

An oppressive society depends on you not fighting for yourself. It counts on you taking more and more mistreatment, poverty, and unawareness, without standing up against them. That's how oppressive societies stay in place. We need to learn how not to let that happen. In particular, you need to learn to fight for yourself. There are thousands of good issues: related to you personally, about your family, your neighborhood, your people, about the world—there's no shortage of issues. It's important that you are able to take a stand in opposition—and doing so simply for yourself is a good place to start.

Tim Jackins

In this issue of *Present Time* you'll find articles on topics ranging from RC in prison to being grandparents, making music, cancer and women's liberation, and RC events on Zoom. There is a strong section on COP26 as well as important thinking about RC leadership.

For the April issue, we'll need your articles and poems by February 22 and any changes to the back-pages lists by February 28.



Katie Kauffman and Lisa Kauffman, editors
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Continuing an Ever-More-Needed Initiative

The RC Communities update their goals every four years at the World Conference. We first adopted a goal about the environment in 2001 and have had a goal on the environment ever since.

In 2017 I proposed a goal on climate change to guide us until the next World Conference, which we expected to be in 2021. That goal pointed us in the direction of becoming aware of and discharging about the degradation of the environment.

As our awareness of the climate emergency has increased, our goals on the environment have directed us more and more toward understanding the connections between the climate crisis, oppression, and exploitation and toward taking action with others to address the crisis.

Our governments and industries have not made the changes needed to begin to solve the climate crisis. It is doubtful that they are going to make those changes without massive pressure for change from outside those structures.

In 2019, with the climate emergency unfolding more quickly each year, I decided to act between World Conferences, publishing a Climate Initiative in the April 2019 *Present Time*.

Given the current state of the climate emergency and the need to act without delay, I am now publishing another initiative and presenting it to the RC Communities at our Pre-World Conferences, for adoption at the World Conference in August 2022. (See the new initiative to the right.)

I am asking all RCers to read this new initiative and discharge about our current climate emergency. I want each of us to face any distress in our way of making this initiative our own and taking action to stop and reverse climate change. The RC Communities are already playing a significant role in addressing the climate crisis. With all of us engaged, we can become a powerful force for change.

*Tim Jackins**

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



J. EISENHEIM

The New Climate Initiative

The RC Community, recognizing the clear evidence of dangerous and ongoing climate change caused primarily by human activity, will actively organize and support its members to face the challenge of finding and implementing ways to halt and reverse climate change.

We will support all RC Community members to discharge any distress that keeps them from playing any role in the struggle to preserve the world. In doing this, we recognize the role that all oppressions have played in creating the climate crisis, and the need to act against all oppressions to find solutions.

We will create opportunities for RC Community members to gather to discuss the situation, discharge, and develop new ideas, tactics, and strategies—using webinars, think-and-listens, and other means useful in building common understanding.

Taking on this important task will require each of us to challenge the distress recordings that have left us feeling powerless and alone. In challenging these recordings, we can learn to move rapidly forward—together and with increasing confidence—in our relationships with other individuals and in public opposition to irrational policies.

We will assist and support each other to learn about and understand the always-developing situation with the Earth's climate—including by getting involved with individuals, Indigenous peoples, and organizations that are working to stop climate change. This will provide us with direct knowledge and contradict, for ourselves and others, the distress recordings of isolation and helplessness.

We will also share our RC knowledge and practice, so that those who are working on the climate crisis can function more effectively.

Sustaining All Life and the COPs

Sustaining All Life (SAL) was organized in 2015, with the goal of taking RC understandings about the natural healing process, and the connections between oppression and the climate crisis, to the activist gatherings associated with the United Nations climate talks (called COPs, for Conference of the Parties).

Sustaining All Life has attended every COP since then, as well as other major climate talks in the United States.

Our delegates lead the following:

- *Workshops:* We present basic RC theory connected to some aspect of oppression and the climate emergency—racism; war; the oppression of Indigenous people, young people, women, Arabs).

- *Forums:* Participants share their personal experiences with the climate crisis, climate activism, or their work on the climate crisis as Global Majority and Indigenous* people, young people, women, Muslims, and so on.

- *Listening projects, support groups, fundamentals classes, and caucuses:* Participants share their experiences,

* The peoples of Africa, Asia and the Pacific Islands, and South, Central, and Caribbean America, and Indigenous people, are over eighty percent of the global population. These people also occupy most of the global land mass.

Using the term “Global Majority and Indigenous (GMI)” for these people acknowledges their majority status in the world and interrupts how the dominant (U.S. and European) culture assigns them a minority status.

Many Global Majority and Indigenous people living in dominant-culture countries have been assimilated into the dominant culture—by force, in order to survive, in seeking a better life for themselves and their families, or in pursuing the economic, political, or other inclusion of their communities. Calling these people “Global Majority and Indigenous” contradicts the assimilation.

listen to each other, and learn a little about RC.



NANCY LEMON

Thousands of people have come to our events, and many have expressed an interest in learning more about us. Many SAL delegates and volunteers have maintained relationships with people they’ve met at the COPs. Through these connections, we have started RC Communities in at least the following countries: The Gambia, Cameroon, Guinea, and Morocco. We are still teaching RC to people we’ve met from Nepal, Egypt, and Madagascar. People are increasingly interested in tools for addressing the emotional stress from living in the escalating climate emergency and the divisions that impair the effectiveness of the climate justice movement. The work of SAL has also strengthened the work on the climate emergency in the RC Communities.

Sustaining All Life attends the COPs because the United Nations is *the* international body addressing the climate emergency. No other global organization is looking so much at the big picture and working to unite the world in addressing the crisis. (There are many global climate advocacy groups, but none of them have near the reach or the power of the United Nations.)

THE IPCC AND INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCES AND TREATIES

The First World Climate Conference was in 1979. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC—the United Nations climate science body) was established in 1988. Since then, many conferences have been held, and the IPCC has released several assessments of the impact of climate change worldwide.

The first global climate treaty, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), was signed in 1992. In that treaty the parties (197 countries) recognized that we have a problem and agreed on international cooperation to combat climate change, by limiting average global temperature increases, and to cope with its impacts. The treaty called on developed countries, as they’ve been the source of most greenhouse gas emissions, to lead the way in cutting emissions. In 1995 the first COP (Conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC) was held in Berlin, Germany.

In 2015 the Paris Agreement was signed, at COP21, to strengthen the global response to the threat of climate change by keeping global temperature rise in this century well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels and pursuing efforts to limit temperature increase even further to 1.5°C. It was acknowledged that the commitments made at COP21 to reduce emissions were inadequate to reach the goal and was therefore decided that the national pledges would be revised every five years.

In October 2018 the IPCC issued a key report: *Global Warming of*

1.5 C Degrees. This report states that to keep warming to 1.5°C requires reducing emissions by about 45% relative to 2010 levels by 2030, and reaching net zero (the point at which the amount of carbon released into the atmosphere is balanced by the amount removed) by about 2050. COP26 focused on this goal.

A 2021 IPCC Report reaffirmed the findings of 2018 with more data and more certainty that the situation is dire and caused by human activity. It concluded that the largest emitters must reach true net zero by 2045.

(Note that during all these years, human-caused carbon emissions have grown at an average annual rate of 3.5 percent.)

ISSUES AND OUTCOMES AT COP26

The issues that had been contentious and unresolved in Paris and at subsequent COPs were in the spotlight at COP26:

Loss and damage: Developing nations object to focusing on future emissions without addressing the past emissions of developed countries that have caused the climate crisis. They assert that principles of equity and “common

but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities” demand that wealthy nations make deeper and faster cuts in emissions than developing nations and help to shoulder the costs of climate destruction in those countries. The wealthy nations have consistently fought any language that hints at their liability for the damage caused by climate change.

Climate finance: It remains voluntary. COP26 called for doubling the financial resources given to poor nations to address the impacts of the climate crisis. But the wealthy nations have yet to meet the financial commitments they agreed to in Paris.

Pledges: The pledges made at COP26 remain inadequate. The current 2030 targets put us on track for a 2.4°C temperature increase by the end of the century. (It was 2.7°C before COP26.)

Even with all the new COP26 pledges, we will emit roughly twice as much in 2030 as is required for 1.5°C. Acknowledging this, the parties committed to meet again next year (2022), instead of in 2025 as originally planned, to submit long-term strategies for reaching net zero by 2050.

Some other important (though inadequate) results of COP26 are as follows:

- Fossil fuels were referred to for the first time.
- A doubling by 2025 of financial aid to poorer countries for adaptation was urged.
- There was a call to accelerate the “phasing down” of coal and the phasing out of subsidies for fossil fuels.
- 100+ countries agreed to end deforestation by 2030 and made some serious financial commitments.
- 100+ countries committed to reduce methane emissions by 30% by 2030.
- 40+ countries (not including the United States, China, Australia, and India) committed to phasing out coal-fired power.
- The United States and China made a joint agreement to do more to reduce emissions.
- India committed to reaching net zero by 2070.
- A “just transition” for workers was mentioned for the first time.

continued . . .



CAMPSIE GLEN, SCOTLAND • ROB VENDERBOS

WIDE WORLD CHANGING

... continued

The agreements do not do the following:

- They do not push developed countries to achieve real emissions reduction now to keep to the 1.5°C target.
- They do not meet calls for climate reparations for those who are most harmed and have contributed the least to the climate emergency.
- They do not phase out, they only phase down, coal.
- They do not adequately help countries respond to the damage from the climate crisis.



- They do not address loopholes for offsets that give big emitters and corporations a pass for cutting emissions while claiming “net zero.”

- They do not include a mechanism to ensure that carbon trading leads to an overall reduction in global emissions.

A GROWING IMPACT

As things get harder, RC tools and understandings become more valuable, and more people recognize their importance. More and more people remember us from

past COPs and openly appreciate the resource we bring.

We keep finding ways to reach more new people at the COPs, along with the activists we have reached in the past. We also find more ways to share our understandings about discharge and the importance of addressing racism and other oppressions as an essential part of solving the climate crisis.

Diane Shisk

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



Sustaining All Life at COP26

For two years, Janet Kabue (Area Reference Person for Nairobi, Kenya) and I, together with a strong organizing team, prepared the Sustaining All Life/United to End Racism (SAL/UER) delegation for attending the activist gathering outside of COP26 [the annual United Nations climate conference] in 2020.

It was challenging from the beginning. The 2020 COP was postponed because of COVID, so we put together online workshops. One of the good things from this was that we ended up with a much more international COP26 delegation, particularly from Africa and Latin America. Also, relationships were built, and teams were formed, that continued into 2021.

In 2021 there were many moving pieces [many things were changing]. We had to stay flexible about what to do next. We had to prepare for the possibility of both in-person and online events. We had to organize to get people to Glasgow (Scotland) while at the same time preparing for mostly online workshops.

Throughout 2021 we held online workshops at a variety of climate conferences. We hit “bumps,” discharged, and got stronger with each presentation.

I did not go to Glasgow in person. Instead I played a long-distance support role from Seattle (Washington, USA). I was involved in all the preparations leading up to and during the COP. (I did this on Glasgow time, while in Seattle!)



ELLIE PUTNAM

Here are some of my highlights:

- Overall, we did well. Good things happened on many fronts.

- I worked with Janet for more than two years and learned a lot. She is smart, warm, and loving and has a connected way of being. I learned so much from her about being an ally—an ally to her and to the other Africans in our delegation. Racism, other oppressions, and colonization are harsh.

- I had the opportunity to be close to our delegates as they went through the visa application process and the United Kingdom (UK) COVID protocols, which changed frequently. I could see the racism and the effects of colonization in the United Nations and UK government processes. It was hard to enter, exit, and be in the UK. We encountered harshness, blind spots, and unnecessary obstacles. People were trying to make profits along the way. I have more to learn about being an ally as a Global

Majority Indigenous woman from the West.

- I learned about Scotland's history and got to work with RCers from Scotland and England. The local organizing in preparation for COP26 was impressive. I was reminded that people everywhere are organizing to end the climate crisis.



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of colonization. They all had an impact and made things hard in places. But each of us persisted. We used what we know in RC and kept moving things forward.

COP26 gave us the chance to respond as flexibly—online, live, recorded, and in multiple languages with people from around the world—and with as much thought as we could

- We made good use of technology. I was able to take part in the daily SAL meetings on a big screen with other long-distance folks. We did a forum that brought in the voices of frontline communities that weren't able to attend the COP in person. We brought in an audience on Zoom, and we livestreamed on Facebook. We made things work.

The circumstances imposed by COVID meant that we experienced unique challenges in terms of racism, other oppressions, internalized oppression, and the effects

manage. And, more than ever, I could tell [notice] that I was not doing this alone.

I am proud to be a part of Sustaining All Life, United to End Racism, and RC.

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

“We Are Committed to Ending Racism as We Pursue the Goals of SAL”



The following is from a talk given by Janet Kabue (Area Reference Person for Nairobi, Kenya) at a Sustaining All Life (SAL) delegation meeting before COP26 (the 2021 United Nations climate conference).

We are living through a pandemic. We have gone through a lot in the past two years. We get to be pleased with ourselves. We have gotten so much done in difficult times—it is important to remember that and continue discharging. There are many parts to discharge about.

We watched as over four million people died during the pandemic. Many of the deaths were preventable.

One of the traps of capitalism is to go ahead and get things done no matter who gets hurt or left behind. We fall into that trap of urgency—of wanting things done now. This is something that we get to discharge about as we prepare for SAL's participation in COP26.

We have talked about “vaccine apartheid.” Some countries have been hoarding the vaccine at the expense of others, literally locking it up. COVID-19 vaccine hoarding by wealthy countries has left the door open for the emergence of new coronavirus variants. We know that some countries ordered five hundred million more doses than they needed, leading to preventable loss of lives in countries that had little access to vaccines. For example, I couldn't get a vaccine until August 2021. Not everyone from my part of the world survived the wait.

In addition, only certain vaccines were available to countries in certain parts of the world. Then the COP put out a regulation saying that only people vaccinated with particular vaccines could get into the United Kingdom and attend COP26. That excluded people from countries that could not get those vaccines.

continued . . .

WIDE WORLD CHANGING

... continued

Recognizing (we hope that they recognized) the obvious and blatant racism and colonialism of that policy, those responsible changed it to “you can come, but you have to quarantine for ten days in an expensive hotel of our choosing.” That meant that people from certain countries had to think about bearing the added expense of ten additional days of hotel meals and other expenses, absence from jobs and families, and the added disruption of their lives. This is just one example of the policies and procedures that limit the participation of people from certain countries and certain parts of the world.

Activism got them to ease the regulations. However, Global Majority and Indigenous (GMI) people once again had to put in extra time to validate the importance of their lives and their presence at the conference. GMI people have had to deal with racism and systematic oppression every step of the way, on top of dealing with the pandemic and climate change, which continue to hit them in big ways. They must face this and so much more in order to show up and be fully present as GMI. It is important that allies stay aware of this.

These are examples of what we have had to negotiate to be a delegation at the COP. And the ground continues to shift and change. We just received a booklet of new regulations that have to be followed at the COP.

We are committed to ending racism as we pursue the goals of SAL. We continue to discharge and help those around us recognize and face the issues.



PANAGIA, KAVALA, GREECE • ARTWORK BY KATERINA STAVROPOULOU-VLACHOU

The Future Will Require Classless Societies

The class societies have played out their miserable role. There's no indication that there can be another class society which will work a little better than this one. . . . The future will require classless societies. Who's going to say this clearly? Who's going to put out a policy over and over and over, no matter how many times it's rejected, that it is possible to live without oppression? Who's going to say that it is possible and necessary to live without the key oppression, the economic oppression, which is the excuse and the source of all the other oppressions?

*Harvey Jackins**

From pages 78 to 79 of “Shall We Seize the Opportunity?” in *A Better World*

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

Below is a Sustaining All Life poster from COP26:



**Sustaining All Life & United to End Racism
at COP26 Glasgow • October 31 - November 13, 2021**

Sustaining All Life (SAL) and *United to End Racism (UER)* are international grassroots organizations working to end the climate emergency within the context of ending all divisions among people. At COP26, SAL/UER will present workshops and forums that address barriers to resolving the climate emergency. Our events are interactive and show participants how to exchange effective listening to free themselves from the emotional and mental harm resulting from oppression and other hurtful experiences—harm that can interfere with thinking about and responding effectively to the climate crisis.

In-Person Events In Glasgow

Hosted by: COP26 Coalition
People's Summit for Climate Justice
Register at: tinyurl.com/COP26ps-register



Sustaining Ourselves as Activists and Organizers
Sunday, November 7, 2:00 PM GMT • 9:00 AM EST *
Garnethill Multicultural Centre,
21 Rose St, Garnethill, Glasgow G3 6RE

Staying Hopeful While We Face the Climate Crisis
Monday, November 8, 2:00 PM GMT • 9:00 AM EST *
Garnethill Multicultural Centre,
21 Rose St, Garnethill, Glasgow G3 6RE

To register for the following Forums,
please visit the SAL website at:
sustainingalllife.org/events



Voices From the Frontlines: The Impact of the Climate Crisis on Frontline Communities (also online)
Tuesday, November 9, 10:30 AM GMT • 5:30 AM EST *
Thursday, November 11, Noon GMT • 7:00 AM EST *
Quaker Meeting House, 38 Elmbank Cres, Glasgow G2 4PS

Live-streaming
All in-person events will be live-streamed to the *Sustaining All Life* Facebook page.

@SustainingAllLife

SAL/UER Online Workshops

To register for the following Workshops,
please visit the SAL website at:
sustainingalllife.org/events



Making A Family Friendly Environment
Sunday, November 7, 2:00 PM GMT • 9:00 AM EST *

Eliminating the Effects of Racism in Climate Activism
Sunday, November 7, 6:00 PM GMT • 1:00 PM EST *

No Human Enemies: A Strategy for Climate Justice Organizing
Monday, November 8, 4:00 PM GMT • 11:00 AM EST *

Emotional Burdens of Oppression and the Climate Crisis
Monday, November 8, 4:15 PM GMT • 11:15 AM EST *

Jews and Climate Justice: Building a United Front
Tuesday, November 9, 6:00 PM GMT • 1:00 PM EST *

Sustaining Ourselves as Activists and Organizers
Wednesday November 10, 2:00 PM GMT • 9:00 AM EST *

War and Climate Justice
Wednesday, November 10, 6:00 PM GMT • 1:00 PM EST *

We Want to Live: Water, Art and Climate Justice Movements
Friday, November 12, 4:00 PM GMT • 11:00 AM EST *

Come meet us LIVE!—online, in our virtual booth
November 1 - 12, 9:00-11:00 AM GMT • 4:00-6:00 AM EST *



* GMT is Glasgow (UK) time • EST is New York (US) time

en français sur ce lien

en español en este enlace



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For more information, write: Sustaining All Life / United to End Racism

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COVID and SAL at COP26

The United Nations (UN) climate talks (COPs) happen annually. However, every five years there is an assessment of countries' progress toward the emissions reduction goal. At that COP, each country is expected to increase its national commitment to making the reductions needed to reach that goal. COP26, five years after Paris, was to be such a COP. It was cancelled in 2020 because of the COVID pandemic.

Because of the urgency to increase national commitments to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, the UN pushed to hold the COP, in 2021, in person, knowing it would be difficult because of COVID. Many people would be unable to attend because their home countries were without resources for vaccinations (another story of racism that won't be told here for reasons of brevity) and because of racist visa policies in the United Kingdom. This was in addition to the general lack of resources and the health risks posed by traveling and participating in a large conference during COVID.

It was uncertain until May 2021 if COP26 would happen in person in Glasgow (Scotland). Prior to that, the Sustaining All Life/United to End Racism (SAL/UER) delegation had held several meetings on whether or not we would attend if the COP were in person.

Some climate justice groups at the time had advocated for a boycott of the COP because of the racism in the lack of global vaccine

distribution that would greatly reduce attendance at the COP by the Global South. The groups cancelled the boycott when the UN decided to hold the event in person



AWABAKAL AND WORIMI COUNTRY, DUDLEY BEACH, NEW SOUTH WALES, AUSTRALIA • BRONWYN L, AUSTRALIA

and instead decided to highlight the lack of Global South participation and the reasons for it.

Until that decision, SAL had focused on participating online. Once the UN decided the in-person COP would happen, we discharged together to consider our participation. We also asked people to discharge and decide if they would attend an in-person COP. Many chose not to, and we decided that only a small delegation would go and hold a limited number of in-person events.

Most of the younger people decided to attend in person, as did three African leaders and a few others from outside the UK. A group of UK RCers volunteered to assist in person as organizers for our events. We decided that everyone who attended from SAL/UER would have to be fully vaccinated and agree to a COVID safety protocol that involved masking, social distancing, and regular testing.

The UN required either vaccination or quarantining in the UK for ten days before people would arrive in Glasgow. A complex scheme of disparate treatment for people from different countries illuminated the racism in the UN's policies. (Amid much global protest, many of the policies were abandoned before the COP.) Delegations attending were informed early on about the COVID protocol that would apply to them, including masking and distancing at the COP site along with daily testing.

A couple of weeks before the COP, the number of COVID cases in the UK started rising. A week beforehand, England was experiencing a record number of new cases, hospitalizations, and deaths. (The number of cases in Scotland wasn't quite as high, but most people would be traveling through England to get to Scotland.)

