



We don't have to stay defeated. The hard part is not the defeat.
It is the fact that, until now, we have had to live it ever after.

Tim Jackins

From Ghana to Basque Country, from Greece to Japan, from climate change and male domination to internalized racism and fighting for ourselves, this *Present Time* shows clearly how RC is moving forward on many fronts. Thank you to all who contributed! Deadlines for the January issue are Monday, November 19, for articles and poetry, and Monday, November 26, for changes to the back-pages lists.



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

Lisa Kauffman, editor

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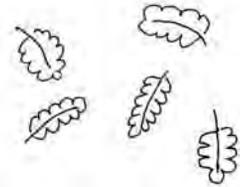
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APPRECIATIONS

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- Typesetting: Amanda Martinez, Travis Quezon, Katie Kauffman, Valerie Jaworski
- Editing: Lisa Kauffman, Katie Kauffman
- Proofreading, shipping, and other help: Barbara Boring, Alisa Lemire Brooks, Fulvio Casali, Teresa Enrico, Maria Franco, Yuko Hibino, Mary Hodgson, Susan Hutchison, Gordon Jackins, Tim Jackins, Truus Jansen, Valerie Jaworski, Katie Kauffman, Lisa Kauffman, Sooja Kelsey, Amanda Martinez, Sandra McDonald, Victor Nicassio, Marion Ouphouet, Gale Picker, Ellie Putnam, Travis Quezon, Jayne Schauer, Diane Shisk, Karen Slaney, Dvora Slavin, Steve Thompson
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Figuring Out Fighting for Ourselves

From a talk by Diane Shisk at the Washington, D.C., and Maryland, USA, Regional Community Building Workshop, February 2012

It always helps to hear complex things from different people's perspectives, so I'm going to talk about the work Tim¹ has been having us do for the last number of years: fighting for ourselves. I'm Tim's Alternate,² so I figure one of my jobs is to really know what he's talking about and communicate it clearly and widely. I find there are many parts to this work and that getting the full benefit of it requires that we engage ourselves in every stage of it.

Decide you are worth it, and discharge your way to knowing you are worth it.

Let's start with the phrase *fighting for ourselves*. Who knows how to do that? Who of us hasn't been told many times and in many ways that we're not worth fighting for, or that we're supposed to fight for others but not ourselves? For those of us who *can* still fight, it's mostly in a pattern. We're not fighting for ourselves from a human place; it's reactive or defiant. Fighting for ourselves from a place of caring for ourselves—so we can have big, full lives and full access to our minds—is what Tim is talking about. To do that we have to go up against a lot of oppression, a lot of feelings that we're not worth it.

There is a lot, a lot, a lot, we have to face to decide to do this work. That battle in our sessions is huge and important. Each of us needs to discharge to where we actually know we're worth fighting for, so it's not just a direction. It's important that we know that nobody is more important than we are and that our battles are significant and deserve to be fully fought; that it makes sense we have people close to us who will fight on our side, that we have resource for ourselves. We won't have the world we want, we won't have the lives we want, if we individually aren't fighting for ourselves. This isn't a capitalist kind of fighting for ourselves, in which we step on somebody else to get ahead and our fight is at others' expense. This is fighting to get ourselves back from the hurts of living in an oppressive society, from having the hurts accumulate on us all our lives. This kind of fighting for ourselves moves everyone forward.

Figure out what it means to fight for yourself.

So the first big piece of work is to decide we're worth fighting for and discharge our way to knowing that. Then we get to look at what that means. What does it mean to fight for ourselves? Certainly there are a lot of places in our lives where we have to fight for ourselves, stand up for ourselves, fight against oppression. It's important that we do that, and doing that is encompassed in this work. But what Tim is particularly talking about here, for us as Co-Counselors, is fighting against the effects of distress recordings on our lives and our minds. To me this is our clearest formulation so far of the work we are doing for re-emergence. It's a big advance in our counseling theory and practice.

For many years we've tackled a lot of feelings and worked to free our minds from the effects of distress recordings. Our lives and perspectives on the world are different because of that, but for all of us, no matter how long we've been in RC or what level of leadership we're taking, some distresses haven't moved; in some places we're much the same as we were when we started counseling. This must be because we as a Community haven't been able to fully apply the discharge process to some heavy early distresses. For all of us, some things happened when we were very young that were so crushing, so discouraging, that we closed the door on ever going back to look at them (or when we looked, the feelings were so overwhelming we soon turned away), so the effects of those hurts have remained unchallenged. In this way, we all had horrible childhoods, with big early hurts, which got recorded along with how defeated we felt and how there was no help for us.

We know that little ones are fully human. We all started out with the ability to fight for ourselves, and we fought against having distress recordings leave scars on our minds. Whatever distressing thing came at us, we didn't agree to be hurt. We fought against it with every resource and understanding of the world we could. But we were little, we didn't understand

continued . . .



BENIN • ELLIE PUTNAM

¹ Tim Jackins, the International Reference Person for the RC Communities

² Alternate International Reference Person



BASILIQUE DU SACRÉ CŒUR, PARIS, FRANCE • NIKHIL TRIVEDI

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a lot of things about the world, and we were overpowered by the incident.

We started life expecting that some very basic things would be in place—things like being welcomed with warmth and human connection—and they weren't. We expected people to see us and to notice that we were human and had functioning minds. We expected to be part of the people we were born into. And the people around us weren't in shape³ for any of that. Apparently human beings lost the discharge process pretty⁴ early in the history of humankind. People who didn't understand the process and hadn't had a chance to discharge couldn't fully welcome us, couldn't let us show what we needed to show after birth, couldn't stay with us as we tried for a human connection. Even if they were feeling tender and warm and loving, and they headed for that connection with us, as soon as we started discharging they got uncomfortable. And we did start discharging, as the warm, human connection came at us. It was a set-up that we didn't understand, and they didn't understand. In the best of circumstances, when things were heading in a really good direction, we started doing what we knew to do to begin healing from what had happened to us before and during birth, and, of course, the discharge soon got stopped—and that was very hard on us. We couldn't make deep human contact. It's hard on us that inherently we have this process—and that we know how to use it, and it's natural and right and makes a difference for us—and we don't get to use it, because when we try, people get tight and we lose contact.

So we all ended up on our own, not being deeply connected to other people, and then more hard things happened. And we tried as little ones to heal from them by using the discharge process, we tried to resolve the damage and work it out then, and we couldn't. We fought

³ In shape means in a condition.

⁴ Pretty means quite.

not to surrender to the effects of the hurt, and we lost. Our use of the process got shut down, and then that became part of the hurt. It became part of the hurt that we tried to recover and couldn't.

So in these early struggles there's the content of the hurt, and right in there with that is the feeling of defeat, of fighting for ourselves and losing and eventually having to settle for something that is less than us, less than what makes sense, less than human. We go on by ourselves, determined or resigned to go ahead anyway, even if life is not what we expected. We go on, and we go on, over and over. But little pieces of ourselves keep getting locked away by distress recordings.

So here we are today. Ever since we got into RC, we've steadily gone back to try to work on these things that happened to us. But some of them, when we were so young and so vulnerable, came in very harshly. The feelings back there are raw, and layered over with discouragement. We've tried to head back there as client, but when we do, all the feelings from the incident surface. Overwhelmed with those feelings, and without a clear understanding of why we feel that way, we have gotten discouraged, changed course, and worked on something that didn't feel so difficult. "Well, I can't work on that in this session, so I'll work on something else." Many of us have stopped even trying to go back and work on things that we know are key issues for us. And this shows up in our lives. We're not having the fullness of life that we know we could have, that would be available to us if we cleaned up these early hurts.

You can see this in leaders like me who have been around for a long time. You know that I'm really excellent in many ways, but then look at that odd recording. Why am I still like that after all these years? I can tell you why: There's one of those big, horrible recordings back there that I haven't been able to go back and face, and stay with, and work to resolve, so I have this big thorn in my life.

Conditions have changed a lot over the years in the RC Communities. We think things have shifted enough that we now have the resource as a Community to steadily do this early work. I know that a lot of you are newer to Co-Counseling, which is great. You're still clearing out the brush pile of distresses right in front of you and may not know a lot of the big places you'll be concentrating resources on, and that's fine. But I think it'll be useful to have this in your mind from the earliest days of counseling. It is a great way to organize your counseling. It's something you will want to do as soon as you discharge enough to figure out how to do it.

Decide that you're going to fight for yourself, no matter what.

So what we're trying to do as client is decide that no matter how bad it feels or how bad a session we feel like we're going to get, no matter how hopeless it's going to feel, we're going to go back and work on that horrible thing that happened. We're going to decide we're worth it. We're going to point our mind at those ugly, horrible-feeling places and go after⁵ them. We're going to make a firm decision to do this for ourselves, and also decide that we won't reconsider this decision when we're restimulated.

Get close to your counselors and use them fully.

We're also going to need to learn to use counseling resource better than we have before. We're going to need to build the kind of Co-Counseling relationships in which we can fully show these early hurts. We're going to need to work through the patterns that have made us unable to fully use a counselor who is there with us. We'll have to discharge what keeps us from actually noticing our counselor, feeling his or her caring for us, and letting ourselves care as much back. We want to feel our counselor tucked in with us as we turn to face the early hurts. We have the potential now of having someone with us. We just have to do the work to really have each other.

This is a crucial part of the work of fighting for ourselves. One reason we haven't been able to face the devastation of the early defeats is that we've been too alone as clients. The isolation and discouragement that have weighed on all of us have interfered with our using the counselor fully, with bringing our counselor fully into our session. We appreciate the presence of our counselor but then proceed to counsel ourselves, often not even looking up or informing the counselor of what's happening in our mind. Our mind alone doesn't provide the resource we need to go after these big early hurts; we need each other in a bigger way. But we have the tools to discharge the isolation and build the strong relationships with our counselors that will let us use this process fully.

Master the technique of going back for the little you.

Tim has laid out for us a useful technique for doing this work: going back for the little you. Engaging in it requires that we do all of these steps, in close communication with our counselor. It is a great roadmap to effectively

discharging on heavy early material.⁶ I've put a short summary of the technique at the end of this article.

Face and fully discharge on the horrible incidents.

Once we have our counselor close in with us, what we want to do is go back and discharge on these early hurts. Bring your counselor (if you're in a group, you can bring the whole group with you); take all the resource you can back to that early spot and open up the discharge on it. We need to look at what happened, feel how devastated we were, and fully discharge in that spot. There's lots to discharge right there. Don't try to skip over that step. Really look at how devastated you were—how alone you felt, how horrible, how scared—and discharge those feelings. Face them fully. Don't give in to the pull to turn away from any part of the memory because it feels too big or too hard or too scary to face. We need to face everything that happened, and how it affected us, and discharge, discharge, discharge. We can't get ourselves back fully without fully facing and discharging what happened.

After lots of discharge, shift your perspective to opposing what happened to you.

We're also realizing that just feeling the feelings and discharging doesn't resolve the distress. It looks like some change in our perspective is needed. You as a client, with the help of your counselor, want to reach for a different perspective on what happened to you—a perspective that's outside of being a victim. (We're not blaming anyone for being a victim. We were little and helpless. We all were victims in those early incidents. But part of completely discharging our way out of the hurt seems to be a shift to a perspective of not agreeing to stay a victim to what happened to us.) As we work on the early hurt, we take a stand that it's not okay with us that it happened; it's not okay that it left us this way.

There is always some stand we can take in opposition to what happened. We don't have to keep feeling like we're just lying there, sad and upset that it happened to us. We're trying to shift out of that feeling and then discharge from the new perspective of being opposed to what happened. We're moving in our sessions from a feeling of defeat to one of triumph. "This happened, but you don't get me. It was awful, but it won't pull me down forever. It happened, but I'm not living my whole life in these feelings." That's what we mean by fighting for ourselves and resolving the early hurts so they don't have a permanent hold on our minds.

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⁵ Go after means pursue.

⁶ Material means distress.

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One thing that's helped me wrap my mind around what Tim means by "resolving" the early distress is how he's said that even though we had horrible childhoods, and all those awful things happened, those aren't the worst things that happened. The worst thing is that we didn't get to discharge the hurts fully at the time they happened. Instead we got stuck in the feeling of the hurts for our whole lives, because we couldn't discharge. If we had been able to discharge, we would have cried, screamed, shook, raged, and so on. We would have fully used this natural process. If the discharge hadn't been so shut down, we would have naturally worked our way through all the distress and "bounced back," as Tim says. We would have come back to our full, fresh, human state of being. I think what we're trying to do now is what we would have done as little ones if we'd had the resource.

If you've stayed with little ones who are discharging on hard things, you've seen this shift in perspective happen very naturally. They will cry and cry and cry and cry and scream and scream and sweat and sweat, and then you'll see them turn bright with rage and just scream at you and scream at you and scream at you, like "How dare you?" It's really just like "How dare you?" I pull that picture into my mind as I try to find my way to being opposed to what happened to me and fight my way through to the end of the damage.

So those are my thoughts about the work we are trying to do now. The same approach also works well with oppression, with looking at how racism, sexism, and so on, came in at us. We can discharge, as we have been, on how we've suffered from oppression, and then look at it again to find the place where we can shift our perspective and refuse to agree to live under that oppression (or oppressor material).

Tim talks about our commitment as a Community to doing this work—for ourselves as individuals and also for our people, and for all people; how we get to resolve the societal hurts that have smashed all of us.

A Short Summary of "Going Back for the Little One"

The technique of "going back for the little one" involves you as a client deciding to work on a horrible incident by going back in a session to be with your young self at the time of the incident. Here's what's worked for me in doing a lot of these sessions:

I don't skip over any feelings. I assume that all of the feelings are connected to my fight for myself. If I have

feelings about working early,⁷ fighting for myself, or doing a technique, I work on them. I work on any feelings that come up about that young self and going back to be with her. Any feelings that come up I hold up to discharge.

When I have worked on that set of feelings and decided to go back to the young me in an early incident, I ask my counselor to come with me. I need his or her mind with me; I am not enough. I have to really ask him or her to come. I work on any feelings that come up at that point. Many of us have to do many, many sessions on really asking someone to come with us. I'm sure I have discharged at least twenty hours on this part, but now all of my sessions are so much better, as I am more connected to my counselor. A wide range of feelings can arise: "I don't want you to come back with me, you can't do any good." "I can't believe you'd want to come back with me." "I'm scared to have you see me back there." If I can't tell⁸ that my counselor wants to come with me, I work on my doubts, on where I can't tell that he or she wants to join in my battle by my side. I persist until I'm well connected.

I take as much initiative as client as I can. Where I can't yet take initiative, my counselor steps in and helps until I can take initiative. And I stay in good, close contact with my counselor at each step.

Once my counselor is tucked in there with me, I head back to find my young self in one of those early desperate situations. I work on whatever comes up about going back there (again, fruitful ground for lots of feelings that shouldn't be skipped over). I picture the young me in my mind. What does she look like? Where would she be? I call out and tell her I'm coming. I put the young me in an active role in the situation, I don't let her wait passively. I have her call out to me, help me find her. I ask her to show me what it's been like waiting there so long.

In the first many sessions in which I used this technique, all I could think of to do when I got back to her was tell stories that changed what actually happened: stories about rescuing her, fighting back for her, helping her fight harder. I could discharge a lot with these improved versions of what happened. But then, as I came to understand better what Tim meant by resolving the distress, I started trying to fully face what happened to me and find a perspective that wasn't one of defeat. I asked myself what it would mean to no longer be a victim at that moment. What would I feel? What would I think or say? What perspective would I reach that would be fully human? As I discharge at that spot, things come to mind and my perspective continues to shift.

⁷ Working early means discharging on early distress

⁸ Tell means perceive.

Learning from a Young Person

I have always had the privilege to spend time with children. They remind me of the reality about us as humans. My neighbor's child (one-and-a-half years old) spends a lot of time at my home. I notice that he keeps himself happy and engaged all the time. He doesn't need any reason for being happy. He doesn't get bored with anything. He reaches people easily. He fights for himself. He lives his life fully. It's interesting to watch him and learn from him. I always wonder about two things: first, how he can be so happy without any reason, and second, how he can be so close to my mother.

There is a lot of misinformation about happiness, like that we should have a solid reason to be happy; that someone else should keep us happy; that we should make others happy, not ourselves; that happiness is tied to owning things; and so on. To fight against all this misinformation and be happy is a big challenge, but I am slowly learning how to do it. I'm not happy without reasons, but I am finding and creating reasons to be happy.

Many things that I "own" I don't really own, but I have figured out one common thing that all of us own and can be happy about: the entire universe. And though it belongs to all of us, I can still claim it as mine. Even this I learnt from him. He likes to be close to my mother, and he claims her as his own.

He is such a role model for me in getting close to my mother physically, something I find difficult to do. He reaches her easily and teaches me how simple it is. I asked my mother whether she was as close to me when I was young as she is to him. She said that she wasn't. He is not only teaching me how to get close to my mother but teaching my mother how to accept the close touch of children. Because of him, a wonderful thing is happening these days between my mother and me: When he is close to my mother, I get close to them both. I tell him that I don't think only he can get close to my mother, that even I can hug and kiss her. To my surprise, my mother has started accepting it.

It's amazing to have him in my life. He reminds me that all the things he is able to do, I must have been able to do when I was young. I used to think that I had lost them, but my Co-Counseling sessions remind me that they are simply blocked. I am on a journey to reclaim them. I used to think that I should be an ally to young people. Now I understand that they, too, can be our allies, by helping us relearn what we knew as children.

Shashikala (Shashi)
Bangalore, India

Distress Is in the Past

Remember always that the distress is in the past, that you are all right now, and that the future is richly rewarding, surrounded by people who love you and care about you.

Harvey Jackins
From a letter written in 1976



STEVE BANBURY



WILDGROUNDS NATURE RESERVE, ENGLAND • SANDRA CARTER

Taking a Stand Against Gossip

“Attacks on Co-Counselors or on the RC Community will not be tolerated. All Co-Counselors are expected to quickly interrupt both attacks and gossip. In preparation, Co-Counselors need to counsel on whatever obstructs their ability to do so.”

Section on Attacks, Criticism, and Disagreements
from the 2009 *Guidelines for the
Re-evaluation Counseling Communities*

The close relationships we develop in Co-Counseling, and the feelings we have about them, can lead us to talk about Co-Counselor X— with Co-Counselor Y— when Co-Counselor X— is not present. Sometimes this is thoughtful, but sometimes it is gossip. As our *Guidelines* define it, gossip is “casual or unconstrained reports or conversation about other people, typically involving details that are not confirmed as true.”

Gossip is destructive to the trust and safety of our Co-Counseling relationships, to the person being talked about, to the person talking, and to everyone who hears it. When we hear gossip, it can come in unquestioned and be filed in our mind as a fact about another person, when it is not true. If we repeat what we heard, we pass on the misinformation to another listener.

When we hear gossip, what can we do? If a Co-Counselor is telling you what he or she thinks or feels about another Co-Counselor and you think it is gossip,

- Tell the person to stop, and explain that you think that what he or she is saying is gossip,
- Offer the person time for discharge,
- If you have questions about what the person is saying, go directly to the Co-Counselor being talked about.

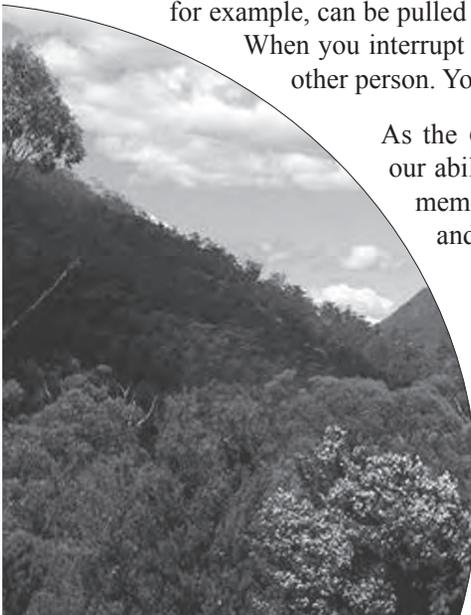
The patterns that fuel gossiping are often the result of hurts carried by targeted people. Women, for example, can be pulled to gossip out of patterns of powerlessness and victimization. When you interrupt gossip, you can expect it to bring up lots of feelings for the other person. You can also expect it to bring up lots of feelings for yourself.

As the *Guidelines* direct, we need to work on whatever obstructs our ability to quickly interrupt gossip. We need to counsel on early memories of having heard gossip, having been the subject of gossip, and having participated in gossiping.

If someone says that Co-Counselor X— is “doing badly” or “having a hard time,” “mental health” oppression can make the listeners worry about how *they* are doing or that they could be the next person talked about in the same way—especially if they try to interrupt the gossip.

How can you talk thoughtfully or think aloud about Co-Counselor X— with Co-Counselor Y— when Co-Counselor X— is not present?

- Discharge on your memories of gossip.



LYNDALL KATZ

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COUNSELING PRACTICE

... continued

- Consider your motives and take them to a session. Are you feeling bad about yourself? Are you upset with Co-Counselor X—? Discharge on the roots of those feelings, which go back to long before you knew Co-Counselor X—.
- Find someone to talk to about Co-Counselor X— who will think well about that person, will not collude with your feelings about him or her, and will think independently of your thoughts.
- Review the purpose of talking about Co-Counselor X— and always try to create the conditions for him or her to discharge and to move his or her re-emergence forward.

Giving up gossiping can be both a useful direction to hold outside of sessions and a useful topic for discharge.

Kathy McCullagh and Hilary Plattner
Brooklyn, New York, USA



My Story of Swimming

At first I am hesitant
The water is cold and looming, separate and other

Does she beckon to me from that generous place?
Or does she taunt me?

We have a history together and so I can try to remember
There is no such thing as other, only another, inviting

Yesterday I dangled my toes in first and then my knees and then my torso
And so it went, limb by limb, remembering her, body part by body part

Today, I take the plunge instead, immersing in one instant
Gasping and shivering in response, taken aback,
wondering will I lose myself to her?

But as I take that first stroke, I feel her offer
A place to exert and to try, to be fully me and fully with

My body floats, glides, strokes, splashes
Wet and smooth skin, deliberate breath, steady, strong arms

My mind imagines, seeks, suggests, wonders
Worlds known and unknown, past places and those I dream of yet to come

We know each other
And when I can remember her, I can remember myself

Rachel Mackson-Landsberg
New York City, New York, USA

Sex

From a talk by Tim Jackins, at the Black Liberation and Community Development Workshop, in Massachusetts, USA, July 2012

There are lots of good possible things to talk about. The one that several people have suggested, pleaded for (*laughs*), is something that we struggle with a great deal. The hurts in this area can be used to manipulate us, to keep us confused and distracted enough to not end oppressive societies. They've been heavy enough on us all that we haven't been able to do a lot of work here. Three guesses. (*Laughter*) Yes, sex.

We continue to go after¹ all of our distresses more successfully and consistently, and doing this relies on our having good relationships and being connected to each other. When trying to build relationships and connections, we often run into distresses connected with sex.

Let me back up a little and talk about it theoretically. Then we'll see what work we can do.

PART OF BEING HUMAN

Sex is part of being human. It developed in life forms on this planet long before we came along. Sex is important for creating complexity faster than can be created by simply having mutations happen; we get to regularly mix different combinations of DNA. Things can change faster, and more complexity is possible. We wouldn't exist unless sexual reproduction had developed. Entities as complex as we are couldn't have happened this quickly. Sexual reproduction has played an important role in the existence of our species. There are indications that it has been vitally important. Several times we got down to a very small population, perhaps five thousand people, partly connected with the ice ages. So being able to reproduce was vital. Not only

is a lot of our structure connected with it, but it has been important for our survival as a species.

The distress recordings of those desperate times have gotten handed down. We all carry distresses that didn't start in our own lives, or even our parents' or grandparents' lives. If there wasn't a chance to discharge a distress, that distress got acted out and went on, generation after generation. And some of those distresses got hooked to sex.

We aren't born sexual creatures. We're born with that possibility and it develops twelve, fourteen, sixteen years later. If you had been able to discharge throughout your life, you would have learned how to develop relationships. You would have used that time to learn about your body, and how to be close with people. Then you would have become a sexual person. You would have added that into all the other experience, and sex would have been great and fun and

interesting, and probably not a very large part of your life. (*Laughter*)

DISTRESSES EMBEDDED IN SOCIETY

Well, that didn't happen (*laughs*), or at least no one has claimed that his or her life was that way. Of course, it has been essentially impossible for it to happen, given the way our societies have been. Distresses about sex are thoroughly embedded in our societies and have gotten connected to almost everything. They have gotten connected to all the oppressions, and to our economic system and the way it oppresses and manipulates people. So all of us are encrusted with distresses connected with sex, and we were born to people for whom that was true.

Long before you became a sexual creature, all of these distresses connected with sex were being acted out around you and at you. What version of them you got was happenstance. It may have been some general version, without much being directed at you, or it may have been the full harshness of desperation that can get attached to this. There seems to be no limit to what sorts of distresses can get installed on people.

You got targeted with enough of it that by the time you became a sexual creature, it was too late. You didn't get to figure out sex, because there was a large load of distress in your head and in everyone else's head. You did the best you could. We all did the best we could. Still, we're all terribly confused about, repelled by, fascinated by, longing for, and running away from sex—often not able to separate it from meaningful contact with another person.

continued . . .



JAPAN • DIANE SHISK

¹ In this context, go after means intentionally discharge.

... continued

When we start out, boys and girls get to play together. Then at some point, we're separated by society and set against each other. Then, after we've been forced into that isolation, society says, "Oh, by the way, you do have one chance to be close to somebody. There's one chance, and it's sexual." And most of us, desperate for any sort of contact, run as fast as we can in that direction. Some of us can't. Some of us get there and then run away. Some of us get there and stay fascinated. But none of us gets the chance to really be thoughtfully and awfully there and experience it and think through it, especially with somebody else thinking through it with us, because our accumulated undischarged distresses get in our way.

Sex is something that's between people. It should involve minds, sharing what it's like to be human with each other. That's what we hoped for. That's what we still hope for. That's what is possible for us. We just haven't been able to create the conditions. Creating the conditions is part of what we're going to do with our sessions.

So, our great-great grandchildren will have a great time, thanks to us! (*Laughter*) In the meantime, what do we do? Here we are with this huge collection of confusions and fascinations and desperations. It hits men hard, because isolation is inflicted on males more thoroughly than on females. The desperation for us men that sex is the only possible way to have contact is up a notch or two, or three or four. We don't even really believe it will be contact. It's just the closest possible thing. It's a reminder that maybe someday, somehow, contact might be possible.

AN ILLUSION OF CLOSENESS

A problem for those of us who are fascinated with sex is that it doesn't



ASPEN, COLORADO, USA • NIKHIL TRIVEDI

take care of anything. There is the illusion, the promise (sometimes) that there will be enough contact to make a difference, the hope that something will resolve in our minds because of it. If we're really, really lucky, occasionally that happens. Occasionally both minds are there enough that there's enough contact and something does shift, for a little while. But most of the time it doesn't. Most of the time, even though we are as thoughtful as we can be, and we reach and do everything we can to be there together, as we get more and more sexual the restimulation takes over. Our mind flips to somewhere else—to some fantasy, some image, somewhere else—and we're not able to be there together, even though we've done our best to have real contact.

MOVING IS WHAT WE NEED

This is where we are: trying our best under really difficult circumstances from our having lived through lives filled with these distresses. So what do we do with the fascinations? How do we get to working on them so that we can push them out of our way enough? We'd like to not be confused about relationships, not feel that sex *has* to be there, or *has* to be this or *has* to be that, but instead really get to think about our relationships with each other. And how do we have a real, human, aware sexual relationship with somebody with whom we've

built a relationship? How do we get this material² moving enough for that?

It's a rather sad picture. We've been stuck in place. We haven't been able to move this distress (though we've been able to survive and discharge on it enough that it hasn't gotten worse quickly). We still run into snags. We can't seem to move in the directions we want to.

Moving is what we need. We don't need a complete, quick solution. We need to find ways to work on it so that there's motion. We can make it move forward. We tend to want immediate solutions to all the things our distresses have put in our way, but that isn't what we need. What we need is the possibility. We need to be able to think well enough to see new possibilities and move our minds and our relationships forward in those directions.

SOCIETY IS COLLAPSING

We've worked on our early sexual hurts. Everybody needs to do that. We all need to go back and see how the distress got planted in us. But that hasn't always made things move much. It begins the work and provides a way to think about and understand these distresses and their effects, but it doesn't always move things forward enough. We need to do more, because our society is so immersed in this distress.

Because society is collapsing, all the sexual distress is getting worse. When did society try to sexualize you explicitly? At what age? Well, it's a lot younger now: the toys, dress, everything. Play make-up is making its way down to, what, six-year-olds? As society collapses, distresses that are even more restimulating are being acted out. They are keeping people confused and distracted from

² Material means distress.

taking on³ real issues. This confuses many important struggles. Women's liberation has been sold as women having the choice to have sex any way they want. Because they appear to get a choice, they're "liberated." Essentially women are being offered men's distresses as progress. Well, it's equality in a certain sense (*laughter*), but I don't think it's what we are after.⁴

SEX AND CLOSENESS SEPARATE

So how do we work on this material? Well, what do you want? I mean, really, what do you want? Because of distress, you don't know! But you need to talk about it in Co-Counseling sessions. You need to try to think about it. For all of us, distresses about sex are tangled with having a real connection with someone. We have a difficult time separating sex and closeness, and they are separate. We can be completely intimate with someone, our full minds knowing each other; we can be committed to each other, be close physically; and it doesn't have to be sexual. But given what happens to us, it can be difficult to see that.

FACING AND DISCHARGING THE FROZEN LONGINGS

Sex often doesn't work as a way to bring us closer. It can work to keep us separated. We have to fight against acting out frozen longings. For example, there was someone I cared deeply about and was sexually involved with, and sex got in our way. I wanted to be sexual, and I could tell⁵ that it didn't work. It didn't work for her; it didn't work for us. So I told her to stay on the other side of the bed while I longed for her and cried, and I said that she could not come and comfort me.

³ Taking on means confronting and doing something about.

⁴ After means seeking.

⁵ Tell means notice, perceive.

Part of women's distress material is to comfort, but comforting can salve over the distress instead of helping men face and discharge it. "Taking care of" the frozen longing doesn't take care of the distress. Smoothing it over and quieting it for the moment may make it feel better, but we know that acting on our feelings is not going to get us out of this. What's necessary is to face the longings that are frozen. We can keep the warmth and closeness but not allow the distress to take over and determine the way we are together.

There's an interesting set of difficulties right there that I want to describe. In general, in heterosexual relationships, it's going to be the women saying no to men. God knows, we men will never say no. (*Lots of laughter*) Not for a while anyway. But what's the basis of the woman's no? It has to be "I actually want more of you; I want to be more with you than sex allows us to be now."

Early in a relationship a woman may try to establish that there won't be sex, because of frozen longings pushing for it to happen. This can be confusing

to a man. It can sound like the woman is labeling him as inadequate before she knows him, like she's closing a door. It can be perfectly correct for a woman to take such a stand, but there's also that message tangled with it that needs to be contradicted. What she can say is, "I want more than that. And I can't find a way to be close to you that way now. I hope we'll find it in the future. I hope we'll figure out everything that's possible between us, but I'm not going to pretend about it, and I don't want you to pretend about it, even though you long for it."

