.

Instead, do something new:
read *Present Time*, each time,
all through.

To order, see page 109
(a five-year "sub"* would be sublime).

* Subscription

Re-evaluation Counseling

Re-evaluation Counseling is a process whereby people of all ages and of 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/her interaction with other human beings and his/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 in adults as the result of accumulated distress experiences (fear, hurt, loss, pain, anger, embarrassment, etc.) 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, etc.). However, this natural process is usually interfered with by well-meaning people ("Don't cry," "Be a big boy," etc.) 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 will be 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 web site: <http://www.rc.org/>.



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