A group of SAL/UER leaders and delegates met twice with Tim Jackins to discuss the situation and discharge together. We also consulted with several RC doctors and considered whether the SAL/UER delegation should cancel because of the COVID numbers.

We decided that, because we are in a climate emergency with huge stakes for humanity, it could make sense for some individuals to take a thoughtful risk to attend the COP. We had to take seriously the valuable contribution we make to those who are working to end the climate emergency. But we also

decided that each person planning to attend should discharge and reconsider their decision, given the spikes in COVID cases. A few more people decided that it didn't make sense for them to go. I decided that, given the added restimulations posed by high COVID numbers and the shrinking pool of volunteers, I would attend and help with the organizing. (I am fully vaccinated and had recently gotten the booster shot. I also don't have any health conditions that would make me more vulnerable to COVID.)

Together with the doctors, we worked out the following COVID protocol and sent it to the delegation (and volunteers) in advance:

Our COVID Safety Protocol

There is a COVID risk involved in our activities. The rate of COVID infection in Scotland is high, and a lot of people will be mixing in Glasgow during the COP. Some of them will be unvaccinated.

We have a policy of no in-person contact within the International RC Communities, except in places where COVID numbers are very low. A limited exception is being made for the SAL delegation.

As much as possible in the remaining weeks before the COP, we will monitor the number of cases in Glasgow and any developments in variants. If there's a significant change, Janet Kabue, Teresa Enrico, Diane Shisk, and Tim Jackins will advise us.

The Delta variant is circulating in Scotland and is mainly transmitted by aerosol (airborne fine droplets). Mask wearing, social distancing, and ventilation are key to lessening

its spread. Meticulous hand washing and use of hand sanitiser will also help, especially with stopping the spread of other infections, for example, colds and flu.

The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) has outlined a COVID Safety Code of Conduct. Our guidelines align with their protocols. Briefly, their protocols include the following:

- Testing with a PCR (polymerase chain reaction) test, which determines if a person is infected by analyzing a sample to see if it contains genetic material from the virus

- Daily lateral flow testing [a rapid test for COVID]

- Mask wearing as required

- Keeping a one-meter distance in all contacts

- After a positive test for COVID, self-isolating and doing contact tracing to identify others for quarantining

More information will be coming from the UNFCCC. Here is the link to the UN Code of Conduct:

www.ukcop26.org/unfccc-cop26-covid-19-code-of-conduct/

IF YOU TEST POSITIVE IN GLASGOW

- If you live in Scotland or England and develop symptoms or test positive for COVID, you will need to travel home by car. One of us will have access to a car and will drive you. If you live a long distance away, it would be good if you had a friend or relative on standby who could meet us partway.

- If you have traveled from outside Scotland or England and develop symptoms or test positive in Glasgow, we will work out how best to look after [take care of] you in the youth hostel. We have arranged for a separate room where you can stay while quarantining or until you go home. One of our RC doctors in the UK will stay close to you. You will need to have medical insurance as part of your travel insurance. And any medical assistance you need will have to be sought from outside the delegation.

WHAT YOU NEED TO PROVIDE TO US, AND DO

If you are on the in-person Glasgow team, you will need to provide us with the following information:

- Confirmation that you are fully vaccinated against COVID (we would also advise a flu vaccination for those who can get it)

- The name, home address, and telephone number of a friend or family member

- Medical information that could indicate you are at increased risk from COVID—so we can think about you and the whole group

In addition, a negative PCR test will be required.

If you are travelling from outside Scotland or England, you also need to do the following:

- Take a pre-departure test within three days of travelling to Scotland or England—those travelling from abroad need to be tested as part of the UNFCCC Code of Conduct (and for some people, UK travel regulations)

continued . . .

WIDE WORLD CHANGING

... continued

- Take a second PCR test within forty-eight hours of arrival

If you live in Scotland or England, please do the following:

- Book a PCR test so that you have a result one to two days *before* you arrive in Glasgow. Results usually take twenty-four hours. Here is the link to where you can book a test: <www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test>. (You can say that a health professional asked you to book it.)

LATERAL FLOW TESTS

- If you live in the UK, please bring with you (freely available) packs of lateral flow tests—as many as you can. Gill and Anica will bring extra tests.

• Each person will take two self-lateral flow tests each day. These can be taken at the same time or at separate times during the day. This will double the chances of the test coming up positive in the presence of an infection. (Studies show that there are many false negatives, while positive findings are highly reliable.)

- Please read the instructions carefully and ask for help if you are not sure how to do the lateral flow test. We may have a mixture of tests with us. Some require swabbing both nostrils. Some still require swabbing your throat and then one nostril (with the same swab).

MASKS AND SOCIAL DISTANCING

- Bring your own supply of face masks. These need to be disposable surgical-type masks, not cloth masks. We have bought enough FFP2 masks, which provide much better protection to the wearer and can be reused. However, please bring a small supply of surgical-type masks as well.

• Within our group we will always wear face masks, including in our bedrooms. Only remove them to eat and brush your teeth. If you can sleep with a mask on, please do.

• There will be no physical contact between us—no hand holding or hugging, no pillow fights. We will maintain distancing except as necessary in the bedrooms.

• All the above also apply to contact with people from outside the delegation.

• We will post a sign on the door to each of our events saying face masks are required.

• Presenters of SAL/UER events will wear a mask unless they are speaking, when they can temporarily remove it.

• We will wear masks outside if we are standing close to someone or are in a crowded area.

• We will avoid densely packed crowds.

SNACKS

We are not to touch and return snacks to the common basket (if you touch it, it's yours). The snack team will purchase snacks that do not need subdivision.

HAND WASHING AND HAND SANITISING

• Bring your own hand sanitiser in a small bottle, to carry around with you. Gill and Anica will bring refills.

• We absolutely need to be meticulous about hand washing, or using hand sanitiser if we can't wash our hands. Remember that other viruses are around.

• We will ask members of the public to hand sanitise when they enter and leave our events.

VENTILATION AND DISTANCING IN ROOMS

• For ventilation, we need to keep the windows open at least a little in the bedrooms. Bring extra warm clothes. Those coming by car, bring extra blankets if you can. We will also try to get extra blankets from the hostel.

• Do the following for in-person indoor SAL events and meetings:

— Get into the venue before a meeting—an hour before if possible. Open all the windows wide and open doors.

— Post a notice on the door saying that masks are required. (We will have additional notices in more languages.)

— Have a box of surgical blue masks available to be handed out.

— Presenters at SAL/UER events should wear a mask unless they are speaking, when they can temporarily remove it.

— Post a notice on the door showing one-meter social distancing.

— Mark out the room for one-meter distancing, move chairs, and so on. If the room is too full, SAL people not involved in the presentation will need to leave.

— Plug in a CO₂ monitor to act as a proxy measurement of ventilation. To give the most accurate reading, it will need to be plugged in away from windows and doors. If the parts per million rise above 700, open the windows and doors wider or turn on fans, if available, facing out a door. If it goes much higher (and certainly if it goes beyond 1,200 ppm), people should get out of the room.

— Always use a portable air filter in the meeting rooms. This HEPA

filter filters out particles to which the virus is attached. (When using the filter, the level of carbon dioxide does not fall.)

Applying the Safety Protocols

We were vigilant in applying these measures within our delegation and at our events. We all became experts at sticking swabs up our noses.

The younger members of our delegation wanted to have more closeness at the end of the day. So they made an agreement with Tim Jackins that if they took a third COVID test the same evening and it was negative, they could hug and sit close within their group of roommates. We all found touching feet to be helpful during in-person Co-Counselling sessions.

We had no resistance to our protocols from people attending our events. We were part of the People’s Summit for Climate Justice, which required that people attending an event show negative results from a COVID test taken the same day. The UN required the same for entrance into the Blue or Green Zones.

We were challenged in keeping the ventilation adequate in our events. We had to leave doors and windows open and use fans, when available, pointed outward. We got to our events early, turned on the HEPA air filtration system we had purchased, and monitored the CO₂ levels throughout. We were always able to keep the ventilation adequate, though we did have to turn people away from a couple of our events.

We marched together in two marches and tried to keep a good

distance from others, though it wasn’t always possible. We all wore our masks the whole time and stayed away from unmasked people. We also stayed away from densely packed parts of the marches and rallies. We were able to do listening projects after the marches at the edge of the crowd. At the second march, we set up a gazebo (in the rain) far back from the front of the march, and we all wore masks. I don’t think anyone without a mask tried to come under the gazebo to look at our literature—most people seemed pretty [quite] aware and respectful.

Toward the end of our time in Glasgow, a delegate felt feverish and had a headache. We asked the person to quarantine until they got negative results from a viral COVID test. Two people who had been near the person also quarantined until the negative results came back. Our RC doctor did not think the person had COVID, and told us all that, but still we decided that they should quarantine, in an abundance of caution since the stakes are so high. We made the earliest appointment we could (the next morning) for a test, and our doc walked the person over to the clinic, maintaining distancing. We danced and sang (masked!) when the negative results came in the next evening.

It was clear to me that having the threat of COVID hanging over all of us the whole time added to our general level of restimulation and made everything harder. But we all got home safely, and no one contracted COVID while in the UK.

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



COP26, IN GLASGOW, SCOTLAND • DIANE SHISK



URBAIN ROMARIC BAMANA-YANGOU



URBAIN ROMARIC BAMANA-YANGOU



ROB VENDERBOS



Reports from COP26

The following are excerpts from reports on COP26 by three Sustaining All Life reporters:

- Our Sustaining All Life (SAL) team has met climate activists, leaders, and politicians. We have listened to people from Nigeria and Kenya talk about the struggles they are facing in the climate crisis. We have shared our RC perspectives on needed climate action with politicians.
- We set up a gazebo to talk with people and share SAL and RC literature. Some of us went to a large movement assembly and listened to inspiring speakers and activists—world leaders and delegates were reminded of why we are gathered in Glasgow: the time to save the world is here and now!
- We joined activists from different countries in a protest march that called for urgent actions to save Mother Earth. Our SAL stand attracted many people.
- We meet most mornings, and every evening we review the day’s activities, say our highlights, and do a COVID-19 check-in. We play games amid much joy and laughter. We observe the COVID protocols to keep safe. It isn’t easy; we want to hug each other and the friends we meet in the street. We want to lean in to hear better, especially with our masks on. But we have to think about the implications of getting COVID or transmitting it. Getting COVID here in Glasgow, far from home, would cause big problems. We have had COVID tests every morning and evening. We played a game in which we all ran toward each other with our arms out, calling each other’s names—then stopped. You should have heard the discharge!
- An exciting action involved United Kingdom doctors and nurses protesting JP Morgan and other big financiers of fossil fuels. They wore scrubs [medical clothing] and medical uniforms with “doctor,” “consultant,” “nurse,” or “radiographer” written on the front. Their banners had messages like “Cause of Death: Fossil Fuel Finance.” They lay on the ground in a “die-in.” Several were arrested. They believed that their medical oath obliged them to take political action against the biggest killer, climate change.
- Negotiations are ongoing in the Blue Zone [the place where the key negotiations between world leaders take place]. After going through four security checks, one comes to a huge shiny corporate space full of smartly dressed people on their phones or laptops or networking in small earnest groups. There are presentations on small nuclear reactors (the UK’s choice) and how to electrify motor racing.

But is there any real progress? The targets for 2030 remain totally inadequate. They put us on track for a 2.4°C temperature increase by the end of the century. (With long-term pledges, it would be 2.1°C.)

Onii Nwangwu-Stevenson
Lagos, Nigeria

Caroline New
Redcliffe, Bristol, England

Erin Huang-Schaffer
Brooklyn, New York, USA

The Emotional Burdens of Oppression and Climate Change

The following are some of my take-aways from the Sustaining All Life forum at COP26 “The Emotional Burdens of Oppression and Climate Change”:

Healing the emotional burden of climate change will release us to be more effective in our climate work.

We have a chance to do something about the climate crisis. We have a better chance if we discharge some of the feelings we carry about the crisis—despair, fear, intense grief, overwhelm. Carrying these feelings can get in the way of acting to end the crisis.

The environmental crisis cannot be fully resolved without ending racism, genocide toward Indigenous peoples, classism, sexism, and other oppressions.

Global Majority and Indigenous communities and nations have so far experienced the most severe impacts of climate change, but the oppression they experience in their daily lives makes it difficult for them to fully participate in the climate movement. Therefore, ending all forms of oppression is a crucial part of stopping climate change.

Marshall Ifeanyi
Trans-Ekulu, Enugu, Nigeria



COP26, IN GLASGOW, SCOTLAND • DANIEL VELA GODINEZ

Making a Family Friendly Environment

I helped lead a Sustaining All Life workshop at COP26 called “Making a Family Friendly Environment.” Parents, young people, and allies came together for a few hours of connection, fun, and creativity, much like at an RC family workshop.

The tone was human, connected, and caring. People of all ages from around the world got a chance to be together and celebrate the earth, living things, ourselves, and our connections with each other. I think the workshop was a huge contradiction to the hopelessness that many of us carry. I cried through whole parts of it, especially watching the people of all ages and from all over the world sing and play music.

Thirty of us made the workshop happen. Coordinating it was a bit of a challenge, but the work we did together created a space in which people celebrated the environment, sang, danced, made art, told stories, played games, and had a chance to discharge.

Marya Axner
Somerville, Massachusetts, USA

Eliminating Racism in Climate Activism

At COP26 I attended the Sustaining All Life workshop “Eliminating Racism in Climate Activism.” Rachel Noble (the Regional Reference Person for Oregon, USA) set a great tone for the event with her warm, light, and loving leadership. We all laughed when, after un-muting her microphone a bit late, she said, “That was for the lip readers in the crowd.” Rachel and other members of the leadership team spoke powerfully about the effects of racism in climate activism.

A friend (a white European-heritage woman) was delighted to meet people from all over the world in the mini-sessions and amazed at the hopefulness of working on racism in this way. (She is accustomed to just feeling bad and discouraged about it.) She said she had lots of “aha” moments.

Phyllis Beardsley
Vernon, British Columbia, Canada

Staying Hopeful While Facing the Climate Crisis

At COP26 the young people and young adults in the Sustaining All Life delegation led a workshop “Staying Hopeful While Facing the Climate Crisis.”

We introduced the tools of RC and our language liberation theory to young and young adult climate activists while we all played, laughed, connected, and looked at the scary realities for young people and young adults who are on the frontlines of the climate emergency.

We talked about how hope motivates humans to act, and we got to notice that we are not alone and can together face and discharge the feelings of hopelessness.

Nearly every young person and young adult who attended the workshop stayed afterward to hang out [spend relaxed unstructured time] and connect with us. And another climate justice group invited Sustaining All Life to lead a workshop just for them.

The event was a great success!



Onii Nwangwu-Stevenson
Lagos, Nigeria

Caroline New
Redcliffe, Bristol, England

Erin Huang-Schaffer
Brooklyn, New York, USA



J. EISENHEIM

No Human Enemies

I was in a Zoom meeting with the pastor of my church and a leadership group that was dealing with a sticky [difficult] issue. The pastor told us that she had been at a Zoom workshop earlier in the week titled “No Human Enemies.” She shared a perspective from the workshop—that people are not our enemies, that the real enemies are systems that divide and oppress us. She then appropriately applied that principle to the issue we were talking about, and it helped move things in a good direction.

The workshop, of course, was the workshop “No Human Enemies: A Strategy for Climate Justice Organizing” led by Sustaining All Life delegates at COP26. Thanks to everyone who was a part of that workshop—you made a difference! And thanks to all who encouraged me to let people know about our workshops.

Russ Vernon-Jones
Amherst, Massachusetts, USA

Every Group of People Is Important

Every group of people is important to the unity of the liberation forces. Even individuals from the oppressing classes are welcome if they really “throw in their lot with the people.”

In every successful struggle for people’s liberation . . . individuals from the oppressing classes made sacrifices and even gave their lives for liberation. The individual human being is not a complete prisoner of his or her class background.

Harvey Jackins
From page 51 of “The Theory of Liberation”
in *Rough Notes from Liberation I and II*

The COP26 Coalition Movement Assemblies

The COP26 Coalition Movement Assemblies ran for ninety minutes in the early evenings. The Coalition had been preparing for its Movement Assemblies, and People's Summit, for two years, and two of our delegation had participated in that effort. Several of our workshops were conducted within the People's Summit.

The Movement Assemblies began with a short report on the COP negotiations, from speakers who understood that market solutions cannot deliver the change that is needed. A passionate Sikh speaker explained that rich countries had agreed in Paris in 2015 to "address the issue" of compensation for countries that had already suffered "loss and damage" due to climate change. But year after year the rich nations, the countries with huge historical responsibility for climate change, had failed to agree on rules for deciding what is owed to whom.

We heard that many countries in the Global South carry an enormous burden of debt. The yearly interest they must pay makes it impossible for them to educate their citizens and look after [take care of] their people's health. When climate disasters occur, they have no funds for cleaning up, rebuilding houses, or dealing with landslides. So they must borrow more, and become poorer and more trapped in debt.

People got to talk with each other about what they had heard and discuss possible responses and strategies. The room was full of grief, outrage, and anger. Our work was evident and appreciated!

We heard a lot of distressing information at the Movement Assemblies, but it is always better

to know the truth. We learnt that many of the Green New Deals being put forward in the Global North involve new forms of colonialism. They sound progressive, but they aim to maintain the current way of life for people in the rich countries while people in poor countries (and poor people everywhere) continue to bear the main burden of climate change. We need to read, discharge, and think about these proposals.

There are grounds for hope. There has never been a time like this. There has never been a time when so many are telling the truth and refusing to accept climate injustice. There has never been a time with such public denunciation of new and old colonialism, and racism, on a global scale. There is now loud rejection of "extractivism," the idea that we have the right to go on taking and taking from the earth for the comfort of some while those

who work in the mines or oil fields and must live with the pollution pay the price.

Across the world people are mobilising. Organisations are springing up and refusing to continue with this unjust system. Climate and class injustice continue, environmentalists are still being murdered, and governments and corporations are still doing all they can to save the current system while pretending to reform it. However, their "greenwash" is being exposed. People who used to be quiet are shouting their anger. There are firm grounds for hope.

Onii Nwangwu-Stevenson
Lagos, Nigeria

Caroline New
Redcliffe, Bristol, England

Erin Huang-Schaffer
Brooklyn, New York, USA

Much of the RC Literature Now Available in PDF Format

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

Almost all the literature in English, and the most basic literature in many other languages, is now available in PDF format and can be purchased and downloaded from the Rational Island website at <www.rationalisland.com>.

Please note that orders for downloadable literature may take several days to process. You'll need to allow for this brief time lag when ordering.



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How to Lead Great Groups on the Climate Emergency

I led a webinar with the title “How to Lead Great Groups on the Climate Emergency without Knowing Very Much—You Can Do It!” I wanted people to lead more classes and groups on the climate emergency, especially within the RC Community.

Too many people are stopped from leading on this topic because they feel like they don’t know enough about the science or the politics of the climate emergency. I emphasized that getting people discharging about the topic is the most important thing to have happen in our classes, and we know how to do that. People need to discharge on what stops them from putting attention on the issue, from learning enough to have a conversation about it, from getting engaged, from talking about the many connections between the climate emergency and oppression.

I reminded people that having a hopeful tone is useful and worth discharging our way to finding. The key distresses people need to work on are the big ones from our early lives that are tangled with the current situation: fear, hopelessness, isolation, discouragement, and feeling powerless, insignificant, and overwhelmed. We know how to help people work on the early roots of these distresses.

The new Climate Change Initiative that Tim Jackins is circulating to the Pre-World and World Conferences [see page 3 of this *Present Time*] is the perfect topic for a group or class. A teacher can take people through the initiative, paragraph by paragraph, alternating between discussion, discharge, and thinking with attention. People can use parts of the initiative as a commitment and discharge on the implications of keeping that commitment.

Also, you can find useful information on these websites:

- <www.rc.org> Especially useful are <www.rc.org/climatechange>, <www.rc.org/publication/externalresources>, and <www.rc.org/coe>.
- <www.sustainingalllife.org> The handouts at <sustainingalllife.org/resources/> are excellent subjects for a class.

You will also find a recording of my webinar here: <www.rc.org/climatewebinarvideos>

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

Preparing to Play a Larger Role

From a talk by Tim Jackins at a workshop in New York City, USA, September 2021

This is one of those rare times in human history when existing conditions are dictating that society must change. It isn't simply that some people want this. The objective conditions are making it necessary that big changes happen.

Society *has* to change soon. We don't have to worry about the necessity—we get to concentrate on how to change it. How can we move ourselves and others in good directions? I think we will need to take action out in the open. Are we in good enough shape [condition] for that? It's not entirely clear. However, we do know how to get in good enough shape.

NOTICING WHAT WE NEED TO WORK ON

The challenges can make us feel like what is wrong is something new. However, what is wrong has been wrong for a long time. There is not some new evil that has shown up suddenly. Irrationality has deeply affected how human beings have lived together at least since societies formed. This has made it difficult for people to think broadly about everybody's interest. Our goal is to get everybody in shape to do that, and there are many things we can do in that direction.

As society collapses, there are lots of snags [obstacles], not all of them large. There is more restimulating pressure on all of us. We are more easily restimulated, including with each other. We are more often short tempered [easily angered]. We can feel justified in acting on how we feel, even though we know that acting based on restimulation doesn't lead to thoughtful results. It's good to notice what gets restimulated, so we know what to work on, so we won't be confused as the restimulations continue to happen.