A lot of us men won't be able to hear that. Sorry. You women will have to find ways to say it, preserving the caring and the possibility while not allowing the unworkable to happen. It's a tough line to draw, but it's a good line. Your intelligence will let you figure out how to do that. We males have to figure it out, too.

We need to do this in new relationships and ongoing relationships, and in relationships in which we've given up having sexual contact with each other.

continued . . .



STEHEKIN, WASHINGTON, USA • ELLIE PUTNAM

... continued

WHAT SHOULD SEX BE?

What should sex be? Is it the activity of two thinking minds, or is it something that happens because of compulsions that come out of distress? We could vote on what's out of bounds, what's interesting, what's too dull. None of that is relevant. What's relevant is our minds functioning as human minds together. Then it's up to us⁶ to figure it out. If we can think, we can figure it out. Our job is to notice that none of us can think very well in this area, and to begin the work and discharge to move the distresses out of our way so we get a chance. It looks like sex isn't a big thing and would not occupy our minds a tenth as much as it does except for the distresses surrounding it and the lack of connection we've been forced to live with.

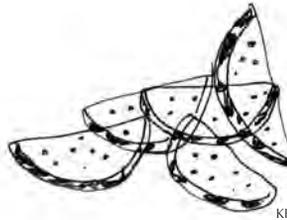
Once we get things established so that people are connected, sex will be a small and interesting thing. What will be the basis on which people have sex? I don't know, and I don't care, as

⁶ Up to us means our job.

long as they're thinking about it. I'm sure it will include sharing affection and being good to each other. I'm sure there will be things related to curiosity.

The basis for it needs to be figured out by minds rather than patterns. That's our issue. And at this point I can say quite confidently that that's not the way it works in your life. Sorry. I wish it did, but it's not. This doesn't mean that you don't have caring relationships, but we've all been too hurt in the area of sex to make it work consistently well. We either get pushed away from it by distress or pulled into it by our distress or that of the person we care so much about—we go along with the distress. We haven't found a way to discharge on it enough that we can make progress together.

So that's my best picture at this point. Now you need to discharge on it. Go!



F—: Is this what you have found out from heterosexual persons?

Tim: It's from counseling lots of people, heterosexual and non-heterosexual—it's not too small a sample. There are a lot of people trying to work on this.

BEST TO WORK ON IT TOGETHER

So we need a mini-session before we go off to our longer sessions. This is a little like working on our other early heavy distresses. We do it best all in the same room, working on it together. So would you look around? We're going to do a short mini-session on "true confessions." You get to "confess" your version of this material, so look around and find someone whom you think could hear it. We're all going to stay in the same room. Help is nearby.

Talk about three things that fascinate you about sex: bodies (yours, theirs, whatever), or three things connected with sex that you don't want to think about ever again. (*Laughter*)



DIANE SHISK

Use the Resources

A resource we have as clients is noticing where the discharge is and trying to go back there repeatedly. Inside all of your shells, you're putting a million horsepower out, all the time, to try to get discharge. Every client is. Every client is doing any damn thing they can, up to eviscerating themselves, to try to get discharge. And so are you. Use the resources.

*Harvey Jackins**

From a talk at the Peace and Disarmament Activists' Workshop, in Boston, Massachusetts, USA, July 1986

* Harvey Jackins was the founder and first International Reference Person of the RC Communities.

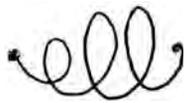
A Goal and Commitment Against Genocide

I have been developing a goal and commitment for us Alaska (USA) RCers to help us work directly on genocide recordings.¹ This goal and commitment (see below) have the full support of all the Native leaders in Alaska and Marcie Rendon, the International Liberation Reference Person for Native Americans.

The central goal for the Region² of Alaska is to fully discharge all recordings, both targeted and oppressor versions, connected with the ongoing policy of genocide of Indigenous people.

These recordings have eroded our humanity, ruined our lives, and disconnected us from one another and the environment. The policy of genocide and the accompanying recordings have made it difficult for all of us Alaskans, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous, to thrive, think well about the environment, get close to one another, and work with one another to achieve our goals for ourselves and the world.

(For assistance in discharging these recordings, see the commitment below.)



Commitment To Free All Humans from the Effects of the Policy of the Genocide of Indigenous Peoples



Short Version

It is theoretically possible, and certainly desirable, for the long-term survival and flourishing of my beloved people(s) and the environment, to completely discharge and eliminate all recordings (both targeted and oppressor versions) related to the ongoing policy of genocide of Indigenous peoples—the purpose of which is to eliminate Indigenous people, by means of death or assimilation, in order to appropriate their resources. Therefore, I once again decide to personally face the effects on the planet, including on myself, of the policy of genocide. Today, this will mean *(first thought)*.

Long Version

It is theoretically possible,

(Review useful theory: (1) all humans are inherently completely good, intelligent, powerful, loving, and cooperative; (2) the person is not the pattern; (3) distress is finite; and (4) discharge works.)

and certainly desirable,

(Review evidence of the ongoing devastation of the lives of Indigenous people, and the emptiness and confusion experienced by non-Indigenous people due to the effect of oppressor patterns.)

for the long-term survival and flourishing of my beloved people(s)

(List specific groups of ancestors; study and discharge on both pre-contact and post-contact history and recordings; learn about and discharge on languages, culture, assimilation, internalized oppression, and so on.)

and the environment,

(Compare Native and non-Native attitudes toward and relationship with the environment. Research and review personal, family, tribal, community, and national practices, policy, and history related to the use and transfer of land and other natural resources, including the buying, selling, inheriting, developing, and managing of land, and rights to the use of water, animals, plants, minerals, and so on.)

to completely discharge and eliminate all recordings (both targeted and oppressor versions) related to the ongoing policy of genocide of Indigenous peoples—the purpose of which is to eliminate Indigenous people, by means of death or assimilation, in order to appropriate their resources. Therefore, I once again decide to personally face the effects on the planet, including on myself, of the policy of genocide. Today, this will mean *(first thought)*.

(Repeat.)



*Christine A. Marie
Regional Reference Person
for Alaska, USA
Sitka, Alaska, USA*

¹ Distress recordings

² A Region is a subdivision of the International Re-evaluation Counseling Community, usually consisting of several Areas (local RC Communities).

Playing My Way Through Terror

I've been learning to play the alto saxophone. I started out teaching myself, but after some initial success I gave up. Last January I decided to take lessons and have been doing so ever since. Every two or three weeks I have a lesson from a lovely, supportive man who lets me shake and laugh while I attempt to play the instrument. He's taught me some of the scales, the proper mouth and finger placement, and how to read the notes. He prefers that I bring in songs I want to learn rather than playing songs from a book.

I absolutely love it! One of the decisions I made early on was that I was not creative and didn't have any musical talent. Taking on* this challenge is negating that decision and pushing me in the direction of a different decision. One Co-Counselor gave me the direction to proudly proclaim, "I am a musician!"

My sax teacher is encouraging me to play in front of people as often as I can. He's confident in my knowledge and says that I just need practice. Playing in front of people feels like the most terrifying thing I've ever done.

* Taking on means undertaking.

I've done it three times so far—once at the East Coast North America Black Liberation and Community Development Workshop (BLCD), once with friends at a barbecue, and most recently at BLCD 2012. Even though I know that my friends and Co-Counselors will cheer for and encourage me just because I'm willing to try, each time I play for them my whole body is trembling with fear. I've managed to play "Love Me Tender," "Amazing Grace," and "Lift Every Voice and Sing." I'm not sure how I got through them, because my breathing was so shallow and panicked. When I was finished people clapped and cheered (so I'm told), but I had no recollection of the audience's faces or movements, because of the terror combined with feelings of shame, humiliation, and embarrassment.

I came back from BLCD determined to keep moving forward and figuring out how I can play and be able to notice the people watching me. I can already see how pushing myself to play in the face of the strong feelings is going to be a fast track to re-emergence.

Donna Paris
Toronto, Ontario, Canada



Sessions at the Dentist's Office and at School

Myson Y—had a dental appointment at which a bunch of cavities needed to be filled, and they were all done with *no* nitrous oxide, novocaine, or Versed, all of which the dentist initially thought were necessary. (Nitrous oxide is a gaseous sedative; novocaine is an injectable local anesthetic; and Versed, often given as a drink, makes people forget a surgical procedure. All are routinely used in dental practices where I live.) The dentist actually left the room four different times during the two-hour appointment so that my husband, who is also a Co-Counselor, and I could give Y— sessions. It went great.

I had a similar experience at Y—'s school, which he just started attending a few weeks ago. I got one of the teachers to sit with me while I gave Y— a session about my leaving, and she said things like, "Wow, I can tell* I'll be learning a lot from you." A week later she told me she had talked at the year-end teacher party about what I'd done with Y— and all the teachers had agreed that they were going to treat the children differently around goodbyes.

J—
Colorado, USA
Reprinted from the RC e-mail
discussion list for leaders of parents

* Tell means see.



HELEN PARKIN

We Talk About Everything, Why Not This?

I am writing this with help from my son Adam. He is sitting right next to me. He is eleven. It is about what we've done together concerning the topic of sex.

We do a lot of things about bodies. We always have. One year at Thanksgiving¹ Adam and his two cousins got the entire family laughing for an hour and a half, right at the table, about embarrassment about bodies. It was brilliant leadership on their part, and a great session for all.

I had been shy about talking to Adam about sex. Finally I did enough Co-Counseling that I thought I could get my tone right, and Adam and I, on three different occasions, went through the best book on sex we could find. We read it slowly together, and laughed, and he asked questions.

He told me that boys in his class had been joking more about sex and penises, and sometimes girls' bodies; that he thought it was stupid; and that he also laughed with them. He said that for the most part² their tone when talking about women and girls was not harsh.

As Adam is starting to use the computer more on his own, I decided to do a little Internet search. I put the word "sex" in the computer and was astonished at what came up. His dad and I quickly put in parental settings. We also had to take the built-in application for YouTube off my cell phone. The way it is set up allows for only a medium-security setting. I am sure that is intentional.

I decided to talk to Adam about the images before he found them. I told him that they were meant to trick people into things, to make money off of where people felt lonely, and that they were particularly aimed at men and boys. We often talk about how boys are separated from each other, and everyone, and how they are supposed to not show that they care about anything. When we put it in that context, it all made sense. He understands how capitalism functions. We

¹ Thanksgiving is a U.S. holiday, in the month of November, when many families get together and share in a feast.

² For the most part means mostly.

talked about how this was all about making a profit. It was helpful for him to have the bigger picture.

I told him that sex is good and nice and fun and that he was going to enjoy it and use it as a way to be connected to another person. I also said that he would enjoy it even more if these images were not in his mind. I told him how much I loved him, and loved his being connected to lots of people, and that I didn't want anything to get in his way of being connected to any person.

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

I haven't told him the details of how harsh these images are, and I won't. I have told him that they are scary, and that I know of a young person in RC who has been discharging for years on some of these images that she saw by accident.

He may never see them, but he probably will. At the moment he is not drawn to them, but that may change. I just want him to be prepared and to have gotten some information early on. We talk about everything, why not this?

Jenny Szama
Jamaica Plain, Massachusetts, USA
Reprinted from the RC e-mail
discussion list for leaders of parents



Security is not having large piles of gold or something else that you can sell, it's having a collection of people who will think well about you, and who have committed themselves to your existence as much as to their own.