DISCHARGING, AND THINKING OF NEW IDEAS

There will be times when it's important to move quickly. I don't think this is one of those times. We mostly feel far more urgent than is warranted. It's useful

to think of things ahead of time, so we have options in our minds, but we do have time to think. And we can discharge, so we have new responses rather than acting rigidly out of urgency.

It's time to prepare to play a larger role and enjoy playing a larger role. We can choose the perspective that we get to play a big role in one of the most significant changes that will ever happen to our species. We couldn't ask for something more challenging and interesting, and probably more satisfying, than to help humans in this period. And we have some of the best tools with which to do it.

Societies are in an interesting phase of development. So far, societies have always been coercive. Although people tried to build societies that weren't based on economic exploitation, ones that would benefit everybody and not exploit anyone, those societies were also coercive. People were made to do things. People didn't know of any other way to build a society. It seemed impossible to reach minds and achieve common agreement. The difficulties were recognized, but there weren't good solutions.

Enforcing new perspectives was supposed to transform minds. Changing the environment does help people step out of their distresses, but that alone is inadequate. People need to discharge the old distresses. Then it is much easier to think of new ideas and reach new agreements.

FACING OUR OLD DISTRESSES

Power is about human minds. It's about getting our minds back to where they can function—to where we can think about everything that needs to be thought about, consider everyone that needs to be considered, and communicate broadly with wider and wider sections of the world's population. Doing this is a big task. It has never been done well before, but we have a chance to take some good steps in that direction.

continued . . .



CASTLE ISLAND, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS, USA • ALAN EPSTEIN



GLACIER NATIONAL PARK, MONTANA, USA • KIRSTEN JOHNSON

... continued

How do we get ourselves in shape to enjoy the challenge? How do we learn from it? How do we give everyone the chance to move forward? I think we need to look at the distresses that were installed on us early in our lives—when we were helpless, didn't have physical ability, didn't have enough information to try things and put our thinking into action. (We collect information much more quickly when we can experiment.)

In the beginning we were dependent, and feelings of helplessness, hopelessness, and disappointment got installed. We felt like the world made no sense, that it was irrational, that it couldn't change. And our caretakers were not as we'd hoped they would be, because they had gone through so many hard times.

For me, feelings of "unchangingness" were installed right after I was born. The standard practice in the United States at the time was to keep a newborn baby in the hospital nursery for a week, alone with all the other unhappy new arrivals. During that week, distresses got frozen in my mind. I know to battle them, but it's still a battle.

We have material [distress] that got put in very early and is chronic. We are used to it [accustomed to it]. People have been used to it for centuries. It seems normal. It seems unavoidable. We live in the dull ache of it.

We try to hold it down. We try to dampen its volume and magnitude. If we ever turn and look behind us, we see it, but we try not to look. The distress recording says that we can't do anything about it, so we just drag on with it. We bend forward and pull it. We don't look back.

At some point, we in RC understand that we can discharge chronic distress and not just pull it along with us for the rest of our days. That's a hopeful thought. But to actually do the work, we can't stay in the dull ache of the chronic material. It can feel dangerous and unproductive, but we have to turn and look at it. We have to see how bad it was.

NOT RELIVING THE DISTRESS IN THE PRESENT

We have tried to live the best life we could while having accepted the limitations and defeat as permanent. In the past we lacked the resources to fully discharge the hurts and resolve them. But now we have created what was missing. We understand distress patterns. We have built relationships that are very different from the disappointing early ones. We understand more fully how to stand against distress.

I was watching some video clips of my father, from different decades. It was interesting to watch him age. It was also interesting to watch his perspective develop. He came to understand things more fully, just like we all have. He came to understand that our minds are more powerful than how we've felt them to be, and that we are functioning much better than we were before we began to discharge, even though we often don't "feel" that we are.

But even though there have been significant changes, we are still confused by the feelings from the past. I have recently noticed in myself and others that we can say the words, say that the distress is only in the past, but we still struggle to stand separate from the feelings and understand that they have nothing to do with us now—nothing, entirely nothing.

We can look at how big a struggle it was, how hard it was, and discharge on it without living it in the present. We know that. We say it over and over. We tell it to our fundamentals classes. We believe it. But I think we can get better at stepping away and watching ourselves. We can look at how hard things were at some points without reliving them in the present.

I think we have mostly gone after [pursued] and cut off the weeds at the level of the soil, leaving the roots in place. It's a lot more work to pull out the roots, to remove the distress entirely so it doesn't come back. It's tempting to rip it off at the soil level, so we can't see it and it doesn't affect things for the moment. But I think our job is to pull out the roots of the distresses that have plagued us for so long. Doing this means allowing the discharge process to operate. We can get stuck in explaining our distress instead of discharging it.

We also tend to say, "I feel," instead of "I felt." We automatically bring it forward, as if it were real now. It's possible to look at the distress and see how bad it was, and discharge the feelings, without giving our minds to it in the present. Our minds can look at even the worst things that happened to us without being consumed by them. It was real back then. It is only a recording now.

Discharging on Health-Related Issues

In this article I suggest ways to discharge on health-related issues. I've found that most RCers wait until they are ill or injured to discharge on them. My fervent wish is that every workshop put some attention on our health!

The following are my suggestions:

- Appreciate your health and your body! If you are breathing, you have some "health." And our bodies are miraculous and complex. They deserve daily appreciation.

- We don't need an academic degree in "RC health knowledge" to discharge about our health! Bring your health struggles to Co-Counseling sessions. Counsel your counselors so they can listen well and think about you and themselves.

- Read the RC journal *Well-Being*.

- Tell the story of your body. It's helpful to have a picture of our health over time. You can begin by reviewing your birth and then all that followed—childhood injuries, serious and minor; ordinary illnesses; big illnesses; family members' illnesses; and so on. These events can install recordings of fear and powerlessness that need to be discharged.

- Counsel on early sexual memories. It can be helpful to read the RC pamphlet *Counseling on Early Sexual Memories* and consider how early sexual hurts may have impacted your body and health.

- Much that happens in the world is hard on our bodies. We can counsel on the effects of colonialism, white supremacy, genocide, enslavement, and forced labor. Oppression affects us physically.

For example, how does sexism affect women's bodies (with high heels, hair dyes, plastic surgery), and men's oppression affect men's bodies (with war, overwork, "tough guy" recordings, conditioning that leads to resisting medical care)? Working-class people's exploitation? The oppression of Global Majority and Indigenous (GMI)* people?



J. EISENHEIM

People who have experienced war and forced migration have the highest rates of chronic illness. And of course, people from privileged groups also have experiences that affect their bodies.

* The peoples of Africa, Asia and the Pacific Islands, and South, Central, and Caribbean America, and Indigenous people, are over eighty percent of the global population. These people also occupy most of the global land mass.

Using the term "Global Majority and Indigenous (GMI)" for these people acknowledges their majority status in the world and interrupts how the dominant (U.S. and European) culture assigns them a minority status.

Many Global Majority and Indigenous people living in dominant-culture countries have been assimilated into the dominant culture—by force, in order to survive, in seeking a better life for themselves and their families, or in pursuing the economic, political, or other inclusion of their communities. Calling these people "Global Majority and Indigenous" contradicts the assimilation.

- Our health care providers are doing their best to think about us. They care and want to help, even though their brutal training, and dysfunctional health care systems, can confuse them. We need to be powerful in our relationships with them. We can ask questions, insist on good explanations, bring friends along to support us, and take notes. Remember to appreciate

your providers. (A few of mine have become teary [have cried a little] when I praised them.)

- Self-care can be a re-emergent project. I've rarely seen shifts in people's major health challenges unless they address their lifestyle—getting good nutrition, getting enough sleep, and so on.

- Discharge groups can support us to persist in prioritizing our health. Note that there's sometimes a glitch [problem] with "chronic illness support groups." Listening to people's suffering can restimulate the group and make it less effective. So make it a party! Lighten up! Make bad jokes about illness. Spend half the time on the hard feelings and the other half on finding ways to laugh. Be creative and silly.

continued . . .

COUNSELING PRACTICE

... continued

• Sessions are not opportunities to “treat” our health. We are Co-Counselors, not doctors or nurses. Our work is as counselors, not in curing or “fixing.” Sometimes we want to “help” a bit too much. We should not be giving each

other advice. We can look at and discharge any feeling that we need to “help” and rescue—most of us have that distress. We also need to keep discharging on being effective counselors.

• Nearly all of us are confused about pain. We are told that it is bad and should be covered up or stopped with drugs or distractions. My directions are “Hi there, pain!” “Yay, pain!” “Bring it on!” Pain gives us information. Love your pain. Make a big fuss over it. Touch and massage it. And discharge, discharge, discharge! A Co-Counselor, when giving birth, told her doula (midwife) these directions, and the midwife used them with her other (non-RC) clients.

Overwhelmed? You can start by focusing on just one or two of the above points for a few months and then move on to others.

Marsha Saxton
International Liberation Reference
Person for People with Disabilities
El Cerrito, California, USA
Marsha died on December 1, 2021



WILLIAM M. LOVING

Rapid Response Counseling

Most of my RC life has taken place in northern California, USA. The RC Region there has “rapid response” gatherings when there are major events—elections, “natural” disasters, mass shootings, and so on—that many people need to discharge about. Different people lead, depending on the topic. It’s been useful to turn to each other for discharge soon after the events.

I live in Puerto Rico now and have relationships with people who live in New Orleans (Louisiana, USA). I helped organize support for the RC Community there as they prepared to face the recent hurricane. I have also been thinking about the people I’m connected to in Haiti, who are recovering from a massive earthquake.

As the climate emergency deepens, more such emergencies will be happening at the same time. Among other challenges, scared and confused people will be committing acts of violence.

What if we organize ourselves in advance for rapid response counseling—being thoughtful about language, technology access, existing relationships? Then when disasters hit, we won’t need to pull together support at the moment.

There could be “rapid response coordinators” in the different geographic locations and a list of people who have agreed in advance to be called when the plan gets activated. Regional Reference People would know who their coordinator is and could activate the plan. A messaging tool could enable people to find Co-Counselors who have already agreed to be available.

Aurora Levins Morales
Maricao, Puerto Rico
Reprinted from the e-mail discussion
list for RC Community members

For All Co-Counselors

Speak, speak,
My dearest one,
To shed all your worries.

Cry, cry,
My dearest one,
To bid farewell
To all your sorrows.

Shake, shake,
My dearest one,
To leave all your terrors behind.

Laugh, laugh,
My dearest one,
To regain your equilibrium.

Yawn, yawn,
My dearest one,
To relinquish all your pain.

Listen, listen,
My dearest one,
To the chorus of love
from your family, friends, and allies.

Sleep, sleep,
My dearest one,
and
Dream of
the humane new world,
unfettered by
oppression and domination,
you are so part of creating
for all.

Awaken, awaken,
My dearest one,
To today's golden sunrise
and all its sweet promises everlasting.

Sojourner Truth
Seattle, Washington, USA



LIVERPOOL, ENGLAND • ROB VENDERBOS

You Are a Remarkable Being

You are a very remarkable being. You are not as big as a mountain or a planet or a star, but you are more complex than any of them. You can handle what goes on around you better than any other kind of being that we have any knowledge of. You can make things around you happen the way you want them to happen. You can remember billions of things from the past. You can think ahead to the things that will probably happen, and you can plan to interrupt them, change them, or prevent them from happening. You have a splendid body which is strong and capable. . . . There isn't anything in the world you can't do (that you would really want to do). You can enjoy everything you do.

Harvey Jackins
From page 195 of *The List*

A Letter from Prison

To Whom It May Concern,

Enclosed please find an order form for the entire back-issue sets of *The Caring Parent* and *Side by Side* and an institutional check for thirty-nine dollars, ten of which is designated for shipping (or other expenses). If I've sent an excess, please consider the remnant a donation. If I've sent an insufficient amount, send me an invoice that I may remit the balance.

Having read a dozen or more issues of *Present Time*, I've noticed a very low count of articles pertaining to incarceration and incarcerated RC Communities.

J—, our RC Community leader, has asked each of us to consider writing a short article on the challenges and benefits of Co-Counseling within our fences. What follows is my contribution. A brief list of common terms and their meanings and use precedes it.

If you publish any article on the topic, my hope is that you do so in both English and Spanish, for we have many Latino/Chicano brothers to "minister" to herein. Perhaps two hundred people out of twelve hundred here speak and read Spanish as well as or better than English. At other U.S. facilities—especially in the Southwest—the ratio is considerably higher. It feels almost rude to exclude by omission such a substantial fraction when the information could be extremely beneficial to them.

Some terms:

The streets: home, outside the gates, freedom (also "free world")

Touch down: to be released from incarceration

Free folk, free people, the people: anyone working in a prison who goes home every night

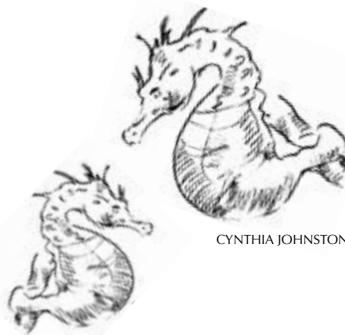
Jos (pronounced with a long "o"): sentence time, doing time, or kidding around ("josed out" means totally relaxed)

My people: any outside supporters, especially family and close friends

Offenders: the word used by the State to identify the group of people who have been convicted of felonies (formerly called "inmates" or "convicts")

I don't personally use the above terms.

I am thirty-five years old, white, male, Gay, and raised middle class and Catholic with raised-poor and pagan influences. I've been incarcerated for over sixteen years, almost eleven of which have been at my current facility.



My prison is in a rural location. It is unusual in that it has a fully open yard—meaning that (under non-pandemic rules) it is simultaneously accessible by ten dormitories, each with almost eighty men—and it has an astonishingly low rate of violence, physical or sexual.

Our prison RC Community is small—usually fewer than ten men.

There are no women in it, and it is all white, though not by design.

I've been with RC since 2015, when J— taught me the fundamentals course. J— has taught several fundamentals classes since he's been here and at least three since I've been involved. The benefits of Co-Counseling within our somewhat regimented environment are obvious to us.

Our days revolve around head count, work, and meals—all at designated times. Thus we can easily plan Co-Counseling sessions, groups, and classes around everyone's (mostly) identical schedule and ensure ample time for any event.

Considering that prisons are filled with people who, let us say, "don't fit the mold of conventional society," and that all of us nonetheless do "fit" *most* of the mold, prison gives us the opportunity to look my favorite Harvey Jackins quote in the face and live it, minute by minute: "Every single human being, when the entire situation is taken into account, has always, at every moment of the past, done the very best that he or she could do, and so deserves neither blame nor reproach from anyone, including self. This, in particular, is true of you." To remember to love the human regardless of the pattern, and to love ourselves and remember that we, too, are loved and loveable, is often difficult but totally worth it.

Prison RC is challenging. Between our rules (official and unwritten) and our "mental health" system, many forms of discharge are discouraged or forbidden as is

some of the standard RC closeness. Here are a few examples:

Tears: In a private RC session “out there,” crying is encouraged. “In here,” it’s liable to result in a paper gown, a concrete bed, an eight-by-ten-foot cell, and a seventy-two-hour “suicide watch,” compliments of our “mental health” professionals.

Yelling: “Out there,” yelling and vulgarity can denote anger discharge. “In here,” they mean being put in an eight-by-ten-foot cell for “fighting.”

Laughter: A lot of embarrassment and light fear is discharged with laughter. But in here, “excessive laughter without apparent cause” can result in an investigation for “intoxication.”

Touch (in any form): Counselors and clients “out there” often hold hands. That’s sure to earn a rule violation in here—or possibly trigger homophobic patterns from passersby.

Privacy: As they say in New York City (USA), “Fugiddaboudit. Not ‘happenin’.” [“Forget about it. It’s not happening.”] We can generally find a spot to have sessions and classes—subject to interruption and eavesdropping.

The RC “no-socializing” guideline doesn’t apply to us. We (our current RCers) all knew each other before RC. We work together, eat together, even live in the same dorm (five of the seven current members anyway). Four of us are in one of the prison bands; two are in the church choir.

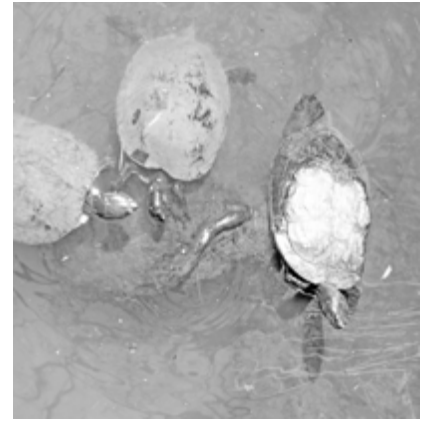
Despite the challenges, I’ve personally gained more than a modicum of control over my anger, my depression, my sex issues, my “ADHD” and “OCD” [“attention-

deficit/hyperactivity disorder” and “obsessive-compulsive disorder”], and my racist tendencies. I’ve incorporated RC concepts into my meditation with excellent results.

It’s often said “in here” that “you can’t find friends in prison.” If that’s true, then I suppose I haven’t made new friends—instead I’ve found a new family.



C—
USA



DIANE SHISK

*Traducción al español del artículo anterior:
Spanish translation of the preceding article:*

Una carta desde la cárcel

A quien corresponda,

Adjunto un formulario de pedido para los juegos completos de números atrasados de *The Caring Parent* y *Side by Side* y un cheque institucional por \$39.00, diez dólares de los cuales están designados para el envío (u otros gastos). Si envío una cantidad excesiva, por favor considere el remanente como una donación. Si envío una cantidad insuficiente, envíeme una factura, para que pueda remitir el saldo.

Habiendo leído una docena o más de números de *Present Time*, he notado un número muy bajo de artículos relacionados con el encarcelamiento y las Comunidades de RC encarceladas.

J—, el líder de nuestra Comunidad de RC, nos ha pedido a cada uno de nosotros que consideremos la posibilidad de escribir un breve artículo sobre los retos y beneficios del Co-Counseling dentro de nuestras vallas. Lo que sigue es mi contribución. Una breve lista de términos comunes y su uso y sus significados precederá a esto.

Si publican algún artículo sobre el tema, espero que lo hagan tanto en inglés como en español, ya que tenemos muchos hermanos latinos/chicanos a los que “ministrar” aquí. Aquí hay quizás doscientas personas de 1200 que hablan y leen el español tan bien o mejor que el inglés. En otras instalaciones—especialmente en el suroeste de EE.UU.—la proporción es considerablemente mayor. Resulta casi grosero excluir por omisión a una fracción tan importante cuando la información podría ser extremadamente beneficiosa para ellos.

Términos:

Las calles: hogar, fuera de las puertas, libertad (también “mundo libre”)

Touch down: ser liberado del encarcelamiento

continúa ...

COUNSELING PRACTICE

... continúa

Free folk, free people, the people: cualquier persona que trabaje en una prisión y se vaya a casa cada noche

Jos (pronunciado con una "o" larga): sentencia tiempo, hacer tiempo, o bromear ("josed out" significa totalmente relajado)

Mi gente: cualquier apoyo externo, especialmente la familia y los amigos cercanos

Delinquentes: palabra utilizada por el Estado para identificar al grupo de personas que han sido condenadas por delitos graves (antes llamados "reclusos" o "convictos")

Personalmente no utilizo los términos anteriores.

Tengo treinta y cinco años, soy blanco, varón, gay, y fui criado como clase media y católico, con influencias tanto de crianza en la pobreza como paganas. He estado encarcelado durante más de dieciséis años, de los cuales casi once han sido en mi centro actual.

Mi prisión está en un lugar rural. Es inusual porque tiene un patio totalmente abierto—lo que significa que (según las normas no pandémicas) es accesible simultáneamente por diez dormitorios, cada uno con casi ochenta hombres—y tiene un índice asombrosamente bajo de violencia, física o sexual.

Nuestra Comunidad de RC es pequeña, normalmente menos de diez hombres. No hay mujeres en ella, y es toda blanca, aunque no por diseño.

He estado con RC desde 2015, cuando J— me enseñó el curso de fundamentos. J— ha enseñado varias clases de fundamentos desde que está aquí, y al menos tres desde que estoy involucrado. Los beneficios del Co-Counseling dentro de nuestro entorno algo regimentado son obvios para nosotros.

Nuestros días giran en torno a ser contados, al trabajo y a las comidas, todo ello en horarios designados. Por lo tanto, podemos planificar fácilmente las sesiones de Co-Counseling, los grupos y las clases en torno a los horarios (en su mayoría) idénticos de todos y garantizar un tiempo amplio para cualquier evento.



YUKO HIBINO

Teniendo en cuenta que las prisiones están llenas de personas que, digamos, "no encajan en el molde" de la sociedad convencional, y que todos nosotros, sin embargo, "encajamos" en la mayor parte del molde, la prisión nos da la oportunidad de mirar a la cara mi cita favorita de Harvey Jackins y vivirla, minuto a minuto: "Todo ser humano, si se tiene en cuenta toda la situación, ha hecho siempre, en cada momento del pasado, lo mejor que podía hacer, y por eso no merece ni culpa ni reproche de nadie, ni de sí mismo. Esto, en particular, es cierto para ti." Recordar que hay que amar al ser humano independientemente del patrón, amarnos a nosotros mismos y recordar que nosotros también somos amados y amables, es a menudo difícil, pero merece totalmente la pena.

La RC de la prisión es un reto. Entre nuestras normas (oficiales y no escritas) y nuestro sistema de "salud mental", muchas formas de descarga están desaconsejadas o prohibidas, al igual que algunos de los acercamientos estándar de la RC. He aquí algunos ejemplos:

Lágrimas: En una sesión privada de RC "ahí fuera," se fomenta el llanto. "Aquí," es probable que resulte en una bata de papel, una cama de hormigón, una celda de dos por tres metros y una "vigilancia de suicidio" de setenta y dos horas, cortesía de nuestros profesionales de la "salud mental."

Gritos: "Ahí fuera", los gritos y la vulgaridad pueden denotar una descarga de ira. "Aquí", significan que te metan en una celda de dos por tres por "pelear".

Risas: La vergüenza y los miedos leves se descargan así. Pero la "risa excesiva sin causa aparente" puede dar lugar a una investigación por "intoxicación."

Tocar (en cualquier forma): Los consejeros y los clientes "por ahí" suelen tomarse de la mano. Eso es seguro que se ganará una violación de las reglas aquí—o posiblemente desencadenar patrones homofóbicos de los transeúntes.

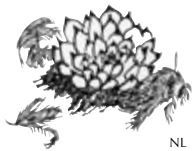
La privacidad: Como dicen en Nueva York (EEUU), "Fugiddaboutit. Not happenin'." ["Olvídate de eso. No está ocurriendo."] Por lo general, podemos encontrar un lugar para celebrar las sesiones y las clases -sujeto a interrupciones y escuchas.

La directriz del RC de "no socializer" no se aplica a nosotros. Todos nosotros (nuestros actuales miembros de RC) nos conocíamos antes de RC. Trabajamos juntos, comemos juntos, incluso vivimos en la misma residencia (cinco de los siete miembros actuales). Cuatro

de nosotros formamos parte de una de las bandas de música de la prisión y dos están en el coro de la iglesia.

A pesar de los desafíos, personalmente he ganado más que un mínimo de control sobre mi ira, mi depresión, mis problemas sexuales, mi “TDAH” y “TOC” [“trastorno por déficit de atención/hiperactividad” y “trastorno obsesivo-compulsivo”], y mis tendencias racistas. He incorporado los conceptos de la RC a mi meditación con excelentes resultados.

A menudo se dice “aquí” que “no puedes encontrar amigos en la cárcel.” Si eso es cierto, supongo que no he hecho nuevos amigos, sino que he encontrado una nueva familia.



C—
EE.UU.
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Being on a Tech Team Is Educational-Change Work

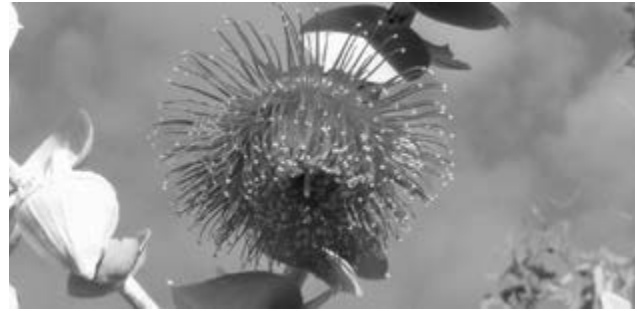
I recently had the opportunity to serve as the tech team lead for my RC Community’s Area workshop. It was my first time leading a tech team, and it occurred to me that being on a tech team is educational-change work.

Especially when hosting on Zoom, we on a tech team must think quickly and do tasks with which we have varying levels of experience. And we do this publicly, while the workshop waits for us. It can feel like being in school—like being put on the spot [expected to do something] and asked to show our skills and abilities—and remind us of having made mistakes in front of others in the past.

Workshop leaders and attendees are generally relaxed, patient, and calm. They allow the tech team to take the time they need to do their tasks. This is a big contradiction to the hurts that many of us experienced as learners.

I’m looking forward to more Co-Counseling sessions on having been under pressure to not make mistakes and learning in front of others as a young person.

Hannah McHugh
Seattle, Washington, USA
Reprinted from the RC e-mail discussion
list for leaders of educational change



EUCALYPTUS FLOWER, IN PERTH, AUSTRALIA • FIONA MORAN

How I Came to Understand RC

I learned about RC as a teenager in the 1980s and adamantly refused to have anything to do with it. As a teen-aged male, I was proud not to appear like I needed to be connected to my feelings.

Just before I turned twenty-one, my mom was diagnosed with brain cancer and given two weeks to live. When I heard the news, I went into the hospital room washroom and cried for the first time in ten years. It was after that experience that I decided to give RC a try.

My mom ended up having surgery and lived for another two years. One night when she was back in hospital, I visited her, and she was in bad shape [condition]. She asked me to put a pillow over her head so she could be finished with the agony of her illness. I crawled into bed with her, and we both had big cries, after which she no longer felt suicidal and was instead appreciative of my company.

Sometimes experiences leave us unshakable in our understandings and beliefs. That night with my mom has always been for me the most important lesson about what we in RC call the “discharge” process and how it can work. I have had several such lessons throughout my years of practicing RC. Some have happened in ongoing groups of Co-Counselors, often over many years, as we’ve addressed liberation issues and uncovered and resolved emotional damage caused by the oppressions that we have been targeted with and that have caused us to target others.

I see the world as a complicated place with much upset and irrationality, the results of which are increasingly harsh. RC is key to my keeping my mind as clear as possible while staying engaged with the people and issues that are important to me.

Phil Rees
Toronto, Ontario, Canada

Discharging While Making Music

At a recent Musicians' Workshop led by Heather Hay (International Liberation Reference Person for Musicians), I led a topic group on discharging while making music. There were a dozen of us. We were amateurs and professionals, young adults and elders. I gave some information and counseled each musician.

I've found that a performance goes best when I choose to be counselor to the audience, not vice-versa. For me to be able to think flexibly about the audience in the moment, I need to have discharged a lot on fear of being judged, terror of failure, competitive feelings ("better than," "worse than," or both), shyness, grief, isolation, and current or old physical injuries. In counseling other musicians, I've learned that it's good to slow everything down and not let them jump to "performing." It's about getting to the feelings, not jumping over them to function. The conditioning to perform has been ferocious.

I have discharged terror for many years now and it shows. I used to get up on stage at a music camp I co-founded to perform for my students and the other musicians. I remember that one year I could suddenly see every face in the audience and feel connected to and think about each person. The audience noticed. Afterward many of them came to talk to me about the big change. I had finally discharged enough terror that I could "be in the same room" with my audience and have my heart wide open. I could share my music as my vulnerable and powerful self.

MUSICIANS AND YAWNING

We Co-Counselors know about yawning. Yawning is amazingly

useful! And I've learned a lot about its usefulness for musicians.

We humans have two autonomic nervous systems, the parasympathetic and the sympathetic. They operate, like our beating hearts, without thought. They are always in balance, one up and one down, like a teeter-totter or seesaw.

When we get scared, the sympathetic system floods the body with adrenaline. The heart beats faster and harder. Dry mouth. Tight muscles. And restricted circulation in the extremities.

During an adrenaline rush, we have more difficulty accessing our flexible intelligence. "Stage fright"! Stomach in a knot. Our mind "frozen." Shaky hands that can't make contact. Audience out of focus and disconnected from us. (Many performers take drugs to deal with stage fright.)

When the parasympathetic system swings up, the adrenaline flood subsides. Circulation returns to the extremities. Digestion begins again. Flexible thinking returns. *We can trigger the parasympathetic by yawning!* Yawning before a performance can derail stage fright. I teach all my students to yawn.

I sometimes yawn on stage. (I'm a folk singer and can get away with more [have more room to try things] than many performers.) When I feel a yawn rising, I let the audience know: "Oops! I need to yawn. Help me by yawning along. You'll get a better concert that way."

Flip Breskin

Bellingham, Washington, USA



KATIE KAUFFMAN

Practicing an Instrument

Learning to play an instrument takes many hours of practice. At the Musicians' Workshop [see previous article], I led a topic group on "practicing." Those of us in the group had a lot of feelings about it. Some felt that they never practiced enough. Others avoided it. No one seemed to love it. Isolation was a big feeling for most of us.

I remember "practicing" many things when I was a young person—jumping rope, sewing, singing a song. I didn't regret the work involved.

As I got older, practicing an instrument became more difficult. Working alone on my technique felt isolating. Competition patterns started to interfere, and I became nervous about performing. Practicing became work, not play.

I recently started learning to play the piano. I have discharged a lot about practicing and notice a big change in how I feel. Now when I sit down to play, I have much more attention! I feel curious and interested most of the time, and my hands are more relaxed. I still work hard, but it doesn't feel like work.

Tam Kistler

Delmar, New York, USA

“What Works Is Connection and Discharge”

From a talk at the European Family Workers’ Conference

Our societies punish people when they show their big distresses. How many of us were hit as children? Yelled at? Shunned? How many were isolated? How many were told “go to your room”? How many were publicly humiliated? It seems that many of us were treated this way. Yet punishment does not help people. It breaks connection—and connection is what allows people to discharge the hurts that cause distressed behavior.

What works is connection and discharge. We have learned that if we stop someone from doing something that hurts themselves, others, or the environment, and stay close to them, often they will discharge and think better as a result.

Those of us who have children with big fears know that sometimes we must hold them and say “no” to keep them from hurting themselves or somebody else. When we move in, with attention and caring, but do not allow the hurtful action, things can change.

We can also set positive limits: “Yes, you are going to do that because I know you really can or want to.” I remember a family worker whose daughter was learning to play the piano. When it came time to practice, the daughter wanted to quit. Her mom had a lot of feelings about it. Before trying to counsel her daughter, she had many Co-Counseling sessions on not wanting to dominate her.

Finally, after a lot of discharge, she could say to her daughter, “We are going to practice the piano now.” She could say it firmly and with kindness. She also didn’t leave her daughter alone to practice. She stayed with her. Her daughter had a huge session. Of course, it wasn’t just about practicing the piano.

Chuck Esser

*International Commonality
Reference Person for Family Work
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, USA*

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



LK



PARIS, FRANCE • LYNDALL KATZ

Adopting an Attitude of Full Respect

So, if, as a listener, you can adopt an attitude of full respect, let the person you are listening to feel that whatever they have to say is important, you will be more effective.

What you hear should be listened to with respect, because either it will be thinking, and everyone’s thinking is worthy of respect, or it will be some distress that the person is trying to voice in order to get it out there where they can see it and begin to take it apart, and that’s very deserving of respect also.

If you can adopt an attitude of respect and keep adopting it until it becomes second nature, becomes a good habit, then your listening becomes more powerful.

Harvey Jackins

From page 14 of *The Art of Listening*



SUE YOSHIWARA

Grandparents, Please Share Your Experiences!

I'd like to introduce myself as the Information Coordinator for Grandparents. Being in this role means I've agreed to keep a list of grandparents and send out occasional e-mails so that we can communicate with each other.

If you are a grandparent, let us hear from you! Here are some questions—feel free to respond to any or all of them. Let's share our experiences with each other.

1. What's great about being a grandparent (specify whether you are a grandmother or a grandfather)?
2. Where do you struggle, or what is hard about being a grandparent?
3. What is your situation? How often do you see your grandchildren? Do you have access to them? Do you function in a parenting or caregiving role?
4. What is your relationship like with the parent(s) of your grandchildren?
5. Do you meet with other grandparents for support and connection (inside or outside of RC)?
6. How has your participation in RC been useful to you as a grandparent?

Let us hear from you! What is it like for you as a grandparent?

With appreciation,

Randi Freundlich
Somerville, Massachusetts, USA
randifreundlich@gmail.com

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

About Me as a Grandmother

I'm a grandmother to two boys, ages two and almost four. Being a grandmother is an opportunity to love fully these young humans and to bring everything I know to support them and their parents. When I first became a grandmother, I heard from others that we get all the benefits without the responsibility of constant caregiving. It's true!

Being in RC has helped me as a grandmother in many ways. I have taken to Co-Counseling sessions my feelings about wanting more connection with my grandchildren than what has seemed to make sense for their parents. I have worked on not giving advice unless I'm asked, on backing [supporting] the parents fully, and on following their lead in everything, even when I might not agree with their choices. It can feel more interesting to put my attention on the children and prioritize my relationships with them. However, their parents are facing parents' oppression and not getting enough support and validation for all the work that they do. So prioritizing my relationships with them has been important.

I'm proud of what I've done to nurture my relationships with my son and daughter-in-law. It has taken a lot of work to understand what will work best for them, to decide that what they want comes first, and to keep my own feelings out of the situation. Having sessions with other grandmothers has been useful!

Parents' oppression and my own internalized sexism can intersect. When I'm visiting the family, I can feel pulled to do more of the work of cooking, caretaking, and so on. Seeing the parents' oppression, I want to jump in and help as much as I can, and it's hard to think about what makes sense for me.

Another challenge is that I don't live in the same city as my grandchildren. Seeing them requires flying there or driving for several days. It feels hard that I cannot be a more regular presence in their lives and help their parents more.

I was fortunate to have learned RC before I became a parent. What I learned helped me to support my son, to listen to him discharge, and to understand both young people's and parents' oppression. I also had other parents I could discharge with about the joys and challenges of parenting. Now there is nothing more rewarding than watching my son as a father. He has great attention for his sons, can play well with them, and allows them to discharge (although sometimes only for short periods of time). Of course he has struggles as a parent, but I can see that he has internalized a lot of basic RC ideas.

R—
USA

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

Really *Being* with My Grandchildren

I love watching my daughter be a parent. I am filled with love for her as I see her with her three children (ages ten, seven, and three). And I love being able to wholeheartedly love the young people without distraction, now that I'm out from under the heavy weight of parents' oppression that comes with the twenty-four-hour-a-day job.

I used to live ten hours away from my daughter and her children, but two weeks ago my husband and I moved to the same city where they live. We now live in a small house right beside my daughter's house. I have seen more of her and her family in the last two weeks than in the previous two years! We provide respite for the parents now and then, but mostly we just live in the backyard, available for visiting. The young people move back and forth between the two houses with ease.

Re-evaluation Counselling has helped me to really *be* with my grandchildren, to give them good attention, to have fun playing with them, and to not get confused by "bad" behaviour. A phrase I heard recently is "connection, not correction." I love it!

Being with them also helps me remember my own childhood. I've had great Co-Counselling sessions on wishing I'd had an available and loving grandparent and ally when I was young.

P—
Canada

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



KATIE KAUFFMAN

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, 19370 Firlands Way North, Shoreline, Washington 98133-3925, USA.

Thanks very much!

Rational Island Publishers

We Need a Change of Consciousness about Crying

What is it like for me as a grandparent? I am hurting. I love my granddaughter, so much that it hurts. I had closed my heart off to love—and here, I couldn't! My sister has said that she felt that her grandchild was her own child. Me, too.

The hardest part is that the baby's crying is not understood or welcomed. I have listened to my granddaughter cry three major times when the parents were not around. I could not see her crying and do nothing. Standing by and not doing anything when she was rightfully and honestly asking to cry and scream was unbearable.

When her parents first brought her home from the hospital, she cried for six hours straight. At 6:00 a.m. my son asked me to come. That day was intense and ended so much better than it had begun. I felt that I had brought them the *gift of discharge*. But still, it did not (yet) make a dent in their allowing the baby to cry.

I visited them the day after writing this and had a much awaited "back and forth" [conversation] with my daughter-in-law that "cleared the air" [ended the misunderstanding between us]. I put out that as mother-in-law and daughter-in-law we can be the best of allies for each other, despite any folklore to the contrary. I appreciated both of us for the great lengths we had gone to be loving to each other and the baby.

I am reaching out to organizations that deal with infants and babies, and to parents' groups, and giving talks about listening to discharge. I have asked friends to set aside twelve minutes for me to address them seriously, professionally, about discharge and have had huge successes with this.

We need a widespread change of consciousness in our societies about crying. Even in RC, I think we are only beginning to explore discharge.

J—

USA

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

Being a Grandmother Is Pure Joy!

I am a grandmother to my daughter's child, who is nine-and-a-half months old. Being a grandmother is pure joy! I see the miracle of life unfolding in my granddaughter's development. I don't have the same worries or lack of time that I had during my own children's young years. At least some of the guilt, confusion, isolation, exhaustion, and fear I experienced as a parent is behind me.

I am seventy years old, and I sometimes struggle to be physically agile as my granddaughter's ally in play and other activities. So I work out [exercise] to be fit for the job!

It is hard to hold back on [resist] expressing my opinions. I have led

babies' workshops and a babies' class in RC, and I often think that I know what is right and what my daughter and her partner should do.

I am learning how to support them without taking over [dominating]. Even where I disagree, I am showing my respect and support for them. I give them "time off" to be together. I also bring a full family meal each week for us all to eat together as well as extra portions of foods I have cooked at home. I often do laundry, housecleaning, and dishes when I am at their house. I have come along on medical appointments and errands. Sometimes I stay overnight, to be of help. Sometimes I arrive on short notice to help for

several days at a time. I have tried to organize my entire family to support them.

I meet with other grandparents in an online RC "special time" class and with friends who are grandparents. We share photos, successes, and stories.

I can discharge! I keep moving through the daily ups and downs. I have a big perspective and can see where to put my attention as a source of support as well as how to recover from my hurts to be my true self.

G—
USA

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

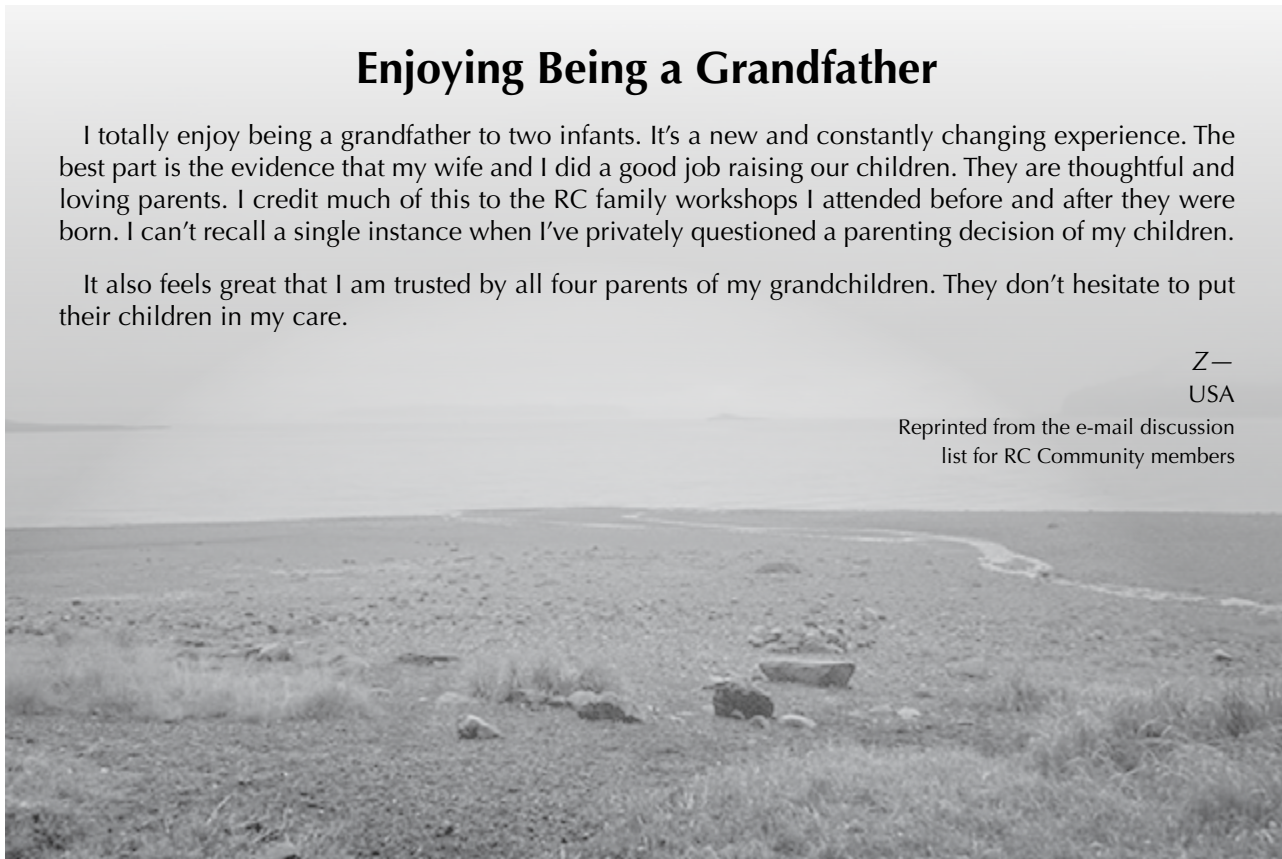
Enjoying Being a Grandfather

I totally enjoy being a grandfather to two infants. It's a new and constantly changing experience. The best part is the evidence that my wife and I did a good job raising our children. They are thoughtful and loving parents. I credit much of this to the RC family workshops I attended before and after they were born. I can't recall a single instance when I've privately questioned a parenting decision of my children.

It also feels great that I am trusted by all four parents of my grandchildren. They don't hesitate to put their children in my care.