Tim Jackins



~~~~~ Building Community as a Parent ~~~~~

I want to share two ideas I've had for building community around myself and my three-year-old.

I live in a rural part of the county, and most of my friends live twenty-five minutes' to over an hour's drive away. This is one of the barriers to my visiting them, and participating more frequently in Co-Counseling classes and events, especially when it is night and I'm tired.

Several years back one of my Co-Counselors held out for me a vision of my having a place in town where I could stay part-time, with my child, and thus be more closely connected to friends and the RC Community and get a little respite from the restimulations of my home life (particularly as a stepparent). At that point I couldn't see any possibility of it, and the idea faded away.

Recently when I described to this same Co-Counselor a wonderful spontaneous visit with friends (I'd invited myself and my three-year-old over to dinner), she again raised the idea—and I realized that it could be possible to take my daughter with me into town, bringing dinner with us, to a friend's house. The friend could play with my daughter

while I attended a Co-Counseling class, then I could return to the friend's house and sleep there together with my daughter.

At first this felt like too much to ask of anyone, but then I realized that it would benefit all of us. I started thinking of more and more people to ask, including teachers I had worked with in the past and friends I hadn't seen in years. I'm slowly getting in contact with these people and re-establishing relationships.

This plan has so many wonderful benefits: I can participate in a weekly Co-Counseling class. The childcare is taken care of—and, more than that, my child gets to spend time with a number of friends we rarely see, and this is wonderful for them also. My husband is freed up to do what he wants to for the evening, including exercise, work on his own projects, or spend more focused time with our older girls. I don't have to drive back and forth to the RC class and then drive the next morning to preschool, which is also in town. I have a night a week away from the restimulations of our home life. I get to visit with friends, enjoy their homes, and see other ways of

running a household. My friends benefit by being brought dinner and garden produce and having company during their evening and morning routines.

The second way I've figured out to bring people into our lives is at home. We have registered our small farm with Worldwide Opportunities on Organic Farms, and people from around the world come to stay on our property and volunteer for a period of time, in order to learn about organic farming and sustainable living. We benefit by having help with the garden work and more people around to play, do creative projects, and share meals and conversations with. Most of the visitors have been thoughtful about and respectful of my three-year-old, and it helps so much to have someone around while I cook dinner, hang up the laundry, make phone calls, and so on. It's also been an easy way to share RC ideas about young people with smart and enthusiastic folks, who are mostly young adults.

Nancy Faulstich

Watsonville, California, USA

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

Responsible for My Own Re-emergence

I am responsible for my own re-emergence. My feeling that I "deserve better" discharge is a frozen resentment. If I need a session, I am the one to go and get it in present time. Why would I wait? Why would I waste a moment blaming anyone for not doing something I won't do on my own behalf?

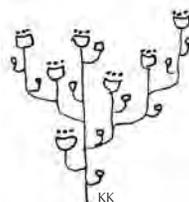
Our justifications for our own oppressive behaviour function as control patterns, resulting in the non-discharge of the hurt behind the behaviour and ensuring its continued acting-out.

A huge part of sexism is men simply ignoring women, their thinking, and their needs. Our attention, meanwhile, is on nothing better than our own distress. We leave ourselves isolated and stuck, and leave women to pick up the slack.

Rowan White

Fitzroy North, Victoria, Australia

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





ISRAEL • RANDI FREUNDLICH



BETH CRUISE



INDIA • MAURA FALLON

Share Your Glimpses of Reality

Many of you have sent us your photographs and artwork for use in *Present Time* and our other journals. The effect of your work has been wonderful for all readers, and we greatly appreciate your assistance in providing clearer and clearer views of reality.

We publish *Present Time* quarterly and also publish many other journals, a bit more often than we have in years past. Because of this, we could use more photos and artwork from you, our readers.

You don't need to be someone who thinks of herself or himself as an artist or photographer. Many people who do lovely, thoughtful work still have undischarged distresses that leave them feeling unsure and confused about themselves in this area. Please don't let any such feelings stop you from sending us what you have done. (Or have some sessions on those feelings, send us your work, and then have more sessions.)

The photos can be of nature, cosmic to microscopic; of objects, familiar or not. They can be about human endeavors, light-hearted or serious. But they need to be *your* photos that help you remember the real world. Drawings can be simple or more involved, and we would like them to communicate your enjoyment of the world. For *Present Time* covers, photos need to be in a vertical (portrait) format. For all photos, please indicate what is in the picture, where it was taken, and when.

You can send digital photos and drawings to <photos@rc.org> (e-mail us for details) or mail hard copies to Rational Island Publishers (see address below). We won't be able to return hard copies. If you're sending photos by e-mail, please send them at a resolution of 300 dpi or greater.

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Please do send us your photographs and artwork. We would love to let other people see them.

Tim Jackins



BRIAN LAVENDEL



SEATTLE, WASHINGTON, USA • AMANDA MARTINEZ



HELEN PARKIN

Looking Directly at Internalized Racism

From a talk by Tim Jackins at the Black Liberation and Community Development Workshop, in Warwick, New York, USA, May 2011

You are leaders. You are here because somebody thinks you are a leader, or will soon be a leader, or wants you to be a leader. Someone has hope in your direction. That doesn't mean that you feel like a leader.

You are here because somebody thinks highly of your abilities. This is a smart crowd. They don't make big mistakes, and they didn't make a mistake about you. So you get to be ready to lead RC, in any way you want to. In particular, you get to figure out if you want to lead RC for this constituency.¹ It's important that a good number of you decide to do that. Barbara² has guided this constituency deftly for a long time. People have joined in more and more fully, and that needs to keep happening.

Part of the struggle is looking at racism, directly. Part is making RC available in spite of racism, so that people have this tool to work on every distress. A part that needs to be looked at over and over again, which isn't easy to look at, is how much racism has affected us and gotten into our minds. It does this with all of us whether we were trained to be the agents of racism or the targets of it. You may not have ever believed racism, you may have used RC well enough to stand against any pull of it, but the hurts of racism are in your mind. Racism gets into us and gets internalized. You can resist it, but until you discharge it, it gets in the

way and affects your relationships within the constituency.

This can be difficult to work on. Who are you going to work on it with? Who is safe? Who can you count on to think well enough about you to not be confused that you have this material³ about people of African heritage? It's like this with



AMANDA MARTINEZ

all oppressive material. Because it's come down on everybody in the society, nobody seems to have enough slack to listen. So what do you do? Well, you do the best you can. You keep it under control. You hide it. You don't tell anybody what you are fighting against. You fight alone. You fight against this distress alone in your own head.

Or you have sessions on it secretly and don't tell your counselor what you are working on. You can have very good sessions in which your counselor has no idea what is going on⁴ (*laughs*). You're thinking your own thoughts, even as you say the

phrases he or she gives you. You work on distresses surreptitiously. You don't have to take a chance. It's nice that you can do that, but it's accepting a piece of the oppression—that there is no good ally, that nobody will understand, that you can't fight openly against the distress with anyone. That's not true.

There are lots of people who could be your counselor on internalized racism, including lots of people in this room. That doesn't mean that they won't get restimulated. It's all right that we get restimulated—just like it's all right that we get defeated in our battles part of the time. It doesn't mean that we don't fight those battles. It doesn't mean that we don't work on the distress. It simply means that it is not easy. It means that we have to have agreements amongst us—that we know that this is distress, that we all carry it, and that we will work on whatever is restimulating about one of us working on it, that we will take responsibility for cleaning up whatever distress gets restimulated. Distresses simply get restimulated, and that doesn't mean that we're corrupted, or weak, or stupid, or mistaken. It means that life has been that tough. We have been defeated by racism repeatedly.

The hard part is not the defeat. It is the fact that we have had to live it ever after. We have to stop doing that. We have to decide that no matter how horrible we feel or

continued . . .

¹ African-heritage people

² Barbara Love, the International Liberation Reference Person for African Heritage People

³ Material means distress.

⁴ Going on means happening.

LIBERATION

... continued

how confusing it seems, we will let somebody else in so that we can really work against the distress.

You have to confess to someone how the distress runs in your head. You have to tell somebody about it and trust that he or she will understand that it's not you, that it's part of the recording that got laid in, that you didn't have a choice about it, and that you've never had the resource to discharge it. If we are going to go on, if you are going to go on, if you are going to go on and lead this constituency, you can't protect that material.

People see the effects of all the distresses we try so hard to hide, and it's even more confusing when they don't know what the distresses are. You know how scared you are when you see people all tight with something and you don't know what it is. You think the worst possible things. You worry that they are near the edge of being out of control with it, when they are just hanging on as best they can. There is no way to interpret it correctly when you have no information. You need information about it so you can make sense of it. It can be restimulating. That's fine—you can work on that.

This happens to everybody who is targeted by oppression. The oppression has been heavy enough in our societies that although you have known better and have fought against it, at some point it still got you. Even though you know better now and can fight against it, it's still there and it's still affecting you. It's still affecting the relationships you care most about. It still gets in the

way of the work you most want to do. So you have to do more than you have done.

You have to talk about the things that run in your head about other people of African heritage. You've got to face and say out loud what runs in your head, what you struggle with. You can give somebody a picture of it. You don't have to blame yourself. You don't have to feel bad about it. None of that makes sense. And it doesn't make sense to keep it secret, because then nothing moves. Then you don't have any way to decide to move it.

You can decide that you want to change something in your own mind and go after⁵ it. Nobody can change something in our own mind except us.

So we're going to do a three-way mini-session in which you get to figure out how to talk about the distressed things that you haven't been able to get out of your head about other people of African heritage. Look around the room. Who are you going to talk to? Keep looking. There are a lot of good people here. Don't choose anyone yet. It isn't going to be that simple. Look around the room. Who knows you well enough not to be confused by your internalized racism? I'm not asking who you feel comfortable with. I'm asking you to think about this. Who knows you well enough that he or she is not going to be confused about the things you have to talk about that you haven't had a chance to? Is there

⁵ Go after means pursue.



PUNE, INDIA • TIM JACKINS

anybody? How many? A handful? One? I want to see. I want you to hold up how many fingers—three, ten, five, four. A lot of hands are not going up, which tells us how hard it is to even think about doing this. It is that hard. Sorry. It just is, and you can do it.

This is the point at which you decide that it's important enough to make these distresses move—that, okay, you are going to go right at them. You are going to take a shot at them instead of hanging back believing the fears that say you can't make this stuff move. It will move. It actually moves fairly easily once you get it out in the open. But you've got to get it out in the open, and that's what we haven't done well. In our fears we've kept it out of sight most of the time. If we want to reach people of African heritage, and do it faster, this is part of what has to move to make it happen.

Euskal Herriaren Askapenerako Politik Zirriborroa

EUSKAL HERRIARI BURUZKO ERREALITATEA

“Euskal Herria” izenaz izendatzen den Herria Europa hego-mendebaldean dago, frantziar eta espainiar estatuen artean kokatzen den lurraldea dugu. Jatorrian gaur egun ikusten duguna baino lurralde zabalagoa zen. Historian zehar hainbat mugimendu inbaditzaileen zapalkuntzen azpian bizi izanak bere lurraldea murriztera eramandu; batez ere, estatu frantses eta espainiarren zapalkuntzaren eraginez, oraindik orain pairatzen duena. Lurralde horretan bizi izan den eta bizi den jende talde batek osatzen dugu Euskal Herria.

Bihotz handiko jendea izan da eta bada, zintzoa, adimentsua eta solidarioa, eta justiziarako sena eta ausardia nabarmenak ditu. Komunitate zentzu sakona garatu du, lurrarekin lotura sendoa, kultura paregabea eta aberatsa, eta dozenaka mila urte dituen hizkuntza bati gaur arte eutsi izan dio.

Bere existentzian zehar, ekarpen interesgarriak egin dizkio munduari eta gainerako gizakiekin armonian eta berdintasunean bizitzeko gogo irmoa adierazi du. Bere nahia da gizaki guztiok osatzen dugun familia handia planeta garbi, justu, oparo eta baketsu batean bizitzea. Horretarako lan egin dugu beti gure lekutik.

BERTAKO EUSKAL JENDEA

Bertako euskal jendea duela 30.000 urte baino lehenagotik bizi izan da lur honetan. Lur honetako jatorrizkoak dira beren ondorengoekin batera. Antzinako sinesmen sistema baten jabe izan dira; honek pertsonen, lurraren, izaki bizidunen eta unibertsoaren arteko harremanaren sakona azpimarratzen du. Egun, sinesmen sistema horren adierazpenak beren kulturaren hainbat elementutan aurki daitezke. Amalurra-rengandik eta beronen baliabideetatik bizi izan dira oro har eta, era berean, garai berrietara egokitzen jakin dute, Amalurra lantzen eta berau eta bere izakiak zaintzen jarraitzen duten bitartean.

EUSKAL JENDEA, EZ BERTAKOA

Bertako euskal jendearen ondoan euskal jende asko ere egon da. Beren sustraiak beste toki batzuetakoak

ziren baina bertan finkatu eta bertakoekin bizi izan dira historian zehar. Hemen bizi, lan egin eta ondorengoak izan dituzte, beren artean edota bertakoekin. Beraien artean batzuk lur hau, bertako jendea eta kultura errespetatzen eta maitatzen jakin izan dute eta euskalduntzat jotzen euren burua. Euskal bertakoek ongietorria eman eta ematen diete denei eta euskaldun izateko beren erabakia harrotasunez sentitzen dute. Baita eskertu ere, bertakoentzat eta hauen bizitzan euskarri-korronea izan direlako.

Ondorioz, ondorengo batzuek bi jatorriak aurkezten dituzte: euskal bertakoena eta euskal jendearena. Gonbidatzen zaie bi jatorriak aldarrikatzera eta direnak direlako bi norizanetan harro sentitzera.

EUSKAL HERRIAREN AURKAKO ZAPALKUNTZA ETA BERE ONDORIO BATZUK

Gaur egun estatu espainolak eta frantsesak okupatzen dute Herri hau, euren estatuen zati bailiran aldarrikatzen, eta horrela deitzen dute. Frantzia ipar aldetik eta Espainia hego aldetik. Euskal Herria euren estatuko zati dela iritzita (edo frantses estatua edo espainiar estatua) pentsatzen dute pertsonak espainolak edo frantsesak izan daitezkeela soilik. Aldi berean, ados daude kultura frantsesa edo espainiarra inposatzen jarraitu beharrekien gure kulturaren gainetik.

Helbururik garrantzitsuena Euskal Herriaren ustiaketa ekonomikoa izan da, eta honen ondotik euskal etnia suntsitzeko eta desagerrarazteko saiakera puntualak izan dira. Okupatze eta ezabatze estrategiaren osagarriak ez dira bakarrik izan euskal kulturaren ukazioa, baita kultura defendatzen saiatzen zirenen zigorra, jazarpena eta, batzuetan, sarraskia ere.

Zapalkuntza honen ondorioetako bat euskal populazioaren barne zatiketa izan da, bertako euskal jendearena zein bertakoak ez diren euskal jendearena. Euren artean talde handi batek euskal kulturarekin bat ez etortzea hautatu du eta norizan horri eta kulturari uko egitea, beste norizan batzuk hartuz: frantsesa (ipar Euskal Herrian), espainiarra (hego Euskal Herrian),

jarraitzen du . . .



HERESA D'AMATO

... aurreko orrialdetik dator

europarra . . . Beste pertsona talde batek norizan bat baino gehiago hartu ditu aldi berean: euskal-frantsesa edo euskal-espainiarra edo alderantziz. Honek hainbeste zanpaketarik pairatu gabe bizirauten utzi die bi talde hauei. Horietako beste talde bat politika zapaltzaileekin elkarlanean aritu da, batez ere interes ekonomikoengatik (jauberia klasetik nagusiki eta ertain klaseko parte batetik).

Eta bertako euskal jende talde sendo eta zabal bat gai izan da bere nortasunaren ikuspegia ez galtzeko eta norizan bakar honi ez uko egiteko. Norizan zapaltzaileak hartu ez izanak arazo larriak ekarri dizkio eta gaur egun ere horrek zailtasun nabarmenen iturri izaten jarraitzen du. Azken talde hau Euskal Askapenerako indar garrantzitsuenetako bat izan da eta aldi berean errepresioaren jomuga nagusia. Aliatu indartsu eta konprometituak aurkitu ditu bertakoak ez diren euskal jendearengan; hauek ere errepresioaren jomuga zuzenak izan dira.

Azpimarratzekoa da gizarte talde batzuk Euskal Herrian garatu dituzten lana eta ardura euskal askapenaren alde, adibidez emakumeen mugimendu antolatua, hain indartsua eta eraginkorra, edo mugimendu antimilitarista, ekologista, gazte mugimendua, eta abar.

BARNERATUTAKO ZAPALKUNTZA

Barne zapalketaz gain, pertsonen arteko harremani eragiten dien indarkeria ere hor dago zapalkuntza honen beste ondorioetako bat bezala, baita alkoholismoa ere. Pertsona egokiak ez izateko sentsazioa, edo "ardi beltzak" izatekoa sistema zapaltzailearen aurrean amore ez ematea erabaki duten euskal pertsonen eta euskal bertakoen buruan ibili daitezke.

Estatu zapaltzaileetakoak diren pertsonak euskal jendea zein euskal bertakoa horrela ikustea ere litekeena da.

EUSKAL ASKAPENAREN ALDEKO ALIATUAK

Planetan zehar pertsona askok azaldu du eta azaltzen du euskal askapenaren aldeko gogoak. Azkenengo hamarkadetan Espainiako eta Frantziako estatuetatik -eta beste herrialde batzuetatik ere- etorritako jende asko lurralde honetan gelditu da. Hauetako batzuk ere jakin izan dute lur hau, bere jendea eta kultura errespetatzen eta maitatzen eta ongietorria ematen diegu denei; gure eskua luzatzen diegu eta gure ondoan euskaldunak izateko aukera ere bai, horrela aukeratzen baldin badute.

EUSKAL JENDEA MUNDUAN

Azkenik, badago bertako euskaldun eta euskaldun ez bertakoen talde anitz eta zabal bat, eta euren ondorengoak, Euskal Herria utzi behar izan dutenak, euskal kultura joan ziren tokietara eramanez dutenak. Gaur arte bertako euskal norizanari edo euskal norizanari eusten diote. Beraietaz harro sentitzen gara.

GURE HELBURUA

Gure helburua da gure jendeari eta gure lur maiteari egindako min guztietatik suspertzea eta elkarri laguntzea planeta eder honetan bizi diren pertsona guztien loratze osoa lortzen.



Listening looks easy, but it's not simple. Every head is a world.

Cuban proverb



XO

La traducción a español de la política borrador en página 23:

Política de Liberación del Pueblo Vasco Borrador

LA REALIDAD SOBRE EL PUEBLO VASCO

El pueblo vasco lo conforma un grupo de gente que ha habitado y habita una región denominada País Vasco, situada entre los estados francés y español, al sur-oeste de Europa.

Originalmente era una región más extensa de lo que hoy en día observamos. Debido a que durante su historia ha tenido que vivir bajo la opresión de varios movimientos invasores y más recientemente bajo la opresión de los estados francés y español, principalmente, su territorio se ha visto reducido.

Su gente son personas de gran corazón, integridad, inteligentes y solidarias. Han desarrollado un profundo sentido de comunidad, una fuerte conexión con la tierra, una cultura única y rica, con un idioma conservado desde hace varias decenas de miles de años hasta el día de hoy. Todo esto va acompañado de un certero sentido de la justicia y determinación.

Durante su existencia han hecho interesantes contribuciones al mundo y han expresado un deseo rotundo de vivir en armonía e igualdad con el resto de seres humanos. Y es su deseo vivir en un planeta limpio, justo, pacífico y abundante en recursos para toda la gran familia de seres humanos. Siempre hemos trabajado por ello, desde nuestro lugar.

LA GENTE NATIVA VASCA

La gente nativa vasca ha habitado en esta tierra desde hace más de

30.000 años. Es la originaria de esta tierra junto con sus descendientes. Ha sido poseedora de un antiguo sistema de creencias ancestral que resalta la profunda conexión entre las personas, la tierra, todos sus seres vivos y el universo, hoy en día aún palpable en algunas de sus expresiones culturales. Han vivido principalmente de la madre tierra y de sus recursos y han sabido adaptarse a la nueva era tecnológica, a la vez que siguen trabajando y cuidando la tierra y sus seres vivos.

LA GENTE VASCA NO NATIVA

Al lado de la gente nativa vasca ha habido también mucha gente vasca, cuyas raíces procedían de otros lugares y que se han asentado y convivido aquí, con la gente nativa, a lo largo de la historia. Han vivido, trabajado y tenido descendencia entre ellas y/o entre la gente nativa vasca. Una parte de ellas ha sabido respetar y amar esta tierra, su gente y su cultura y se considera sí misma gente vasca. La gente nativa vasca les ha dado y da la bienvenida a todas ellas y a toda su descendencia y han sentido y sienten con orgullo su decisión de ser vascas. También les agradecen que hayan supuesto una corriente de apoyo importante para la vida y liberación de la gente nativa vasca.

Algunas de sus descendientes presentan ambas raíces: descendientes de gente vasca no nativa y descendientes de gente nativa vasca. Las personas nativas vascas les invitan a que reivindiquen

ambos orígenes y a que se sientan orgullosas de quienes son, en ambas identidades.

LA OPRESIÓN CONTRA EL PAÍS VASCO Y ALGUNOS DE SUS EFECTOS

Los estados español y francés ocupan hoy día este País, lo reclaman como parte de sus estados y así lo denominan, Francia por el norte y España por el sur. Consideran que las personas que lo habitan solamente son españolas o francesas. A su vez, están de acuerdo con que se siga imponiendo la cultura francesa o española sobre nuestra cultura.

El objetivo principal ha sido la explotación económica del País Vasco, lo cual ha sido acompañado con algún intento puntual de aniquilación y/o desaparición de la etnia vasca. Por un lado parte de la estrategia de ocupación y asimilación ha sido la negación de la cultura vasca, y por otro, el castigo, persecución y, a veces, exterminio de quienes pretendían defenderla.

Uno de los efectos de esta opresión es la división interna de la población vasca, tanto de la gente nativa como de la no nativa. Entre todas ellas un amplio grupo ha optado por no identificarse con la cultura vasca y ha renunciado a ella y a su identidad, adoptando otras identidades: francesa (en el norte del País Vasco), española, (en el sur del País Vasco), europea . . . Otro grupo de personas ha adoptado más de una identidad al mismo tiempo: vasco-francesa

continuado . . .



... continuado

NEW ZEALAND • ELLIE PUTNAM

o vasco-española o viceversa. A ambos grupos esto les ha permitido subsistir sin padecer tanta represión directa sobre ellos. Otro grupo de ellas ha colaborado con las políticas opresivas, mayormente por intereses económicos (la clase poseedora principalmente, y una parte de la clase media).

A la vez, un sólido y amplio grupo de gente nativa vasca ha sido capaz de no perder nunca la perspectiva de serlo y de no renunciar a esta única identidad. No adoptar las identidades opresoras les ha acarreado graves problemas y hoy en día sigue siendo fuente de serias dificultades para dichas personas. Este grupo ha sido—y sigue siendo—una de las fuerzas principales para la Liberación Vasca y a su vez el principal objetivo de la represión. Ha encontrado fuertes y comprometidas alianzas en la gente vasca no nativa que, a su vez, también han sido diana directa de la opresión.

También es de destacar el inmenso trabajo y dedicación a favor de la liberación vasca que algunos colectivos sociales han desarrollado en el País Vasco, tales como el fuerte y tan eficaz movimiento organizado de las mujeres, o el movimiento antimilitarista, el ecologista, y el juvenil.

OPRESIÓN INTERNALIZADA

Además de la división interna, están presentes otros efectos de esta opresión como la violencia—que afecta a las relaciones entre las personas—y el alcoholismo. Cierta sensación de no ser personas correctas, o de ser las “ovejas negras”, puede rondar por las mentes de algunas de las personas vascas y nativas vascas que han decidido no rendirse ante el sistema opresivo.

Amplios sectores de la población de los estados opresores también pueden percibir así a la gente vasca nativa o no nativa.

GENTE ALIADA DE LA LIBERACION VASCA

Muchas personas a lo largo del planeta han mostrado y muestran su simpatía por la liberación vasca. En las últimas décadas un gran número de gente procedente del estado español y del estado francés, así como de otros países ha venido y se ha alojado en este territorio. Parte de estas personas han sabido respetar y amar esta tierra, su gente y su cultura. Se les ha dado y se les sigue dando la bienvenida a todas ellas a la vez que se les ofrece la oportunidad de ser vascas—si así lo decidieran—junto a la gente vasca nativa y no nativa.

GENTE VASCA Y GENTE NATIVA VASCA EN EL MUNDO

Finalmente existe un amplio y diverso grupo de gente nativa vasca y gente vasca no nativa, junto con sus descendientes, que tuvieron que dejar el País vasco y quienes llevaron consigo la cultura vasca allá a donde fueron. Hasta el día de hoy mantienen su identidad como nativa vasca o gente vasca. Las personas vascas y las personas nativas vascas que habitamos en el País Vasco nos sentimos orgullosas de ellas.

NUESTRA META

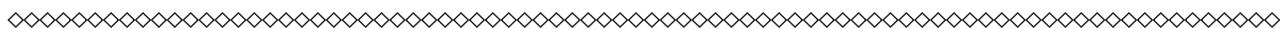
Es nuestro objetivo llegar a recuperarnos de todos los daños infringidos a nuestra gente y nuestra amada tierra y ayudarnos mutuamente a alcanzar la plena re-emergencia de todas las personas que habitan este hermoso planeta.

*Traducido del euskara por
Juan Gabriel Urriategi*

Housework as a Team Effort

I like your thinking about housework. I have always, until lately, done housework under oppressive conditions, but I enjoy thinking of it as a job to be managed efficiently and well, with everyone who uses the house being organized into a team to get things done. I have to do the finishing touches myself, because no one else does them well enough to please me, but in terms of the gross work, it seems to me that organizing teamwork, and doing it with a great rush of activity, is the best way so far.

Harvey Jackins
From a letter written in 1976



Traduction en français du projet politique en page 23:



Un Projet de Politique de Libération pour le Peuple Basque



LA RÉALITÉ DU PEUPLE BASQUE

Les Basques ont habité et habitent une région appelée le Pays Basque, situé entre la France et l'Espagne, au sud-ouest de l'Europe.

À l'origine, le Pays Basque couvrait un territoire plus vaste qu'à présent. Les invasions subies au cours de l'histoire, et plus récemment l'occupation et l'oppression par la France et l'Espagne, ont conduit à une réduction de son territoire.

Les Basques sont, et ont toujours été, des gens au cœur généreux, intègres, intelligents et solidaires. Ils possèdent un profond esprit communautaire, une forte connexion à la terre, une culture unique et riche, et une langue vieille de plusieurs dizaines de milliers d'années. À tout cela, s'ajoutent détermination, compassion et un sens aigu de la justice.

Les Basques ont apporté une contribution au monde de bien des façons intéressantes. Ils ont toujours cherché à vivre en harmonie et sur un pied d'égalité avec les autres êtres humains. Ils souhaitent vivre sur une planète juste, abondante, et pacifique et ont œuvré en ce sens depuis l'endroit de la planète où ils vivent.

LES HABITANTS ORIGINELS DU PAYS BASQUE

Les habitants originels se sont installés au Pays Basque il y a plus de trente mille ans. Avec leurs descendants, ils constituent le peuple originel de cette terre. Ils possédaient un ancien système de croyances qui met en lumière la profonde connexion ancestrale entre les gens, la terre, tous les êtres vivants, et l'univers. Aujourd'hui, on peut retrouver dans leur culture l'expression de leurs croyances. Ils ont essentiellement vécu de la terre et de ses ressources, tout en trouvant leur voie au sein du monde moderne. Ils continuent à travailler la terre, et à prendre soin d'elle et de ses créatures.

LES HABITANTS NON-ORIGINELS DU PAYS BASQUE

À travers l'histoire, nombre de gens originaires de l'extérieur du Pays Basque s'y sont installés et y ont travaillé côte à côte avec ses habitants originels. Certains d'entre eux en sont venus à complètement respecter et aimer la terre, son peuple et sa culture, et se considèrent eux-mêmes comme Basques. Les habitants originels leur souhaitent la bienvenue, sont fiers de la décision qu'ils ont prise d'être Basques, et les remercient du soutien important qu'ils apportent à l'existence et à la libération du peuple Basque.

Certains Basques sont issus de ces deux origines ancestrales. Les Basques originels les invitent à adopter simultanément les deux identités et à éprouver de la fierté à propos de ces deux identités.

L'OPPRESSION DU PAYS BASQUE

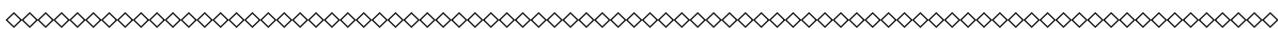
L'Espagne et la France occupent actuellement le Pays Basque. Ces deux pays considèrent qu'il fait partie de leur territoire national: la partie septentrionale pour la France, la partie méridionale pour l'Espagne. Ils imposent également leur culture au détriment de la nôtre.

Leur objectif principal est l'exploitation économique, accompagnée de l'annihilation de l'identité Basque et/ou la disparition du groupe ethnique Basque. D'un côté, la stratégie d'occupation et d'assimilation a consisté à nier la culture Basque; de l'autre, elle a mené à la répression, la persécution et parfois l'extermination de celles et ceux qui cherchaient à la défendre.

Un des effets de l'oppression est la division interne au sein du peuple Basque, habitants originels ou non. Beaucoup de Basques ont choisi de ne pas s'identifier à la culture Basque. Ils ont abandonné leur identité Basque au profit d'autres identités — une identité française au nord du Pays Basque, espagnole au sud, et une identité européenne. D'autres ont adopté une identité multiple — Basque-Français ou Basque-Espagnols — ce qui leur a permis de survivre sans subir de répression marquée. Certains d'entre

suite . . .

LIBERATION



... suite

eux (principalement appartenant à la classe possédante, mais aussi à la classe moyenne) ont collaboré, à cause de leurs intérêts économiques, aux mesures oppressives.

Il existe un groupe solide et important de Basques originels qui n'ont jamais perdu ou renié leur identité unique et continuent de faire face à de sérieux problèmes du fait de leur refus d'adopter les identités oppressives. Ils ont constitué une force majeure dans la libération des Basques, ainsi que la cible principale de la répression. Ils possèdent des alliés solides et engagés au sein de la population Basque non-originelle, et eux aussi ont été directement pris pour cible par l'oppression.

La lutte pour la libération des Basques au sein de collectifs sociaux au Pays Basque a déjà connu un long et difficile passé, tout comme les puissants mouvements féministes, anti-militaristes, environnementaux, et ceux en faveur des jeunes.

L'OPPRESSION INTERIORISÉE

Les divisions internes, la violence continuelle, et une tendance à l'abus d'alcool, affectent négativement les relations entre Basques. Il arrive qu'un sentiment d'être des fauteurs de trouble hante l'esprit de celles et ceux qui n'ont pas rendu les armes devant le système oppressif. De larges secteurs de la population des pays oppressifs peuvent percevoir les Basques originels et non-originels de cette manière.

DES ALLIÉS DANS LE MONDE ENTIER

Beaucoup de gens de par le monde ont fait preuve de sympathie envers la libération des Basques. Dans les dernières décennies, un grand nombre de gens venus d'Espagne, de France et d'autres pays se sont installés au Pays Basque. Certains d'entre eux ont appris à respecter et aimer la terre, son peuple et sa culture. Nous, le peuple Basque, leur souhaitons la bienvenue. Nous leur tendons la main et les invitons à être Basques à nos côtés, si tel est leur choix.

LES BASQUES DANS LE MONDE

Enfin, il existe un groupe important et diversifié de Basques originels ou non, y compris leurs descendants, qui ont été contraints de quitter leur pays et ont apporté la culture Basque dans les endroits où ils se sont installés. A ce jour, ils conservent leur identité de Basques originels, ou simplement de Basques. Nous, qui vivons au Pays Basque, sommes fiers d'eux.

NOTRE OBJECTIF

Notre objectif est de guérir de tous les dommages causés à notre peuple et à notre pays adoré, et de nous entraider pour parvenir à la réémergence complète de tous les habitants de cette belle planète.

Traduit de l'anglais par Régis Courtin



ARNSIDE, MORECAMBE BAY, ENGLAND • SANDRA CARTER

English translation of the draft policy on page 23:

A Draft Liberation Policy for the Basque People

THE REALITY OF THE BASQUE PEOPLE

The Basque people have inhabited and inhabit a region called Basque Country, between the countries of France and Spain in southwestern Europe.

Basque Country originally encompassed more territory than it does at present. Invasions throughout history, and more recently the occupation and oppression by France and Spain, have led to a reduction of its territory.

The Basque people are, and have always been, people of great heart, integrity, intelligence, and solidarity. They have a profound sense of community; a strong connection to the earth; a unique, rich culture; and a language that is tens of thousands of years old. All this is accompanied by a finely tuned sense of justice and determination.

The Basque people have contributed to the world in many interesting ways. They have sought to live in harmony and equality with other human beings. They desire to live on a just, plentiful, clean, and peaceful planet and have worked toward that goal from their place on the planet.

NATIVE BASQUE PEOPLE

The native inhabitants have occupied Basque Country for more than thirty thousand years. They, along with their descendants, are the original people of this land. They have possessed an ancient system of ancestral beliefs that highlight the deep, ancestral connection between people, the land, all living beings, and the universe. Expression of their beliefs can be found in their culture today. They have mostly lived off the land and its resources, while also finding their way into the modern world. They continue to work the land, to take care of it and its beings.

NON-NATIVE BASQUE PEOPLE

Throughout history many people with outside roots have settled in Basque Country and worked side by side with native Basque people. Some of them have come to fully respect and love the land and its people and culture, and consider themselves to be Basque. The Basque native people welcome them, are proud of their decision to be Basque, and are thankful for their important support of the Basque people's life and liberation.

Some Basque people combine both of the above ancestries. Basque native people invite them to adopt both identities and to feel proud of themselves in those identities.

THE OPPRESSION OF BASQUE COUNTRY

Spain and France now occupy Basque Country. They claim it as part of their own countries: France the northern part, and Spain the southern part. They see the Basque people as only Spanish or French. They also impose their culture over the Basque culture.

Their main objective is economic exploitation, accompanied by the annihilation of Basque identity and/or the disappearance of the Basque ethnic group. From one side, their strategy of occupation and assimilation has been the denial of Basque culture; on the other, it has been the punishment, persecution, and sometimes extermination of those seeking to defend it.

One of the effects of the oppression is the internal division among Basque people, both native Basques and those not native. Many Basque people have chosen not to identify with Basque culture. They have given up their Basque identity and adopted other identities—French in northern Basque Country, Spanish in southern Basque Country, and European. Others have adopted more than one identity—Basque-French or Basque-Spanish—which has allowed them to survive without suffering so much repression. Some of these people (mainly owning-class, some middle-class) have collaborated, because of their economic interests, with the oppressive policies.

A solid and broad group of Basque native people have never lost or denied their unique identity and continue to face severe problems for not taking on* the oppressive identities. They have been a major force for Basque liberation and the main target of repression. They have strong, committed allies among the Basque non-native people, who have also been directly targeted by the oppression.

There has been a long and hard fight for Basque liberation among social collectives in Basque country, an effort similar to the powerful women's, anti-militarist, environmental, and youth movements.

INTERNALIZED OPPRESSION

Internal divisions, ongoing violence, and a tendency to abuse alcohol, negatively affect Basque people's relationships. A sense of being troublemakers can haunt the minds of those who have not surrendered to the oppressive system. Broad sectors of the population in oppressor countries perceive the Basque people in this way.

continued . . .

LIBERATION

... continued

ALLIES WORLDWIDE

Many people worldwide have shown sympathy with Basque liberation. In recent decades a large number of people from the Spanish state, the French state, and other countries have come to and stayed in Basque Country. Some of them have learned to respect and love the land and its people and their culture. We Basque people welcome them. We extend our hand and welcome them to be Basque along with us, if they so choose.

BASQUE PEOPLE IN THE WORLD

Finally, there is a broad and diverse group of native and other Basque people, along with their descendants, who have had to leave their country and have brought the Basque culture to the places where they've gone. To this day they retain their identity as Basque native, or simply Basque. We who live in Basque Country feel proud of them.

OUR GOAL

It is our goal to recover from all the damage done to our people and our beloved country, and to help each other achieve full re-emergence, and re-emergence for all the people who inhabit this beautiful planet.

Translated from Basque by Xabi Odriozola

* Taking on means adopting.



INDIA • MAURA FALLON

People Can Recognize Erroneous Ideas

Not only do people have the ability to hear correct things when they are said in a correct manner, they also, as their Co-Counseling progresses, intuitively recognize and reject erroneous ideas.

Harvey Jackins

From *The Human Situation*, page 181

FIVE-YEAR SUBSCRIPTION TO *PRESENT TIME*

Rational Island Publishers is offering a five-year subscription to *Present Time*, at the request of many people who would like to not have to re-subscribe every one or two years. The cost is \$84 in the United States, outside of Washington State; \$91.50 in Washington State; and \$124 (U.S.) outside the United States. (A couple of dollars have been added to partially cover the anticipated increase in costs over the next five years.) To order a *Present Time* subscription, see page 111 of this issue.