Z—
USA

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



DOUGLAS, ALASKA, USA • GEORGE PARTLOW



JOANNA VAUGHN

My Story Is Different

For reasons made clearer below, I have often felt distanced from the other grandparents I have relationships with. Many of my friends had children young. They expected to see them grow up and marry and then to participate in their grandchildren's lives.

My story is different. I married late. I married because I wanted to have a child, and I was blessed with two children. My husband had a daughter. She was ten years old when her father and I married and fourteen years old when I adopted her. Then a month after I adopted her, I gave birth to my second daughter.

I became a mom at forty. Four years later, my adopted daughter had a child, and I became a grandmother at age forty-four. Then she had three more children over the next several years. My birth daughter was nineteen when the last grandchild was born, so the demands of parenting affected what I could offer as a grandparent.

My older daughter and her children have lived in a different class context than my birth child. I have given financial support at points to all the grandchildren but have focused mostly on supporting their mom, both financially and emotionally, trusting that that would help overall. It has, and she has done an amazing job as a working, poor, single mom.

One of the most important decisions I ever made, beyond committing to discharging everything I could to be able to play a good role in this unconventional situation, was to see all of these wonderful people—daughters, grandchildren, and now three great-grandchildren—as my teachers.

M—
USAReprinted from the e-mail discussion
list for RC Community members

Being Supportive of My Granddaughter's Parents

I'm a grandmother to a three-year-old girl who lives in another country. Due to COVID restrictions I have not met her, but I see videos and photos.

I have a positive relationship with my son (her dad), thanks to time spent thinking and feeling about racism, classism, and parents' oppression when my sons were young. I am still learning about racism and the impact of colonialism on my granddaughter's family in her country.

Re-evaluation Counseling has helped me be supportive of my granddaughter's parents. They are the best parents they can be. They combine traditions with new ways and ideas to make their daughter's life go better. And they love their daughter fiercely.

O—
USAReprinted from the e-mail discussion
list for RC Community members

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As societies' failures continue and show themselves more openly, and as we in RC continue to offer what we have developed in order to aid minds in developing new and equitable solutions, each of us needs to be able to proudly talk about our theory and the tools we have developed. We each need to do this in our own voice from our own mind. This will take facing and discharging some of the distresses that have kept us small and kept us from being proud of the important work we have done so far.

K Webster (Regional Reference Person in Manhattan, New York, USA) and I spent a good deal of time working on a version of this (see below). Would you please work on yours?

Tim Jackins

Who We Are

We are a grassroots global organization of peer co-counselors within locally led communities, each community composed of people seeking to build better lives.

We are focused primarily on one-to-one peer assistance: listening and allowing each other to find our own thinking about everything that affects us.

We are increasingly confident in our belief that all people are inherently good, have a caring and cooperative nature, have a sense of connection, enjoy life, and are flexibly intelligent.

This is true of all of us except when we are under the effects of unresolved past harms that have become etched in our minds.

There is real damage in the world, and much of it is done by people. We do not excuse it away. Instead, we look at it, try to illuminate it, and work to heal the individual damage and lay bare the structures and institutions that ensure such damage continues.

We do not blame or shame or punish people for the damage they carry. Instead, we offer an effective means to work to repair it.

We try to care openly and unreservedly for one another in theory and, as we are able, in practice.

We do not seek to limit the care and respect we extend to one another or to anyone else.

We do good, interesting, dynamic things. We keep thinking and working, without let-up, to remove our own confusions; to get smarter, more alive, happier, and more effective in ending anything that harms others or ourselves.



KATIE KAUFFMAN

We have moved against racism, sexism, the oppression of young people, and every other oppression we've learned of in order to free ourselves and everyone else from the effects of those oppressions and the internalizing of the messages of those oppressions. We have done this work for decades and will continue until it is done.

OUR THEORY AND PRACTICE

RC theory was developed from direct observations of what works in everyday life to help people be more themselves. We use the inborn human processes connected to laughing, yawning, crying, and so on, that allow the release of painful feelings and resolve the rigid behaviors left from hurtful incidents. We've come to be confident that it is these innate processes that resolve those hurts. We share our individual gains from using these processes to continue to develop our theory and offer it to others who are interested.

We make room for the release of painful emotion. In short: people cry, and we let them.

Our long experience has been that this "room" allows someone to recover from whatever harsh things happened to them.

Without opportunities to recover, those harsh incidents accumulate in our minds, and we become more easily “set off” by a larger variety of incidents. As many others have noticed, it can become harder to differentiate what’s happening in the present from feelings we’ve had many times before.

We have developed policies on liberation that serve as a starting point to continue thinking on many liberation issues. These policies are always draft policies, because we assume that we will think more clearly as we work through confusions and misinformation and as we become more diverse globally. This has been borne out in practice.

Though people find us primarily through one-to-one communication, we have been accessible to the general public—with a website and projects online that are available to anyone with access to the Internet.

We make allowance for the great variations in what is tolerated regarding personal or political expressions, both on the Internet and in public life in the different countries and societies of our members.

We freely offer what we’ve developed to anyone who has interest. People use what they choose.

People use it in various facets of their lives, including while they are active in other groups that they are a part of, in the same way that any good idea from any source is shared.

Many people choose to use in their work and in their lives various pieces of our theory and practice (such as taking turns in listening pairs). RC’s interest is in providing tools to groups and individuals that could be useful for achieving their own goals.

We find that these ideas are used most effectively in an RC community setting where we have common commitments and understandings.

Not everyone wishes to make such commitments, nor is it necessary in order for them to benefit from the perspectives and practices of RC.

We don’t assume the RC community is a good fit for everyone.

THE CURRENT CONDITIONS

Brutal systemic mistreatment, carried out by individuals, themselves soaked in early mistreatment, has been an ongoing feature of the harsh systems we live in. To help cloak this brutality, society offers compelling distractions, such as addictions to drugs, sex, food, and so on. Those distractions can only offer to temporarily obscure the hurts. Many of us become so worn down by oppressions and other hurts that in order to tolerate our existence we rely on the distractions and become numb to life.

Almost everyone has been a target of or witnessed mistreatment (as a child if at no other time). This can deeply affect us and can lead to our mistreating others or going passive in the presence of mistreatment.

All of us have this happen to us.

In addition, some groups are also viciously and relentlessly the focal point of institutionalized and structural systems of oppression that are constant and overt. Some oppressions are still accepted as “normal” or “right.” Oppressions can also be covert and wait in the wings [wait until they’re “needed”]. Those oppressions are ready to be hauled out to distract people from the real causes of difficulty in our societies.

We think that trying to create a hierarchy of “better or worse” oppression is pointless and diversionary. Any oppression is inhuman and not to be tolerated, though different oppressions serve different purposes in the continuation of the oppression of everyone.

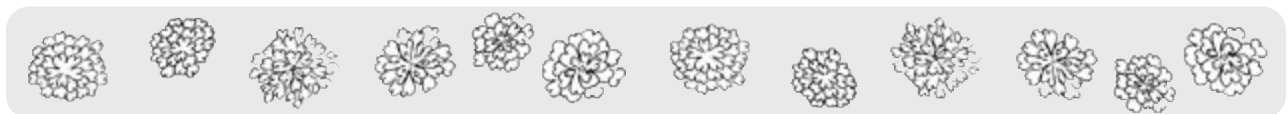
We believe every oppression is wrong and is to be opposed.

Ongoing systems of mistreatment leave everyone fearful of further injury, terrified enough to attack others, hopeful of redirecting mistreatment by assailing others, or quaking on the sidelines hoping not to be the next victim.

Our unjust societies not only ensure that people get hurt, but they also try to make sure that no one can “get up” again.

We can be made to feel “small” and petty and jealous and fearful and insignificant and wrong and vengeful and insecure and watchful and mistrustful.

continued . . .



LK



KALAMUNDA, PERTH, AUSTRALIA • FIONA MORAN

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Among the worst of the effects is that almost all of us can begin to feel utterly alone, can be left with the feeling that there is no one who cares enough about us or our people to help.

Our insecurity is wrought from the damage done by large systems of oppression as well as by individuals (this includes all of us) who themselves have been crushed by the oppression. This insecurity has made it difficult to achieve a unity of purpose even in battles that threaten all of us and life as we know it.

Our experience has convinced us that this damage we have suffered obscures the natural understanding and common wish of people for friendship across barriers—the same wish for connection and relationship to others that we can see in unhurt infants.

These systems of mistreatment must be ended and mechanisms found to heal the damage from the mistreatment. Attempts to shift these systems matter. Attempts to heal from them matter. As have many others, we have joined with those attempts for decades.

MOVING FORWARD IN DIFFICULT TIMES

We live in societies that oppress people, and we are all affected. The effects shape us and lead us to make mistakes. We are all challenged to not pass on the damage from abuse, oppression, and other hurts that we've absorbed. When any of us do so, it is counter to our deepest wishes and goals. Using the theory and practice of RC has shown itself to be a way to stop the passing on of hurts.

ADDRESSING SOCIETAL OPPRESSIONS

We have a history of meeting in different groups, each a target of a particular oppression, to share experiences, do the counseling work to resolve the hurts that have come from the oppression, refute the misinformation contained in the oppression, and reclaim ourselves. Out of these gatherings, policies are created to provide accurate information to the RC communities and to others. These policies affirm who we are and what our expectations are of one another.

We also meet as allies to those targeted by an oppression: to strengthen our ability to listen respectfully and without defensiveness, to become more solid in the role of ally, and to learn to act on behalf of ending oppressions.

ADDRESSING AND SAFEGUARDING OUR PERSONAL INTERACTIONS

RC has clear guidelines to help people avoid unaware behaviors that could cause hurt to others in RC. These guidelines include: requirements to be certified to teach, no use of alcohol or drugs by certified RC teachers, prohibiting alcohol or drugs in any counseling setting, no tolerance of sexual exploitation, not expanding relationships begun in co-counseling to anything other than the co-counseling relationship, staying in good communication, and offering feedback to one another.

[Guidelines](#) on reaching decisions and handling disagreement, criticism, and upset are available to everyone. We encourage direct conversation with one another before a situation deteriorates.

Paired commitments: Before a difficulty appears, two community members may promise each other that they will assertively intercede if one of them is ever in need of intervention. This clarifies, ahead of time, that they have permission and are expected to get involved if one of them is in difficulty.

If a mistake is found or suspected, it is RC practice to offer counseling to the community members involved. A person having made a mistake needs, where possible, to admit the mistake openly, apologize for it, and offer to remedy any harm.

A mistake, when handled well, can be an opening for everyone's growth, similar to how mistakes are handled using a restorative justice model.

Because of the role they play, RC leaders are expected to be especially rigorous in their RC practice, to continually reassess their work, to be attentive to RC guidelines, and to use RC tools to grow in their job. There are counseling formats and self-estimation formats specifically to give a leader's constituency chances to directly address any difficulties.

Safeguards can provide guardrails to reduce the likelihood of errors, provide chances to continually improve our functioning, and, in the event a mistake occurs, offer us a chance to understand why it was a mistake in order to prevent future ones.

MISTAKES

None of our safeguards mean there will be no mistakes. One of the effects of living in societies containing oppression is that merely growing up in them means we will absorb some of their misinformation. This ensures our conditioning will lead us to make mistakes with one another.

And yet, new and unproven efforts are necessary. If no one is allowed to try, to dare to be mistaken, and to learn from mistakes, then we have little ability to learn.

If we have no mechanisms that allow for recovery from mistakes, both for those who were hurt by mistakes and for those who committed error, we have no way to create a workable and just society. Because really, that is all of us.

Mistakes can be made because we may not know enough or because we carry unresolved hurt. They can be made by our eagerness to help without an adequate assessment of our capabilities or by our lack of understanding a context. They can be extremely hurtful and confusing.

Those of us who are organizing for a more human-centered world will do so imperfectly. We will make mistakes.

Mistakes due to ignorance or upset or confusion are different than those made with deliberate, malicious intent. That distinction matters.

HARM CAN OCCUR OR BE FELT "INTENTIONALLY" OR "INADVERTENTLY"

Painfully experienced past harms may cause someone to feel "justified," even "righteous," in acting out damaging behavior from their past at someone else. This acting out can include an intense desire to be "winning" or dominating and can appear to be deliberate. It can also include the feeling of obtaining revenge or of "righting a wrong."

Painful harms can also happen "inadvertently" while trying to think about and care for someone. Parents can inflict harsh experiences on their children with well-meant attempts to "protect" or "help" them, inadvertently dominating instead of helping. This can happen when the parents' minds are lost in feelings similar to feelings from their own confusing childhoods. It can leave a young person feeling alone and uncared for, and even feeling that the hurt was intentionally inflicted.

It can also be true that no harm may have happened but instead something was too reminiscent of real harms in the past, causing a surge of memories and feelings from the past. This can deeply confuse us about what is happening in the present.

Malicious acting out is done with the apparent "intention" of causing harm. Our experience has led us to believe that even those who commit malicious harms are not inherently evil—they are reenacting the cruel mistreatment that they themselves suffered in the past.

Our experience leads us to believe that every human being would want to be prevented from harming others if their mind were not driven by the mistreatment they had suffered.

WITHIN RC, WHAT WE UNDERSTAND ABOUT HOW TO MOVE FORWARD WHEN HARMS HAPPEN OR APPEAR TO HAPPEN

When harm has happened, the first requirement is to end that harm immediately.

Any healing of harm must begin with the ending of that harm and anything that perpetuates it.

The redress of past harms (whether systemic or individual) can be sought with a focus on changing the present and the future.

Punishment or revenge perpetuates the ongoing cycle of passing on harm rather than healing harm.

continued . . .

COUNSELING PRACTICE

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Acting out the painful emotions from a past or present hurt cannot resolve past mistakes.

We cannot change or fix the past. We can acknowledge it, learn from it, and do the work to resolve any pulls to act out similar harm. Often, though not always, we can repair the damage, and keep the past damage from being carried into the future. We can significantly and proactively shift resources to alter the present and the future.

Feelings from past hurts can cloud or confuse our judgment in the present. Trying to cope with and think about a hurt in the present is made more difficult because the past interferes with our judgment. But harsh things that happened and were not handled long ago can become accessible to our minds to be dealt with. They can eventually be sorted to a clear resolution.

Sometimes we are trying to process an upsetting incident when there was no actual harm done in the present. At these times the incident can bring up a chain of times when there was harm done. We need help to remove the confusion between the past and present instances in order to find our own clear thinking.

The punishment, blame, or isolation of someone who has harmed others drives that person deeper into confusion.

Malicious acting out (destructive acts done with every appearance of intention to cause harm) requires many more resources to resolve and needs thoughtful and firm procedures to keep individuals from doing harm to others.

The RC community recognizes that it does not possess the resources to offer help to people saddled with malicious patterns of behavior. Some individuals in RC have chosen to use their personal commitment to help free individuals they care about from these patterns, using our theory and practice.

INTERNAL PRACTICES IN THE AFTERMATH OF ANY MISTAKES OR HARMS

For the person harmed, our practice is to listen intensively with caring, kindness, confidence, and compassion. We will offer suggestions to encourage the person to express any feelings of grief, anger, fear, hopelessness about recovery, and so on.

Sometimes a person has no “proof” of what happened in the past or the present. This doesn’t automatically impede their ability to work on the incident and how

it affected them. They don’t have to be certain about what is “true” in order to work on harm or upset. We can know that the person’s mind is working and needs space to work. They will sort through whatever occurred, given enough time and resources. Our job when counselor is to remember that they are whole, good, intelligent, and powerful. We can hold out that they can overcome the effects of any hurt.

With resource and support, we can strive to rid ourselves of any vestiges of past mistreatment.

Each of us can face, feel, and express fully in our sessions any harsh and negative feelings from past experiences. This allows us to gain a clearer perspective, which will assist us in recovering from harms inflicted in the present.

We do not want our existence to be determined by past harms forever.

For those who have caused harm, the practice is much the same but with additional practical and concrete requirements—beginning with a requirement to end harming others and firm guidelines for what needs to happen if the person is to continue in the RC communities.

An internal and individual healing process is different from what is needed to secure an end to institutional and structural harms. A transition to more rational structures for our societies will require organized, persistent, large, and unified efforts. It will necessitate an immediate end to egregious practices to stop generating more harm.

Many of us believe that achieving more human societies will happen sooner if we can operate from positions of our own innate power of decision, intelligence, and unity with all people.

We believe this will happen most quickly if people can recover from their own individual hurts.

CHALLENGING MISTAKES OR DAMAGE OUTSIDE OF AN RC CONTEXT

We know how badly hurt people can become. We never want to excuse away damaging behavior. We want to try to address it with all the tools and resources at our disposal.

We are not naïve about how in most current legal systems, such as the ones most of us in the world live in, “. . . legal or other punitive consequences [hang] over the heads of [the accused].”¹ Such systems do

¹ Quote by sujatha baliga

not provide the possibility of the accused taking responsibility, admitting culpability, and expressing remorse without subjecting themselves to punitive actions within the legal system. Nor do they encourage a process to repair the effects of harm and allow for resolutions that lead to ending the root causes of harm. “The stakes remain too high for the truth to come out, and restorative justice’s core work—recognizing harm, taking responsibility for it, and beginning to repair it—cannot happen under these circumstances.”²

We currently live in systems that do not permit a “restorative justice” ethos. Where that model has been used and where sufficient resources are in place, it can help create the safety necessary to end the cycle of retribution and move us forward in recovering from injury.

We understand that we cannot change the past—but we can help determine a better future.

CLOSING

As societal unworkability is more and more exposed, we see increasing and sometimes deliberate attempts to disrupt the functioning of any organized effort to rebuild our world towards a workable, humane, and life-sustaining one.

Organizations effectively fighting for individual or structural progress have always had their leadership and their work targeted. History is rife with examples. And if using a chosen target fails to do damage, a next target will be found, and so on.

Attacks may seek to isolate organizations from potential allies, or distract the population from current inequities and increasing crises. Some will aim simply to raise ad revenue or site traffic, and some will just arise from opportunistic personal career or financial motivations.

Whatever the means—whether careless and blunt destructive force, gross misrepresentation, vindictive punishment, biased and mechanical legal maneuvers, or fear-mongering through unanswerable smears—oppressive systems, along with their supporters (be they champions or unwitting enablers) act to keep struggling societal systems in place.

These campaigns and their tactics are never an attempt to give redress to a wrong, or to provide more resources to end harm or build foundations for a future public good, though they may camouflage themselves as such. Instead, they leave more damage in their wake.

This “poisoned bait” is intended to distract us in this disintegrating and unjust world. It seeks to undermine the already challenging effort to build the unity needed to end the oppressive nature of our societies.

Right now, “divide and conquer” appears to be the key challenge to solve in order to end the destruction of people and planet.

We believe there is a need to unify on common principles. Unity on everything can’t happen all at once, but we don’t need full agreement to be able to begin.

In relation specifically to Re-evaluation Counseling, please see this website <www.listeningwell.info> for further explanation of our work and some rebuttals to the attempts to disparage our leaders, our work, and our members.

We invite you to learn about who we are from our point of view, and then arrive at your own conclusions.

We will continue the work to build a truly grassroots organization towards the goal of creating a better world, no matter what.

Thank you for reading.

K Webster and Tim Jackins



CAPE COD, MASSACHUSETTS, USA • ELLIE PUTNAM

² Quote by sujatha baliga

Sustaining All Life No. 3



If you are wondering how to lead or move on the climate crisis, read the new *Sustaining All Life* journal!

Sustaining All Life No. 3 has solid, classic articles on the climate emergency, the transformation of society, and many oppressions. These important writings, all in one place, can help you think and discharge about, and act on, the worldwide climate emergency.

You can read about the impacts of climate change around the world; about the liberation of Global Majority and Indigenous people, young people, Jews, Catholics, women, people with disabilities, and working-class people; about getting people involved in climate activism; and about Sustaining All Life and United to End Racism at recent United Nations conferences and summits.

You will want this journal close at hand [nearby], to read over and over again, as we tackle the climate crisis together.

Beth Cruise
Editor, *Sustaining All Life* journal

Print version: \$5.00 (U.S.), plus postage and handling

Downloadable PDF: \$4.00 (U.S.)

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A limited number of Sustaining All Life/United to End Racism t-shirts that have the following important message on the back:

“Countries that have done the least to create the climate crisis suffer the worst damage.”

The new t-shirt has “COP26 Glasgow 2021” on the front.

T-shirts from other COPs have been renewed by adding the above message to the back.

\$25 (U.S.) plus postage and handling.

To order, see [page 111](#) or go to www.rationalisland.com.



ALISON EHARA-BROWN

Global Majority and Indigenous People

Dear RCers,

Our International Liberation Reference Persons (ILRPs) for race-based constituencies—Barbara Love (for African-heritage people), Lorenzo Garcia (for Chicanos/as), Azi Khalili (for South, Central, and West Asian-heritage people), Teresa Enrico (for Pacific Islander and Pilipino/a-heritage people), Francie Chew (for Chinese-heritage people), and Jan Yoshiwara (for Japanese-heritage people—and for Native Americans (Marcie Rendon) have drafted a definition for the term “Global Majority and Indigenous (GMI).” It is as follows:

The peoples of Africa, Asia and the Pacific Islands, and South, Central, and Caribbean America, and Indigenous people, are over eighty percent of the global population. These people also occupy most of the global land mass.

Using the term “Global Majority and Indigenous (GMI)” for these people acknowledges their majority status in the world and interrupts how the dominant (U.S. and European) culture assigns them a minority status.

Many Global Majority and Indigenous people living in dominant-culture countries have been assimilated into the dominant culture—by force, in order to survive, in seeking a better life for themselves and their families, or in pursuing the economic, political, or other inclusion of their communities. Calling these people “Global Majority and Indigenous” contradicts the assimilation.

I suggest that whenever we are speaking or publishing in the wide world, we use this term and include the above definition. The definition alone communicates many important realities that contradict racism and genocide. We will be updating our websites and handouts to adopt this term.

Our policy within RC has been that authors, in their own writings, can choose the terms they use to describe these groups of people. Please read over the above definition and discharge about the choice of language and any resistance you feel to using the term “Global Majority and Indigenous (GMI).”

With love and appreciation,

Tim Jackins



KATIE KAUFFMAN

Soon after Tim sent out the letter above, Barbara Love (International Liberation Reference Person for African Heritage People) received an e-mail from an RC leader (copied at the end of this article) questioning the decision to use the term “Global Majority and Indigenous.” Here is Barbara’s response to that person:

Dear X—,

Thank you for writing to me about your concerns about the use of the term “Global Majority and Indigenous.”

While I cannot answer your concerns, I can let you know what thoughts come to my mind while reading your concerns. I will number these thoughts just to keep track.

1. My first thought is for you to reflect on Tim’s e-mail of October 11, 2021, regarding the use of the term “Global Majority and Indigenous.” In that e-mail Tim stated, “Please read over the above definition and discharge about the choice of language and any resistance you feel to using the term ‘Global Majority and Indigenous (GMI).’” I took that to mean that whatever comes up for someone about the use of the term, they should take that to Co-Counseling sessions and discharge about it. You should know that it is not atypical for white males to assume that the directions for everyone else do not apply to them. Instead of taking your “concerns” to sessions, as Tim suggested, your response indicates that you believe that your concerns must be addressed. This “exceptionalism” is a guiding principle of white male supremacy.

continued . . .

LIBERATION

... continued

2. You wrote, "I told Diane [Shisk] that I think this issue deserves more discussion among the ILRPs and ICRPs [International Commonality Reference Persons]." Exactly which ILRPs and ICRPs do you think deserve to have more discussion about what the ILRPs of race-based constituencies and Indigenous people have decided to call themselves? The ILRPs of race-based constituencies and Indigenous people discussed the term we wanted used to refer to us and our constituencies, and we made this recommendation to Tim. What is the discussion that you think the white ILRPs and ICRPs deserve to have? What is the basis for your thinking that you all deserve to have more discussion about what we wish to be called?

3. You wrote, "From my perspective (and I acknowledge that I am influenced by my being a white person of European heritage), I prefer 'people targeted by racism' to 'Global Majority and Indigenous (GMI)' people."

White people do not get to have a preference about what Global Majority and Indigenous people decide to call themselves. It is called the "right of a people to name themselves." The European colonial project arrogated to Europeans the right to name all the people with whom they made contact. What the people called themselves was of little consequence to European colonizers. They simply named people and whole regions with the names that they preferred. Our goal in this RC project (Goal number 1: the elimination of racism [in the [Guidelines for the Re-evaluation Counseling Communities](#)]) includes abandoning that bit of white supremacy and recognizing the right of all people to claim the name that suits them, independent of the preferences of white people.

It is somewhat, though not exactly, akin to the habit of white people of saying, "That name, Bhagya or Mingxia,

is too difficult for me to pronounce. I'm just going to call you 'Susie.'" In other words, white people often presume that what is most comfortable and convenient for them is the acceptable and appropriate thing to do.

4. You wrote, "From my perspective (and I acknowledge that I am influenced by my being a white person of European heritage) I prefer 'people targeted by racism' to 'Global Majority and Indigenous (GMI)' people."

I acknowledge that it is customary for white people to prefer to refer to GMI people based on how we have been hurt and to see us and respond to us from that perspective. We, on the other hand, do not see the hurt that we have experienced as an identity or a way to be referred to. Yes, we have been targeted by racism, but that is what happened to us, not who we are. We prefer to claim an identity based on benign reality—that we are the majority of the people of the world. A hurt, no matter how institutionalized or pervasive it may be, is not an identity. If you prefer to refer to us based on the hurt that has been targeted toward us, then why not just call us the "People Who Have Been Genocided," or the "People Who Were Stolen," or the "People Who Were Enslaved," or the "People Who Were Put in Concentration Camps," or the "People Who Had Their Families Separated." Racism is a catchall word that obscures what happens to us. If you identify us by what has happened to us, why not be specific? If we use your line of reasoning, then why not simply say, "People Targeted by White Supremacy," since racism is merely the outward enactment of white supremacy.

5. You wrote, "I think GMI is problematic for several reasons."

It is problematic that you think that the name that ILRPs of race-based constituencies and Indigenous people have chosen for themselves is problematic. If this name were rooted in oppression or internalized oppression, or if it reproduced oppression or internalized oppression or directed harm toward some other people or some such, I could see why you would want further discussion. What the term does is dispute or deny the status of white people as the majority. I can see how that might be problematic and confusing for some white people.

6. You wrote, "It is confusing to some people that Indigenous people are not considered People of the Global Majority. (When we first started using the term 'People of the Global Majority,' I asked Marcie Rendon [International Liberation Reference Person for Native Americans] at a workshop if she considered Indigenous



FABRIC WEAVING, IN TIMOR-LESTE • LYNDA KATZ

people to be People of the Global Majority. She said that she did not but did not say why. And I did not press her.)”

I am so glad that you did not press Marcie. Do Indigenous people always have to explain everything to white people’s satisfaction? The term is GMI—Global Majority and Indigenous. Do Indigenous people really have to explain to white people why they prefer to be referred to as Indigenous people?

It is my experience and observation that “confusion” is a convenient shield behind which racism often hides and resides.

7. When white people are uncomfortable with something, they can find “reasons” to object, covering their discomfort with a cloak of presumed rationality. I will not try to address your reasons—except for this one: “If we adopted the term ‘GMI’ now, we might come to regret it in the future as more and more people in the world join the RC Community. The term ‘people of color’ was once more common than it is now.”

The term “colored” was once more common than it is now. And yet, we are pretty much [mostly] in broad agreement that we do not refer to African-heritage people as “colored.” The term “Negro” was once more common than it is now. And yet, we are in general agreement that we mostly do not use the term “Negro.” Names change. This name will someday change as well. It will change, however, when the people who have chosen it decide to change it.

You might be right. We might come to regret it. I think that it is more likely that when we arrive at a point when this term no longer serves us well, we will simply change it.

Finally, you wrote, “because it is simpler and because racism is easily explained.” I am taking your letter as proof that racism is not quite so easily explained.

These are my thoughts, not answers. The recommended term was the product of long and repeated discussions and agreement among the eight race-based ILRPs and the ILRP for Native Americans. I will pass your letter along to the other members of the group. Others in the group might have a different response.



Sending love and care,

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



WOVEN BASKETS, IN AUSTRALIA • SANDY WILDER

This is the letter Barbara was responding to:

Dear Barbara,

I have been having an e-mail discussion with Diane [Shisk] about the term “Global Majority and Indigenous.” I told Diane that I think this issue deserves more discussion among the ILRPs/ICRPs. She suggested that I consult with you.

From my perspective (and I acknowledge that I am influenced by my being a white person of European heritage), I prefer “people targeted by racism” to “Global Majority and Indigenous (GMI)” people.

I think GMI is problematic for several reasons:

It is confusing to some people that Indigenous people are not considered People of the Global Majority. (When we first started using the term “People of the Global Majority,” I asked Marcie Rendon at a workshop if she considered Indigenous people to be People of the Global Majority. She said that she did not but did not say why. And I did not press her.)

There are other groups of people in the world who might be considered a “global majority,” for example women, poor and working-class people, and perhaps others.

Although it is true that eighty percent of the people in the world are in the groups mentioned in the footnote [for Global Majority and Indigenous] that Diane sent me, some of those groups also oppress or have oppressed each other, sometimes in brutal ways. For example, Japan’s imperialistic desires led to the oppression of many people from other Asian countries. China oppresses the Tibetans and the Uyghurs and probably other minorities.

continued . . .



THE NETHERLANDS • TIM JACKINS

... continued

Capitalism uses oppression to keep people divided, and the oppression is justified by convincing the members of the oppressor group that they are better than the other group. This often (but not always) gets played out [acted out] using racism.

If we adopted the term “GMI” now, we might come to regret it in the future as more and more people in the world join the RC Community. The term “people of color” was once more common than it is now.

Referring to these groups (which are clearly people targeted by racism) as *the* global majority distracts from the crucial goal of uniting the working class to the task of replacing the class system.

I think “people targeted by racism,” while not perfect, is a better term than “Global Majority and Indigenous” people, because it is simpler and because racism is easily explained. In addition, even if white people were the majority of people in the world, wealthy white people would be finding ways to oppress and exploit darker-skinned people with the excuse that they were inferior.

What do you think?

Love,

X—

An Exciting Challenge

As counselor, your knowledge or ignorance of a client’s multiple oppressions will expand or limit your ability to counsel the client well.

It is human to be curious about each other. We need to learn the history of the various oppressions which groups of people in our world endure. We need to become familiar with the way these oppressions operate and the harm they do. We need to persist against any present lack of information (and the widespread misinformation in our cultures) to become well-informed.

We can *each* take on the exciting challenge of learning about *all* the peoples of the world, both their triumphs and their struggles.

Harvey Jackins
From page 156 of *The List*

Appreciating BLCD 2021

Our Black Liberation and Community Development (BLCD) family once again gathered to strengthen our bond as people of African heritage. The following are some of my highlights and understandings from the BLCD Workshop for Africa and Europe:

- No language is better than any other language. Language should not be allowed to be a barrier to communication.
- Our problems are interesting challenges to solve with enjoyment.
- It is important to free ourselves from the impact of racism, colonialism, and genocide
- The “mental health” system was put in place by our oppressors to subdue us.
- We proposed having a media platform for all young adults of African heritage, starting with those of us living in Africa.
- We can always be proud of ourselves.
- Our ancestors suffered tremendously at the hand of the colonist. They were dehumanized and forced to abandon their way of life.
- Nature is bleeding; we must protect her. Corrupt and myopic leaders can never solve the problem of climate change. And women must have their proper seat at the table.

A big thanks to all who worked tirelessly to make this year’s BLCD a success.

Alfred Asika
Ikorodu, Lagos State, Nigeria

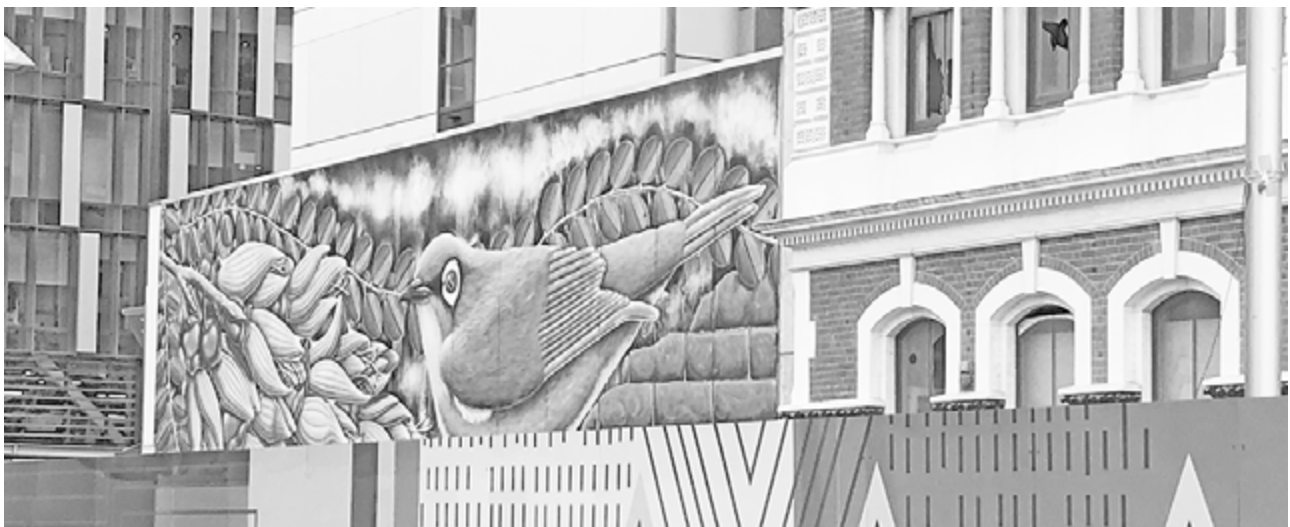
No Longer Alone

I had been looking forward to the BLCD (Black Liberation and Community Development) Europe and Africa 2021 Workshop for a long time. I experienced it as a great celebration and a big party.

I could move through it dancing and discharging because I felt connected to everyone who was present. It felt safe and familiar. I could discharge deeply and take steps to come a little closer to the pain that I often try to avoid because it is unbearable to feel.

We were reminded that we are good just like we are, that we are lovely and smart human beings. As little children, we felt alone and often isolated ourselves to survive. Do not judge this, do not blame yourself, do not blame others. Feelings of hopelessness, disappointment and loneliness are there to be discharged. Discharge, discharge, discharge, and know that you are no longer alone. We are together!

Marlene Melfor
Arnhem, the Netherlands
Reprinted from the RC e-mail discussion list for leaders of African-heritage people



MURAL, IN CHRISTCHURCH, NEW ZEALAND • LYNDALL KATZ



Reflections on BLCD



My goal for the Black Liberation and Community Development (BLCD) Europe and Africa Workshop was to bring my female self—a woman of Black African heritage—to our BLCD Village. Racism can cloud my thinking when I try to put female first. My family has fought and still fights to survive racism, to the point that “woman” gets sidelined.

I came to the workshop with feelings that people don’t like me and that that’s why I haven’t connected with them and they haven’t connected with me. My inner critic asked me, “How dare I step up and lead as Jobs Coordinator or in designing the flyer? Who am I to think I can do that?” But I was reminded that as a woman of Black African heritage, I can stop thinking small and go *big*.

My gift from BLCD 2021 was listening to the journeys of African and Caribbean Co-Counsellors and about the impact of colonialism and the climate crisis on their everyday lives. I gained more awareness of my privilege from living in a coloniser country. It is easy to “numb out” about and “switch off” the climate emergency and its impact on millions of Africans.

We were invited to think about what we want to change in the world. My first thought was that I want all of us—country leaders, organisations, communities—to really listen to each other. Also, counselling on my feelings of rejection, confusion, and not being good enough will help me think about getting involved in the climate movement.

Alison Reeves

Bedford, Bedfordshire, England

Reprinted from the BLCD leaders’ mailing list



PROVENCE, FRANCE • PAMELA PERROTT

Drugs and Ending Classism

I attended the recent Northwest USA “Mental Health” Liberation Workshop led by Rachel Noble [Regional Reference Person for Oregon, USA]. Rachel’s warm showing of herself helped everyone relax.

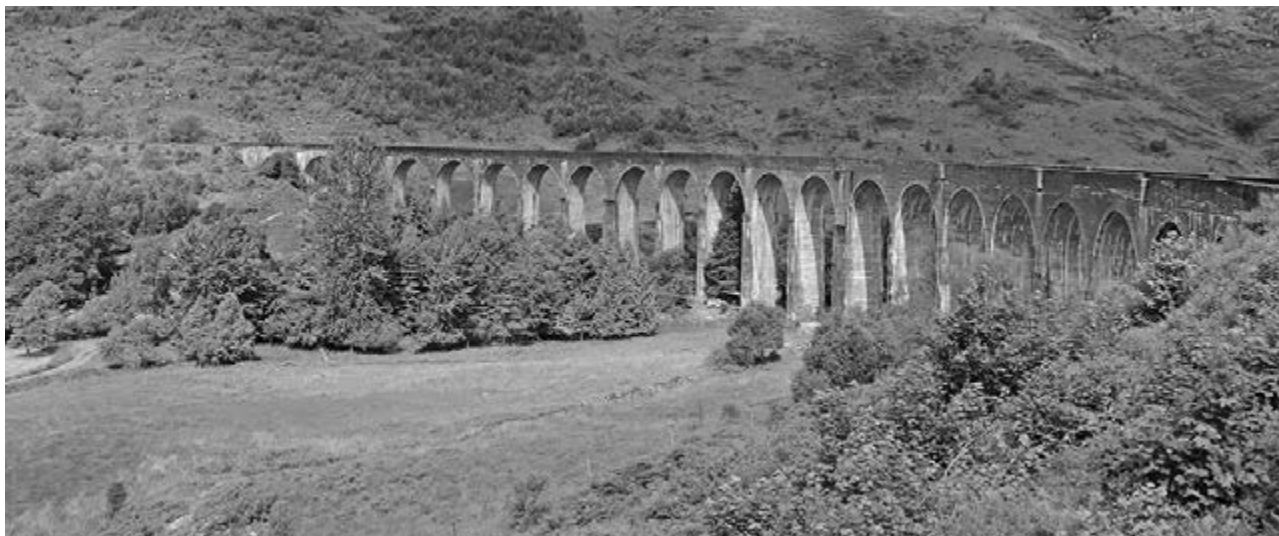
I led my very first topic group there. I entitled it “Discharging on the Intersection of Drugs and Ending Classism.” I chose the topic because it is clear to me that as capitalism continues to collapse, people will be having lots of feelings, and that what is needed is as many people as possible thinking and in the present moment. Many people are now on drugs, and more will be pulled to go on drugs as things escalate. The drugs keep us quiet and numb and interfere with our minds. Our minds and our ability to discharge need to be intact.

I was scared and led the group in the best way I could as a raised-poor person. This meant that I discharged as I led. A young adult appreciated how I had shown myself and said it had given her permission to be herself as she leads. That appreciation made all the difference for me.

M—

USA

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



GLENFINNAN VIADUCT, SCOTLAND • WILLIAM M. LOVING

My Body Is for Me and Me Alone

What I've Figured Out about My Decision to Be a Large Woman

I have always known that being a large woman was a decision. I made it—awarely or unawarely—at some point in my life.

Several years ago, I realized that this decision to be a large woman was a stand against sexism—against conforming to the standard of beauty expected by the oppressive society. That was a useful perspective for me and took me a long way [helped me make a lot of progress]. It helped me realize that the oppression of large women is real, that I am not to blame for being large, and that deciding to be large was claiming some part of my body for myself.

More recently I have come to a slightly different, and I think more powerful, perspective. I still know that I am not to blame for being large and that choosing to be large was a valiant attempt to claim some part of my body for me. However, I no longer think of it as a *stand against* sexism. Instead, I think that for me it was *succumbing* to sexism.

The decision to be large was a reaction. It was not chosen freely. It is no different than another woman's decision to conform to the standard of beauty expected by the oppressive society. My decision was oppositional instead of conforming, but it was still a reaction to sexism. It was never a decision for me.

Therefore, I have resolved to give up the idea that deciding to be large was a stand against sexism. That has served as a justification for me to stay large. It has

also kept me from fully facing the harshness of the sexism that led to my decision to be large. Holding on to it excuses a rigid decision that was not my own but rather a reaction to sexism.

In my Co-Counseling sessions, I have been choosing to notice that my body is for me and me alone, and then exploring the implications. Self-righteousness about my decision becomes available for discharge. I get to express my humanness in all ways, no matter what my body looks like or is challenged by. There is nothing wrong with my body, nothing that needs to be fixed or changed.

In the context of sexism, my body can only be for someone else. So I am attempting to forge a different path—one that isn't framed by what sexism dictates. It has nothing to do with changing my body in any way, or numbing out my body, or seeing my body as something that must be managed. It is about accepting my body as it is—for its innate beauty and utility and ability to express my humanness in a myriad of ways without changing a thing about it.

My body is for me and me alone, and everything that implies.

Mary Sue Lobenstein
Minneapolis, Minnesota, USA
Reprinted from the RC e-mail
discussion list for leaders of women

Some Highlights of Jewish Liberation

Excerpts from the annual Rosh Hashanah letter written by Cherie Brown, International Liberation Reference Person for Jews, to her constituency

Dear beloved Jews,

What a year this has been! We continue to face a worldwide pandemic that has changed all our lives forever. COVID 19 has presented us with enormous challenges but also many new opportunities. And just when we thought we could finally burst free of Zoom life, new variants have been forcing us to proceed with caution and continue our RC life on Zoom once again.

But we Jews are a resilient people. We are certainly having many new opportunities to discharge and are finding ways to adapt and flourish under difficult circumstances. (I, for one, without a rigorous travel schedule, have been able to enjoy and find rest and renewal by observing Shabbat each week.) I hope each of you has been able to make hopeful changes during this difficult time.

Besides COVID, our challenges have included violence between Israel and Gaza; increasing anti-Semitism, particularly on the right; and the climate emergency. As we have discharged and taken new actions, we have found the strength to make Jewish liberation work keep growing and developing. Our relationships with each other and our allies are stronger than ever.