A New International Liberation Reference Person for Elders

I'm so pleased to have the opportunity to be the International Liberation Reference Person for Elders. I'm looking forward to working toward our liberation as elders and to helping to build a strong and vibrant movement to reclaim our full, human power and end ageism.

A bit about me: I am a raised-rural-poor female. I grew up in a farming community in the Midwest USA, in and near a town with a population of about five hundred. I knew the first time I heard the RC introductory lecture in 1973 that Re-evaluation Counseling would be a lifetime commitment for me. I've been an Area Reference Person for many years. I also lead health and well-being support groups and workshops and am the editor of *Well-Being*, the RC journal for exchanging information and ideas about health.

I'm the mother of an adult son who was born and raised in RC. So far I'm not a grandparent, but for several years I've been spending "special time"* with a young person who is now eleven

* "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.

years old. She calls me "Pamma" (her variation of Grandma). That, and having been raised by my mom and two wonderful grandparents until World War II was over (my dad was in Europe during the war), I appreciate how wonderful and challenging it is to be a grandparent.

Health is one of the biggest issues facing elders. As a young adult I survived a life-threatening accident in which I was pronounced dead, and I've spent many years successfully working through the physical challenges from that. I bring a good perspective on how to work on distresses attached to our bodies.

I want to acknowledge and appreciate Dottie Curry, the previous International Liberation Reference Person for Elders. I had a good relationship with her. She was deeply committed to RC, to many Co-Counselors, and to her family and friends. She had a big picture of what life for elders could be and thought well about many people. Her work moved us all forward. We will always have our memories of her and what she brought to us. But from this time forward, we don't have her mind. It is important that we discharge the many forms of distress that attach to the loss of a loved one. Unless we do, we won't be able to use our own minds to move us forward. We can do that!

I want to hear from you, including any thinking you have about this project, especially if I don't know you yet. Please write and introduce yourself, and share any goals you have. I'm developing goals—some personal and some for our elders' constituency. One of my goals is to reach for allies.

I'm looking forward to connecting with you and building a strong team of people to love each other fiercely and work together on our elders' project.

With love and hugs,

Pam Geyer
Bellaire, Texas, USA



MARION OUPHOUET



KATHY TAYLOR

A Message to Fathers

Dear dads,

In the United States, today is Fathers' Day.¹ I take this opportunity to thank fathers, all over the world, for being fathers and for doing the important work of fathering.

Thank you for all that you do as fathers—for loving your children, for overcoming the men's oppression that tells you that you are not worthy of being close to children. Thank you for fighting to discharge so that you can be ever closer.

I back² you to be central, and I remind you that your children are yours, without any limits or reservations.

Also, you are precious, brilliant, and deserving of being cherished as a man, as a father, and as a human.

Thank you for parenting in the male way you parent—your young ones want you as a man.

For those of you who co-parent with women, thank you for where you back your partner as a mother.

I love you and back you as a dad. Happy Fathers' Day.

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

¹ Fathers' Day this year was on Sunday, June 17.

² Back means support.

Not a True Measure of Your Ability

I sharply disagree with you about your approval of psychiatric drugs—anti-depressants, and so on. I think you have chosen to sit on top of an early negative decision about your ability and power. You are also contributing to the powerful forces that use the anti-depressants to keep whole numbers of people agreeing with the message that they're too powerless to play a thoroughly human role.

For you to decide, on the basis of your feelings, that the feelings of one of your patients are so bad that he or she should be assisted to give in to them is not a true measure of your ability or your power or the initiative available to you.

Harvey Jackins
From a letter written in 1997

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

You can order back issues as regular literature items (see pages 104 and 110).

The next eleven pages contain reports on the Contemporary Women's Issues Workshop, led by Diane Balsler, the International Liberation Reference Person for Women, in Maryland, USA, June 21 to 24, 2012.

Women's Liberation Is Black Liberation

Of the hundred and sixty people at the workshop, twenty were men—six of them men targeted by racism. Of the hundred and forty women, fifty of us were women targeted by racism and thirty of that group were African heritage. There was safety for me in having so many women targeted by racism and in knowing the African-heritage women through the Black Liberation and Community Development (BLCD) Workshops. It was having a community within a community.

The men sat in the back of the room and did not participate with the women during the classes. It was a huge contradiction¹ not to feel like I had to be cautious around the African-heritage men and minimize myself because of how our men

struggle with showing up as “men,” with dignity and pride. A racist society sets them up² not to have access to the resources that make



it possible to be what society says is a man. In a racist society, a black man can never be fully a “man.” Therefore, we as black women get hammered with a type of male dominance and sexism that says that we have to accommodate and tolerate male dominance and sexism from our men in order to support them in being men in a racist society. Fighting for our liberation as black

women is minimized. If the men had not been at the workshop, I would not have been able to experience this huge contradiction.

The workshop, and BLCD, which followed in July, were strong reminders that women's liberation is black liberation. One cannot happen without the other. At the women's workshop I truly was at the center, as a black, large woman. I knew I had my black sisters there as a core support group. I could let go of some of the fear and cautionary behaviors and be more fully who I am—proud, brilliant, warm, loving, wanting and welcoming closeness, and reaching out to others. I left the workshop feeling like it was all of us in this together.

Sondra D. McCurry
Cleveland (Euclid), Ohio, USA

¹ Contradiction to distress

² Sets them up means predisposes them.

Being Brown Has “Saved” Me from Genocide

I am a raised-Native black-Native female. At the workshop I had a home with both my Native women and my African-heritage women. I made many fun and sweet connections.

Being in the Native women's support group was a dream come true. I figured something out about internalized genocide and male domination in my family. The fact that I am brown—that I have brown skin—has kept me from disappearing. Being brown has “saved” me from genocide. The other raised-Native females in my family either pass for white or play the game of being a part of white society, and disappear. There is a way that their disappearance sets them up for male domination. I, with my visible, beautiful, brown skin, have not been set up for male domination in the same way. I simply could not disappear. Wow!

Kerrie Johnston
Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada

* Sets them up for means predisposes them to.



— — — — — → **Latinas Stick Together** — — — — — →

It was great having Latinas stick together so closely. We learned something, crossed some threshold.

It has not been easy for us to feel connected as a group during workshops. There's nothing particularly "natural" about our being united. We have commonalities and we have differences, and we haven't always known how to manage them. For example, we feel strong cultural connections when we sing or dance, and then we don't feel included when we can't dance or can't sing (don't know) certain songs. Or we feel a strong connection when we're able to speak Spanish together, and then we don't feel good if

we don't speak it "well enough" or don't know it. Many of us Latinas who came to the workshop have known and loved one another for a long time. We've treated each other well, but sticking together as a group during workshops has been a challenge. What was different was that it became possible to be together and feel our connection as a group throughout. We did it! We *did* it!

I've heard Diane say that whatever mistakes the feminist movement has made with women targeted by racism, whatever it has failed to realize, we women targeted by racism must still make feminism ours, make the fight for women ours—because not joining this fight is to not recognize ourselves as fully female. Not joining serves the oppression. It allows sexism and male domination to portray feminism as a limited thing for a few women. Joining it as women targeted by racism means that the fight for women's rights; freedoms; and good, full lives truly is for females of all shapes, sizes, colors, and nationalities. These ideas were alive at this workshop—in the organizing, the running, and the leading of it all. And it worked marvelously.

Yara Alma Bonilla
San Juan, Puerto Rico



VICTORIA, BRITISH COLUMBIA, CANADA • BETH CRUISE

← ← ← **Starting Women's and Men's Support Groups** → → →

I learned how sexism cost me my relationship with my mother—I always ended up angry with her. I don't want sexism to cost me any relationship with a woman ever again.

It was the first mixed workshop in which I felt so safe.

I came with a question about my RC Community in Curacao (one of the ABC islands¹ in the Caribbean), and I got an answer. I will start a men's group as soon as we have four men. We will work in men's support groups and women's support groups.

Yesterday I led the first women's group. We started with introductions, saying our name and age out loud. After a mini-session I said a bit about women's oppression, as it is written in the RC women's policy statement. I translated it into Papiamentu.² After that we shared time, with twenty minutes for each of us. We all had big sessions. After each session we sang a song. It was a productive class.

Jasmine Maduro
Curacao

¹ Aruba, Bonaire, and Curacao

² Papiamentu is the most widely spoken language on the islands of Curacao, Aruba, and Bonaire. It is derived from African languages and Portuguese or Spanish, with some influences from Native American languages, English, and Dutch.

A Formidable Force

The sheer joy of being female with other females who were also joyous about being female gave us the platform to look at hard things.

The personal and the political merged seamlessly. It didn't matter if my exact story was being expressed in someone else's demonstration—it was clear that anything that had happened to one of my sisters had had an impact on me. A demonstration on the sex industries showed clearly how they impact not just those directly involved but all women and men.

The workshop was set up so that we could live and discharge from a place of broader awareness, outside the current thrust to experience our lives as a series of individual choices, faults, and blameworthy actions. I love that deep sense of solidarity. I love the power it gives me. We women are diverse—and we are one.

In my support group of women from the global majority from outside the United States, it was easier than usual to be clear that we are a gift to the United States, to white women, and to the world. Something

clicked in my mind about that as one woman, in particular, reached to turn all her feelings of inferiority and needing to “fit in” on their heads.

We had the best of RC. We could feel hard, hard things in the context of a glimpse of woman-power, woman-energy. We women are a formidable force.

Dorann van Heeswijk
London, England



NEW YORK CITY, NEW YORK, USA • BENJAMIN ALTMAN

Fully Alive as a Woman

Within the safety of my Jewish women's support group, I came to face the enormity of how I protect Jewish men and the extent to which that act of protection saps my energy and attention and distorts my focus. I began to place the blame firmly where it belongs—outside of me. From a platform of being fully female and fully alive, I could contradict feelings of disgust that are closely intertwined with feelings of deadness—clear outcomes of misogyny and genocide. The workshop was a celebration of being fully alive as a woman, alive and alert in both mind and body.

I brought the riches of the workshop back to the women in my Region.¹ Erin Mansell and I led a one-day workshop, “Younger and Older Women as Allies for Each Other.” I kept focused on Diane's exhortation that as older women we back² the leadership of younger women, but not out of a sense of defeat.

The song by Betsy Rose that says, “I'm a grey-haired woman and I'm coming into my years,” is a perfect example of how we women artists write anthems that rouse and sustain revolution. When we sing this song, the spirit of the words and Betsy's powerful older woman's voice fuel a fire under us, and we cheer each other on to rage against going small and feeling and acting inconsequential.

Leah Thorn
Folkestone, Kent, England

¹ A Region is a subdivision of the International RC Community, usually consisting of several Areas (local RC Communities).

² Back means support.

Fighting as a Collective Movement

The overall impact for me was that I had more room to be myself. I appreciated Tim's* reminder that we can show and be who we are, that there is no "normal."

Staying quiet and not being honest (for example, while "protecting" and "thinking about" the men in my life) are a direct result of sexism and

* Tim Jackins, who led one day of the workshop

anti-Jewish oppression. As a Jewish woman, I tend to stay quiet when I'm afraid I will give expression to the blame and criticism that fell hard on me. The "blame" feelings have also acted as a buffer to keep me from feeling deeper fears about closeness.

I think the work on sexual exploitation will allow us to work even more efficiently as clients and counselors. Diane

lifted the blame, helping us notice how we feel like it's a personal battle particular to each one of us. We were encouraged to fight our battles on a bigger, more unified front and as part of a collective movement—an alive, active women's movement—against all the ways we've been divided and shamed for our struggles.

Emily Feinstein
Brooklyn, New York, USA

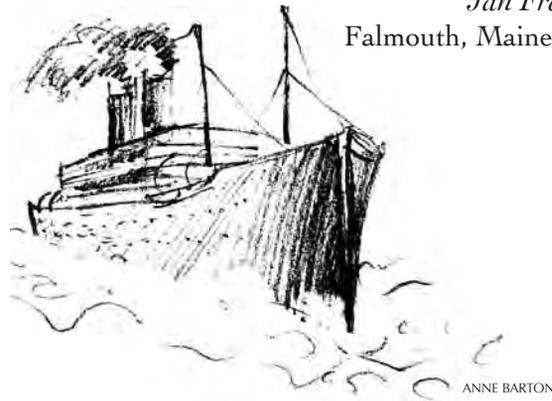
A Vision of a Better World

Male domination is destroying the planet on the backs of women! Diane reminded us of this, and that we have had a hard time prioritizing women's liberation in our various constituencies—women of the global majority, Jewish women, working-class women, Catholic women, and so on. We, and our issues, have come second.

Having a home base of white Catholic women committed to ending racism was a highlight. We celebrated the recent activism of Catholic women, nuns in particular, who are protesting male domination in the Catholic Church. We cherished each other for the bold stands we have taken to end racism.

Young women and women targeted by racism being at the front of the room, and all of us being led by Diane, an elder Jewish woman, was a vision of a better world—one where oppression is turned upside down on its head and rendered powerless.

Jan Froeblich
Falmouth, Maine, USA



Sexism and Gay Oppression Both Brutal

Discharging systematically on sexism is helping me access in fresh, new ways the impact that Gay oppression has had on me. For the first time in years I can work directly on how both sexism and Gay oppression have been brutal in my life.

Anonymous
USA

A Powerful Force To Take with Me

The image of all of us women singing loudly Helen Reddy's (who is Canadian) "I am woman hear me roar" is emblazoned in my mind. After much hard work, it was a celebration. We celebrated that our minds are intact, that whatever has happened to us, we were never "got." Our minds are ours.

After the workshop my anger has been more on the surface, and I can see sexism everywhere I turn. We women don't get to give up on this battle. At the workshop we were witnesses for each other—proof that the battle is not lost. We were strengthened by each and every woman's connection to the others. I brought, in my mind, all the women in my life there with me. I felt all the women who had come before me. I am willing to go it alone* if need be, and I have a powerful force to take with me as we go forward together.

Mary Klausen

New Westminster, British Columbia, Canada

* Go it alone means do it alone.

So Much To Build On

Diane created an environment in which we could work effectively as females. It was an immense contradiction.¹

I love that we have built so much over the years and that these workshops have a history. There is so much to build on from our work at the last Contemporary Women's Issues Workshop—what we did on the trivialization of women's issues; being the key person, as client or counselor, to make a difference; the "nation of women"; and telling the stories of how sexism and male domination play out² in our own groups—and this workshop: the work we did on sexual exploitation, "plateauing," being fully female in every fiber, and our own personal re-emergence having to be at the center and being revolutionary and key to continuing to move everything forward.

Jennie Evans

Medford, Massachusetts, USA

¹ Contradiction to distress

² Play out means are acted out.



Reclaiming Our Thinking Is Paramount



Not only did I have the privilege of organizing the workshop, but I was able to confront directly the enormous level of sexism and male domination that has existed in my life. For example, the mantra of "free love" in the sixties was actually another way of making me feel obligated to have sex, making me feel that as a "real" woman I needed to be accessible sexually—when I hadn't been able to think clearly about it and determine what I wanted.

Discharging on what set me up* to accept that worldview is important. However, it's clear that we also need to take a firm stand against the present-day exploitation of all women. Working as we did on the sex industries, prostitution,

* Set me up means predisposed me.

and pornography kept me from turning away from these realities.

I led a topic group on "How to put forward controversial topics and win people over to a rational position."



VICTORIA, BRITISH COLUMBIA, CANADA • BETH CRUISE

Twenty-five women came. After hearing each woman's turn, I talked about how we need a team of women with us as we think about, discharge on, and take action on controversial issues. I asked the women to work in three-ways on putting out their thinking—discharging if necessary but not stopping at the discharge. Then each woman reported on her thinking. It was amazing—all kinds of ideas emerged.

Sexism and male domination have robbed us of our ability to contemplate many topics. We "second guess" and hesitate. Reclaiming our thinking is paramount. Each woman was brilliant! Ideas flowed! Clearly the world needs us freed up, and thinking and acting.

Beth Edmonds

Freeport, Maine, USA

An Exhilarating Four Days

Here are some of my highlights from the workshop:

- The spirit of the women rose with the work that we did. For the first time in my life I could see what it was like to be in the world without being pulled by my internalized sexism.

- I was in a topic group in which we were asked to think as widely as possible about a particular question and show how we would take a controversial issue and win people over to our point of view. I was given attention as I framed my strategy and was surprised at how limited and narrow my expectations were. For me, the greatest damage of sexism and male domination has been not completely having my own mind and thinking, and not expecting that I could be a power in the world. It was great to be encouraged to use my mind, to see that I do come up with¹ ideas I didn't know I had, and to see how much I assume that things aren't possible and how ineffective I see myself to be (some of the greatest damage, I think, done to females by sexism).

¹ Come up with means think of.



- The workshop kept pace with people's evolving attention and ability to take on² more aspects of sexism and male domination. It made for an exhilarating and wonderfully hopeful four days.

- It was eye-opening to hear a panel of young women (whom I knew to be smart and articulate) express haltingly how difficult it was for them to speak to a group of a hundred and fifty women allies—a graphic picture of how hard it is for young women to speak up, and a fine picture of how brave these young women are.

- I liked how, after a talk, Diane asked volunteers to come up front and take two minutes working on the topic. Having the chance to see where the issue hit each one of them gave me a broad picture.

- I appreciated Diane's recapping of the feminist movement in and out of RC. Many of us in the room had been active in the 1970s. I could see what it had been like for me, forgive myself for the mistakes I made, and be proud of what I tried.

Betsy Najjar
Albuquerque, New Mexico, USA

² Take on means face and confront.

A Wide View of the Women's Movement

What a workshop! I was struck by the depth of love, thought, relationships, backing,¹ and organization that fueled it. It was a collective effort.

A highlight was Diane recognizing "old school" women's liberation songs that had been powerful in wide-world women's liberation. She also showed a documentary about Shirley Chisholm, an African-heritage female politician, the first female to run for president of the United States. She used the music and that film to give a wide view of the women's movement and how it coincided with the women's movement in RC. She asked women of the "second wave"² to talk about what they had led in that earlier time period. It was lovely getting a picture of the range of what we've done historically while at the same time being challenged by Diane on the places where we've settled.

Tokumbo Bodunde
Brooklyn, New York, USA

¹ Backing means supporting.

² Second-wave feminism, which in the United States was initially called the Women's Liberation Movement and lasted from the early 1960s to the late 1990s

Sexual Exploitation

Sexual exploitation is a key vehicle for sexism and male domination. We spent almost a whole day on it at the workshop.

I tied the work on sexual exploitation into the larger picture of the global sex industries. Women worked on a range of issues—pornography, rape, sexual abuse, sexual violence, prostitution, war, and sex crimes. Today's multi-billion-dollar-a-year sex industries manipulate sexual exploitation, which has always been part of male-dominated class societies.

The contemporary sex industry (integral to today's media and entertainment industries) is central to almost all of today's oppressions. Its

influence is felt every day and everywhere in the collapsing society. The sexual objectification and exploitation of women is on a bigger scale than ever before. Each man colludes with it in some way. (Hearing and working on that was a big challenge for the men at the workshop.) All men have been made agents of sexism and male domination. Men of oppressed groups often show and act it out more visibly. Men of the oppressor groups tend to keep it hidden, but they make the wars and the profits that are responsible for the sex industries.

U.S. imperialism, mostly although not entirely after World War II, created the conditions, started the wars, and built the sex industries that are now

spread throughout the world. Most pronounced in these industries are the racism and sexism that target Asian women.

Each of us women has our own individual distresses, but they are tied in with what happens to all women. Going back and freeing the "young girl" from these hurts is a useful approach but not sufficient. We need to take a tough, principled stand against sexual exploitation, in and out of RC, in order to heal from these hurts.

Diane Balsler
International Liberation
Reference Person for Women
Jamaica Plain, Massachusetts, USA

Devalued and Discarded as Women

I grew up feeling like I wasn't female (common for many Jewish women) and like I wasn't oppressed by sexism, partly because I wasn't seen or treated by men as a sex object. In fact, being ignored by men made me feel desperate to be seen and treated by men as a sex object in order to "prove" that I was female.

I was preoccupied with patterned thoughts about sex from early childhood on, until I discharged the preoccupation (by doing years of early-sexual-memory work) about fifteen years ago. Shortly after the workshop I had a big re-evaluation: I understood for the first time that I was sexually exploited by having my mind sexually exploited. I would not have been preoccupied with thoughts about sex and trying to prove I was female if I hadn't been sexually exploited in my mind. That's how I was a "sex object."

At one point at the workshop ten of us met in my room. About half of us were "mental health" liberation leaders and three of us were ex-psychiatric inmates. I discharged heavily about being on the women's ward when I was in a "mental hospital" and how all the women, including me, were on that ward due to sexism. Somehow that connected me more deeply to all the women at the workshop, and to all women. The words I came up with* in a session after the workshop

were that I, along with other ex-inmate women, had been devalued and discarded as women.

I had never before felt like I could think about this issue well enough to lead others on it. Now I do, and this will make a profound difference for the women "mental health" system survivors I lead.

Janet Foner
International Liberation
Reference Person for
"Mental Health" Liberation
New Cumberland, Pennsylvania, USA



GERMANY • LYNDALL KATZ

* Came up with means thought of.

Discharging on Sexual Violence

On Saturday morning at the workshop, I woke up thinking about a violent gang rape scene in a movie that I used to watch over and over and masturbate to in my teens. I've worked for the last several years on an early sexual memory that's been coming out of occlusion, but I never thought to discharge on that scene. I could tell¹ the conditions were right for me to do that at this workshop. I discharged terror I had never worked on before.

I also discharged on a pornography addiction. I occasionally watch online pornography—mostly when I have a lapse in what feels like a pressured life. Watching it also seems related to the pressures of male domination. I discharged terror when I slowed down and noticed the actual pornographic images. At some point I made the connection that I was trying to “work on” something that had actually happened to me.

As is true with any hurt, it seems useful to work on sexual violence and pornography in a variety of ways and with various perspectives. I could shake hard and cry in those particular sessions. However, it was equally useful to laugh out loud while wrestling. I discharged light fears while hearing so many women have big sessions during the physical counseling clinic. I remember Diane Shisk² saying that discharging on sexual violence is a lot of what physical-power counseling is about.

Anonymous
USA

¹ Tell means perceive.

² Diane Shisk is the Alternate International Reference Person.



SUE EDWARDS

Objectification, and Working on Racism

Diane described how women have been objectified historically in the sexist and racist images of females in Western fairytales and other literature. According to these myths, females need to be dominated, rescued, or captured by men; are destined to be controlled by men, serve them, and have their children. The images in these stories evolved into today's hyper-sexualized images.

Pornographic images are widespread on the Internet and in other media and reach a global audience. Pornography is marketed with sophisticated precision, and several industries work together to make huge profits. We women have internalized a standard of beauty established by this confluence of the porn industry and historical images, a standard additionally promoted by the beautification and fashion industries. Diane's demonstrations showed the huge effect this sexual exploitation and objectification have had on us from early in our lives. The workshop brought into stark relief how much we deal with in relative isolation.

REAL SISTERHOOD REQUIRES WORKING ON RACISM

Work on ending racism was key to the success of the workshop. We white women need to work on our racism if there is to be a real sisterhood in the battle to end sexism and male domination.

Women targeted by racism were invited to be physically up front and center in the class meetings. We white women struggled to not assume a position of domination. We were challenged to back* women targeted by racism to be fully visible and have each other. We were challenged to reach for connection and close peer relationships and to offer resource while fully expecting resource ourselves. We were challenged to face where we feel superior, are afraid, and don't show ourselves.

Sexism and racism together create a hierarchy in which white females are valued over females targeted by racism—for example, white women make more money and have greater access to jobs; blonde Gentile women's looks are promoted as the standard of beauty, and women who look this way are more sought after and visible in society.

* Back means support.



KK

WHITE JEWISH WOMEN AND RACISM

Racism for us white Jewish women is locked into a heavy residue of insecurity (fears of being persecuted, criticized, attacked, excluded, killed) as a result of our people's history of expulsion, pogroms, and the Holocaust; being considered a subhuman "race," devalued, isolated, and unwanted by society. Some of us have been forced into the role of visible agent of the ruling class and are easily resented and targeted as oppressors of working people and people targeted by racism. Anti-Jewish oppression throughout history and into the present has led us to feel responsible for the survival of our people and for the future of the human race.

We white Jewish women need to look at how we exclude other Jews and where we automatically assume control or feel that we are "right." We looked at the quasi-racism that operates among Ashkenazi Jews with regard to our appearance: some of us have features that resemble white Gentiles; others have features that resemble those of people targeted by racism.

RACISM AT THE WORKSHOP, AND RELATIONSHIPS WITH MEN TARGETED BY RACISM

On Friday morning the workshop focused on the racism that was showing in white women's relationships with women targeted by racism at the workshop—on where we white women get hooked, are confused, hold back, leave, feel superior, feel afraid, feel like we are smarter; where we are unaware of racism and our inherent connections.

On Saturday morning we worked on racism in our relationships with men targeted by racism, focusing on cleaning up the intersection of racism and sexism in our relationships with black men—how we go passive, liberal, invisible, and quiet in the face of the sexism of black men; how we settle, give up, and go away rather than fight for our relationships and for being our full selves with our full minds.

Jennifer Wexler
Hyde Park, Massachusetts, USA



KK

What Would the World Look Like without Male Domination?

At one point Diane mentioned that racism sometimes shows itself in the perception that white women are the "pure" ones while women targeted by racism are the "messes." That was useful to me.

I hadn't realized what a blanket of pretense sat on me, especially in regard to internalized sexism. I think of myself as strong and capable, and I put that persona out in the world. However, I certainly do have struggles as a female, struggles that I've been embarrassed to show fully. In my sessions since the workshop, I've been able to lay things out more honestly and candidly than before.

I got a sense of how strong the oppressive forces are that keep us not seeing and feeling male domination. Since the workshop my eyes have been more open. When I was listening to a radio show the other day, I was interested in the topic but after about twenty minutes of only male voices and male perspectives I was no longer interested. It was good to understand why. I've gotten a lot out of working with the direction, "What would the world look like without male domination in it?"

Andrea Blum
Austin, Texas, USA



KATHY TAYLOR

More Aware of Sexism and Male Domination

“Re-entry” after the workshop has been hard. I am more aware of sexism and male domination in every aspect of my life. I have been angry at so many things.

Diane was brilliant in showing how sexism runs* within each identity—different classes and sexism, Jews and sexism, mothers and sexism, grandmothers and sexism, to name a few. It is not a surprise that with a clearer picture of these things I would be upset! The key, I think, is to not get lost in that but, as Diane says, to take a tough and principled stand against sexual exploitation, male domination, and sexism.

There was a lot of celebration of being female along with the work of looking at what has happened to our minds as a result of sexism and male domination. Significant for me was the topic table on women growing up with a feminist mother.

Judy Tilsen
St. Paul, Minnesota, USA

* Runs means operates.

I Left with My Eyes Wide Open

I had always started my sessions on male domination with “My father was a good man, but . . .” I left the workshop with this phrase: “My father was so good at male domination he made male domination look good.” His acting out of male domination seemed so normal that my mother, sisters, and I swallowed it hook, line, and sinker.* I see this as “a fish doesn’t know it’s in water until it’s out.”

I left the workshop with my eyes wide open to how my father used my mother as the “middle-agent of oppression” (the discipliner, the overseer). My mother carried out my father’s wishes in how my sisters and I

acted, thought, and acted. This left me thinking that my mother could not think for herself. She became the enemy and my father the hero.

In trying to get the “American dream,” my father’s dream became the reality in our home. The male-domination price my mother paid was to give up her life and be of service to her husband and children. The price my father paid was to die at fifty-eight, exhausted but remembered as a good man. The cost to me is deep-seated anger and grief, which, unlike my parents, I get to discharge.

Josephine Grimes
Albany, New York, USA

* Swallowed it hook, line, and sinker means accepted it without any questioning.

Our Unique Women’s Liberation Movement

It was great to see how RC women’s liberation work has grown since Diane led the first of these workshops. Many of us have grown in our experience and expertise and can now share the work on the institutions and issues of sexism. What a great model Diane has given us of how to build a movement!

I teach Women’s Studies and lead women’s work in the wide

world. It’s clear to me that the women’s liberation movement in RC is thriving in a way that is different from what’s happening outside of RC. I’ll mention a few things that stand out:

First, we are tackling the intersection of sexism and other oppressions (racism, classism, anti-Jewish oppression, ageism, Gay oppression, and so on) far more effectively than is happening in the

wide world. This is (1) because we understand about both the target and oppressor ends of patterns and how to discharge them, (2) because of the rich liberation movements built by our International Liberation Reference Persons, and other leaders, working together on all of these liberation fronts, and (3) because Diane has created a unique space at the Contemporary Women’s Issues Workshops for us

to prioritize the work on sexism while still fully claiming our other identities. She has helped us take on¹ discharging on male domination without vilifying men from targeted groups, such as Jewish men or men of the global majority.

Second, we stand as one united women's movement that includes women of all ages working together. This is different from what has happened in the wide world. There the movement has not been strong enough to stand up to divisive forces. It has split, with women of different ages identifying with different cohorts or waves (for example, second- or third-wave feminism²) and struggling to work together toward common goals. It has made a difference that Diane has kept our focus on "no limits" rather than settling for partial gains.

Also, the young people's, young adult, and other age-based liberation work we do in RC has little parallel outside of RC. Because we respect young people and try to make room for them at the center, they tend to want to build this movement even as they become adults, rather than wanting to break away and identify with something new. This is a powerful model of what's possible in terms of the continuity and growth of liberation movements. I feel lucky to have been invited, as a very young woman, into the center of RC women's liberation work.

Third, we have prioritized discharging the underlying patterns of sexism and creating permanent change—for example, by discharging on the women's

commitment³ or with a direction like "fully female," or by doing physical-power work (where else is anything like that happening?!). The women's movement outside of RC has focused on reforming specific institutions and has been stymied when sexism reinvents itself with a new appearance time and time again. In RC we have been able to discharge underlying patterns. As a result, we are not as vulnerable to manipulation by oppression. This makes us a powerful force. Our flexible thinking is a tool beyond compare.

Being able to discharge and re-evaluate keeps us from getting stuck in rigid positions and allows us to tackle complexities that have not been well addressed outside of RC. An example is the issue of abortion. In the United States, most people align themselves with political camps that hold rigid positions: A "pro-life" camp says that women do not have the right to abortion (this has obvious problems, given the current circumstances for women). A "pro-choice" camp can't admit that the fetus is a human life (also problematic). Our positions in RC tend to reflect more flexible thinking.

Another example is our work on male domination. In the women's movement of the 1960s and '70s, RC played a key role in changing the prevailing attitude of "men are the enemy" to a focus on men as allies, with a recognition of men's oppression and the need for a men's liberation program. More recently Diane has helped us women look squarely at male domination while considering the fact that men, too, are hurt by male domination.

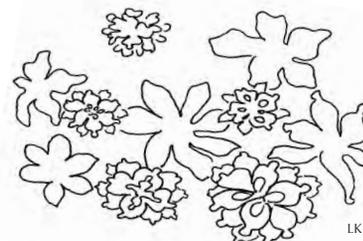
Fourth, and related to the previous point, we work side by side with an effective men's liberation movement. Diane has been clear about the importance of men working on sexism and male domination and has expected men to follow her lead on this. Tim Jackins has followed Diane's lead on issues of sexism, and has also used his own full mind to lead an effective men's liberation movement that not only supports the women's movement but also does its own body of work. What an amazing thing to have Diane Balser and Tim Jackins working together!

These are just a few of the things that make our RC women's movement unique. Good work is being done on various issues outside of RC, but the broader U.S. movement has lost momentum over the past decades. Many people have been sidetracked by issues of gender and sexuality to the extent that there's a fight to keep women at the center. Our RC movement is stronger than ever, thanks to all of our efforts and especially to Diane's brilliance, fierceness, and determination on behalf of women. As a woman in my thirties, I feel incredibly lucky to have grown up in RC and been trained to do women's liberation work in this thriving movement that focuses on liberation and "no limits," with a leader who will not settle for partial gains and has her eyes set on permanent, revolutionary change. We have such an important role to play in changing the world.

Thank you, Diane.

Ellie Brown

Wilmington, Delaware, USA



¹ Take on means undertake.

² In the United States, second-wave feminism, initially called the Women's Liberation Movement, began during the early 1960s and lasted through the late 1990s. Third-wave feminism is identified with several diverse strains of feminist activity and study and is often marked as beginning in the 1980s and continuing to the present.

³ The RC women's commitment: I solemnly (fiercely, cheerfully) promise that from this moment on, I will never again settle for anything less than absolutely *everything*. This means that _____.

Thinking About Transgender People

We in the RC Community have begun working on the distresses we need to in order to be able to think well about Transgender and Transexual people.

We have a long history of thinking about Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual people (and more recently Queer and other identified people). We have made progress. The places where we continue to struggle against our distresses connected with the oppression of these populations show up as we begin to try to think about Transgender and Transexual people

CONTACT AND DISCHARGE ARE KEY

Without meaningful contact with members of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer (LGBTQ) constituency, and a lot of discharge, we can be restimulated into bouncing between two attitudes toward LGBTQ people: (1) being “liberal,” or (2) “enforcing” our beliefs.

When we go liberal, we suspend our thinking and slip into only “supporting” people—enthusiastically endorsing their thinking and actions without our own thoughtful consideration of the issues. While the RC Communities have worked to face this, we have not yet widely achieved the level of discharge (especially on distresses connected to sex and gender) that will enable us to think flexibly about this constituency.

The other reaction is to thoughtlessly act as if we know what’s best for all people. This includes treating Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Queer, and Transgender people like they were a set of distresses instead of the human beings that they are. Like all of us, they are miracles of intelligence and survival. Any attitude of dismissiveness toward what they have figured out in the context of their lives runs counter to basic principles we hold dear in RC—for example, that people have always done the best they could.

Everyone, we RCers included, can fall into patterns of believing that (a) we know best; (b) people’s choices are wrong (we say distressed, but it interprets as wrong); and (c) we are going to make people be what we think they should be. We will push LGBTQ people on their chronic distresses rather than work on our own chronic distresses (such as the feelings that come up for us when we face LGBTQ people’s distresses). This is Gay oppression. Even if we think our perspective on someone is theoretically right, imposing it on them is acting out Gay oppression.

We need to resolve this with the wider LGBTQ constituency. It is essential that we make more progress here if we wish to be useful to people in the “newer” identities (particularly related to gender).

OPPRESSION, NOT BIOLOGY, THE LIMITATION

From a Co-Counseling standpoint, our perspective is that there are two sexes (with some people whose bodies have elements of both). We do not see male or female as descriptions of behaviors, limitations, requirements, or expectations in any way apart from procreation. We assume that with anything other than reproductive functions, what is humanly possible for one sex is available to the other as well. Inherently, all of us have easy and full access to the full range of human behaviors. Oppression and the resulting distress recordings, not biology, are what limit our behavior and abilities.

That is our RC perspective. It comes out of years of experience in using the discharge process with many, many people. However, having that perspective, we can easily flip into oppressive behavior if, as Co-Counselors, we feel obligated to force that (or any) perspective on other people.

START WITH RESPECT

All people carry big struggles from past hurtful experiences. We don’t want to relate to them based on their struggles. We want to relate to them based on their humanness. As we do this, we are learning about them, working on our own distresses, and increasing our ability to think about them.

When thinking about people with Transgender identities, the place to start is with respect—the same as when we approach and build a relationship with anyone else. All people have always done the very best they could do given all that has happened to them. Everyone deserves respect.

Being respectful includes calling Transgender and Transexual people whatever pronoun they choose to be called, treating them well, helping them discharge, liking and cherishing them. It does not include confronting them about their identity or situation. Treating people respectfully is not the same as being liberal or agreeing with distresses. We also get to trust what we see, or think we see.

This is complicated. Most of us are still confused about gender, sexuality, and identity. If people

perceive themselves in a particular way, we need to respect that and recognize them in that way. To do otherwise is both rude and oppressive. We can be respectful even though our perception of them may not match their presentation of themselves. We still have to base our thinking on what we ourselves observe but without imposing our observation or perspective on them. We cannot understand their perspective until we take the time to build a close relationship with them.

FEELINGS HAVE BECOME A GUIDE; THINKING IS BETTER

Since World War II, some people in well-resourced countries have had greater material prosperity than most people have ever known. Without a *constant* need to look after day-to-day survival, some people—for example, college students—have had more room to *show, share, and act on their feelings*. (Working people did not have much room to do this in earlier eras.) Many take their feelings seriously, and use them as a guide for their lives.

This change in circumstances has included more opportunity to explore sex and gender identities.¹ Men and women in these more affluent societies are no longer so defined by a specific set of skills. What it means to be a man or woman has opened up. And what is inherently possible for a male or female is close to limitless—we are all human.

Still, our societies and cultures perpetuate a limited picture of what it means to be male or female. These rigid pictures of the “possible” are based on oppression and distress. When people feel like they don’t fit the society’s rigid picture of being “male” or “female,” they can be pulled to pick the other label, especially if they have not felt like they are the gender that matches their biological traits.

OUR BODIES AS COMMODITIES

At the same time, societal changes and advances in technology have made it possible for people to actually match their bodies to their feelings. Capitalism creates commodities for every desire. You can buy the nose you want, the hair color you want, the gender appearance you want, and even the reproductive organs you want—or at least close facsimiles of them.

¹ Sex- and gender-based identities are a relatively new phenomenon. They have been both useful and confusing. Identity can be used to separate and isolate people. It can also be a temporary bulwark against oppression. All identities have at least one foot based in distress. In the long run, as we eliminate oppression, and discharge thoroughly, they won’t be necessary.



EVERGLADES, USA • MARTIN URBEL

COUNSELING TRANSGENDER AND TRANSEXUAL PEOPLE

The process of Co-Counseling is the process of individuals coming together to reclaim their intelligence. Each individual client deserves the room to discharge fully and reclaim their intelligence. We assume that each client is in the best position to think well about their life. We do not give advice or tell people what to do with their lives. Instead, we set up situations in which people can discharge the early hurts that impede their ability to think flexibly about their lives.

As we get to know people, we are better able to help them discharge where they feel most vulnerable, oppressed, and terrified.

When counseling Transgender and Transexual people, we start with respect and liking. Our earliest goal is simply discharge. We have to listen to them rather than “know” what they should do, or work on. We have to learn about them from their viewpoint. As we get to know them, and we are trusted, we can perhaps work with them on the specific issues that current Transgender RCers have identified as useful—for example, how they felt about having the body they were born with; who they felt like they were “really”; what life has been like, exactly as they see themselves and experience things. We cannot pretend that we “know” what is best for them. We cannot do this and expect them to stay in Co-Counseling.

As Transgender or Transexual people grow as Co-Counselors, and understand chronic distress more deeply, we can ask them, like we do with everyone else in RC, to hold everything up to the light of discharge—that is, every decision they have made, every feeling they have had, every idea they had about themselves and the world before coming into Co-Counseling. As part of doing this we may ask them to slow down in terms of their decisions about physical changes (if this is relevant). This can allow them to fully discharge and look at the feelings and

continued . . .

LIBERATION



NEW ZEALAND • LANCE CABLIK

... continued

experiences that have brought them to their current view of themselves and their lives. However, this can only be done if trust is established and it is clear that no oppression is running this approach.

When working with a constituency that has been so heavily targeted by oppression, it is critical to contradict the oppression, to listen to people in the constituency's stories of oppression, to assure them that it is not our goal to change them but rather to give them more room than they most likely have ever had to look at and discharge about a lifetime of vicious targeting, mistreatment, and oppression. We cannot expect people to "un-defend" themselves instantly upon entering Co-Counseling, when they have relied on the defenses for much of their lives to keep an oppressive society at bay. We need to find ways of letting them know that we are on their side, that we back² them fully, and that we want for them what we want for every human: the space to fully reclaim their intelligence and the ability to think about what they want for their lives. We also cannot expect them to work on things that challenge their picture of themselves without our sufficiently contradicting the oppression and the defensiveness.

NOT YET THE RESOURCE

Currently we have found that most Transgender folks don't have great experiences in RC. Conditions that have made a difference are (1) having a pre-existing strong wide-world relationship with a Co-Counseling leader; (2) being in a good RC class; (3) having several good Co-Counselors and allies. We are committed to building more resource in this area, but at this point, and especially without these factors in place, it has been our experience that Transgender and Transexual people have not had good experiences in Co-Counseling.

At this time we are not encouraging Co-Counseling Communities to recruit Transgender or Transexual

people. The level of complexity required to think about this group of people, *without being oppressive or liberal*, is not there yet. People still have a hard time thinking about Gay, Lesbian, and Bisexual folks without falling into "liberal" or oppressive attitudes.

We are *not* saying that we do not want Transgender and Transexual people in RC. We are saying that we need to slow the recruitment of people in this constituency down to a crawl, or slower, because we as a Community are not ready to think well about them yet. It has not worked well to simply recruit people from this constituency with little knowledge of their lives or experiences. We are encouraging people to develop their understanding of the history of Transgender and Transexual people, their oppression and distresses, and develop respect for GLBTQ folks, before we bring Transgender folks into RC. In practice, what this will likely mean is lots of people making a lot more friends with Transgender and Transexual people, without bringing them into RC, and building up their ability to think about and act knowledgeably about them through the creation of those friendships.

We already use our judgment in thinking about anyone else we want to bring into RC. In addition to evaluating whether or not the interested people can quickly become good Co-Counselors, we also take care to ensure that we have the attention to think about them.

SUMMARY

The key issue here is that we need to learn to think well in this complicated situation. We have to be respectful; *and* we have to maintain our own perspective; *and* we have to help people discharge their early distresses, but *not* from a know-it-all or self-righteous perspective. If people could have emerged from their distresses in this area through well-intentioned challenges to their identities, or a nice (even correct) piece of theory, or a "decisive intervention" or two, they most likely would have, because this is exactly what the oppression of this constituency subjects its members to. In RC we have to aim for something better than this—for the ability to think and care about people for who they are and what they have figured out in the context of their lives, without giving up on their ability to discharge every hurt they have experienced, including the hurts in the areas of gender, sexuality, and related identities.

"Jeanne D'Arc"
International Liberation Reference
Person for Lesbians and Gay Men
Seattle, Washington, USA

² Back means support.

A Child Relaxes About His Gender

Insisting that a child agree to a rigid set of assumptions about gender can be very confusing. There are so many odd expectations and rigid roles. Some of these are relatively benign, some are harsh and deeply hurtful. Parents feel compelled to “help” their child be “normal,” so that he or she won’t get targeted with the vicious treatment that comes the way of anyone seen as pushing the boundaries of gender.

There is a lot of theoretical debate about gender. I will say what I’ve learned from my child, as he and I try to sort this through. Most of what I know is from following his lead (I run to keep up*).

My son was adopted and had some early harsh experiences that left him feeling like he wanted to be a girl. We protected his preferences from foolish remarks and listened to him want to be a girl, with as little judgment as we could, just being pleased with his showing how things were for him. But while we left lots of room for him to like all kinds of activities, colors, and ways of being, we did decide that his feeling like something was wrong with him, just for being a boy, wasn’t his own fresh thinking.

He would find ways to bring up the feelings over and over again. We would tell him, “I’m so glad you are a boy,” “Boys are wonderful,” “Boys are just right,” which would lead to angry tears, lots of fighting, and denial: “No, I’m a girl!” We also tried “boy activities,” so that he could work on the fears or (sometimes) just enjoy the new activity. We didn’t want any piece of internalized male oppression to decide his life. Whatever decision he made about himself, being biologically a boy was not and could not be wrong.

I think that any feelings that lean us in the direction of not wanting to acknowledge and celebrate our biology have to be based in distress. We need to fight to end men’s oppression and women’s oppression, not alter our biological identities to suit oppression. Most of us try to avoid the oppression of being female or male with different “strategies,” but there is no way out of oppression except to end it. We can see that this is true with other oppressions: racism, anti-Jewish oppression, and so on. It can be a relief to try on a different identity in a Co-Counseling session. It’s understandable that we would want to avoid oppression (and sometimes would do what we have to do to survive), but we never have to collude with the oppression in our minds.

I do wonder what it will be like to grow up as a woman or a man without oppression. Until then we get to challenge the notions of what those two identities are—hopefully without ever losing our complete pride in whatever sex we were born as.

We get to ask, “How do we create the conditions that allow us to discharge toward reality?”

My son now thinks of himself as a boy and is one of the most relaxed people I know about it—despite the tough stuff that comes at boys, as they grow older, about being “man enough.” He still likes many “girl” activities, colors, and ways of being, but from the solid base of his boy-ness.

I look forward to lots more discharge on this.

Anonymous
USA

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



SAN JUAN ISLANDS, WASHINGTON, USA • ALISA LEMIRE BROOKS

* Keep up means get to where he is, not be left behind.

Large Women's Liberation

Diane Shisk¹ led a groundbreaking workshop in England for large women and allies. About fifty women came—from Hong Kong, Denmark, Holland, Sweden, Israel, Ireland, the United States, and England.

Diane explained the difference between the sexism related to their bodies that all women experience, and the oppression of women who are large. Women who are large are considered lazy, dirty, not human, not deserving of health care, because they “bring their problems on themselves” and are “weak people with no self-control.” Large women show their undischarged distresses for everyone to see, but no one should be blamed for his or her patterns. In RC we use our theory to assist people to re-emerge from their distresses, and we name the oppression for what it is.

¹ Diane Shisk is the Alternate International Reference Person for the RC Communities.

That women who were not targeted came to the workshop as allies was a contradiction and a big blow to the vicious internalised oppression between us women, as was Diane taking a stand on behalf of large women—not with a weight-loss programme but by naming our experience as an oppression. She helped us all put our minds to sharpening our skills as counsellors and clients so that we can assist large women to discharge chronic material² that to date hasn't been discharged.

² Material means distress.



NANCY LEMON

Louise Fox
London, England

This was not an easy report to write. Despite my over thirty years in RC I still feel ashamed about being a large woman and like I should already have sorted it out.

Diane's draft programme for large women and allies is thoughtful, proactive, and committed to our liberation. It is an act of love. I include it below.

Draft Program for Large Women and Allies by Diane Shisk

FOR LARGE WOMEN

Below are thoughts about how you as a large woman might take this work on⁴ for yourself over time. Discharge about them and think about whether they make sense for you and when they would make sense for you. This is not a rigid program to follow without discharge. As you discharge your way through these ideas, you will come up with⁵ a better program for yourself than the one I have proposed here.

- Appreciate yourself fully, just as you are. Know that you are fully female and a beautiful woman. You have a good body, a beautiful body. Accept no blame for the distresses that have made you large. Decide that you're not going to feel bad about yourself for being large or for not having already done some of the following things.

⁴ Take this work on means undertake this work.

⁵ Come up with means think of.

- Notice that many, many wonderful women (and men) struggle with being large, despite our putting our best attention to this struggle. It cannot be your personal problem; it must be the result of oppression. Stop blaming yourself. You've done well for yourself on this up until now, and now you have more resource.

- Decide that you're going to make your health and liberation as a large woman one of your top priorities for the next five years. (Seriously consider making it your top priority.) If it's not the top priority, be explicit about what you will let come before it, and why, and how you will continue to move on it even if one of your other priorities must come first for a while. Work on the ways that sexism (and other oppressions) interfere with you prioritizing yourself.

- Decide to do this work for you, not for anyone else. Decide to do it for your health. Discharge on how sexism has left you with longings and pressures

to look thin. Remember that you have this struggle because of oppression and that prioritizing your own body and health is an act of liberation.

- The focus of this work is using the discharge process to free yourself from all distress recordings, including those that keep you heavy. As important as getting your body back is getting your mind back—restoring your ability to be in charge, at all times, of your mind and where you put your attention.

- Fight for yourself; work in sessions against the effects of early hurts. Head toward resolving those hurts so that they no longer have any hold on you.

- Decide that you won't give up, that nothing can stop you in your pursuit of your goals. Discharge any feelings that tell you that you can't do this, that you don't want to, that it's not worth it. Don't settle for anything less than success. Discharge any feelings of discouragement, hopelessness, despair; they are all from the past and have nothing to do with your current efforts. Every step you take and discharge about will move you forward. This is a long-term project, as is all our work to free ourselves from chronic distress.

- Discharge your way to close connections with women and with men. Accept no limit to how close you can be. Reach for people and bring them close to you, and invite them to fight their way close to you. Form many close, permanent relationships in which you and the other person fight for each other.

- Don't postpone, until you lose weight, anything that you want to do. Live your life fully now.

- Get help. Ask for help. Find buddies and allies inside and outside of RC: large women, women who are not large, men. Let people see your full struggle, so that they have an accurate picture of it and can think accurately about you. Tell all your secrets about what you eat and any patterns connected to your health. Tell your allies about sex and closeness in your life. Have daily contact with at least one of your buddies, and tell him or her how you are doing with this project. Train everyone to listen to you without judging you or giving you advice. Train your sharpest counselors to give you non-permissive sessions on large women's issues.

- Change your life so that you have time for sessions on sexism, health, and fat oppression; exercise; food shopping and preparation; and eating with people and with attention to what you're eating.

- Make a plan for rational eating and exercise that you decide to stick to, then discharge what's hard. Make your plan known to your buddies and counselors. Get a group around you of people you can easily go to for sessions when sticking to the plan gets hard. Change it over time so that it's increasingly useful to you and based on what you learn from following it and discharging.

- Start a large women's support group for yourself. Lead other women on this topic.

FOR WOMEN ALLIES

- Read my article "Allies to Large Women."⁶

- Learn how large women's issues are important to you. Do this work for yourself, in addition to being an ally. Be pleased with yourself as an ally; don't look for reassurance from large women.

- Don't assume that you know how you could be of use to large women. Ask them, many times. Ask again. Listen. Listen. Listen.

- Don't give advice about food, exercise, health, and so on. Really, even if you are sure that your information is vital and will really help.

- Learn about sexism and fat oppression and the impact it has on different constituencies (on different races and classes; on Jewish people, LGBTQ⁷ people,

continued . . .

⁶ See *Present Time* No. 144, pages 27 to 29.

⁷ Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Queer, and Transgender



INDIA • DIANE SHISK

LIBERATION

... continued

rural people, young people). Ask large women to tell you about the oppression and how it affects their lives. Interrupt the oppression.

- Don't assume that you know what distresses or habits underlie a large woman's struggle with weight.

- Work on how you've been targeted by sexism and male domination with regard to your body size. Look at where you enjoy men's appreciation of your body size and what you do to gain that appreciation.

- Discharge feelings about other women's body sizes. Discharge any feelings that large women's bodies are anything but beautiful or that large women need to lose weight, any feelings of blaming large women.

- Consider never again exercising or restricting food intake in order to be thin. Discharge about focusing instead on your health. (Unhook food intake and exercise from internalized sexism.)

- Don't client with large women about⁸ your body or your struggles with food or exercise.

- Work on being an oppressor of large women, using all that we know about working on oppressor material.

- Commit to being an ally to a large woman and be clear about what that means to both of you. Ask her periodically how you are doing. Care openly and stay close. Welcome upset.

- Make sure that large women's liberation work happens in your Area⁹ and Region.¹⁰ Support large women who want to lead this work. Lead allies.

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

⁸ Client with large women about means unawarely use the attention of large women to talk about.

⁹ An Area is a local RC Community.

¹⁰ A Region is a subdivision of the International Re-evaluation Counseling Community, usually consisting of several Areas.

Human Beings Always Fascinating

As far as "finding corporate life dull and puzzling in the extreme," I remind you that you are working with human beings, and if one has the best attitude toward them, they are always fascinating, challenging, and satisfying.

Harvey Jackins

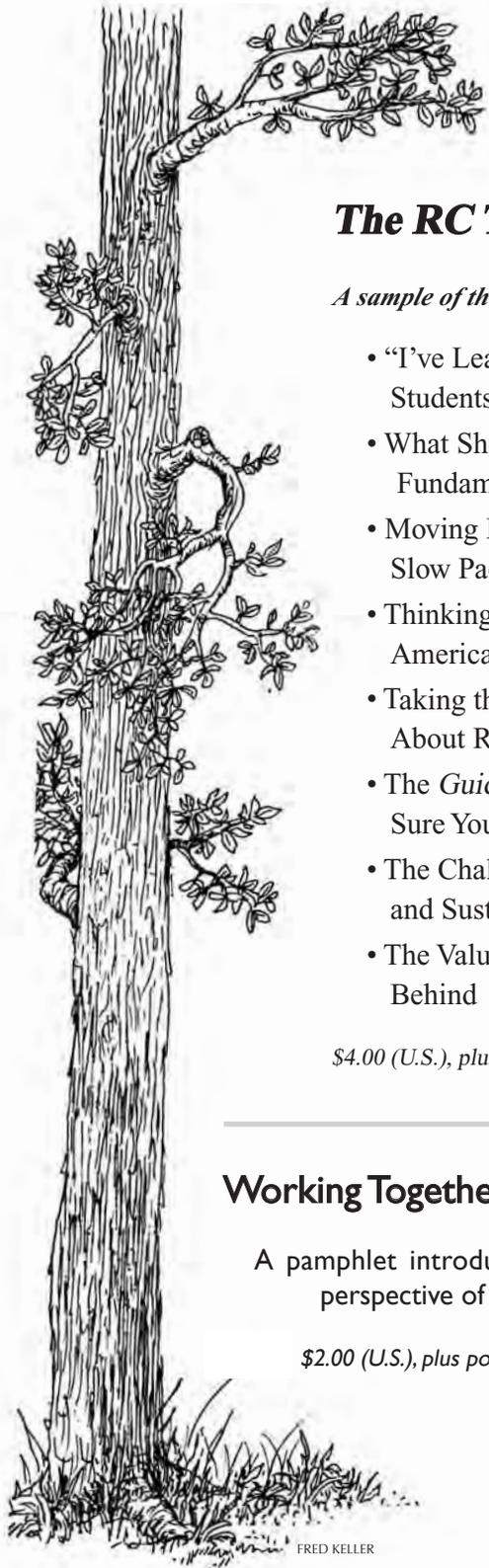
From a letter written in 1997

U.S. POSTAL SERVICE STATEMENT OF OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT, AND CIRCULATION (REQUIRED BY 39 U.S.C. 3685)

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A sample of the articles:

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A pamphlet introducing RC from the perspective of ending racism

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BOB ROMERO

Short Talks by Tim Jackins, on CD

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

For a complete list of all the CDs produced up until now, see page 106 of this *Present Time*.

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

The entire 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, and 2011 four-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, and mailed out quarterly, for \$25 a year. You can order up to three years at a time.

For ordering information, see page 110.

Don't Miss These Excellent Journals!

Sustaining All Life

The RC journal about the care
of the environment

"I have asked people what difference it made having that connection (with nature) in their lives, and they have told me it saved their lives. Nature doesn't judge us; it recharges us. Try this direction: 'The earth is alive and wants us.' This is a powerful contradiction to isolation."

—Wytske Visser (page 4)

"The first issue of *Sustaining All Life*, our journal about caring for the environment, is now available. Please consider getting a copy (or many). We have many things to do in this field and much discouragement and isolation to overcome. This journal will help us do that."

—Tim Jackins

A small sample of the articles:

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Me, Sparrows, and Saving the Planet (poem),
Micheline Mason

Questioning Patterns that Lead to Overuse,
Marcie Rendon

Discharging Entitlement Patterns, Susan Kammerzell
Making a Decision About Global Warming,
Madeleine Para

A Household Conservation Project, Glen Hauer
Some Angles on Discharging on the Environment,
Shashi Raman

On Class Societies, Racism, and Ending All Oppressions,
Wytske Visser

Sexism and Care of the Environment, Beth Cruise
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Mari Piggott

\$4.00 (U.S.), plus postage and handling



BOB ROMERO

Ruah Hadashah No. 11

This *Ruah Hadashah* is full of items to help Jews, and allies to Jews, meet the challenges of the next period. Each article can be used to guide us toward powerful counseling and powerful action. The articles are packed with new thoughts about how to discharge the hurts of anti-Jewish oppression that keep Jews from loving themselves, loving each other, and reaching out to every potential ally.

Discharging on anti-Jewish oppression goes hand in hand with the goal of eliminating white racism, another central theme of this *Ruah Hadashah*. Each topic relates to the others, reflecting a hopeful cohesiveness and strength.

Marya Axner, Editor
Somerville, Massachusetts, USA

\$4.00 (U.S.), plus postage and handling



For ordering information, see page 110.

A Lovely Teachers' and Leaders' Workshop in Ghana

I am excited to write about our lovely teachers' and leaders' workshop, held in July 2012, in Accra, Ghana, under the leadership of Bafana.¹

After introductions came a fundamentals class. As Bafana put it,² "When building a house, you start with a firm foundation."

On Saturday we began with twenty minutes of play, then discussed the benign reality,³ had a Co-Counseling session, and went to support groups. Many of us discharged about the demise of our Ghanaian president,⁴ as it was still fresh in our minds.

After the support groups we came together and discussed the no-socializing policy.⁵ Later we divided ourselves into women and men with these topics in mind: "What do you like about being a man or a woman?" "What don't you want to hear the opposite sex say?"

On Sunday Bafana read to us some of the *Guidelines*⁶ and spoke about the structure and leadership of the Re-evaluation Counseling Communities.

I wish to express my gratitude to Tim Jackins and Diane Shisk for their unwavering support, to Bafana for leading a successful workshop, and to

Chioma,⁷ who provided him with all the necessary assistance. The participants cannot be left out: their contributions helped to make it a huge success.

Urbain Bamana
Accra, Ghana



JULIE FORGIONE

All too soon the much-awaited teachers' and leaders' workshop in Ghana has come to an end. I can say with confidence that new members who participated will never regret taking time off from their busy schedules to join us.

My highlight was hearing that distress can only confuse us, persist, and cause us to forget that we are intelligent, loving, kind, smart, caring people.

The workshop would not have been complete without a culture performance that unified us as Africans.

Reginald Acquaye
Accra, Ghana

My first encounter with RC was in 2008, in Malmo, Sweden. However, my understanding and appreciation of RC were not meaningful until I participated in the Accra workshop. I now understand that RC is about being able to live life in the present moment, let go of the past, and make peace with oneself.

The two of us from Tamale (Ghana) who participated in the workshop have resolved to bring the ideas to interested individuals within and outside Tamale Metropolis. The ultimate aim of our effort is to establish an RC Community in Tamale in the coming months.

Gmabi Philip
Tamale Northern Region, Ghana



KK

Ghana's three-day workshop was indeed worthwhile. Topics ranged from the benign reality to relationships, money, and the need to study RC literature for an in-depth understanding of RC.

Bafana reminded us, over and over again, that we are all good, kind, caring, loving, intelligent, compassionate, zestful beings. He taught us that we can empower ourselves toward whatever we want to do by healing from hurts, and that we need to have sustainable RC Communities and leaders.

Chioma Okonkwo
Lagos, Nigeria

⁷ Chioma Okonkwo, the Area Reference Person for Lagos, Nigeria

¹ Bafana Matsebula, the Regional Reference Person for Southern Africa

² Put it means expressed it.

³ The benign reality means the objective good reality that exists outside of our distress patterns.

⁴ Ghana's President, John Atta Mills, died unexpectedly on July 24, 2012.

⁵ The RC no-socializing policy states that Co-Counselors should not set up any relationships, other than Co-Counseling, with other Co-Counselors or with people whom they first meet in a Co-Counseling context.

⁶ The *Guidelines for the Re-evaluation Counseling Communities*—the policies for the RC Communities

Deepening Connections with People with Disabilities

We held a one-day support group on July 29, in Kumamoto (Japan), entitled Deepening Connections with People with Disabilities. I had the pleasure of leading it.

There were eighteen of us in all, ten of whom were folks with disabilities. We started at 11:00 AM and ran until 3:30 PM with a ninety-minute break for lunch.

The morning was devoted mostly to a disabled-person panel of five. We found helpful the panel format and questions suggested on page 100 of *The List*. Afterward we paired off for Co-Counseling sessions, to work on material* that came up from doing the panel.

After lunch we divided into three support groups, each led by a disabled person.

To finish up, we were delighted to use Dave Ratzlow's article, "The Basics Are Powerful," from page 9 of the July 2012 *Present Time*. I found many of the ideas in it key to disabled people having liberating sessions. For example, we want "able-bodied" counselors to back off and respect our brilliance and resilience.

I was able to speak strongly and insist that our allies offer us counseling environments safe enough for lots of discharge. I spoke about the importance of counselors trusting our minds and refraining from imposing their own agendas for what "should" be happening during discharge. This is vital for building the necessary trust between disabled and "able-bodied" Co-Counselors.

I am continuing to take leadership to end all discrimination, racism, and oppression.

Hisabon
Yanagawa, Fukuoka, Kyushu, Japan
Translated from Japanese by Leah Matsui

* Material means distress.

Raised-Poor People at the Center

Most people in the world are raised poor, in growing numbers apparently. So if we are going to transform the world, we have to get really smart about raised-poor people.

One of the first things we all have to keep in mind is that poverty is completely unnecessary, and does not result from people being lazy or stupid. It comes from bad policies—policies created to get the wealth to the top and keep it there.

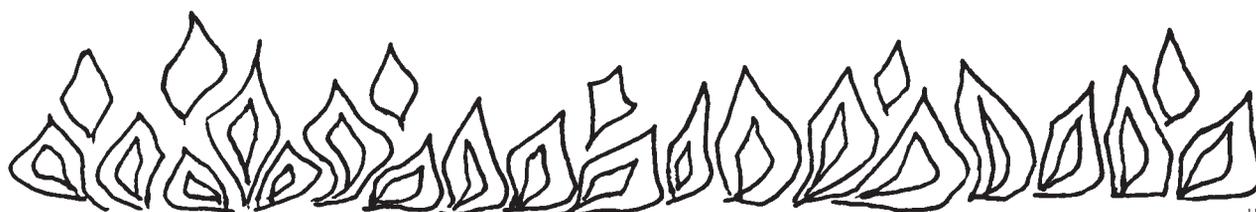
There are tons of confusions about poor people that get communicated not just to middle-class people but also to poor people. One of these is that poor people are not intelligent and are lazy and not capable of being leaders. We have to keep battling that confusion, because it will get acted out in our Communities if we're not careful.

Our society passes out the notion that intelligence is being able to speak clearly and have a great vocabulary and do math and all of that. In fact, there are all kinds of ways that great minds can act great, and one of them is generosity.

One of the great strengths of people raised poor is generosity. Generosity is higher in poor neighborhoods and goes down as people get wealthier. Generosity is a kind of intelligence—a way of being smart about others and ourselves, a way of thinking clearly that the world badly needs right now. Another strength of raised-poor people is that they tend to be able to connect and be alive in a particular way. Things will go better for our Communities if we learn to think well about raised-poor people and move them to the center of our Communities.

Gwen Brown
International Liberation Reference
Person for People Raised Poor
Wilmington, Delaware, USA

From a gather-in in San Jose, California, USA,
in September 2011, at which the International
Liberation Reference Persons talked about their work



LK



Everybody Wants To Be Close

*Harvey Jackins, at the Peace and Disarmament Activists' Workshop
in Boston, Massachusetts, USA, July 1986*



I've tried working with two people on their getting close to each other. It's awkward. I can't handle two sets of patterns. I can't keep in touch. But I've found that if someone works on getting close to me, at least I know what's going on¹ at my end of the thing, and I can be counseling that person.

So someone has gotten up front at a workshop and gotten very close to me. Discharge all over the place. Then I've noticed that when they've sat down, they've moved close to the person sitting next to them. Our conjecture that people are naturally close and only distress keeps them separate seems to be validated by the fact that if they discharge on their difficulties with me, they get close to other people.

So I've been doing this, and the point of it for you as leaders is that if you have at least one person whom you feel really close to, whom you feel is absolutely for you, then everything goes about twenty times easier. Does that make sense to you? And look how simple it is: If A— and I could keep working on this until her feeling of being held back was pretty well² gone, then all I'd have to do is ask her another question: "What else would get in the way of you being completely close to me?" She would immediately think of something. And the next time I asked she would think of something else, the third time something else, and so on. With a minimum of a good counseling attitude, people burst into discharge and move close. It works for everybody.

Here's this entire population of us walking around our entire lives lonely—you know, wishing to hell³ that there was somebody else on that road we walk alone. Just turn to the person and ask, "What's getting in the way of you being completely close to me?" and let them discharge.

There's closeness all over the place. It really is that simple. Just have all the closeness you want. Everybody around you wants to be close. Everybody around you has something in the way. Ask them, "What else would get in the way of you being completely close to me? First thought."

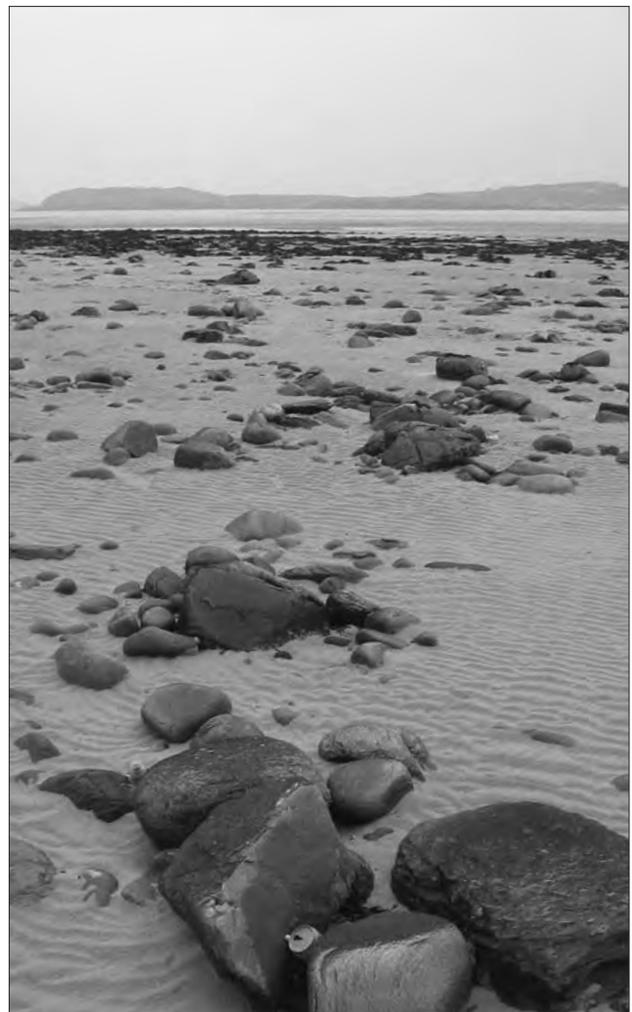
¹ Going on means happening.

² Pretty well means mostly.

³ To hell is an expression that adds emphasis.

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DIANE SHISK

Thoughts About Growth

I have been looking at why our Region¹ has not been growing very successfully in the last twenty years. I think not growing has been hard on each of us personally, and hard on us as an RC Community.

I also think that if we haven't successfully taught RC to a lot of new people, then we don't really know that RC is "true" (in other words, an accurate description of reality). We may believe it's true, but that is different. Without the direct knowledge gained from experience, we can end up having a "faith-based" relationship with the theory and practice. We can feel comfortable when we are around people who also believe in RC, but we don't have a solid confidence that RC works, or can be made to work, for all humans.

Growth is a sign of success, and lack of growth does mean some kind of failure. What have we done in the face of that failure? We've put all our energy into successful activities within the existing Community (and we've done some good things). We haven't looked very hard at why we haven't grown much, because it's too discouraging.

With the discouragement pushed down and out of sight, and not worked on, of course it hasn't moved. I think this hidden discouragement (which looks like pretence) can make it even harder for us to communicate RC accurately and without urgency.

So I figured out that it is important for us to grow—not just so we spread RC ideas, which is important, and not just as a Community, but so that each of us, as an individual, builds RC around himself or herself. Unless we do that, we aren't going to have Communities made up of² individuals who are confident in their understanding of RC. We won't do good RC within our Communities, and we won't spread RC outside of our existing Communities.

Why had we found growth so difficult? What was it we had been doing wrong—repeatedly? I started by looking at where I had succeeded and where I'd failed in involving new people.

¹ A Region is a subdivision of the International Re-evaluation Counseling Community, usually consisting of several Areas (local RC Communities).

² Made up of means consisting of.

I could see that where I had succeeded, I'd had an ongoing relationship with a person. He or she was part of my life in a big way. Where I had failed, I hadn't had that kind of relationship. Not only that, I'd had no idea how to get that kind of relationship.

WHAT WORKED