We Jews are just the people [are well suited] for these challenging times. I continue to love doing this work with you. I wish you and your family and loved ones a joyous, healthy, and re-emergent New Year. *L'Shana Tova* ["Good Year" in Hebrew]. May we grow closer to one another in the New Year. May

we make time to prioritize our sessions and our re-emergence. And may we all be more engaged than



OLYMPIC PENINSULA, WASHINGTON, USA • DIANE SHISK

ever, together with each other and with allies, in building Jewish liberation and transforming society. *Hag Sameach* ("Happy Holiday" in Hebrew).

JEWISH LIBERATION IN RC

Here are some highlights of Jewish liberation in RC this past year:

Diane Shisk [International Commonality Reference Person for Care of the Environment] and I led the second Jews and the Climate Emergency Workshop. I gained a deeper understanding of the discharging we Jews need to do on ancestral loss to take our place alongside others working on climate justice. Working on climate justice with a Jewish voice and Jewish symbols (for example, blowing the shofar to start each day of a workshop) makes the work more accessible for many Jews.

This past year we launched a project to bring RC to the work of Dayenu Circles, a non-RC Jewish climate project.

We held workshops on Jews and Climate Justice as part of Sustaining All Life. We learned more about what it's like for Jews to do climate justice work and ensure that anti-Semitism isn't used to divide the climate movement.

I led the fourth Black Gentiles and White Ashkenazi Jews Workshop with Barbara Love [International Liberation Reference Person for African Heritage People]. We continued to build a stronger Black Gentile-white Jewish alliance. We discharged on the intersection of racism and anti-Semitism (the "hook") and not letting them be used to divide our peoples.

Eighteen Global Majority Jews attended a workshop at which Black Gentiles were paired with white Ashkenazi Jews.

I experimented with a trust-building circle for Israeli and diaspora Jews. We increased our understanding of what it's like to be a Jew living in Israel and a Jew living in the diaspora. We worked on racism, U.S. imperialism, and other forces that keep us from one another.

There were bimonthly meetings with the leaders of the Jews and Allies United to End Anti-Semitism project.

I keep increasing my understanding of the significance of the work on being female.

JEWISH LIBERATION OUTSIDE OF RC

Outside of RC, I am working with Jews on college campuses. They are facing enormous challenges with anti-Semitism and issues related to Israel-Palestine. I am advocating a bridge-building approach to taking on [challenging] anti-Semitism.

I co-led a program on intergenerational issues for young adult Jews who are working on Israel-Palestine issues and ending the Occupation. They, and elders they'd invited, had interesting answers to

the following question: "Does the existence of Israel make the world a safer place for Jews?" Almost all the elders said yes, and all the young adults said no.

All the young adults had been born after 1967, when the Occupation of the West Bank and Gaza was entrenched. Israel's oppressive policies and actions had made them ashamed of being Jewish.

I was born in 1949, four years after the Holocaust and one year after the foundation of the state of

Israel. It was always clear to me that no matter how oppressive the policies of the Israeli government were, Israel was still of key importance for me as a Jew.

We need to discharge and resolve the intergenerational differences if we are to build a unified Jewish liberation movement.

Cherie Brown

International Liberation

Reference Person for Jews

Silver Spring, Maryland, USA

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

From an Australian White Ally

Eighty of us from Aotearoa/New Zealand and Australia came together recently for three days (on Zoom) to learn, discharge, and decide to act to end white racism. We were led by Dvora Slavin.

I heard Dvora say that "the white identity is almost entirely about exploitation." Australia was brutally colonised by white people—who often came from desperate circumstances and competed in taking land.

My peoples arrived in Australia sixty years after the beginning of colonisation. I was raised with silence about both my own peoples and the First Peoples. We didn't talk about the real history—in my family or in school. It was "whitewashed." I heard, "There's no real culture here." As white allies, coming home to our peoples—to our stories, cultures, languages—is key to unravelling the silence.

The workshop enabled me to break the silence and discharge deeply. I focused on discharging the oppressor patterns—control, superiority, urgency, desperation, domination of others—that I'd been forced to take on [assume] by the harshness and disconnection from others.

I worked on having been raised not knowing that a group of peoples exists and denying much about my own peoples.

I had heard about genocides when I was ten years old, and it had terrified me that humans would do that to one another. My feelings of fear, and grief, became "unlocked" at the workshop.

Genocide intersects with the targeting of my mother's Jewish people and the hurts and oppressor distresses of my Gentile father's people. It also intersects with my peoples' having benefited from genocide since they came to Australia four or five generations ago from Poland, Prussia, Wales, and England.

I am a member of a group of largely white people who visibly act together as allies to First Nations people in the city where I live. We share stories of our peoples' histories, and this creates strong bonds between us. Our confidence and effectiveness are growing. My intention is to keep listening, learning, and connecting with other allies as we build solid relationships with First Nations peoples on their terms.

R—

Australia

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

Catholics: You Have an Important Story to Tell

If you have a Catholic heritage, you have an important and unique story to tell.

It starts with your earliest memories of anything about being Catholic. It can start at birth, or when you converted to being Catholic. It can begin with your mother's pregnancy.

When we tell our stories, we often have new thoughts about who we are, the people we come from, and our complex histories. We often become more curious, move outside of our comfort levels, and become more able to listen to people who are "different" from us. We get to know people who are different in race, nationality, economic situation, beliefs, and more. And we find that they are as dear and human as we are.

The following questions may help you tell your story. Choose any that resonate with you.

YOUR FAMILY

Were you part of a small or large family? Were you welcomed? Who were your mother and father? Who were their parents? What were their jobs? What was your neighborhood like? Did your home feel like it had a "culture"? Did it have a racial, ethnic, or other identity that was tied to being Catholic?

Has your family held on to or given up ties to being Catholic? Were there different religious identities in your home? Did this cause hard feelings?

Did one family member dominate? Did Catholic matriarchs play a role? Was your Catholic home a haven from outside oppression? Do your family members gather at your home for important occasions?

Was there a time before your family was Catholic? Do you know their story of becoming Catholic? Have you heard anything about belonging to a tribe? If you have lost the story of your ancestors, how do you feel about that?

YOUR GOD, NATION, AND LANGUAGES

Was your God benign and reassuring or confusing and harsh? Did your God offer hope, love, and consolation? Did you turn to anyone for consolation? Was your family angry with a harsh and punitive God? Did they discard that God?

What does your nation mean to you as a Catholic? Are church and state merged where you are? How does that situation affect you? What are other effects of church-state mergers in your country?

What languages do people speak in your home? What languages do family members speak outside your home? Is language important to them?

YOUR EDUCATION

What was education like for your generation? Whose history did you learn? Did the history include your story? Did you learn about Catholics being legally restricted, or attacked by Protestants or hate groups?

Did you go to Catholic schools? If so, were you bused? What was the racial make-up of your schools? Did you go to the "best" schools? Did you get the "best" education? Were you trained to follow the rules, or were you encouraged to think for yourself?

Were you part of the generation (after the 1960s) that initiated fresh thinking for Catholics? Did you learn Catholic "social justice" doctrine or liberation theology? What did you learn about women's oppression? What did you learn about the sexual abuse of young people? About racism? About the targeting of Native people?

CURRENT ISSUES

The individualistic, greed-driven economy threatens all of us. It threatens all life on the planet. We need programs that unite people. Here are a few suggestions:

- Join with RCers and wide-world activists to end the climate emergency. Read and follow Pope Francis's *Laudato Si'*.
- End white racism.
- Follow Native people; they have much to teach about our connection to Mother Earth.
- Catholic women, take leadership in your relationship with your male partner (if you have one) and in Catholic institutions.

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



TYPEWRITER • JOANNA VAUGHN

Artists and the Environment

Kamusta sa inyong lahat (“Hello to you all,” in Tagalog).

In October 2021, I joined Emily Feinstein in leading an online weekend workshop on artists and the environment. Sixty-five RC leaders—from Trinidad and Tobago, Puerto Rico, Canada, and the United States—attended.

I led a class for Global Majority and Indigenous* artists on recovering from the impact of racism. I shared that art has always been integral to our peoples’ ways of being, long before our artistry was separated out and commodified. Calling ourselves artists might not be easy because classism and racism have made us feel that “being an artist” is something only white middle-class people can claim. Regarding ending the climate crisis, I talked about how our patterns may pull us toward one pole or another: inaction due to feeling discouraged and defeated or overworking and burning out [becoming

exhausted] due to being “scared active” and unable to slow down. I talked about caring for ourselves and how our body is our first environment.

Emily led a class on artists’ oppression and liberation. She spoke about how artists’ liberation is human liberation and how we make art not only to communicate but also to enjoy and delight in being human. She said, “Art is our intelligence in action.”

I led a class on the current state of the environment and our power and clarity as RC leaders to see that all goes well for the whole. I also said, “Wherever you are at is a good place to start.”

Emily and I talked about the importance of recovering from isolation and disconnection—from ourselves, each other, and the world around us. We shared how the workshop had come to be and our relationship with each other.

We are creating the conditions for us as artists to contradict patterns of isolation and competition and to put our attention on the environment. We are gathering, building relationships, and creating networks of support so we can increasingly apply our creativity to how we live and to the world around us.

Cecilia Lim

Jackson Heights, New York, USA
Reprinted from the RC e-mail discussion list for leaders of wide world change

* The peoples of Africa, Asia and the Pacific Islands, and South, Central, and Caribbean America, and Indigenous people, are over eighty percent of the global population. These people also occupy most of the global land mass.

Using the term “Global Majority and Indigenous (GMI)” for these people acknowledges their majority status in the world and interrupts how the dominant (U.S. and European) culture assigns them a minority status.

Many Global Majority and Indigenous people living in dominant-culture countries have been assimilated into the dominant culture—by force, in order to survive, in seeking a better life for themselves and their families, or in pursuing the economic, political, or other inclusion of their communities. Calling these people “Global Majority and Indigenous” contradicts the assimilation.

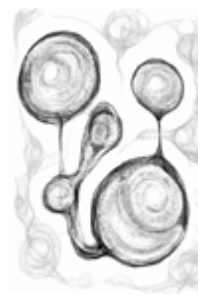
Some Thoughts about Creativity

I recently had the joy of being with artists from around the world at an (online) artists’ liberation workshop led by Emily Feinstein.

Emily said that some of us were told that we should be doing something “more important” than having fun, playing, guessing, or experimenting. She asked if we had an early memory of being taught that other things were more important.

I thought about how my Protestant parents had tried to be “good” and how it had been important how we looked to others. I had also been rewarded for doing household chores, doing them well, and completing them. I’d never been told outwardly that I would have to put aside my creativity, but my imagination had been dismissed and my ideas often questioned by my parents and other adults.

C—
Australia



WYTSKE VISSER

A Musicians' Liberation Workshop

I attended a Musicians' Liberation Workshop led by Heather Hay, the International Liberation Reference Person for Musicians.

I am a Canadian currently living in the United States. It was powerful to have a Canadian woman's leadership and thinking be celebrated and loved. It contradicted my internalized oppression as a non-User as well as my U.S. domination patterns from having lived long-term in the United States.

The organizing was thoughtful and warm. We were invited to send in links to our music before the workshop started. I experienced the beauty and diversity of who we are as musicians and the music we create.

Heather emphasized that music is for everyone. It's not for the "special" few. There's no such thing as too much music! And there is no "better than" or "worse than." All music is good. The idea that some music is better than others is a result of racism and classism. Music and competition have nothing to do with each other. Music is about connection.

I had some classical music training and became a singer and songwriter. It's a miracle that I stuck with [persisted with] music after all the competitiveness I faced as a young person. There was something in me that just loved music and was ready to fight to have it on my terms. I also figured out through my Jewish identity how to have music as a form of connection. In the Jewish community there are many contexts for communal singing, and I grabbed on to those like a lifeline!

My support group leader asked us to hold our instruments and notice how much we loved them. She also invited us to slow down and

discharge, to not "perform" while playing music. I shared a song about being born in Canada to U.S.-born parents, how I came to live in the United States, and how much I miss my family.

Musicians try to do big things while being up against their early hurts. Heather asked what it would be like to back [support] every musician we know—the way we back RC leaders. It was a relief to imagine this and good to discharge about doing it in the wide world.

Those of us who are white were encouraged to reconnect with the music of our roots. For me, that is Yiddish music. I had many mini-sessions mourning how my internalized anti-Semitism had caused me to lose the Yiddish language and music. I am a musician in the Jewish world but can barely speak or read Yiddish. I also realized how much Canadian folk music, and Canadian children's musicians, had been part of my early life and I decided to reclaim it.

During the workshop, two of my children, ages six and eight, popped into the "telling jokes" breakout room. I listened to, and got to discharge about, my eleven-year-old son who had recently stopped playing violin. He told me that he needed a few more months to get used to [accustomed to] his new school and that after that he would like to find a klezmer violin teacher who wasn't rigid about practicing. I felt hopeful that he might play the violin on his own terms.

Again, music is about connection. Being with a wonderful crew of us musicians fighting for ourselves and each other and our collective liberation was a big contradiction [to distress]. I didn't want it to end! And now I have lots of Co-Counseling

buddies to remind me that music is about connection.

Chana Rothman

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, USA

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



LYNDALL KATZ

Musicians as Workers

At a Musicians' Workshop led by Heather Hay (International Liberation Reference Person for Musicians), I called a topic group for musicians and our role in the labor movement.

Five of us met. We were both current and former union members. All of us made money by doing music. I encouraged us to notice that we were workers, that we were members of the working class, and that we made something of value.

Capitalism seeks to divide us and have us compete for seemingly limited resources. Right now we have a tremendous opportunity to unite with other workers to tackle this oppressive system.

Ty Citerman

Brooklyn, New York, USA



POINT LOBOS STATE NATURAL RESERVE, CALIFORNIA, USA • PAM ROBY

The Jewish Women's Workshop

It was a joy and an honor to assist Diane Balser (International Liberation Reference Person for Women) at the recent Jewish Women's Workshop.

There were so many highlights and learnings:

- Being part of a team with M—, who also assisted and who has done an excellent job working for many years with Global Majority Jewish females; and Diane, who has put a lot into making Global Majority Jewish females central
- Participating in an international gathering of female Jews
- Putting “female first”—facing how hard it is to put sexism front and center
- Seeing the importance of the intersection of anti-Semitism and sexism and how the existence of sexism is often denied in Jewish organizational life
- A powerful class on identities; demonstrations with Jewish females who had wanted to be boys when growing up
- Stories shared by Global Majority Jewish females
- A class on subservience—thinking about how we Jewish females have been conditioned to be subservient

In a time when both sexism and anti-Semitism are often denied and we are made to feel that our oppressions don't exist and don't matter, it was a huge contradiction [to distress] to put female Jews at the center and combine the work on sexism and anti-Semitism.



CYNTHIA JOHNSTON

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

“Women Who Are Jewish”

At the Jewish Women's Workshop, Diane Balser (International Liberation Reference Person for Women) called us “women who are Jewish” instead of “Jewish women” to contradict how, because of women's oppression, we tend not to prioritize being female.

We Jews have a two-thousand-year history of anti-Jewish oppression. Our Jewish men have internalized the oppression and are pulled to act it out on us as Jewish females. They have often hurt, oppressed, and dominated us. We usually can't notice this in our daily lives or that it matters. We feel like we need to protect them. We can't look at what they have done, or talk about it, because we see how they have been oppressed as Jews. Our role has been to take care of them, be subservient to them, and “erase” ourselves.

We've seen what happens to Jewish men when their distresses are made public. These men are not “bad” men. Their distresses are no worse than those of Gentile men. Their hurts are from the systemic oppression that every man experiences. But because they are Jews, they are targeted with hate, blame, disgust, vitriol.

I've cried about what happened to my dad, and this has helped me cry about how he hurt me.

S—
USA

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

Re-evaluating about the Men in My Jewish Family

The recent RC Jewish Women's Workshop was powerful. I especially appreciated the segment on facing the sexism and male domination in our Jewish families. We were encouraged to do so without blaming our fathers or brothers individually for a systemic oppression that they were the targets of, but without hiding or defending their male patterns. I had some significant re-evaluations about my father and brother.

My father's idea of parenting his daughters was non-engagement. He invited my brothers to watch sports with him on television and taught them how to play baseball, football, and so on. Meanwhile, he expected my mother to raise her daughters without his active participation. This was painful for me, and for years I tried to do things that might get him to notice me.

I saw the same thing happen with my nieces (his granddaughters). But then one of them refused to let him stay in his pattern. At age three, she pushed him to notice her. He responded excitedly, "She likes me!" and repeated it several times. I realized that part of his disengagement was not knowing he was wanted.

My brother is eighteen months younger than I am. From birth, he was treated as the adored and preferred child. I had discharged on how my anger at him for his preferential treatment was not his fault. He was innocent in that respect. However, I hadn't worked on the way he is still sexist toward me. I have lots more discharging to do so I can take this on [do this] thoughtfully.

Z—
USA



LONGWOOD GARDENS, PENNSYLVANIA, USA • CHUCK ESSER

Educational Change Work Is for Everyone

I attended a topic group on educational change at the Caribbean RC Regional Black Liberation and Community Development Workshop. It was led by Marilyn Robb, the International Commonality Reference Person for Educational Change.

Here is some of what I remember from the group:

- We all have distresses about school, because we were hurt in school, and we get to discharge the feelings from the hurts.
- Educational change work is for everyone, not just those who work in schools.
- Each of us can do something to make schools better. We can identify something specific we would like to change and focus on that.

- We can share the tools of RC when we interact with a school.

- Building relationships is key.

We each had three minutes in front of the group to work on early school hurts. I noticed that I wasn't the only person who got humiliated in school and was made to feel stupid.

I'm working on building a stronger relationship with a middle school where I mentor Black students.

Chris Hughbanks

Albany, Oregon, USA

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



Responding to Attacks, as a Raised-Poor Man

I'm reflecting on how I respond to attacks as a raised-poor man, and I have some insights into patterned behaviors that I can elect to change.

When I was first alerted to some public attacks on RC, I didn't feel much. My curiosity did not go beyond wanting to know and be assured that Tim Jackins and Diane Shisk were not in physical danger and that any mistakes did not go beyond those made by an individual or a few individuals. Then, after a few weeks, more news of the attacks came to my attention, but again I was only mildly curious and saw no need for my involvement or even my attention.

Then I was asked to get involved in responding to the attacks. I knew I would need to take that request to my Co-Counseling sessions. Deciding to counsel on it did not come from being asked for a response but rather from recalling my long reputation as a fighter and an advocate. I discharged on attacks from a few angles—including being Jewish, being raised Catholic, identifying as male and an elder, and being raised poor.

I had good sessions on the impact of having been raised poor. I remembered my mother feeling humiliated and angry when she was dismissed or overlooked in a store because people could tell [perceive] that we had little money and were looking only at sale-priced goods. I remember, too, the shouting among my family members as they recounted attacks at work, public injustices,

and embarrassing situations. The shouting did not end in action but rather confirmed that things were as hopeless as they appeared.

I also recalled the times when an injustice had been done to me, or a sibling, or someone close to us. Once, as a pre-teen, my whole class was kept after school, and I was made late for my job as a newspaper delivery boy. The next day my father took off work [left his job] for an hour and went to the school to yell at the teacher on my behalf. Another time, my sister went to a store and complained after I had been treated poorly by a worker there.

Other sessions uncovered a frequent message: "Don't let them bother you. You know what you are doing. If someone tells you to jump off a bridge, are you going to follow those orders?"

I recalled messages from my childhood about attacks: "Stick up for [defend] others, even if it requires you to be fierce." "Defending yourself might be less possible, because you're in a weaker position due to poverty and social status. So endure it and complain about it to the people you are close to but also stay your own course. You know what you are going to do; do not let anyone sway you." The feelings in my bones [deep inside] are that "Attacks just happen because of who I am. They won't change what I do, so just move on. I'm an outsider anyway."

In terms of attacks on RC, I've realized the following: I will not be dissuaded from counseling



EL SALVADOR • GABRIEL MOLINA

on them. I am not weak. Status is irrelevant and won't stop me from finding ways to address them. Complaining when no one is being a counselor might feel familiar, but it will not be sufficient to create change—not with attacks, not with racism, and not with the climate emergency.

Gary Hollander
Milwaukee, Wisconsin, USA
Reprinted from the RC e-mail
discussion list for leaders
of raised-poor people

◀ Language Liberation and the “Mental Health” System ▶

I shared the following at the recent International “Mental Health” Liberation Workshop to shed light on the distresses of those of us who have been the target of both “mental health” and language oppression:

The capitalist system decides what is “normal” and who falls within that definition and who does not. This includes deciding which languages are “normal” and which are not.

A “normal” language is judged to be useful and valuable. A language that is not “normal” is seen as inferior and useless. You can guess which languages the capitalist system labels as “normal.” Of course, the dominant languages. If we want to have a place in society, we must know how to speak one of the “normal” dominant languages and abandon our relationship with our non-dominant language.

Our language plays an important role in our mind, heart, people, culture, land, and vision of the universe. It connects us to our people and our culture. It makes us sure that we belong to someone and something. This sense of belonging gives us a solid foundation for refusing to collaborate with oppression. It provides us with a powerful link to something that is real, making it easier for our rationality, intelligence, and self-worth to develop properly and be a part of us throughout our life. The closer we stay to our origins, our people, our language, our culture, the more difficult it is for the system to manipulate and confuse us.

Many people do not know what their origins are, because they have had to leave the knowledge about them behind and assimilate into a new culture so that they can survive in it. I think it is time to look back, not only forward (as capitalism insistently tells us we must do), and reclaim our connection with our people, cultures, land, and languages. We may need to discharge about even attempting to do this, because we may believe that doing it is impossible or unnecessary and we have given up.