Part of what worked was having more than just organised RC contact with people. When people were my close friends or family, I had lots of contact with them outside of organised RC activities. During those "ordinary" times, we were open, aware, and deliberate about using RC ideas to guide the way that we interacted and our goals for our time together. Another way of saying this is that we "lived" RC.

Another part of what worked was that I added people to this group one at a time, so that each new person came into a group of us that was already using RC successfully in our personal interactions. The new people started learning RC in a way that was different from simply attending a fundamentals class once a week.

A further sign of the success of this (accidental) strategy was that the people I reached were successfully reaching out to people around them.

WHAT DIDN'T WORK

Why did it fail when I tried to reach people with RC with whom I didn't have a close, committed relationship—and didn't feel like I could have one? A lot of RCers struggle to talk about RC to people in their lives, largely because of "mental health" oppression, but I took pride in being able to talk about it to almost everyone I met. In fact, it was almost hard for me not to talk about it. Now I can see that I was talking about RC because I didn't know how to talk about much else. I didn't know how to make a relationship that didn't have RC in it. I had done a lot of work on getting close to people within the RC Community—through all kinds of liberation work in workshops, classes, and Co-Counseling sessions. Learning about closeness within an RC setting had been useful in many ways, and shown me what was possible for human beings, but to some extent it had also provided a substitute for building closeness in the rest of my life. When faced with someone I was not already close to, I would try in various ways to get him or her to do RC, because then we would have a ready-made formula

for how to be close with each other and I would not have to face my difficulties in getting close. I was also looking for a way to have friends with whom I could communicate and agree about difficult topics, like racism and classism.

Now I understand why I was so unsuccessful with these people! I needed to stop unawaresly pushing RC as the only route to being close and instead teach RC only on the basis of building a close relationship.

When I put this out to leaders in my Region, many said that it was a mistake that they had been

making, too. I think we all need to do a lot of work on forming close personal relationships.

One way I expressed this is “Growth of RC isn’t about bringing in people so much as bringing in growing, alive, fought-for relationships.”



Karl Lam
Regional Reference Person for Cambridge,
Herts, Beds, Bucks, and Norfolk, in England
Burwell, Cambridgeshire, England
Reprinted from the RC e-mail discussion
list for Regional Reference Persons

What Matters Is Not Losing People

*Kaixo*¹ to everybody on this list.² Big pleasure to be in contact with all of you. *Eskerrik asko*,³ Karl, for your thinking.⁴

I think we need to review the term “growth” and define it from our perspective, not from an oppressive capitalism one. I do not think growth must be linked with the number of people, with quantity—that has more to do with capitalism distresses. Recruiting (getting new people into RC) and growth are two different processes that need to be thought about separately.

I link growth with strength, solidness, honesty, and depth of connections. These qualities are a sign of success to me. Nowadays, I do not mind very much if in my Region⁵ we are not getting more new people for a long while. What is important to me is that we do not lose people.

Lack of growth does not necessarily mean to me some kind of failure. It used to some years ago, when I believed that we RCers were the ones “called” to save the world. I do not think now that this is our role. I feel much more powerful now—in every way that I touch any person outside of RC—than I did before. Nowadays I do not try as much as before to talk to people about RC. I think that influencing someone outside of RC with some of my logical, warm, close behavior is more important than any information about RC I could give to him or her.

Nowadays I choose very carefully whom I am going to invite into RC, and I make sure that the person will stay in. I get fewer people into RC in a year, but the ones who come in do remain. I think we sometimes forget how deeply and badly human beings have been hurt, and the huge effect of their having to build a picture of the world without being able to discharge.

So, every year that my Region does not lose anyone is a big triumph to me. It is a good signal of growth in the face of the continuous smashing by these societies. I feel that we are winning, and I tend to feel better about everything I do in RC, even if the numbers do not go up. When the numbers start to go down, I think I should worry then—but not before.

I think a good perspective could be taken in twenty years. I do not think there is a real hurry. I would like to wait for twenty years and then see what is going right and what is needing to be changed.

What do you think about these perspectives, dear RRP⁶s?



Love,
Xabi Odriozola
Regional Reference Person
for Basque Country
Donostia, Basque Country
Reprinted from the RC e-mail discussion
list for Regional Reference Persons

¹ Hello, in Basque

² The RC e-mail discussion list for Regional Reference Persons

³ Thank you, in Basque

⁴ See previous article.

⁵ A Region is a subdivision of the International Re-evaluation Counseling Community, usually consisting of several Areas (local RC Communities).

⁶ Regional Reference Persons



Embracing Upheaval in Greece



Up until a few years ago, it seemed that Greece rarely got much attention internationally. Obviously this has changed, and you have probably all heard a lot about our current situation. As one Co-Counselor recently wrote, "You are really in the front line of the collapse of capitalism, or at least in one of the waves of it." This is true!

Last weekend I led a workshop called "Well-Being and the Current Situation in Greece." It was the third attempt to have the workshop. In March only one person signed up for the workshop, then the rescheduled workshop was cancelled because of our country's second elections eleven days ago, but the third time never fails! Last weekend fifteen Co-Counselors joined together—ten from Athens and five from three unorganized areas. It was worth the wait.

Janet Foner¹ is often quoted as saying, "Mental health therapies are used to change people to fit into the society; RC helps people change society to fit the people." Julian Weissglass² recently wrote, "Our goal is to transform the institutions of the society so that society is good for all people, rather than require individuals to adjust to an oppressive society." I like to say that RC is "mental health" liberation, that you can't do RC without doing "mental health" liberation. It's also clear to me that you can't work on "mental health" liberation without working on wide world change. So you can't really do RC without working on wide world change. When I connect the three in my work, wonderful things happen.

The workshop was built around "staying present," finding balance, and building on hope. It was the most relaxed workshop I had ever led. Aside from the "mental health" liberation theory I used as the foundation of the workshop, Vivi Katou led a class on leadership, class oppression, and building community and Vasiliki Xanthi led a class on taking initiative and getting good support.

The workshop schedule was more relaxed than ever. This was to go against my own patterns related to time, as well as the general panic that fills the country at the moment. It was a step against the pace of capitalism and the daily struggles to handle the pressures. When I write that the schedule was relaxed, the stereotypes that are used to throw blame on the Greek people for the current situation may come to mind. Supposedly Greeks are lazy,

unorganized, and only interested in having a good time. The truth is that Greeks are hardworking people.

We used the spaces in the workshop schedule to be more aware of how we are interacting with other people in the "crisis." We went against feelings of powerlessness and the pull to dramatize.³ We practiced what I called "no-socializing"⁴ at the level of re-emergence," which is no small feat when almost every discussion in our daily lives seems to add to the panic around us. The pull to client is barely resistible. I'm proud of the way that each person took responsibility to go against this.

Listed below are some of the changes we have noticed in ourselves and in the society as a result of having less money and more insecurity concerning the future. Amazing changes are taking place. The country as a whole has been forced into embracing the idea of welcoming upheaval.

- Eating more rationally
- Walking more, using public transportation more, and therefore contributing less to pollution
- Reaching out to extended family more often
- Keeping better informed
- Having more sessions and better discharge
- Becoming more action-oriented
- Organizing seeming to happen spontaneously
- Regaining and building a sense of community
- Strangers talking to each other more readily and openly
- More recycling of clothes and other useful articles
- Thinking consistently of one's neighbors
- Sharing with those in need
- Soup kitchens organized in neighborhoods and by churches
- Stores trying to be more reasonable and reducing their prices (competition at its best)
- Landlords often discussing and deciding together with their tenants what a reasonable rent is
- Brainstorming on real issues
- Getting back to basics: realizing that we don't need a lot of the things we thought we did; living with less and enjoying it
- Seeing ourselves for the first time as activists
- Making better choices about how to spend money
- Organizing companies that throw away food at the end of the day to contribute it to organizations that feed needy people
- Refusing to adopt the victim role
- Daring to refuse to comply
- Thinking things through rather than acting on feelings
- Realizing that a lot of people care about us and/or the situation
- Breaking isolation
- Working collectively beyond the barriers of class
- Realizing our significance and our ability to affect the people around us
- While there remains a strong tendency

¹ Janet Foner is the International Liberation Reference Person for "Mental Health" Liberation.

² Julian Weissglass is the International Commonality Reference Person for Wide World Change.

³ Dramatize means act out feelings.

⁴ In this context, no-socializing means not acting like a client outside of one's turn as a client in a Co-Counseling session.

to dramatize, people who have made a decision to act seem to be more able to stay in present time.

Greek history is full of huge challenges. Now is no different. Fortunately or unfortunately, we are no longer “just” ancient history. Our thanks to all the Co-Counselors of the International RC Communities who

have reached out to us in solidarity. It has been one more positive aspect of the current situation.

Margie Doyle Papadopoulou
Athens, Greece

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



YUKO HIBINO

A South and West Asian Workshop

Here are some highlights from the recent South and West Asian Workshop, led by Azadeh Khalili¹ (Azi), in Warwick, New York, USA.

Azi said that we West and South Asian females are trained to apologize for everything, including our own existence. At the workshop I decided to never again apologize for my existence. It’s a good and important thing that I’m here—and that we’re all here, that we all exist.

Tara Abrol
Brooklyn, New York, USA

Highlights included the fun way we worked on not apologizing, and the table for mixed-heritage people led by Manijeh. She described how mixed-heritage folks often grow up with racism playing out² within the family. That rang true for me.

Claudia Marieb
Montpelier, Vermont, USA

¹ Azadeh Khalili is the Area Reference Person for the Brooklyn Gardens Area in New York City, New York, USA.

² Playing out means being acted out.

I especially liked Azi’s characterization of early defeats as “anchor” distresses. We worked simultaneously on the hurts from our own early lives and the hurts installed on our people from colonization and being targeted by racism. What a contradiction³ to be with this group and see what big, powerful lives we are living and how good we are at being connected. I came home with renewed hope and excitement.

Mary Toutonghi
Seattle, Washington, USA

I pursued Azi’s direction for us—to take a stance of power while still feeling the old hurt: “I’m going back and changing things.” I had been doing that in the previous few months, but at the workshop I was more able to quickly and easily access discharge. I could just look at the face of a South Asian Co-Counselor; see my mother, father, or brother; and cry hard about being close. I still remember touching Kayhan’s cheek, and remembering how much as a young person I unconditionally loved my mother.

Anu Yadav
Washington, D.C., USA

³ Contradiction to distress

I got to lead Shabbat⁴ at the workshop—a great opportunity for me. I’ve led Shabbat at other workshops but always with mostly white Jews, and it’s often been hard not to feel that I was leading it just because I was the only Jew targeted by racism. I’ve also found it hard not to hide my Indian heritage while leading as a Jew. It has felt like I have to be one or the other. As I thought about leading Shabbat at this workshop, it felt exciting. Not often do Arab, Iranian, Turkish, Assyrian, and Indian Jews get together, united first as South and West Asians. I really felt like I belonged with these Jews!

I talked about how anti-Jewish oppression has been a huge factor in dividing those of us who are from this part of Asia. To move our liberation forward as a group, it’s important that we work on anti-Jewish oppression. I had everyone do a short mini-session—allies on whatever they needed to work on to be better allies, and Jews on whatever was coming up. I asked the

continued . . .

⁴ Shabbat is the Jewish Sabbath. It has become a tradition at RC workshops for everyone to celebrate Shabbat on Friday evening, as a way to contradict anti-Jewish oppression.

TEACHING, LEADING, COMMUNITY BUILDING

... continued

Gentiles to say what they loved about Jews. Almost everyone wanted to say something. What a contradiction!

Malana Rogers Bursen
Hartford, Connecticut, USA

Playing Marco Polo⁵ in the swimming pool was a highlight. We played it using names like Ali Baba, Muhammad Ali, and so on. We made the game our own by using names of people we liked, identified with, felt connected to, or admired. This was one of many times when we made space for ourselves and each other as South and West Asians—shrieking with laughter, being pleased with ourselves and each other, and getting to notice that we belonged.

Ben Altman
Flushing, New York, USA

Being able to speak in my native tongue and feel that people were understanding me was empowering.

Azi told us that we get to lead the way in fighting racism. I realized that we could indeed take the lead, and that maybe that was the only way! Seeing growing numbers of Iranians and other people from West and South Asia makes me feel hopeful.

Persheng Vaziri
New York, New York, USA

Highlights included Azi's and Amisha's splendid leadership and support of each other, holding a women's liberation table, and that Pardis came with me from the Nordic countries.

Sujata Maini
Stockholm, Sweden

⁵ Marco Polo is a game, typically played in a swimming pool, in which one person, with eyes closed, calls out "Marco!" while a second person calls out "Polo!" The goal is for the first person to touch the second person without opening his or her eyes, simply by listening for "Polo."

Azi talked about how "defeat" is an idea oppressive societies use to keep us oppressed people under control and stop us from taking action. If we shift our thinking and understand that we are not defeated, we can use our brilliant and flexible minds to keep fighting. She encouraged us to not wait to take initiative. She challenged us to fail as many times as we could in the coming year. Fear of failure, and all the messages we have in our heads about failure, often prevent us from trying out great ideas.

I counseled for the first time with other South Asian men. I counseled on being Hindu. I went back to some old memories I'd never worked on as hard as I did at the workshop. I walked away hopeful, inspired, ready to fight, ready to fail, and with a sense of love and belonging to the folks at the workshop.

Nikhil Trivedi
Chicago, Illinois, USA

The evening in which we shared how we use RC in our wide-world-change work was not only inspiring but made me feel like we are having more of an impact collectively than any of us individually might have realized. Other highlights were the ten people of Iranian heritage, being with the Arabs and South Asians, and getting the mixed-heritage folks together.

Manijeh
New York, New York, USA

I wish we could have a workshop like this every week. By being close and loving with Iranians and Indians, I cried about early fears of getting close to other South Asians and Iranians. I got to see clearly the way that assimilation and racism affected me from early on. I recall the sensation of looking at potential friends as if they and I were standing on two sides of a deep, dark hole that we were never allowed to cross. Having my people as counselors

allowed me to go right to the source, because they already knew so much. I was able to see the root of some of my distress—how it stems from my people being driven from their land, being displaced, and begging to be let in.

Kayhan Noshir Irani
Queens, New York, USA

I loved the one-minute breaks during the talks, taken because English was not the main spoken language in the countries some of us came from. Also, because many of us were from a culture in which the faster you speak, the more important you seem, it made sense to slow down. I decided to teach my classes at home using the one-minute break, because I have many students for whom English is their second language.

Sharokin Betgevargiz
Savannah, Georgia, USA

Azi talked about the pattern of defeat being a construct of an oppressive society. As an organizer taking on⁶ racism and capitalism on a daily basis, this truth has the power to sustain me without limit. The idea that defeat serves to keep us small, powerless, and discouraged; which benefits colonialism, capitalism, and imperialism; and that I do not need to accept it is revolutionary.

I loved my time with the South Asians and that we get to do this work with Iranian, Arab, Assyrian, and Turkish peoples. It's a big deal that we have figured out how to be with each other, be with our own groups, and weave together connections that are deep and significant despite the differences among our communities. I am grateful to Azi for leading us so lovingly and setting an incredibly high yet somehow attainable vision for our total liberation.

Amisha Patel
Chicago, Illinois, USA

⁶ Taking on means confronting and doing something about.



The following four articles are taken from a discussion on the RC e-mail discussion list for International Liberation and Commonality Reference Persons.

Elders and Leadership

Dear International Liberation and Commonality Reference Persons,

As the new International Liberation Reference Person for Elders, I am thinking about elders and leadership and trying to collect information and ideas about where we are and where to go from here. So I have some questions for you. (A big thanks to Julian Weissglass¹ for working with me on these!) I know your time is limited, so just answer the questions that are relevant to you (you can be brief). I look forward to hearing from you.

* Do I cut back—or think or have feelings about cutting back—on my leadership activity as I age, especially on traveling long distances? How do I think about allocating my resources wisely?

* With so many things to discharge about (leadership, all the oppressions, fighting for myself, reclaiming power, and so on), how do I fit in discharging on feelings about my aging body, aches and pains, and so on?

* What will I have to discharge to make health and well-being a personal priority?

* What are the main distress recordings I need to challenge in order to continue to have a big (or have an even bigger) life? And how do I find the contradictions²?

* How do we get people in the RC Community discharging more on their ageism?

* How am I in better shape³ than I was when I was younger? (This may take a Co-Counseling session or two.)

* What are some of my goals for the future?

Thanks, and love,

Pam Geyer
Bellaire, Texas, USA

¹ Julian Weissglass is the International Commonality Reference Person for Wide World Change.

² Contradictions to the distress recordings

³ Shape means condition.



AM

Few Students Get Really Interested

My own experience has been that reaching a hundred people and teaching them fundamental RC, and keeping them in a supportive relationship in which I am doing most of the supporting for a long time, are necessary for ten of them to really get interested and support a determined effort to have RC spread as a Community in their neighborhood.

Harvey Jackins
From a letter written in 1997

Working Hard and Living a Full Life

Do I cut back—or think or have feelings about cutting back—on my leadership activity as I age, especially on traveling long distances? How do I think about allocating my resources wisely?

For me this has been an ongoing issue, in part because I find it physically exhausting to travel and then get back to work—often without much of a break, or any break at all. Unfortunately my current circumstance has not allowed me much flexibility in taking time off, due to being dependent upon my income. I have needed to work in order to pay bills and haven't had much wiggle room. I also think I have some pulls based on internalized perspectives about my role as the "provider" for and "protector" of my family. The idea of retirement has some temporary appeal, but my hope is to never stop doing what I love.

In the past I spent a large part of my life doing things that were well intended but not necessarily empowering. I have since learned to listen, to keep my mouth shut—even though inside I've wanted to yell or dramatize my frustrations, which of course has never worked much.

As far as cutting back goes, that often seems to assume a certain amount of privilege. I have had to stop and think, to notice, that not only is it "possible we are going to win" but it is inevitable. I have more confidence in humanity, and its ability to recover, no matter how bad things appear to be. I think it is actually in our DNA.



AUSTRALIA • DIANE SHISK

I am trying to think about how to make it¹ through a normal day that starts at 5:00 AM, at times take a nap during the day, and include at least two contacts over the phone and one in-person Co-Counseling session. I love to read, and getting up early gives me the space to do so. I also love to sculpt, as well as listen to people and have meaningful contact (work with others on a parallel goal or important task). When I don't make it through the day like this, I strive to not fall into the bottomless pit of self-reproach.

With so many things to discharge about (leadership, all the oppressions, fighting for myself, reclaiming power, and so on), how do I fit in discharging on feelings about my aging body, aches and pains, and so on?

I try to get as many sessions as possible. My regular Co-Counselor makes me take time² on my health daily. This has allowed me to actually try things physically. My most recent victory was a forty-five-mile bike ride in a two-hour period. It works best when I can get in a session every day. When that's not possible, I read the RC literature, like *The List*, and listen to Tim's talks.³ For a while I experimented with getting regular massages, and that seemed to help me work through aches and pains and have more flexibility with my body.

What will I have to discharge to make health and well-being a personal priority?

I have to keep prioritizing them, as I have type 2 diabetes. But once again, it is not always possible. I try to limit my portions of food, and get in a walk one to three times a day, for at least half an hour each time.

What are the main distress recordings I need to challenge in order to continue to have a big (or have an even bigger) life? And how do I find the contradictions⁴?

I think of my old habits of believing my internalized oppression (feelings of not being smart enough, feeling that I will survive only if I remain quiet, only seeing evidence of "treading water" or a lack of big victories).

¹ Make it means survive.

² In this context, take time means take time to discharge.

³ Rational Island Publishers has been producing a series of CDs of talks given by Tim Jackins at recent RC workshops. For more information, see page 105 of this *Present Time*.

⁴ Contradictions to the distress

How do we get people in the RC Community discharging more on their ageism?

I think that, in part due to my changed appearance, whomever I lead has to work on their ageism if they want to be able to hear me or work with me. I am actually better able to stay present during my interactions with folks, so they can't help but want a more direct relationship with me, no matter how they may have perceived me initially.

How am I in better shape⁵ than I was when I was younger? (This may take a Co-Counseling session or two.)

I am more confident and not worried as much. I have learned to be "chipper"⁶ in my tone and facial expression, laugh more often in regular conversation, and use irony or Chicano (Indigenous) humor in ways that help lighten up the conversation. I hold my head up more and say what I think, even when I know that

⁵ Shape means condition.

⁶ "Chipper" means spritely, cheerful.

no one will even remotely agree. Often, as a result of my courage, people respond to me in a positive manner.

What are some of my goals for the future?

(1) To live each day well, be pleased with myself in every moment, and not give myself a hard time at the end of the day for what I did not accomplish. (2) To not be inclined to punch anybody's lights out⁷ when I am referred to as "grandpa" or "old timer" or when I am ignored or unseen as a result of variations of ageism. (3) To seek out close connections with everyone I meet, and to communicate my caring in a flexible and thoughtful manner so that everyone I have contact with is inspired and has a lighter load.

*Lorenzo Garcia
International Liberation Reference
Person for Chicanos/as
Albuquerque, New Mexico, USA*

⁷ Punch anybody's lights out means hit anybody and knock him or her unconscious.

Experimenting as I'm Aging

These are great questions. I'll try and answer one of them for now—one that I've been putting some attention on this summer.

I travel lots, for both my International Liberation Reference Person job and my non-RC work, so I decided to experiment this summer with something different. For the past three weeks I have stayed off airplanes, gone into the office only two days a week, and been around the house all the other days. It hasn't been a vacation; I've been experimenting with a different way of doing my week.

On the days when I've been home, I've been doing some work but also doing long physical work-outs, seeing friends, and having many more Co-Counseling sessions. Result: I am sleeping deeply, which is not usual for me. So now I'm beginning to discharge and think about whether the intense non-stop travel, flights, and jet lag of the last three decades still make sense for me. Is that much travel harder on me because I'm aging? I honestly don't know. But I'm experimenting as I'm aging, and trying to think well about and take care of myself.

*Cherie Brown
International Liberation
Reference Person for Jews
Silver Spring, Maryland, USA*

Read, every day, something no one else is reading. Think, every day, something no one else is thinking. Do, every day, something no one else would be silly enough to do. It is bad for the mind to continually be part of unanimity.

Christopher Morley

A Working-Class Perspective

Do I cut back—or think or have feelings about cutting back—on my leadership activity as I age, especially on traveling long distances? How do I think about allocating my resources wisely?

Is it cutting back or is it being more rational and strategic? Not sure. Some of you know that in March I had a stent placed in the circumflex artery of my heart. I am known by my friends at work as the person who walks to work all year, and walks the same road in retirement; who “eats grass” (working-class language for eats healthily). Nonetheless, this heart condition happened. No doubt genetics played a role, as my mother’s side of the family all has arteriosclerosis, but I think that recent busy schedules, difficulty sleeping at workshops, jet lag, and exhaustion also contributed. So I am doing things differently and still have much to figure out.

With so many things to discharge about (leadership, all the oppressions, fighting for myself, reclaiming power, and so on), how do I fit in discharging on feelings about my aging body, aches and pains, and so on?

Not a problem, in that for years as a factory worker I had to have frequent sessions on these things—no way to ignore them. As a result I have healed from many injuries that I would not have believed I could.

What will I have to discharge to make health and well-being a personal priority?

One thing that has unearthed itself is early violence and the recordings that keep me hyper-vigilant, making sure that everything in my environment is going well before I pay any attention to my own needs. Also, internalized working-class oppression: “never good enough,” “never done enough,” feeling that I have to make up for a lack of intelligence by working harder.

What are the main distress recordings I need to challenge in order to continue to have a big (or have an even bigger) life? And how do I find the contradictions¹?

Remembering to keep working on it rather than focusing on all of the other challenges.

¹ Contradictions to the distress

How do we get people in the RC Community discharging more on their ageism?

Good question. But like a lot of things, I think we just have to do it. Take some time to put attention on it in Community classes, workshops, and so on. Experiment—try things and see what works.

How am I in better shape² than I was when I was younger? (This may take a Co-Counseling session or two.)

I am smarter in lots of ways and have learned a lot.

What are some of my goals for the future?

To have a long future, to become more confident in myself so that I am not working unnecessarily. I also have to get better at navigating the medical system. I have improved at this and am learning, but I still face great challenges due to my internalized classism. It’s hard not to give up on the hope of finding someone in the profession who will partner with me on my goal of good health. It was helpful to talk to someone at a recent workshop who had found a medical team, after fifteen years of struggle, and was making significant progress with health issues. It validated that it is a difficult challenge, but also possible.

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

² Shape means condition.



GRAND TETONS, WYOMING, USA • HOLLY JORGENSEN

Trusting My Thinking About Counseling on Birth

Hi Tim,¹

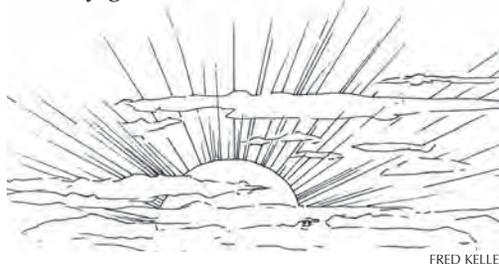
Some years ago, at one of your Area² Reference Persons' workshops, I began counseling on my birth as a way to discharge some of my chronic patterns related to trust and feeling that I am significant.

Mine was a perilous birth in which both Mom and I almost died. I've been discharging for a few years on the terror it left me with, and I've noticed that humans are looking a lot more lovable to me. Plus, I am more willing to take risks, have started to go after³ close relationships with my family, and have joined groups I'm interested in. I am putting forward my thinking in these groups and being more direct about my ideas and desires in my marriage and my RC Community. And I'm doing it with pretty⁴ good humor and (usually) a relaxed attitude. That's quite a shift for a woman raised Catholic and poor/working-class.

After a recent workshop at which I noticed that a lot of other Area Reference Persons were discharging on their births, I decided to try leading a one-day workshop called Recovering from Patterns of Isolation, for my Area of mixed middle- and working-class white people. Our Community's patterns of isolation make it a struggle for us to stay close and build a Community that

would feel safe for people targeted by racism.

It seems to me, from what I've learned from discharging on my birth, that working on really early memories, or telling the stories we were told about our births, is a great way to work on a lot of the patterns that make us feel unsafe, powerless, and therefore stuck and isolated. I can see sexism, classism, racism, and age oppression influencing the way that babies and new parents are treated in hospitals and after they go home.



FRED KELLER

Here's some of what I think I did well at the workshop:

1) I reminded people of what we know in RC about all human beings wanting connection, and being loving and lovable. I said that at this workshop, because we would be working on such early experiences, our complete innocence would be obvious.

2) We took lots of time for Co-Counseling sessions and mini-sessions, and I asked people to look at their counselor the whole time they were client, so that they could tell⁵ they were not alone.

3) For one session I asked people to tell the story of their birth, even if they didn't remember anything. I said that they could use what

they'd been told about their birth, or make something up⁶ from what they knew about hospitals or their family. The point was not to recall what actually happened; it was to discharge on the feelings about being born or being very young.

4) We shared what we knew about medical procedures during birthing. We have a couple of medical doctors, who are also mothers, in our Area, and it was good to hear their perspectives on how things in medicine have changed—and stayed the same, too. We saw clearly that class and race can have a huge impact on treatment and resources.

5) A thought I had was that working on our births could help us get a handle on⁷ oppressor material.⁸ One way that children are taught to accept their roles in an oppressive system is by having their early thinking (that something is wrong or frightening or unfair), often expressed with crying, dismissed by those in charge as unreliable or troublesome. If we are taught very early to mistrust or disregard our thinking about our own pain or distress, it becomes easier for us to unthinkingly accept other people's patterned thinking about other things, like what is equitable, right, or just. Fighting for our little bodies, and discharging on the drugs or other things that kept us passive, could be critical to working on oppressor material.

continued . . .

¹ Tim Jackins

² An Area is a local RC Community.

³ Go after means pursue.

⁴ Pretty means quite.

⁵ Tell means see, notice.

⁶ Make something up means invent something.

⁷ Get a handle on means deal effectively with.

⁸ Material means distress.

... continued

6) Finally, I counseled people by asking them to look at any chronic struggle they had in getting close to others, or what in other people they had the least attention for. I reminded them that those feelings might go back to how they were hurt early on.

I felt like I was taking a risk in sharing my thinking, but what I struggled with most was believing that the participants valued me and wanted to support me, and that I was doing something good in asking for their attention. Despite their

closing appreciations, I still felt alone and unsure. Those are the same feelings I have about my birth, so it seems logical that they would come up around my leading, especially on this topic. Clearly, leading keeps our nose to the grindstone⁹ in terms of discharging chronic material.

This is the first time I've been so public about my thinking in RC. Usually I just work from ideas in print or that I've heard at workshops. Birth

⁹ Keeps our nose to the grindstone means keeps us working hard.

experiences being tied to isolation patterns and people being set up¹⁰ from the start to be oppressors is probably ground already well trodden in RC. No matter. It felt fresh to me. And putting it in front of you is challenging old sexist and classist patterns about being good only when I'm invisible, and ageist patterns that say I can be "seen but not heard." A whole new me!

Suvan Geer
Santa Ana, California, USA

¹⁰ Set up means predisposed.



AFRICA • MAURA FALLON

A Revolution in Our Minds

There has to be a commitment to a revolution in our minds—not just working so that life doesn't feel so bad, not just helping people, but changing our lives entirely and daring other people to do the same. Once we get a group that can understand and remember that, then things take off.* It starts with one person getting the idea.

Tim Jackins
From *The RC Teacher* No. 30, page 111

* Take off means really start moving.

A Dynamic Group of Israeli Women

I just came back from leading, with Diane Shisk,¹ a women's workshop in Israel. It was a treat to be in Israel during Passover.² It was even more of a treat to be with close to seventy amazing Israeli Jewish women. What a dynamic group.

We had support groups on the beautification industry, sexism, sex, marriage, work, reproductive issues. We discussed contemporary sexism in Israel. We did a lot of work on sexual abuse, and I loved how open about it the Israeli women were.

I led a table for women who were either feminist activists, peace activists working on the Israeli/Palestinian conflict, or activists in the Israeli social justice protests. Many women showed up and were doing such interesting and important work on so many fronts.

¹ Diane Shisk is the Alternate International Reference Person for the RC Communities.

² Passover is an annual Jewish holiday celebrating the Hebrews' liberation from slavery in ancient Egypt.

On one evening women shared what they saw as key issues related to the sexism that Israeli women face, for example, sexism and the occupation of the Palestinians, sexism in the military and the schools, racism and sexism toward all groups of women targeted by racism, limitations on reproductive rights, lack of civil marriage.

I could discharge more easily than in most other places. I was able to work on my early Holocaust material,³ my father, and how the Holocaust affected my relationship to men. Thank you, Israeli women.



Diane Balser
International Liberation
Reference Person for Women
Jamaica Plain, Massachusetts, USA
Reprinted from the RC e-mail
discussion list for leaders of women

³ Material means distress.

Fears of Leadership and Organization

Dear Old Buddy,

You make out a long case for fears of our organization being taken over by elitism and leadership patterns like other organizations have been. Of course, it could happen—but only if you don't think, only if you allow your recordings¹ to take over.

That “the people” can come to agreement, make decisions, and carry them out² without decision-making processes or leaders is an ancient anarchist dream that has never worked out except on fairly trivial issues, in the simplest of organizations, and with small numbers of people.

What is necessary is a clear-cut awareness that a leader's decisions have to feed back to people and appear before their judgment periodically—as a check on the leader's patterns taking over because of the discouragement or apathy of the non-leaders.

However, there is no organizational solution that will prevent these dire events we fear so deeply. It takes simply thinking all the time in order to make sure they don't happen.

Harvey Jackins
From a letter written in 1976

¹ Distress recordings

² Carry them out means act on them.

Young Adults Take Charge

I started RC when I was twenty-one, and I am turning thirty next year. So far all my experiences as a Co-Counselor have been as a young adult. I started RC in Switzerland, then due to my studies moved to Germany, then England. I just recently moved to Sweden for my first job after graduation.

I was part of a successful RC young adult liberation movement in Germany and Switzerland, led by Juliane Cieslak and Vera Koppen, and backed¹ by a core group. From no young adults in these Communities and not much knowledge about young adult oppression, we transformed RC. One of the results: the 2009 Wide World Change Workshop for German-Speaking Europe, led by Julian Weissglass,² was organized by a young adult, and two thirds of the participants were young adults.

WHAT WORKED WELL

Here is some of what worked well:

- To do it our way. The committed core group of young adults around the two main leaders took leadership themselves. No leader was left alone. We did everything in a gang. We had a strong sense of doing it together.
- To trust our thinking, trust our thinking, trust our thinking
- To back the leaders to trust their thinking
- To take initiative to lead the older adults, to insist that work on young adult liberation be done. This included going up to International workshop leaders and requesting that they work on it with the whole workshop, going up to Regional³ and Area⁴ Reference Persons and insisting that this work be done in Community and Area classes.
- To have monthly young adult support groups, whenever there were enough of us
- To have annual national open young adult liberation workshops for all the young adults in Germany and Switzerland
- For young adult leaders to go to the young adult conferences in Europe and the United States and build

continued . . .

¹ Backed means supported.

² Julian Weissglass is the International Commonality Reference Person for Wide World Change.

³ A Region is a subdivision of the International RC Community, usually consisting of several Areas.

⁴ An Area is a local RC Community.

TEACHING, LEADING, COMMUNITY BUILDING

... continued

relationships and stay connected with young adult leaders from other countries

- To work in Co-Counseling sessions on the young adults' commitment⁵
- To not let each other give up on visions and hopes, to have high expectations of each other but *not* let each other fight in isolation
- To remind each other that young adult oppression is real. Most of the time personal struggles can be traced back to oppression. It is the oppressive system that does not work.
- To hold out the bigger picture for each other, to know how other oppressions interlink with young adult oppression
- To take ourselves seriously and put ourselves in the centre of the RC Communities
- To go to workshops other than young adult liberation workshops. To take charge and make those workshops go well for young adults. To be strategic and go together with other young adults. If there was no official young adult support group at a workshop, to organise one that took place at mealtimes or as a topic group. To initiate what was needed.
- If at (older-adult-dominated) workshops and classes there was not enough play or hanging-out⁶ time, to initiate it ourselves. To talk to the leaders about what would make the workshop or class go better for ourselves and other young adults.

CHALLENGES

These were some of our challenges:

- Competition and internalised young adult oppression. (It helped that the International Liberation Reference Person for Young Adults, Anna van Heeswijk, always held out that the idea that there isn't "enough" is a lie and a set-up; that competition is an inhuman activity; that each one of us gets to be as big as she possibly can be and have the life that she wants, while being backed by the whole group.)
- Remembering that older adults are not the enemy; modelling working early⁷ in sessions; remembering that current upsets with adults in the Community



⁵ The RC young adults' commitment: I joyfully promise, from this moment on, to never give up my dreams and goals. I choose to remember always that the whole world is mine, and I need never be alone in figuring it out and making it just right.

⁶ Hanging-out means relaxed, unstructured.

⁷ Working early means working on early distresses.

are restimulated early experiences, that the hurt is in the past. (Working early is not only more efficient for re-emergence, because we are discharging the roots of the distress, it is also less restimulating for our Co-Counselors to listen to.)

- Taking charge of relationships with older adults, training our adult Co-Counselors to be our allies, telling them what works and what doesn't. (Waiting for them to make it right is not the most efficient or successful strategy for our re-emergence.)
- Other oppressions. (All the young adult leaders did a great job of creating space for people of targeted groups to share their stories and be at the centre. Work was done on ending classism, racism, anti-Jewish oppression, Gay oppression, disabled people's oppression.)



INFORMATION FOR ALLIES

You who are allies need to have sessions in a systematic way about your young adult years. Often in RC we are encouraged to go back and work on very early hurts. Not so often do we do sessions on our teen years, and probably almost never on being a young adult (twenty-one to thirty years old). Do this work predominantly with other older adults. Before working on it with young adult counselors, check to see if they are prepared to listen.

In the best case, older adults have friends of all ages and can bring their young adult friends into RC. If only the young adults are bringing in their friends, the older adults in the Communities need to have worked on their young adult years in order to be able to create space for the new young adults.



YOUNG ADULTS AS ALLIES TO YOUNG PEOPLE

Because we young adults are so close in age to young people, it can be easy for young people to relate to us and use us as a resource. But *we* need to have sessions on how it was when *we* were their age.

For those of us not raised in RC, feelings may come up if we do family work,⁸ as we did not have that resource when we were young. These feelings are great for sessions! We can go back in sessions to the young persons that we were and be that resource.

⁸ Family work is the application of Re-evaluation Counseling to the particular situations of young people, and families with young children. It entails young people and adults (both parents and allies) interacting in ways that allow young people to show and be themselves, and not be dominated by the adults.

ENDING RACISM

Ending racism needs to be central to the young adult and young people's liberation movements. The last annual young adult workshop in Germany had more participants than ever but fewer people targeted by racism than ever in proportion to the size of the workshop. As the only young adult targeted by racism, that was restimulating and discouraging. I think it is worth slowing down growth and putting even more attention to targeted groups, if that makes our Communities more diverse. The more dominant another group is, the harder it is for members of targeted groups to make the Community their own and find their way into the centre. If white young adult Co-Counselors bring all their white young adult friends into RC, there will be in proportion even fewer people targeted by racism.

I had the privilege to attend the last young adult conference in the United States, led by Anna van Heeswijk. The balance between people targeted by racism and white people was even. The leader was a person targeted by racism. The whole atmosphere was different. I had more space to breathe. Because racism was in a way "taken care of," my mind had space to think about other things. I led a topic group on "artists and wide world change."

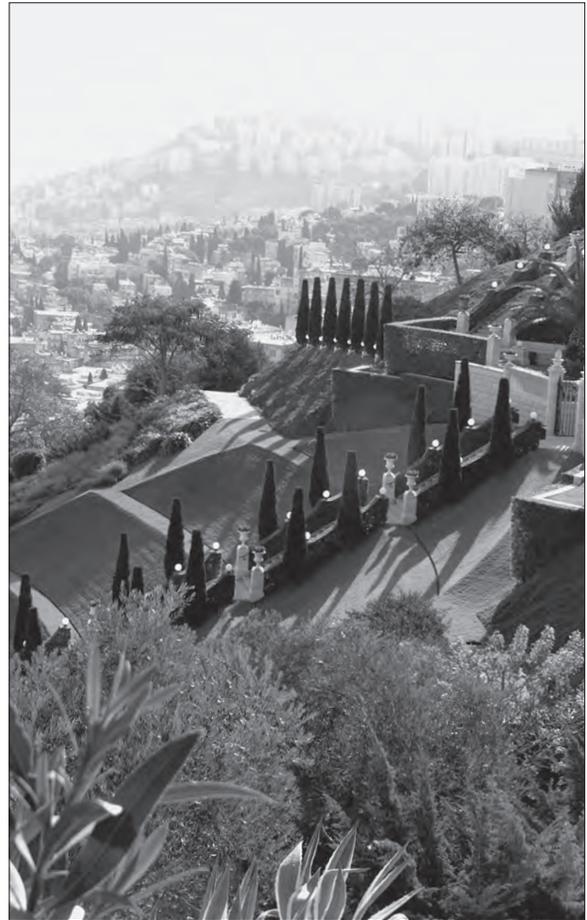
PEOPLE IN THEIR THIRTIES AND FORTIES

As a consequence of young people's oppression, there are not many young people in RC. There are more but still not many young adults. I recently started asking myself where all the people in their thirties and forties are. I think their lower numbers have to do with parents' oppression. I see a lot of parents of younger children struggling to stay central to their RC Communities. They are left so alone with the responsibility for their children that it is not easy to find space for themselves. That is parents' oppression.

OVER-THIRTY'S GROUP

Already our core young adult group has decided that we will keep going and have an "over-thirty's" group. I'm excited about the work that Ellie Brown (former International Liberation Reference Person for Young Adults), in collaboration with Diane Balser,⁹ has started for "women in their thirties." I know that "our gang" will take the initiative and lead there as well.

⁹ Diane Balser is the International Liberation Reference Person for Women.



ISRAEL • RANDI FREUNDLICH

I'm planning to stay visible and central to RC in my thirties and my forties and my fifties and my sixties and, and, and . . . I am not giving up my visions and dreams and big perspective. I am not giving up playfulness. As a non-parent, I am not giving up close relationships with young people. A direction in sessions is to be Area Reference Person for Katrineholm (Sweden) within the next ten years.

I would love to hear from others. Especially, I would love to hear from Co-Counselors in India and Israel, where there are strong young adult liberation movements.

Melanie Uhlmann
 Katrineholm, Sweden
 (and Switzerland, Germany, and England)
 Reprinted from the e-mail discussion
 list for RC Community members



Rethinking Community, and Interpreting and Translations

We Basque native people and Basque non-native people were born in a capitalist society. When we start out in RC, we carry with us our confusion about what a community can be like. The capitalist system puts forth a model of communities that is based on profit, competition, and hierarchy. This is different from my native point of view of a community based on cooperation and humanness.

After working on some distresses about the capitalist way of building a community, my mind is recovering more of a sense of what a natural, cooperative, loving community could be like. In essence, it is that “we” come first, and “I” come later. Here are a few examples: that every Community member’s re-emergence is every Community member’s job; that every Community member can—and, when ready, should—think about the Community as a whole; that there are no subjects that only “the ones who know” should think about; that when problems arise in our relationships, all of us should think about and help with them, not only the Reference Persons; that supporting the leaders and the Reference Persons, and knowing what their tasks are, should be natural and included in everyone’s daily thinking.

This re-thought way of seeing the Community is moving us toward each other in new ways and making us more committed to each other. One of the interesting results is that Community members are understanding that the RC project cannot be done in isolation or in “islands,” that it needs to be done all together, that it depends on how much we take responsibility for each other, and that taking care of everyone and of everything is for everyone’s benefit.

As we are a multilingual country, we have needed to think, from this new perspective, about the translators’ and interpreters’ big jobs. We are moving from the old way of thinking of it—that “only people who know well how to translate or how to interpret do this job”—toward the human, cooperative way: that translating and interpreting are necessary for people who cannot read or understand the language being used and that as they benefit from these resources, so do all of us, and it is therefore everyone’s job to help with this task.

We have created a job called “IBK,” which in English means Coordinator of Resources for Interpreters and Translators (CRIT). The person who does this job keeps an updated list of the resources that Community members are ready to give to the translators and interpreters. There are two main kinds of resources people can offer:

- Material resources: helping with the translations; giving advice about grammar, vocabulary, editing, and so on
- Human resources: giving one-way attention to the interpreters or translators—via Skype,¹ phone, or being with them—while they work on a translation or interpret at a workshop, in a support group or class, or at home.

The IBK (CRIT) person writes down a list of the resources that the members of the Community are ready to give and puts the translators and interpreters in contact with the people who are offering the kind of resource they need. After this contact, the Community members

give the resource to the translators and interpreters.

For this to be done well, we have needed to define accurately who the members of the Community are: After the first year of fundamental classes, the new students do a second year of “ongoing” classes, along with other Co-Counselors who want to learn more RC. We also involve the teachers, leaders, and assistants of the Area² in these classes. This gives the students a picture of what our Community is like, and the kinds of relationships we have among us, so that the Community is not a phantom or some strange people or structure that one hardly gets to see or meet except under certain conditions. After the first year of the “ongoing” classes, we ask the students to think and have sessions in the following few months about deciding whether or not to become members of our Community. They need to say to us,

“Yes, I want to be a member of this Community,”

“No, I only want to be a single RCer,” or

“I need to take more time to decide on this. I will let you know by”

This gives us a clearer idea of who and where we are as a Community and where we need to go next.

I believe there are a lot of other models. This is one that is functioning.



Thank you for reading,

Xabi Odriozola
Regional Reference Person
for Basque Country
Donostia, Basque Country

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

² An Area is a local RC Community.

An Inspiring Workshop with LGBTQ Jews

This past weekend “Jean D’Arc,” the International Liberation Reference Person for Lesbians and Gay Men, and I led a workshop in Boston (Massachusetts, USA) for seventy LGBTQ¹ Jews from Israel, England, Australia, Switzerland, Canada, and the United States. I was there as a Jew and a heterosexual ally. “Jean D’Arc” was there as a member of the LGBTQ constituency and a Gentile ally. I had never led a Jewish workshop in which folks were more determined or worked harder than this group.

I came to the workshop planning to share my observation that LGBTQ Jews struggle in leadership roles in a different way than other RC Jewish leaders. I had come up with² an image a few days before the workshop: that Jews (particularly Ashkenazi Jews³) who are LGBTQ often start out with the same “scared-active” behavior that I’ve begun counseling other Jewish folks on, but that then a wall seems to come crashing down in front of them, stopping them in their tracks. Some then go scared-passive, unable to do what they started out doing, often staying invisible. Others, often with defensiveness, try to fight through the wall but don’t get very far. I put this out to the group and then counseled two people. Little did I know that person after person would say, with a broken heart, “I thought that was just me. I’ve been so ashamed!” One person screamed out, “Why can’t I do the things I know I can do?” An outpouring of grief, recognition, heartbreak, relief, connection, and hope filled the room. Almost everyone said I was talking about the story of his or her life.

Then the next morning “Jean D’Arc” took what I said about the “wall” and filled out the picture with a tender, honest class on early sexual abuse—how LGBTQ folks often have a higher-than-the-general-population exposure to sexual abuse and how that is one explanation for the “wall.”

Almost half the workshop was under thirty-five. I did a lunch table for eighteen LGBTQ Jews in their twenties and spent an hour listening to them tell me what they were up against. I am seeing now a growing phenomenon in non-RC Jewish liberation organizing, particularly amongst LGBTQ Jews, of taking a strong anti-Zionist stand, including supporting Boycott, Divest, and Sanction policies against Israel. After listening to person after person tell me that he or she was struggling

with class issues and feelings about upward mobility, I had a thought: This is a group of young adults wanting to figure out how to build a new radical Jewish movement but feeling so ashamed of their white privilege, their Jewish families’ upward mobility, that in searching for a way to live a life of integrity, they have understandably grabbed on to the struggle of the Palestinians and made it their own. They haven’t gotten a clear picture of how anti-Jewish oppression operates, and the nuances in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, because in the majority of the new social-justice projects that many of them are involved in, little is done to communicate a progressive understanding of anti-Jewish oppression.

I worked that night with a young adult Jew on her and my needing to partner with each other to move our movement forward. She needed my knowledge of the Jewish movement and its history and how anti-Jewish oppression operates, and I needed her fresh perspective on what things look like now. We will need to build a new inter-generational partnership in order to take the next step in Jewish liberation.

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



KATHY TAYLOR

Impossible is not a fact. It’s an opinion. Impossible is not a declaration. It’s a dare. Impossible is potential. Impossible is temporary. Impossible is nothing.

John Maxwell

¹ Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer

² Come up with means thought of.

³ Ashkenazi Jews are Jews of Central and Eastern European descent, who generally identify as white.

**The 2013
Pre-World Conferences
and World Conference**

*Here are the dates for the Pre-World
and World Conferences, coming up in 2013:*

January 18 to 21
West Coast North America
Pre-World Conference

January 31 to February 3
South Asia Pre-World Conference

February 28 to March 3
Latin America Pre-World Conference

March 15 to 18
East Asia Pre-World Conference

March 21 to 24
Australia/New Zealand
Pre-World Conference

April 4 to 7
Central/Southern North America
Pre-World Conference

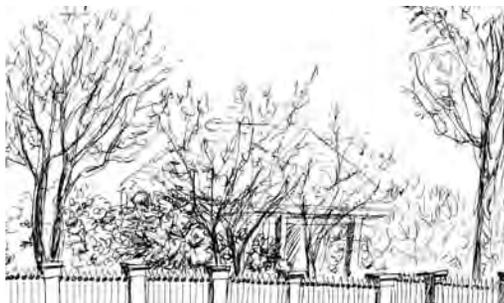
May 2 to 5
Africa Pre-World Conference

May 31 to June 3
Eastern/Central Europe and
Middle East Pre-World Conference

June 6 to 9
Northern/Western Europe
Pre-World Conference

June 20 to 23
East Coast North America/Caribbean
Pre-World Conference

August 7 to 11
World Conference

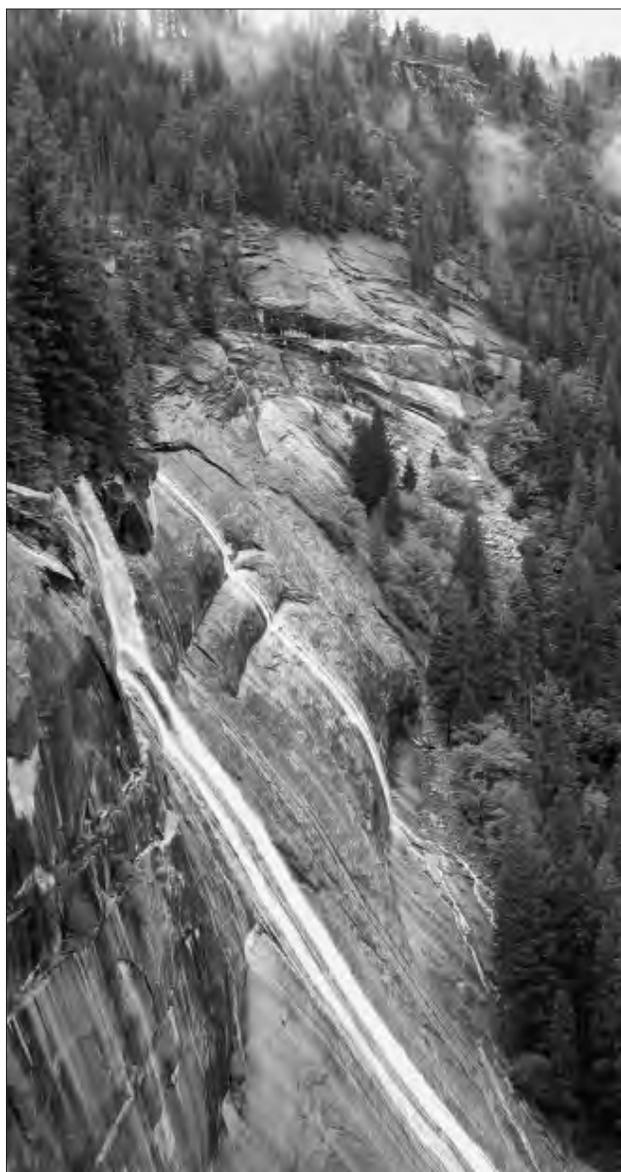


NANCY LEMON

Review Basic Theory

I would like to urge you to be pleased with telling the basic theory over again at every workshop you lead. My own experience is that people forget the basics very quickly, because it was so early in their lives when the beginning nonsense and invalidations were heaped on them from the adult society around them. When I remind them that each of them is completely intelligent and completely valuable, it comes as a shock and they feel that they are hearing it for the first time.

Harvey Jackins
From a letter written in 1998



LISA VOSS

Eine neue, liebevolle Beziehung zur Umwelt

Unsere Verbindung zur lebendigen Umwelt ist für jede einzelne/jeden einzelnen von uns wichtig. Und das Anliegen unserer Arbeit zur Erhaltung unserer Umwelt ist, dass wir das nicht mehr alleine tun, sondern gemeinsam.

Alte Schmerzerfahrungen in Bezug auf unsere Umwelt kommen dadurch zustande, das es für die menschliche Gemeinschaft lange Zeit um Überlebenskämpfe ging und Naturveränderungen und ereignisse oft menschliches Bemühen zunichte machten und den Verlust wichtiger, lieber Menschen mit sich brachten. In jedem Fall haben sie Angst und Unsicherheit erzeugt und tun es noch. Die menschliche Auseinandersetzung mit der Umwelt ist jedoch an einem Punkt angekommen, wo es nicht mehr in erster Linie um das Überleben geht. Wir können uns ihr mit liebevoller Aufmerksamkeit und gutem Nachdenken widmen. Durch den entstandenen Raum kommen alte Gefühle mehr und mehr an die Oberfläche und verstellen uns oft den Blick auf die neue, hoffnungsvolle Situation. Zum Teil bewirken alte Gefühle und der Mangel an klaren Ideen und Gedanken, dass Menschen zerstörerisch an der Umwelt handeln.

Gemeinsam an alten Gefühlen zu entlasten zeigt uns, wie wertvoll und wichtig wir Menschen für die Entwicklung der Erde sind und wie gut und verantwortungsvoll unsere Rolle ist. Entlastung öffnet uns den Weg zu einer neuen, liebevollen Beziehung zur Umwelt. Wir sind Teil der Erde. Die Umwelt zu verletzen verletzt uns selbst, weil sie den Organismus trifft, von dem wir Teil sind. Unser Anliegen ist, die Verbindung zur lebendigen Umwelt in Einklang zu bringen mit menschlichen Bedürfnissen und Denkweisen.

Verletzungen sollten so gehandhabt werden, dass sie wieder heilen können. Das erreichen wir, indem wir alte Schmerzerfahrungen entlasten. Die internationale Nc-Gemeinschaft hat das Entlasten an den Schmerzerfahrungen, die mit unserer Beziehung zur Umwelt zu tun haben, zu ihrem dritten, allgemein übergreifenden Ziel gemacht.*

Die Arbeit an diesem Thema in unserer örtlichen Gemeinschaft begann während einer Sommerklasse 2005 und meinen Fahrten zu den Workshops über die Erhaltung

* Ziel -3 der Nc-Gemeinschaften, angenommen vom Weltkongress der Nc-Gemeinschaften 2001 und von den darauffolgenden Weltkongressen bestätigt: Mitglieder der Nc-Gemeinschaften mögen der Entlastung von Schmerzerfahrungen, welche zur fortwährenden Degradierung der Umwelt und zu Entmutigung in Bezug auf ihre Wiederherstellung geführt haben, verstärkt Aufmerksamkeit widmen.

der Umwelt in den Niederlanden 2005 und 2007. Auf dem Workshop 2007 entschied ich, Leitung in diesem Bereich zu übernehmen und eine Unterstützungsgruppe aufzubauen. Ich habe meine Counselor dafür um Unterstützung gebeten und von 2007 bis 2011 haben wir uns regelmäßig getroffen. In diesen vier Jahren gab es zwei Themenabende in Berlin und Leute aus der Gruppe und aus der Gemeinschaft haben begonnen, auf Workshops Thementische und Nachdenken über Umwelt zu organisieren und zu leiten.

In der Gruppe haben wir vor allem zu unserer Verbindung zur Umwelt gearbeitet. Sie ist die Basis auf der wir gut über uns und die Umwelt nachdenken können. Das ist der Ausgangspunkt unserer Arbeit und auch ihr Ziel. Wir wollen unser Sein und Tun so gestalten, dass es für alles Leben auf diesem Planeten und darüber hinaus gut ist, mit uns in Kontakt zu sein.

Die Arbeit hat mein Leben sehr verändert, vor allem meine Verbindung zu allem Lebendigen, die Wahrnehmung von Menschen und mir selbst. So ist eine wichtige Basis für mein Leben insgesamt entstanden, von der aus ich selbstbewusster und verbunden mein Leben in die Hand nehme, meine Ziele klarer sehe und ihnen kontinuierlich folgen kann. Ende diesen Jahres wird es einen Workshop für die deutschsprachigen Gemeinschaften, geleitet von Wytske Visser, der Internationalen Gemeinschaftsreferenzperson für Care of the Environment, geben. Das ist ein Riesenerfolg!

Laura

Berlin, Deutschland

Nachdruck eines Beitrags zur Nc-Email-Diskussionsliste für Leiter/Leiterinnen der Arbeit zur Erhaltung der Umwelt



The most common way people give up their power is by thinking they don't have any.

Alice Walker

English translation of the preceding article:

A New, Loving Relationship with the Environment

Our connection to the environment is important for each of us. And the aim of our work in caring for the environment is to not be alone in it any longer but to do it together.

Old distress recordings related to the environment have their origins in the fact that for a long time human societies had to struggle to survive and environmental changes and major events often destroyed human endeavours and led to the loss of loved ones. This caused fear and insecurity, and still does today. However, human interaction with the environment has reached a point where survival is no longer the main issue. We can now turn to the environment with loving attention and good thinking. Because of this space opening up, old feelings may rise to the surface and block our view of what is a new, hopeful situation. Old feelings and a lack of clear ideas and thoughts are part of why humans act destructively toward the environment.

In discharging old feelings with each other, we come to see how valuable and important we humans are for the development of the earth, how good and responsible our role can be. Discharge opens up a path to a new, loving relationship with the environment. We are part of the earth. When we hurt the environment, we hurt ourselves. We want to harmonise our connection to the living environment with our human needs and ways of thinking.

Hurts should be handled in a way that enables them to heal. We can achieve this by discharging old distress recordings. The International RC Community has made discharging the distresses attached to our connection with the environment its third goal.*

In our local RC Community the work on this goal began during a summer class in 2005 and with my trips to the 2005 and 2007 Care-of-the-Environment Workshops in the Netherlands. At the 2007 workshop, I decided to lead in this area and to build a support group. I asked my Co-Counsellors to support me in this, and we met regularly between 2007 and 2011. In those four years we had two care-of-the-environment gather-ins in Berlin (Germany) and people in the support group and others in the Community began to organise and lead thinking-about-the-environment teams and topic tables at workshops.

We have worked in the support group mainly on our connection to the environment. It is the foundation from which we can think well both about ourselves and about the environment. It is the starting point for our work and also its goal. We want to shape our Being and our Doing in such a way that all life on the planet and beyond benefits from being in contact with us.

This work has changed my life substantially, especially in terms of my connection with all living beings and my awareness of other humans and myself. An important foundation for my life has emerged. From it I take charge more confidently and better connected. I can see my goals more clearly and pursue them continuously. Toward the end of this year, Wytse Visser, the International Commonality Reference Person for the Care of the Environment, will lead a workshop for the German-speaking Communities. This is a great success!



SPLIT, CROATIA • MOLNÁR GABRIELLA

Laura

Berlin, Germany

Translated by Matthias Wentzlaff-Eggebert

Reprinted from the RC e-mail discussion

list for leaders in the care of the environment

* Goal 3 of the Re-evaluation Counseling Communities, as adopted by the 2001 World Conference of the RC Communities and reaffirmed by subsequent World Conferences: That members of the Re-evaluation Counseling Community put increased attention on discharging the distresses that have led to the continued degradation of the environment of the world and to discouragement about taking the actions necessary for its restoration.

Appreciations Move Even the Toughest

I want to tell you this little story of the last day of school in my son's class.

After one of the teachers had talked about the class and the seven years they'd spent together, and he and his two colleagues had received a gift from the parents, I felt it was a bit shallow. I knew that the teachers had done a great job and were greatly appreciated by both the young people and the parents, so I asked the children to huddle together around their tables and come up with¹ one appreciation for each of their three teachers and the assistant, and had the parents do the same. I knew from experience that many people have an easier time talking in front of a group if they are saying something that has come from the group they are sitting with rather than just from themselves.

¹ Come up with means think of.

Each group of children got to say an appreciation for each teacher and the assistant, and they spontaneously divided the task so that almost every pupil said an appreciation. The first four had a hard time getting started, and I think some parents might have thought I was being hard on the children for letting them sweat awhile. But I knew that they would come around,² which they did. After that it was easier for the rest.

When the children were done, one of the fathers, who is a two-meter-tall member of the Hell's Angels (a criminal motorcycle gang), jokingly said that now the children should appreciate their parents. (The school had had great troubles a few years earlier relating to both him and his son, but the son was now back in the regular

² In this context, come around means become able to do it.

class and doing much better, both academically and emotionally.)

I laughed at the joke and then asked the parents to give their appreciations. The Hell's Angels member volunteered to start and said that he appreciated the teachers' ability to see and understand each child, that it had meant a lot to him and his family. As he talked, this huge, heavy, tough-looking guy with a bad reputation was on the brink of crying in public. His voice grew thicker and his eyes watered. I could see that everyone in the room was moved. Some of those trying to "hold things together" started to cry.

I was proud that I'd dared to step up and make the suggestion, and wait out the first appreciations, which apparently opened things up for the Hell's Angels member to speak his heart. It strengthened my hopes for the world to see that simple RC tools move even the toughest.

Fredrik Eklöf
Oxie, Sweden

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



Main Goal the Elimination of Class Oppression

(To someone who ran for office) The negative repercussions, I think, can be traced to not setting quite accurate goals. Working-class or revolutionary candidates should never have the principal goal of getting themselves elected, because that is something borrowed from the bourgeois thinking of the middle and owning classes.

You can have lots of goals subsidiary to your main one, but your main one has to be the elimination of class oppression, and any successful candidacies are only important in that they contribute to that. If your goal was correct, then every bit of gain you made was right on target and will pay off¹ in the future.

¹ Pay off means bring good results.

There are many examples of "successful" candidacies that are betrayals of the original expectations. To head off² these betrayals, and provide for the continued education of candidates and supporters, becomes a main job in this period.

I think you're in a good position to carry on³ well with correct goals.

Harvey Jackins
From a letter written in 1997

² Head off means intercept.

³ Carry on means continue forward.



WYOMING, USA • HOLLY JORGENSEN

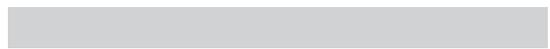
Society Will Fall Down

Society is going to fall down. Everything is probably going to fall down in our lifetimes. That wasn't so clear before. It's pretty* clear now. To guide that big change so that it isn't too destructive is going to take people who can think, like you.

Tim Jackins

From *The RC Teacher* No. 30, page 85

* Pretty means quite.



Please take a look at the lists in the back of this *Present Time* and let us know if you find any inaccuracies. You can send corrections to <publications@rc.org> or to Rational Island Publishers, 719 2nd Avenue North, Seattle, Washington 98109, USA.

Thanks very much!

Rational Island Publishers



More United and Hopeful

I am a union representative working as a reporter with Canadian Public Broadcasting. I want to share with you how RC has helped me present to my co-workers a hopeful perspective on the future.

We are currently being hit with harsh cutbacks and attacks by the government, which likes to portray us as lazy and inefficient civil servants. The reality is exactly the opposite; we work hard for a better society. It is the successive cutbacks that make it harder and harder for us to produce quality reporting.

Recently I took more leadership in the union, with a pretty¹ good understanding of the difficulties that come from my mostly middle-class background. I am getting better at gathering people around me.

From being a union that was dominated by people who carried a lot of discouragement and feelings of isolation, we are becoming more and more united and hopeful. We are offering a hopeful perspective on how work relations should be, and people are starting to believe we can change things.

We are in the middle of a huge fight. It is not easy. I am particularly proud of having brought together reporters and technicians (camera people, editors) in order to counter plans by management to cut editors' positions. Over the last six months I took time to talk and listen to editors. I am pretty sure that they trust me, because I have gotten close to them. We are now working together and are being creative in proposing to management how we can change things so that we can produce reports of better quality.

My doing this has a lot to do with inspiring thinking from Julian Weissglass² and Joanie Parker.³ The text they write, the workshops they lead, are important to me. Joanie likes to have participants at union activists' workshops share success stories from their unions. This has given me the courage to continue.

We are wonderful! And together! Worldwide change is happening!

Anonymous
Canada

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

¹ Pretty means quite.

² Julian Weissglass is the International Commonality Reference Person for Wide World Change.

³ Joanie Parker is the International Liberation Reference Person for Trade Union Activists.

RC Central to Stopping Climate Change

Over the last several years I've made climate change the focus of the small non-profit¹ I head, in my ongoing effort to build a new model for social change based on the theory and tools of RC. So far, so good.

Last August I organized a naturalized RC weekend workshop for thirteen of the leaders in the climate-change movement here in Tucson, Arizona, USA. I knew from seven years of leading such workshops for returning U.S. military veterans that people will make use of as much RC as I can get over my own embarrassment and other distresses to present. Not surprisingly the participants in that first climate-change workshop loved it, and the ten of us who were from the immediate Tucson area have been meeting as a monthly support group ever since. Two of these people (and four others) are now taking a bi-weekly naturalized RC class in order to become leaders in the project.

We are using listening in two ways:

First, we are listening one-way to as many people as we can on the subject of global warming, to let people discharge and to learn more about the distresses that keep people from accepting the scientific information that climate change is real and caused by human activity. It is already clear that it would take a long time to get rid of some of the "climate-denier" distress patterns. (As Harvey² used to say about Ronald Reagan,³ we could counsel him out of his distress, but it might not be the best use of our time.) Indeed, Diane Shisk⁴ told me when I started this project that changing people's beliefs about this issue would require providing information as well as listening.

We use the one-way listening mainly to identify the majority of the population, beginning with our own families, friends and associates, that does accept the scientific information about climate change, and seek to get those people more active.

The second way we use listening is in two-way listening turns (Co-Counseling sessions and support groups) for aspiring activists that focus on what gets in their way of taking the next step to stop climate change. All of what Julian Weissglass⁵ presents in

his wide-world-change workshops is relevant here, especially encouraging people to talk about early times in their lives when they hoped to change something and were discouraged by the adults around them. Some of the key climate-change activists in the state are now turning to me for listening turns.

I have always been impressed by the range of tools we've developed in RC. Together they provide a whole new approach to social change. Along with workshops, support groups, listening projects,⁶ and sessions, in this project we put special emphasis on topic group discussions and Wygelian leaders' groups.⁷ For those not familiar with topic group discussions, a large group of people are asked to nominate the topics they would like to discuss, and then each person votes for the topics that he or she is interested in. The topics that have enough votes are then discussed in small groups by those who are interested in them, following which each small group reports back to the larger group. The small groups follow simple guidelines: nobody talks twice until everyone has spoken once, nobody speaks four times until everyone has spoken twice. Discharge, though not emphasized, is not discouraged. Compared to what happens in most organizations and movements, topic groups are a much more egalitarian way to identify priorities for discussion and to share information. The agenda is set by the members of the group rather than by a boss or some other authority. Everyone gets to participate.

Every month many of the climate-change leaders in Tucson get together as the Tucson Climate Action Network, a group I started, and use the topic-group framework for the meeting.

Wygelian leaders' groups allow leaders in a particular arena to share information, loosely coordinate their activities, decide on their own next steps, and get

continued . . .

¹ Non-profit organization

² Harvey Jackins

³ Ronald Reagan was the president of the United States from 1981 to 1989 and moved the country in a reactionary direction.

⁴ Diane Shisk is the Alternate International Reference Person for the RC Communities.

⁵ Julian Weissglass is the International Commonality Reference Person for Wide World Change.

⁶ 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.

⁷ A Wygelian leaders' group is a group of leaders and potential leaders of a particular constituency in which each person takes a turn doing the following: (1) reporting on what he or she has been doing in the last period with regard to the constituency, (2) saying what he or she thinks is the current situation facing the constituency, from his or her viewpoint, (3) sharing what he or she proposes to do as a leader in the next period, and (4) discharging on what is getting in the way of his or her leadership. The group does not make any group plans but rather serves to encourage individual initiative. It meets only when the members feel a need for meeting.

WIDE WORLD CHANGING

... continued

counseling on whatever is in their way of taking action.

In my first project, with veterans, I learned to combine elements of the topic group and the Wygelian leaders' group. At most of our eighty-five weekend workshops, small groups would meet in topic group discussions and share information, including the participants' own recent activity. After the report-backs the same groups (sometimes with additions) would reconvene as Wygelian leaders' groups in which people would take turns responding to the question, "What are you going to do next on this topic?" and get a turn on "What might get in your way?"

In Tucson this process of following topic group discussions with Wygelian leaders' groups (which we call Action Groups) led to a listening project last fall that made the front page of our newspaper. The discussions also led to a protest with our local Occupy⁸ group against importing tar sands oil from Canada and to another demonstration demanding that our local utility stop burning coal because of its damage to the health of the community and its contribution to global warming. When I entered the local movement, many activists from different organizations would mention the coal plant, but nobody was doing anything about it until we started our monthly topic group discussions.

Two of our Action Groups support ongoing projects. One of these projects is an election in the fall for our state utilities commission, which sets policy on the utilities' use of conservation and solar energy. Another is a national campaign to pass legislation to put a fee on carbon and return the proceeds to the taxpayers (to compensate them for higher prices on carbon based products). To all but the richest families, this would be a financial bonus!

My own plan is to hold a series of small home- and organization-based meetings to identify more volunteers for all the groups in the climate change movement and provide these new activists with the tools they need to avoid burnout and take more action more effectively. There are plenty of great organizations in our town, or any town. The main challenge is getting more people involved in the current activities and giving them the tools to do it rationally.

In our community a handful of activists used to do all the work in the climate change movement. Many burned out and withdrew. Our activities have already

⁸The Occupy movement is a grassroots movement organizing against the economic exploitation of the majority of the population by the small, wealthy minority.

resulted in new people coming forward and many of us working more effectively. One of the climate change leaders, who had given up working in our city and was traveling across the country for most of his activism, claims that we have made an enormous difference, in a very short time, in the climate change movement in our community.

When I am teaching my class for leaders, I share that enthusiasm. I know that I am bringing a new approach to a movement that may well determine whether or not most of our species survives into the next century. I am building on the work of RC leaders like Chuck Esser⁹ and Ellen Deacon,¹⁰ who in 1977 helped write the *Resource Manual for a Living Revolution*, to spread their learning from the social change movements of that era, including about the central importance of RC. They knew then, and we know now, that RC is key. People must discharge or they will drop out or behave badly. They need to be in permanent relationships, many of those in small face-to-face groups. They need to take radical action, like our challenge to the local power plant. They need to use egalitarian, non-hierarchical structures, like topic-group discussions and Wygelian leaders' groups, to decide on actions.

It is a "pain" that social change takes so long and must be done on such a personal level, and that we won't all be able to live the middle-class lifestyle of a separate suburban home with two cars. I have heard that if we shared the world's resources equitably, we would all be able to live at a reasonable level, for example, in an urban apartment accessible to public transportation. We would certainly have to conserve energy and water and eat more food that was grown locally. We can only consider such changes, much less make them, in a movement that makes explicit our RC theory (people are good, and society must be transformed) and that uses RC tools. Without discharge, not much that is good is going to last. As Harvey told us again and again, it will take RC to change the world effectively.

The climate-change movement is waiting for more of us in RC to bring what we know to the table.¹¹ The stakes are high.



Jim Driscoll
Tucson, Arizona, USA
Reprinted from the e-mail discussion
list for RC Community members

⁹ Chuck Esser is an RC leader in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, USA.

¹⁰ Ellen Deacon is an RC leader in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, USA.

¹¹ Bring what we know to the table means contribute what we know.

Is “Intellectual” Leadership Necessary?

*Harvey Jackins, at the Peace and Disarmament Activists’ Workshop
in Boston, Massachusetts, USA, July 1986*

Question: I’d like you to comment a bit on the role of intellectual leadership in disarmament, and in wide world change in general—particularly how you see the Leninist notion of the working class being too into internalized oppression to get itself out and there needing to be an intellectual vanguard, that sort of thing.

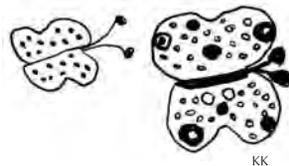
Harvey: Well, if by intellectual you mean intelligent—of course, it’s essential. It’s essential that somebody get us out. If you mean by intellectual the pretentious acquiring of degrees and the wasting of time in on-the-surface discussion,

then no, that’s not much help. The word has two meanings, even in ordinary parlance. Intelligence, yes, but intelligence doesn’t have to come from the middle class or from the intellectual group, by far.

As a migratory farm laborer at work in the beet fields, I used to sleep in barns with some of the most disturbed, distressed people you

ever saw. Really, their behavior was odd. But I never was around one of them for any length of time but he would say something brilliant that I would never hear from anybody else. They were a source of wisdom, even though they had trouble with some things many of us find easy to do. There’s a tremendous mind in every single one of us.

Sure, you’ve got to grab the ones whose intelligence is sticking out a little bit and start organizing them first, but You see what I’m saying?



The following five articles were taken from a discussion on the RC e-mail discussion list for leaders in the care of the environment.

What Are You Going To Do?

Dear all,

In preparation for an upcoming care-of-the environment workshop for the Frisian and Dutch Regions,¹ I found a question Harvey Jackins asked us as leaders at the last World Conference he led.

He did several demonstrations in which he asked the clients this question. In his demonstration with me, I discharged on being terrified of being too visible and ending up in jail or even getting killed, as happens to some activists. He kept a light tone and said, smiling, “I will come to your funeral.” That has helped me to face the fear and not let it control me.

Here is a little story: A few weeks ago, in a shopping center not far from my house, I witnessed a robbery in which a man got shot. It was easy for me to stay counselor. I listened

to many people. Coming home, I started shaking and felt like throwing up.² There it was—fear, running big-time.³

At first I avoided the place of the incident, but after many Co-Counseling sessions I decided to go back there again. Fear came up right away. However, when I got back home, I realized that I had not been afraid of feeling the fear. I had known that I had to face it in order to get rid of it.

What is new is the energy and power I feel knowing that I can handle a situation like this.

Now, Harvey’s question: What are you going to do to end the threat to our planet?

*Wytske Visser
International Commonality Reference
Person for the Care of the Environment
Fryslân, The Netherlands*

¹ A Region is a subdivision of the International RC Community, usually consisting of several Areas (local RC Communities).

² Throwing up means vomiting.

³ Running big-time means being strongly felt.

Revisiting My Big Plan

Dear Wytyske and all,

Thank you for the story and this important question.¹

When I first realized that I must face this question and do something to end the environmental threat to the planet, I knew that I had to find people to do it with. Then I thought, “I work in a big organization (the Israel Reform movement) with people who seem to think about the environment. I could find partners there.” I spoke to the director of the organization, then asked a friend to join me. At the organization’s biennial convention two years ago, I led a workshop about the environment that thirty people attended. At the end several people were interested in being active. I thought that we could set up an environmental forum that would meet regularly, perhaps put out a newsletter about the congregations’ initiatives, and so on.

To get ideas I spoke to a Knesset² member who works on environmental issues and with the head of an organization that works on environmental education. I then began to draw up a plan for each level of the organization—the staff in the offices, the individual congregations—and finally for a public stand in all of Israeli society.

¹ See article by Wytyske Visser on previous page.

² The Knesset is the legislature of Israel.



DIANE SHISK

I thought of what we could do to make the offices and congregations as environmentally friendly as possible (solar energy, composting, community gardens, carpools). In staff meetings I got people to agree to not use any plastic dishes. I wrote an early-childhood curriculum, Judaism and Sustainability, for teachers and families. I also led two classes in my Area³ on care of the environment. On the national level, I worked on a public stand of protecting the environment in the name of Judaism.

Then my friend became too busy to help. I spoke to the director of

³ An Area is a local RC Community.

the Religious Action Center, and she said that they had set their five major policy goals and that saving the environment was not one of them (that there were lots of other organizations dealing with that). So I became discouraged and gave up on my big plan.

Recently I have begun thinking about it again, and one of my conclusions is that I must discharge my fear and discouragement. The first thing I am going to do is discharge my fears of death, of speaking out, of being visible. I imagine they are all connected.

Naomi Raz
Jerusalem, Israel

Cutting Consumption in Half

I have a personal policy to cut my consumption in half, whether that is food, clothes, driving.

Marcie Rendon
Minneapolis, Minnesota, USA

Action on Many Fronts

Thanks for asking your question, Wytkske.

I am often pretty¹ scared when trying to think about the environmental crises we face and the human-system difficulties on top of that. I try to keep some attention on where we are collectively moving in good directions and on the most fun parts of my life (for example, music, dance, exploring the outdoors, and doing these things with my son). I also remember that, like with Occupy Wall Street,² things can rapidly crystallize into action and that a vast amount of groundwork, perhaps even enough, is being laid.

Locally, I work to strengthen my connections with people through my work at an early childhood centre and my leadership in the Transition Initiative.³ I also stay in contact with family, friends, and RCers around the world. I try to stretch my mind and perspective by keeping up with the clearest thinkers I have identified, and hunting for others.

¹ Pretty means quite.

² Occupy Wall Street was a recent protest against the control of the U.S. economy by a small, wealthy elite.

³ The Transition Initiative is a grassroots network of communities that are working to build resilience in response to peak oil, climate destruction, and economic instability.

As a father, I think about how I will explain my decisions to my son, as he is curious about the broader picture and the struggles we need to face.

As a family, we grow some of our own food and try to shop smartly in various ways. We own one family car and bike often, hang clothes to dry, continually look for ways to improve the efficiency of our house, and join regional and global campaigns to shift things in good directions.

I lead an RC care-of-the-environment support group on Skype⁴ and borrow the group's confidence in me to celebrate successes, set and review goals, and keep discharging through difficult feelings. Building a local RC Community is an ongoing struggle.

All of this feels inadequate, but of course I work to contradict and discharge that feeling. Something that helps me set a good tone is this quote (I don't know the author): "If you are not having fun, you are not serious enough."

Lance Cablk
Auckland, Aotearoa/New Zealand

⁴ Skype allows users to communicate over the Internet by voice, video, and instant messaging.

Working on Several Levels

Thanks for asking this question! I am trying to work on several levels:

I'm staying connected to the earth, and inviting others to notice their connection, by doing urban gardening and sharing in general conversations my love for the earth.

As a way of challenging the financial institutions that are driving an economic system that sees the earth solely in terms of profit, I am working with a group of people in my neighborhood to encourage others to move their money out of big banks and into

community banks and credit unions, and encourage a credit union to offer to hold some of the city's money so that it can be invested locally.

To invite people to get over their intimidation in the face of economic "experts," I'm inviting them to be bold about bringing their values and common sense into the economic conversation. I'm doing this through my blog¹ and by working with Quakers and a national interfaith group to develop religious education

¹ A blog (web log) is information or a discussion published on the Internet.

modules that congregations can use to engage with these issues.

I'm also leading a Regional² gather-in on care of the environment, every time there's a fifth Monday in the month.

All this brings me joy and makes my life go better.

Pamela Haines
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, USA

² A Region is a subdivision of the International RC Community, usually consisting of several Areas (local RC Communities).

•••••Turning Up the Heat on Classism•••••

The class society is not working very well for most humans. Society will change, but the kind and quality of society we end up with depends on how well human intelligence can function in the next period. We RCers will be more helpful in the transformation to a classless society if we discharge more about classism.

WHAT IS CLASSISM?

Classism is the economic exploitation of one group of people by another. A small group of people takes a portion of the value produced by the labor of another (larger) group. Even middle-class workers “give” a percentage of what they produce to the owning class.

Classism requires the systematic installation of distress recordings on people of every class background. These recordings affect people’s actions, beliefs, attitudes, and relationships.

WHY DISCHARGING ON CLASSISM IS IMPORTANT

As a Community we want to end all oppressions. Believing that we can eliminate any oppression without transforming the class society into a classless one is like putting a pot of water on the stove without turning on the heat and waiting for it to boil. (I have done that, and I don’t think I am the only one!) I encourage all wide world changers to commit themselves to turning up the heat on (becoming more active in) discharging the effects of classism on their lives, and leading others to do the same. Here the analogy breaks down. We can turn up the heat on the stove without feeling it, but in order to lead effectively on classism we have to discharge the distress caused by growing up in a classist society. We have to feel the heat (feel the discomfort).

If we discharge consistently on the hurts of classism, we’ll be able to think more clearly and act more powerfully. At earlier workshops when I focused on classism, I felt tired, even though the workshops went well. I was struggling with discouragement about the class society and my early experiences with and confusion about class. (I was raised upwardly-mobile middle-class. My parents were raised poor and working-class and became affluent after World War II. I was attacked as a teenager by my uncle and father for defending unions. Different parts of my family were in different classes.) I decided I had to turn up the heat (increase the effort), for myself and for the people attending my workshops. I had

several sessions on class. At the last workshop I led on classism, I wasn’t tired. Progress!

WE HAVE AN IMPORTANT ROLE TO PLAY

All over the world, liberation movements are developing, as the “for-profit” society becomes more unworkable and people understand better the damage it causes. We also see attempts by the owning class to suppress these movements, sometimes with violence or threats of violence and sometimes more subtly with lies, nationalism, patriotism, and addictions to alcohol, drugs, sex, food, and so on. The attempts at suppression are a result of owning-class distress recordings that have overcome all moral restraints. These recordings will condone death squads, police attacks, indefinite detention without trial, and labeling people as terrorists, in order to suppress resistance to the class society.

Harvey¹ wrote, “Class societies, in particular owning-class or capitalist societies, have devoted increasing amounts of their energies to the deliberate and organized installation of distress patterns to condition people to play their distressed roles in the society, either the role of exploiter or the role of exploited, without rebelling against the irrationality of the system.” (“The Oppression of Classism,” on page 394 of *The Rest of Our Lives*)

Co-Counselors have the opportunity and responsibility to understand how the society installs distress recordings on people, to discharge the recordings, and to take leadership in helping others discharge them as well. We can do this! If enough people discharge on classism, societal transformation will accelerate. This may seem like a slow process at first, but it is the only one that will work. Our job at this moment is to turn up the heat (become more active), to make a decision to discharge more on classism. It will require determination, since we will be pulled to avoid the topic. I know this from personal experience. I have decided several times to discharge on classism and then found a reason to discharge on other things.

THE CHRONIC PATTERNS OF CLASSISM

Everything we do, think, or believe—all our chronic patterns, all our relationships—are influenced by our class backgrounds. They are not the only influence. Every identity the society uses to keep us apart contributes. But at the root of all of our struggles

¹ Harvey Jackins

as individuals and as a society is class oppression. For example, if there had been no profit to be made from the mistreatment, exploitation, and genocide of different groups of people, racist ideas would not have been invented and installed on people.

Everyone has distress recordings that contribute to the persistence of classism and the for-profit society, and everyone has strengths from his or her particular class background that will contribute to the transformation of society. We have to provide enough contradiction² that enough people discharge the distress patterns that keep the class society in place. Harvey described some of the patterns resulting from classism in "The Chronic Patterns of Classism" (in *Present Time* No. 86, January 1992; and on page 287 of *A Better World*). Because these patterns are sometimes difficult to see and challenge, precisely because they are chronic, working consistently on classism is not a challenge to be taken on³ casually. It is a serious commitment that will require us to feel the feelings (and perhaps the numbness) we felt when the recordings were installed. But we can be cheerful as we take it on. We can celebrate the struggle.

A REVOLUTION WITH LOVE

My goal is that a child's access to the world's resources not depend on where she or he was born. Every child, every human being, is precious and should have equal access. There are enough resources, enough understanding, enough technology, and enough knowledge of RC for everyone to have a good life. Achieving that will require a revolution—not a violent one, but a revolution with love. We have our intelligence, our knowledge, our attention, our love, and our ability to build alliances with people different from us.

We know that when we change the class society, even owning-class people will have better lives. Despite their wealth, they often lead painful lives filled with isolation, separation from their children, and addictions. Of course, people whose standard of living is above the average standard for the world will have to give up some things. (It is difficult to say how much, because I do not know the extent of the wastefulness—military expenditures, bribes, huge salaries spent on lawyers in order to avoid taxes, and so on—that would be eliminated in a classless society.)

We can be hopeful about achieving a classless society. Increasing numbers of people recognize that the present system is not working and cannot solve

the problems it causes. We have created enough safety to discharge thoroughly on how we have been hurt by classism, whatever class we or our ancestors grew up in or whatever class we are in now. It may not feel safe to work on classism, especially with people from other classes, but it is safe. And whether it is safe or not, if we want things to move, we have to do this work. As we discharge it will become safer.

We can take leadership. And of course we will make mistakes—you can be sure of that. Remember what George Bernard Shaw said, "A life spent making mistakes is not only more honorable but more useful than a life spent doing nothing." And I would add, from personal experience, that it is much more interesting. We get to make mistakes and then struggle to not feel bad about ourselves for making them. Mistakes are not the problem. The problems are passivity, timidity, and powerlessness recordings.

SOME WAYS TO COUNSEL ON CLASSISM

Here are some ways you can counsel on classism:

- Tell your life story from the point of view of class. When did you see class prejudice? What confused you about class, money, and class differences?
- Would you have to give up anything if a classless society were established and you lived at the average world standard of living? How do you feel about that? What would you gain from a classless society?
- How do class oppression and your class background affect you as a wide world changer?
- Do the patterns in Harvey's article "The Chronic Patterns of Classism" apply to you? And, if so, how do they affect you as a wide world changer?
- If you grew up poor or working-class and are now middle-class, have you absorbed any middle-class patterns? What are they?
- Use the class commitment⁴ for the class you were raised in or the class you are in currently.



Julian Weissglass
International Commonality Reference
Person for Wide World Change
 Santa Barbara, California, USA
 Reprinted from the RC e-mail discussion
 list for leaders of wide world change

² Contradiction to the distresses

³ Taken on means undertaken.

⁴ Commitments, useful for discharge, have been written for people of various class backgrounds. See page 11 of the appendix to *The List*.



RC Returns to Tule Lake



We are a United to End Racism¹ delegation attending the 2012 Tule Lake Pilgrimage.² Today was a day to feel pleased with ourselves as individuals and as a team, to feel proud of and excited about how RC can be used to open minds and hearts.

We began the day at a memorial service for those who were incarcerated at Tule Lake and the many who died in the camp. After receiving a flower and a string of origami cranes, each person proceeded to a table that had on it small models of the ten concentration camps in which 120,000 people of Japanese and Okinawan heritage had been incarcerated. People bowed at the altar, placed their flower in a box, and hung their cranes near the models. United to End Racism delegates sat with folks and listened well. Tears were flowing.

In the afternoon we visited a Civilian Conservation Camp that used to house nearly two hundred Japanese who refused to answer the loyalty questionnaire.³ We stopped at the Tule Lake jail, built by a work crew of Japanese incarcerated in the segregation center. It was designed to hold twenty but often held up to a hundred Japanese before they were sent to Department of Justice camps or deported to Japan. We went to the remains of a latrine in block 73. As we stood near the holes where lines of toilets, without partitions, once stood, the elders talked about their lives, how they had hated going to the bathroom, how humiliating it had been to have no privacy. Our ability to listen opened up a space for people to tell their stories.

In the evening we prepared for the next day's Intergenerational Dialogue discussions. We organized three hundred and seventy participants into groups of fifteen, made and distributed rosters, posted room signs, and made plans for younger young people's activities. Lois Yoshishige⁴ led a training for us discussion facilitators. It included three-way sessions in which we thought and discharged about our own histories in relation to war and the incarceration of Japanese people, and shared what had worked well in past discussion groups. We then took turns in our three-ways to map out a plan for the morning.



KK

Paul Ehara
Richmond, California, USA
and Keith Osajima
Redlands, California, USA

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

¹ United to End Racism is a project of the Re-evaluation Counseling Communities.

² The Tule Lake Pilgrimage is a bi-annual pilgrimage to the Tule Lake Internment Camp, in Oregon, USA, where 18,700 people of Japanese and Okinawan heritage were interned by the U.S. government during World War II. For more about United to End Racism's participation in the pilgrimages, see pages 57 to 67 of *Present Time* No. 157 (October 2009).

³ A questionnaire that would supposedly determine the internees' loyalty to the United States

⁴ Lois Yoshishige is the Area Reference Person for the Eugene, Oregon, USA, RC Community.

Pseudo-Reality Must Be Contradicted

The only comment I can think of that might be helpful to you in your understanding of Rwanda* is to remind you that once a pseudo-reality is installed in the form of a pattern in a person's mind, it has to be contradicted by outside

events or some actual reality "staring the person in the face," or the acts of the person with the pattern will seem to that person to flow logically from the data being fed in by the pseudo-reality.

* The Rwandan genocide of 1994

Harvey Jackins
From a letter written in 1997

Complete Index to *Present Time* Available On-Line

On the RC web site is an index covering every issue of *Present Time*. You can search the index by author, title, or topic (from a list of pre-determined topics). To find the index, go to the web site at <<http://www.rc.org/>>, click on "Present Time" under Publications on the home page, then click on "Search PT Index."

Young Adult Males as Allies

Every semester I teach a women's studies class. Usually I have about forty students—about thirty-three of them female and seven male. I basically teach women's liberation from an RC perspective, with just enough academic rigor that the department keeps asking me back year after year.

What I always say to the males is that they will have the rare privilege of really getting to understand women's lives. I talk about male domination and how they are set up to dominate. And I'm tough on them, saying that I expect them to be allies to women. At the beginning of the semester I'm usually met with some eye rolls and resistance. But I tell them that, although I am the mother of a son and I love men, sexism is brutal. I expect them to listen to the women in the class. We have heated discussions, and many of the young women cry.

Each semester I assign group projects, and last week something great happened. One group of men did a report on single mothers in which they cried about how hard their mothers had fought for them. Three other men did a group presentation on sexual harassment and at the end of it all spoke about how they had been dominant toward women, mostly by engaging in catcalling,¹ objectifying women, or treating women as sexual objects for their own pleasure. (They all got very quiet when they spoke.) All of them admitted that they always did this around other men, and that they didn't want to do

it, or just plain froze when other men did it. They said that today they considered themselves allies to women. One said that until the class he had never had information about what it was really like to be a woman. They all said that from now on they would stop the dominating behavior. (By the way, these were all men targeted by racism.) A week later two of them marched with me in an Ending Violence Against Women march.

What I got a clear picture of was (1) how important women's studies are for men, (2) how many young adult males don't have clear information about what sexism is or how they have been bribed by other men into participating in dominance, (3) how men want to be allies to women, (4) how we need to have more sessions on bringing young adult men into RC.

I know I was able to do this work because of the RC e-mail discussion list for leaders of women and the recent shift in our thinking about male domination. Diane,² I thank you for this. I love you. To all my other sisters, I carry you with me every day.

Jennifer Berry
Los Angeles, California, USA
Reprinted from the RC e-mail
discussion list for leaders of women

² Diane Balsler, the International Liberation Reference Person for Women

¹ Catcalling is verbal sexual harassment of women, by men, on the street.



CYNTHIA JOHNSTON

Everything Right

It's crucial that you be able to want everything to be right, even at the cost of your own comfort.

Harvey Jackins
From *The Rest of Our Lives*,
page 290

Appreciating RC Literature

I do not read English easily, but I like to get PRESENT TIME. It updates me on what is being done in the Community, and it challenges me to read.

I especially admire the professional and serious work done on the publication. People collect and sort the material and distribute it to the Community. I can feel the love that goes into this work.



Tsvia Waks
Kibuts Gazit, Israel

Yo soy siempre tan emocionada cuando llega enero, abril, julio y octubre de cada año porque voy a tener la oportunidad de recibir y leer PRESENT TIME. Y esto significa para mí, estar unida a una Comunidad Internacional de Co-escuchas. Significa conocer más sobre la teoría de RC por medio de los artículos de Tim y otras líderes de RC en el mundo. Y mantenerme informada de las experiencias de la teoría y práctica de RC, sobre los talleres y experiencias enseñando en RC en otras partes del mundo.

English translation of the above:

I am always so eager every time January, April, July, and October arrive, because I am going to receive and read PRESENT TIME. This means to me being united with an International Community of Co-Counselors. It means knowing more about RC theory by way of reading Tim's articles, and articles from other leaders in RC around the world, and being in touch with the experiences from workshops and teaching RC in other parts of the world.



María Lorena Cuéllar Barandiarán
San Salvador, El Salvador

Hi Tim,

The July PRESENT TIME is great. Instead of reading it all in one go, I'm giving myself inspiring snippets over a few weeks and finding the breadth of topics quite extraordinary. In particular, it has been great to read your article about physical pain, a topic that has in the past (unsurprisingly) led people into quite a lot of confusion. Your clarity will make it much easier to counsel people on physical pain and also to communicate to non-RC doctors and others in a helpful way.

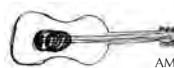
Fio Adamson
London, England

I was looking forward to receiving the latest issue of PRESENT TIME. I was happy to see the picture of a market in India on the cover. I loved the poem "In Search of Me."



Shashikala (Shashi)
Bangalore, India

I have to tell you, those CDs* are incredible! I listened to all of them—multiple times. They were so good to have in order to focus on reality. I can't get enough of this RC theory! Thank you!



Sarah Tooley
Rochester, New York, USA

* Rational Island Publishers is producing a series of CDs of talks given by Tim Jackins at recent RC workshops (see pge 105 of this *Present Time*).

I opened *Present Time* No. 167 (April 2012) today, my first in at least thirty years.

I cried reading Tim's¹ article on sleep. I cried reading S.J. Shashikala's article, "A Most Special Relationship." I cried about Nancy Lemon's article, "Going Back to the Church." And I cried reading Tim's "Planning How We Grow."

As he always has in the past, Tim spoke clearly to me. He accurately stated my obstacles: "the feeling of it being impossible, and [my] feeling alone in it, are two things that pull [me] under."

I was one who "wandered away," and I'm trying to figure out how to get back.

How am I trying to return?

I've started counseling again with someone I had a good Co-Counseling relationship with in the past. We'll see how it works for both of us. I'm re-connecting with Co-Counselors and allies from "the old days" in RC. I'm re-learning RC from the literature and Tim's CDs.²

I'm deciding whether or not it's workable to rejoin the Chicago (Illinois, USA) RC Community. Reading the current *Guidelines*³ will help.



Harv Millman
Evanston, Illinois, USA

¹ Tim Jackins'

² Rational Island Publishers is producing a series of CDs of talks given by Tim Jackins at recent RC workshops (see page 106 of this *Present Time*).

³ *The Guidelines for the Re-evaluation Counseling Communities*—the policies for the RC Communities

The RC Web Site

There is a web site for Re-evaluation Counseling at <<http://www.rc.org/>>. At this site you will have easy access to a large amount of information about Re-evaluation Counseling, including:

- RC theory (basic theory, including an introduction to RC, *The Art of Listening*, and the RC postulates)
- An introductory talk (in audio) by Harvey Jackins (1986)
- RC practice (how to start RC, what to do in a session, counseling techniques, how to lead support groups)
- Policies, forms, and the *Guidelines for the Re-evaluation Counseling Communities*, 2009 edition
- Articles by RC leaders and Community members (quotes and selected articles from *Present Time* and other RC journals)
- Translations of articles into many languages
- Resources for workshop organizers
- Rational Island Publishers (contact information and literature ordering)
- Ordering RC publications on the web: <www.rationalisland.com>
- An on-line fundamentals of Co-Counseling class
- Outlines for teaching fundamentals classes, in English and Spanish
- An ever-growing collection of back issues of *Present Time* (currently 1974-1993)
- An index to all issues of *Present Time*
- "Today's Thought"—a short daily thought from a Re-evaluation Counseling perspective
- International Reference Person Perspectives

How to Contact Us On-Line

- The International RC Community: ircc@rc.org
- United to End Racism: uer@rc.org
- Rational Island Publishers (orders, and billing questions): litsales@rc.org (or order on our web site at www.rationalisland.com)
- Re-evaluation Counseling Community Resources (Intensives and office matters only):
rcoffice@rc.org
- Automatic response e-mail about RC: info@rc.org
- For sending photos: photos@rc.org
- Reference Person for the Internet, Tim Jackins: ircc@rc.org

On-Line Fundamentals Class

An on-line fundamentals of Co-Counseling class is available for people who are interested in learning more about RC.

Active participation in the class is reserved for those who do not have fundamentals classes in their geographical region. Learning Re-evaluation Counseling via e-mail is much more difficult than learning it in a regular class and requires a higher level of commitment to the learning process and to regular Co-Counseling sessions.

If you are already participating in a regular RC class, or are an RC teacher, you may still have access to the articles used in the on-line class by enrolling in the class as an inactive member. Please note, however, that all of the materials used are already published and available in printed issues of *Present Time* and other Rational Island Publishers publications. The on-line class organizes these materials, making them more easily accessible.

Please see the RC web site at <<http://www.rc.org/class/fundamentals/>> for more information about how to sign up for either active or inactive membership in the on-line fundamentals class.

United to End Racism

United to End Racism (UER), an ongoing program of the Re-evaluation Counseling Communities, is on the web at <<http://www.rc.org/uer/>>. The e-mail address for UER is <uer@rc.org>.

United to End Racism is working with other groups involved in eliminating racism, and sharing with them the theory and practice of Re-evaluation Counseling.

continued . . .

Electronic Mailing Lists

The RC Community maintains a number of electronic mailing lists for particular categories of RCers. These lists are for active members of the RC Community, and most of them are for active leaders only. (If English is your first language, part of being an active member of the Community is subscribing to *Present Time*.) If you would like to subscribe to a list, first e-mail the person in charge of the list, then forward that person's approval, your request, your contact information (phone number, mailing address, city, state, postal code, country), and whether or not you have a subscription to *Present Time*, directly to the International Reference Person at <ircc@rc.org>. Read the information below for the various lists and whom you need to contact for approval to subscribe to them.

RC Community Members: <community@mail.rc.org>.

Contact any Area, Regional, or Liberation Reference Person.

RC Community Members Involved in Eliminating

Racism: <uer@mail.rc.org>. Contact any Area, Regional, or Liberation Reference Person. (This list is for trading information on the theory and practice of using RC in the fight to eliminate racism, both inside and outside of the RC Community.)

Regional Reference Persons: <rrp@mail.rc.org>.

Contact the International Reference Person at <ircc@rc.org>.

Area Reference Persons: <arp@mail.rc.org>.

Contact the International Reference Person at <ircc@rc.org>.

International Liberation and Commonality Reference

Persons: <ilrp@mail.rc.org>. Contact the International Reference Person at <ircc@rc.org>.

RC Teachers: <teachers@mail.rc.org>. Contact the International Reference Person at <ircc@rc.org>.

Editors of RC or non-RC publications:

<editors@mail.rc.org>. Contact the International Reference Person at <ircc@rc.org>.

Translators of RC Literature:

<translators@mail.rc.org>. Contact Truus Jansen, Rational Island Publishers Translation Coordinator, at <ircc@rc.org>.

Activists for the Liberation of "People Targeted for Destruction by Society Because of the Patterns Imposed Upon Them":

<access@mail.rc.org>. Contact the International Reference Person at <ircc@rc.org>.

Leaders of **African-Heritage People:**

<black@mail.rc.org>. Contact Barbara Love, International Liberation Reference Person for African-Heritage People, at <bjlove413@gmail.com>.

Leaders of **Artists:** <artists@mail.rc.org>.

Contact John Fehringer, International Liberation Reference Person for Visual Artists, at <rc@fehringer.com>.

Leaders of **Asians:** <asian@mail.rc.org>.

Contact Francie Chew, International Liberation Reference Person for Chinese-Heritage People, at <fchew@tufts.edu>.

Leaders in the **Care of the Environment:**

<environment@mail.rc.org>. Contact Wytke Visser, International Commonality Reference Person for the Care of the Environment, at <wytkevisser.coe@gmail.com>.

Leaders of **Catholics:** <catholic@mail.rc.org>.

Contact Joanne Bray, International Liberation Reference Person for Catholics, at <jmbray@aol.com>.

Leaders of **College and University Faculty:**

<colleagues@mail.rc.org>. Contact Pam Roby, International Liberation Reference Person for College and University Faculty, at <roby@ucsc.edu>.

Leaders on **Disability, Chronic Illness, and Health:**

<health-disability@mail.rc.org>. Contact Marsha Saxton at <marsax@wid.org>.

Leaders of **Educational Change:**

<education@mail.rc.org>. Contact Marilyn Robb, International Commonality Reference Person for Educational Change, at <joyfulplace@yahoo.com>.

... continued

Leaders of **Elders:** <elders@mail.rc.org>. Contact Pam Geyer, International Reference Person for Elders, at <pgeyer@medcetera.com>.

Leaders of **Family Work:** <family-work@mail.rc.org>. Contact Chuck Esser, International Commonality Reference Person for Family Work, at <ckesser@verizon.net>.

Leaders of **Irish-Heritage People:** <irish@mail.rc.org>. Contact Sheila Fairon at <fairon@fastmail.fm>.

Leaders of **Jews:** <jewish@mail.rc.org>. Contact Cherie Brown, International Liberation Reference Person for Jews, at <ncbiinc@aol.com>.

Leaders of **Latinos/as and Chicanos/as:** <latino@mail.rc.org>. Contact Lorenzo Garcia, International Liberation Reference Person for Chicanos/as, at <lgcra@aol.com>.

Leaders of **Men:** <men@mail.rc.org>. Contact the International Reference Person at <ircc@rc.org>.

Leaders of **“Mental Health” Liberation:** <mental-health@mail.rc.org>. Contact Janet Foner, International Liberation Reference Person for “Mental Health” Liberation, at <jbfoner@verizon.net>.

Leaders of **Middle-Class People:** <middle-class@mail.rc.org>. Contact Seán Ruth, International Liberation Reference Person for Middle-Class People, at <seangruth@gmail.com>.

Leaders of **Native Americans:** <natives@mail.rc.org>. Contact Marcie Rendon, International Liberation Reference Person for Native Americans, at <mrendon703@aol.com>.

Leaders of **Owning-Class People:** <owning-class@mail.rc.org>. Contact Jo Saunders, International Liberation Reference Person for Owning-Class People, at <jo.saunders@btinternet.com>.

Leaders of **Parents:** <parents@mail.rc.org>. Contact Marya Axner, International Liberation Reference Person for Parents, at <maryaaxner@gmail.com>.

Leaders of **Raised-Poor People:** <raised-poor@mail.rc.org>. Contact Gwen Brown, International Liberation Reference Person for Raised-Poor People, at <gbbrown@udel.edu>.

Leaders of **Trade Unionists:** <unions@mail.rc.org>. Contact Joanie Parker, International Liberation Reference Person for Trade Unionists, at <jep7ok@aol.com>.

Leaders of **Wide World Change:** <wwc@mail.rc.org>. Contact Julian Weissglass, International Commonality Reference Person for Wide World Change, at <weissglass@education.ucsb.edu>.

Leaders of **Women:** <women@mail.rc.org>. Contact Diane Balsler, International Liberation Reference Person for Women, at <dibalsler@comcast.net>.

Leaders of **Working-Class People:** <working-class@mail.rc.org>. Contact Dan Nickerson, International Liberation Reference Person for Working-Class People, at <dnickerson122@comcast.net>.

Leaders of **Young Adults:** <young-adults@mail.rc.org>. Contact Anna van Heeswijk, International Liberation Reference Person for Young Adults, at <annavanheeswijk@hotmail.com>.

Leaders of **Young People:** <young@mail.rc.org>. Contact Mari Piggott, International Liberation Reference Person for Young People, at <marikathleenp@yahoo.ca>.



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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/>.



KK

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