JO PERRY

By looking back and paying attention to all that we have left behind, or think we have lost, we can reestablish the link with our ancestors and the cultural-linguistic legacy they have offered us. That bond will become a safe refuge for our minds and hearts. It is a return home, to our true home. Without it we can hardly be complete and free beings. Without it we can easily identify with the oppressive system and culture, which forces us to conform and assimilate to it or be labeled antisocial, inconsiderate, ungrateful, misfits, dangerous, or “crazy.” We can end up experiencing oppression and oppressive relationships as if they are the air we breathe. They can become “normal,” and we may not remember that our human essence is connection, love, liberating creative thoughts, and powerful innate movement against any oppression.

Xabi Odriozola

*International Commonality Reference
Person for Languages and Interpreting*

Basque Country

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

About Speaking “Correctly”

We recently worked on language liberation in my RC class. I discharged on early memories of having to speak “correctly.” I’d had to be careful about what others thought of me and my words. My mother would correct my essays and focus on my grammar and spelling instead of appreciating my thoughts and ideas.

When I was ten years old, some adult Kenyan students stayed at our house. They taught me Swahili songs. It was okay to make mistakes when I tried singing or speaking in their language. They appreciated my efforts and were warm and loving.

When I moved to Australia, there were many moments of misunderstanding. My cultural and language differences weren’t acknowledged, and I thought there was a “right” way of speaking.

C—
Australia

The Importance of Language Liberation

I have had the good luck of being in a U.S. RC Region that often partners with Quebec, Canada, in doing workshops. The Canadians have been training us for many years (with warmth and patience) on the importance of language liberation. We have had a lot to learn.

Zoom has made it easier for RC Communities everywhere to get together. But in other ways, workshops on Zoom are harder. We drop instantly from one room to another. There is no pause. Our minds need pauses. They need time to process and rest. This is true for all of us. It is doubly true of people for whom English is not their first language. Their double workload does not stop as long as people are speaking in English. On Zoom there is no opportunity to walk from one building to another, speaking your language with someone who understands. It is important that native English speakers reach to understand how much work others must do to be part of an RC workshop in English.

When we speak our first language, we have increased access to our early experiences, our memory, our culture. Non-native English speakers must leave a piece of themselves behind when they are speaking English. English speakers need to recognize and acknowledge this. It is everyone's loss.

Most white Canadians and USers have lost the first language of their people, their ancestors, and most have not let themselves notice that. We who are white need to notice, feel, and discharge the grief of that loss. A chunk of our collective memories, of our people's culture, has been left behind. It is useful to face the pain of having lost a part of ourselves and our heritage over a period of a few generations.

Over time Greek, Latin, Portuguese, Spanish, French, and, most recently, English have been the languages of conquest, colonization, imperialism, and now capitalism. I can't give you examples from Eastern cultures, but I know they are there as well.

English is a language of oppression and has been for some time. We English speakers did not ask to be oppressors. It is a role that was handed to us. It is not our fault, but it is our responsibility. It is our responsibility to challenge and end the oppression.

We do interpretations at RC International workshops for several reasons. One is to contradict capitalism's drive for production, efficiency, and speed. Equally important, everyone deserves to learn RC theory in their own language.

Over the past decades, we in RC have done a lot to combat language oppression, and we have a great deal more to do. Whenever we English speakers believe that what we have to say is more important than others understanding it, we are looking at language oppression. It is the responsibility and privilege of native English speakers to take it on [confront and eliminate it].

Kathy Manns
Danville, Vermont, USA

Andrew Gaertner attended the October 2021 online Midwest and South USA Men’s Workshop, led by Tim Jackins, and was inspired to write about his experience for a wide-world audience. The following are excerpts from what he wrote.

A Few Good Men, Crying

It can sound unusual to talk about men’s liberation. What do men need liberation from? Especially white, middle-class, educated, heterosexual males with unearned privilege, like me?

I recently attended an online men’s retreat. It was a chance to learn from a well-respected teacher about what it means to be a man and how to use that understanding to become a better human.

Such retreats are called “workshops” because we do a lot of work. We participate in classes and take turns listening to each other, in pairs (“sessions”) or in small groups. We give each other our full attention. When feelings come up, we are encouraged to express them. Then we can think more clearly.

Despite our not meeting in person, I could feel the good attention of the men. I had several powerful sessions.

HEALING FROM HURTS

Healing men’s hurts is key to ending the cycle of oppression in which we men reenact our hurts—on ourselves, other people, and the environment. If we can heal our hurts, everybody wins, including us.

To hurt another human, a boy must have had his natural release of emotions blocked. When I was growing up, I learned that boys

don’t cry. I had a hard time with this because I was a “crybaby.” I would cry about an injury when playing soccer. What hurt even worse than



ENO RIVER, NORTH CAROLINA, USA • DALE EVARTS

the physical pain was my shame at their having to stop the game for me to cry. Learning to control my tears was a way to survive and avoid embarrassment; it was a rite of passage. I felt like I could finally live my life, but at what cost?

Crying is the release of the hurt, not the hurt itself. Without the crying, the hurt stays in place. Then the next time something happens that reminds us of the original hurtful situation, we tend to flip into a reaction based on what happened previously instead of drawing upon the full range of possible actions. Over time, we live in progressively smaller “boxes.”

Our society devalues emotion and uses that to oppress everyone. If a woman is very emotional, she may be called “hysterical” or a “bitch.” Black people learn to control their emotions around white people to avoid the “angry

Black person” trope. If anyone laughs or weeps uncontrollably, people get concerned and try to stop them.

We can only show emotion in certain circumstances. We can show fear at an amusement park or at a scary movie. We can laugh at jokes, but not too much. We can cry a little at funerals and weddings and some movies. Other than that, we must “bottle it up” [hold it in] in order to appear “sane.” There is more latitude for some groups than

others; men tend to be particularly “bottled up.”

Later hurts accumulate on top of the early ones. We figure out a way forward, and we stick to that way. It isn’t the full range of possibilities. It is like we are on a leash. If we don’t go to the edge, we can have a pretty [quite] good life. But the leash makes it hard to take emotional risks—to risk caring about someone or something.

Our unhealed hurts can take out the “high notes” and the “low notes” of our lives. We don’t feel the lows, but we also don’t have the highs. We settle for the grey middle tones.

We had to limit ourselves back then. It was a survival strategy. But now we have the tools to go after [pursue] all of life’s possibilities. We can remind each other about what is real and what is possible.

OVERCOMING ISOLATION

Isolation starts early. After being connected to our mothers in the womb, we come out expecting connection, and few of us get enough. Now we face existential threats from the climate crisis, unfettered capitalism, racism, genocide of Indigenous peoples, and more. None of these threats can be faced alone. We need to fight through our isolation and solo functioning and reach for connection. We can push through them, find ourselves and each other, and work together.

We were asked to try to trust the other men at the workshop to “have our backs” [to care about and support us].

RACISM, HOMOPHOBIA, ANTI-SEMITISM, SEXISM

We talked about the following in relation to our lives as men:

Racism—ending racism will not only make life much better for Global Majority and Indigenous people; it will give white people more space to be themselves.

Homophobia is not only a problem for LGBTQ+ folks; it is a problem for all of us. We all deserve to have a wide range of possible “selves.”

Anti-Semitism hurts not only Jews; it hurts everyone by keeping in place the systems that underlie oppression. Ending anti-Semitism improves all our lives.

Sexism is not only a problem for women; it limits and damages our lives as men. Males are taught to dominate everyone, including each other, by means of violence, threats of violence, and the suppression of emotional expression.

Men have been made confused about sex and relationships. We want caring but are told that

we can only have it in a sexual relationship. When we finally have the one caring relationship we are allowed, we often have unrealistic expectations, and women tend to sacrifice themselves to stay in a relationship with us.

We discharged on our earliest memories connected to sex in any way. Our first encounters with sex form the basis for our later confusion. We can begin peeling back the layers of hurt and recover rational relationships.

We scanned our relationships with women, talking about each one for about twenty seconds before moving on to another. The goal was to get a “bird’s eye view” of our interactions with women.

Expressing our emotions helps us heal from the effects of racism, homophobia, anti-Semitism, and sexism.

THE “PINCH”

Society is collapsing around us. It has been built on exploitation and unsustainability. Its internal contradictions are putting a strain on every sector. Many communities are already experiencing “post-



KATIE KAUFFMAN

apocalyptic” conditions. The forces that attempt to manipulate us are becoming more and more blatant. People are increasingly reacting with flashes of irrationality. As men, we are especially susceptible to having our hurt-based reactions—defensiveness, separateness, domination—kick in [occur] when we are “pinched” [pressured]. We are conditioned to act as enforcers in the escalating irrationality.

We can fight our conditioning by being open with each other about how we were “pinched” in the past, for example, by economic hard times or by being isolated.

REVOLUTION, TOGETHER

As society collapses, more men will be pushed from being compliant into a state of rebellion. Anyone can be pushed into forceful opposition if they are pushed hard enough.

Perhaps we can go back to that early time when we decided to stop objecting to what was going on [happening]—for example, when we stopped having “tantrums”—and make a different decision. But our opposition needs to be constructive. We can have our tantrums in sessions and then use the attention we gain to organize and work together to create a new society.

If we can remember that we are basically good, loving, intelligent humans, we can realize that our hurt-based actions are not us. We can notice the essential humanness of other people. We can look someone in the eye and show them how pleased we are with them. We can give someone a real hug. We can listen without interrupting. It is an act of revolution to truly see another human being.

Andrew Gaertner
Glenwood City, Wisconsin, USA

Being a Catholic Nurse

I want to share some thoughts about how being of Catholic heritage has intersected with my being a nurse.

Many Catholic-heritage people I know care deeply, sometimes without regard for their own bodies and health. Our Catholic culture emphasizes service and selflessness.

Where I am from (the United States), nurses are sometimes seen as “angelic” and pure. Historically in some countries, nurses were trained in Catholic hospitals and not allowed to date, be married, or have children. They were expected to plan for a life of service. They were to follow rules, follow doctors’ orders, and take care of patients.

complete respect for him and asked him to stay in the hospital (which he did). That seemed to allow him to feel human and prevented the security guards from using physical force (they were all male and armed with weapons).

During the pandemic, nurses, nursing assistants, and other health care workers have worked long hours while feeling a lot of fear. We have not always been able to speak up for ourselves. My Catholic distresses have contributed to my feeling responsible for everything yet unable to speak about or change anything.

A Catholic nurse fought for me when I was being targeted by someone else’s confusion. She stood up for me [defended me] in a meeting in front of many middle- and owning-class people who were not of Catholic heritage and did it without shaming anyone. It has been a model for me of how to stand up for other workers!

The health care system is oppressive. We Catholics use our minds in all kinds of ways to keep going. There’s much to discharge.

People need to listen to and counsel health care workers, both for themselves and because everything that happens in health care affects everyone. Nurses are tired and can feel discouraged, which directly impacts health care for an entire community. It is in our interest to be “all for one, and one for all” in matters of health care.

Karen Lasota

Seattle, Washington, USA

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



OUTSIDE THE OLD RE-EVALUATION COUNSELING COMMUNITY RESOURCES (RCCR)
SEATTLE, WASHINGTON, USA • KATIE KAUFFMAN

I started in health care when I was eleven years old. I helped an elderly neighbor, and she told some friends about it. That led to my helping some other elderly females with meals, cleaning, and getting ready for bed. They paid me, and I gave some of the money to my mother to use for food, gasoline, and housing expenses. My siblings did the same with money from their jobs (babysitting, delivering newspapers, working at fast-food restaurants). It was all about service and family and contributing to the family. It was important that everybody contributed and was taken care of.

People generally know so little about what nurses do. At the end of a shift, some of us are filthy and covered in germs. We often deal with every bodily function and fluid. We face uncertainty, along with our patients. Doing the job has allowed me to see people in their most human moments when pretense falls away.

I remember working with a male patient in a veterans’ hospital. He was about to get violent. Hospital security was called. Everybody was scared. I saw an opportunity to use myself as a female. I showed

“At Home” with Other Health Care Workers

Nineteen people attended the October 2021 (online) Health Care Workers’ Workshop. It was led by Anne Greenwald, the editor of the RC journal *Well-Being* and the Area Reference Person for Muddy River, Massachusetts, USA.

We were mostly nurses. Also attending were pharmacists, social workers, a chaplain, a physiotherapist, and one other doctor and me. Most of us were from the United States. Sweden, Germany, and Canada were also represented.

Anne reminded us that we are all trying courageously and intelligently to do our best within an oppressive system.

She offered us a direction: “I am simply an assistant to the client I am supporting.”

After mini-sessions, we each had three minutes to discharge in front of the group. Issues that surfaced included capitalism, the oppression of health care workers, women’s internalized oppression, death and dying, self-care, and lots on COVID.



ROSLINDALE, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS, USA • MARC GOLDRING

I felt more immediately “at home” with this group than I have with my RC doctor colleagues (all of whom I love dearly). I think it’s because we doctors are so heavily weighed down by isolation. Also, I have worked much more intimately with non-doctor health care folk in my forty years of doctoring than I have with doctors.

John Graham-Pole

Clydesdale, Nova Scotia, Canada

Reprinted from the e-mail discussion list for RC Community members interested in health care workers

Class Backgrounds and Our Strengths

Each class background will tend to confer certain advantages on its members. Working-class people, for example, will tend to competence and “getting the job done,” to cooperation with others, to ability to survive. Middle-class people will generally have access to information or know where to find it, to think in terms of organization and responsibility rather than individual roles only. Owing-class people have generally been left with confidence that initiative can be taken by them in any direction.

If we become skilled at eliminating the patterns involved in class roles, we will be left with only our strengths.

Of course, the patterns that we face in our clients will be individual and unique also, as individual and unique as the individuals whom they affect.

Harvey Jackins

From page 292 of “The Chronic Patterns of Classism” in *A Better World*

“Internalized Sexism Could Have Killed Me”

I was raised with a tremendous amount of shame about my female body. It was the result of sexual molestation, classism, fat oppression, racism, anti-Jewish oppression, and sexism from every corner of my life as a girl. It came at me as internalized oppression from women and as sexism and male domination from men.

It is difficult for me to let anyone, including doctors, near my body. I am especially ashamed of any body parts that are usually covered by clothing. My employer provides good health insurance, but I do not get regular mammograms, pap smears, and so on, because the humiliation is too great.

When I turned fifty, the doctor said I needed a colonoscopy. I ignored her for a few years but then started having physical problems. In 2018, I overcame my humiliation enough to do a stool test. The test showed blood, and I was told to get a colonoscopy immediately.

I didn't do it. I knew it was the right thing to do, but I am a single woman and did not know who would care for me if I was sick. I'm responsible for caretaking family members, and I did not see how I could possibly take time away from them. Also, I'd heard that colonoscopies were unbearable, and I did not think I could do one without drugs, which I did not want to take.

After three female friends my age had been diagnosed with cancer and two had died, I decided it was time

to get a colonoscopy. I asked for a female doctor and tried to be honest with her about the problems I was having with my body so she could help me. I won over the male anesthesiologist as an ally, and I got through the procedure awake and alert, holding his hand the whole time.

As I had feared, the doctor found, and cut out, a very large pre-cancerous polyp, and I will be monitored for cancer the rest of my life. If I had gotten screened a decade ago when I was supposed to, or two years ago when the doctor told me I was in trouble, this would not have happened. Fortunately, because I took charge of my health, the polyp came out before it had grown into cancer.

Internalized sexism could have killed me. I have a lot more work to do, but I know I will not let the oppression dominate my mind to the same degree again. I am grateful for the community of women in RC who fight for themselves and each other and inspire me to value my own life. Thank you, Diane [Diane Balser, International Liberation Reference Person for Women], for the years you have spent helping us to build this sisterhood and the ways you keep us going strong together.

J—
USA

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



LENOX, MASSACHUSETTS, USA • ALAN EPSTEIN

if you move . . .

and don't tell us in advance of your address change, it causes a surprising waste of resources. The post office does not forward bulk mail; instead it destroys the undelivered literature. Then we usually receive a notice from the post office saying that you have moved, and we are charged postage due for the notice. This need not happen if you will kindly let us know of your address change with as much advance notice as possible. You can e-mail address changes to litsales@rc.org.

Thank you!
Rational Island Publishers



LIVERPOOL, ENGLAND • ROB VENDERBOS

Cancer and Women's Liberation

As I listen to Global Majority and Indigenous females from different nations and religious heritages and across age and class (especially women raised poor), I am struck [impressed] by how cancer appears to be a women's liberation issue.

Cancer among females seems to be increasing. It often seems to be assaulting the female body in deliberate ways. How does the oppressive society make us vulnerable to this disease as females? In addition to the food we eat, where we live, the invisible toxins we absorb—can we examine how we are impacted as women? I know we are not at fault.

I recently listened to a woman in her thirties about her fear of cancer and how she was thinking pro-actively about her body's health. She was working on it in an inter-related way that included early sexual memories and distress recordings related to her heritages. It made me feel hopeful that we can "take back our bodies."

I welcome thinking on this topic. How do you gather information, use the discharge process, and learn from listening to other women?

Joanne Bray

Stamford, Connecticut, USA

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

My Family and Female Cancers

My family has been decimated by female cancers, starting with my maternal grandmother. When my mother died, after fifteen years of battling cancer but also living a full life, a distress recording flickered past my consciousness. It said that the best way to honor her was to die the same way: with a big struggle, yes, but with death as the end result. In that instant, I knew that I had huge things to face to not go down the same path.

My cousins have also had to work on this (not as RCers). Our mothers taught us to persist and fight. But we have all determined to win—which, as far as I can tell [perceive], is not something our mothers thought they could do. I certainly do not blame our mothers. They fought glorious battles. We stand on their shoulders.

I, for one, am committed both to living a long life and to discharging the recordings that would leave me enmeshed in a perpetual struggle—which seems a key part of my recordings from sexism.

Tresa Elguera

Brooklyn, New York, USA

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



Women’s Reproductive Health and “Mental Health” Liberation

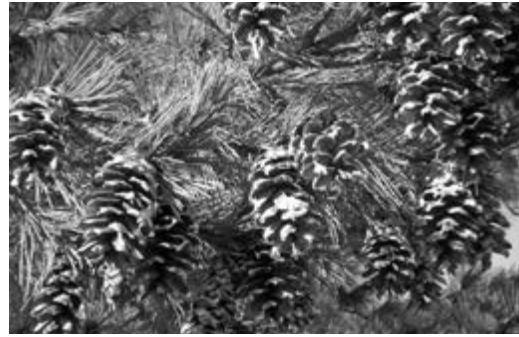
I attended a recent RC workshop on “mental health” liberation and led a topic group on women’s reproductive health and “mental health” liberation.

As part of male domination, males have had control of female reproductive systems. Women’s ability to carry, birth, and nurse children has been the pretext for women being oppressed in this way.

Our histories as women differ depending on our identities. For example, enslaved women were tortured by a man who is referred to as the father of modern gynecology. Native women have undergone forced sterilisations and had children taken away from them. Many women have not had access to safe abortions and reliable contraception.

Women have typically not been in charge of giving birth. Our mothers were probably not in control of our births. No wonder [it is no surprise that] many

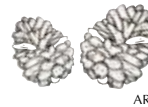
of us have restimulations about our reproductive system. When we show these restimulations, they are often labelled—for example, premenstrual dysphoric disorder (PMDD)—and used to oppress us. Our physical symptoms are often dismissed because “women are emotional” or because there has not been enough medical research on female bodies.



TIM JACKINS

Many of us have internalised shame about our bodies and bodily functions and what happens to our bodies at different stages of our female lives.

In the topic group, we each had a turn to discharge and then took turns thinking about what had gone well or what we wished had happened with our reproductive health.



AR

Erin Mansell

London, England

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



Mothers of Teenage Girls

I, assisted by Caryn Davis, recently led an RC evening for mothers of teenage girls. We set up the evening with the mothers at the center. Also attending were female allies with whom the mothers were connected.

We wanted to open the door to what often feels unbearable—looking at our lives when we were twelve to nineteen years old. The following are just a few of our thoughts:

- Teenage girls can be some of our favorite human beings. At the same time, the effects of sexism and young people’s oppression can sometimes

make it hard for us to feel like we like them.

- Our teenage years were an important time in our lives. Our bodies were changing. There were many struggles. None of that is trivial. Yet it is easy to skip over it [not work on it] as clients.

- Today’s teenage girls are being targeted in shocking ways. It can feel hard to look at what they are up against [having to deal with]. I have taught high school for over a decade and have observed how advanced capitalism, consumerism, and the sex industries are shaping the experience of teenage females. For

example, young people, especially females, are encouraged to create and share sexualized images of themselves on social media. Girls can be humiliated or threatened with humiliation because cell phones can capture and share images of them.

We can choose to stay close to female teens. We can communicate to them that they are liked and wanted. Doing this also honors ourselves as mothers and allies.

Tokumbo Bodunde

Brooklyn, New York, USA

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

● ● ● ● Growing Up a Jewish Puerto Rican Latina ● ● ● ●

My mother was a working-class Puerto Rican woman born in Harlem in New York City, USA. My father was a Ukrainian Jew born in Brooklyn, New York, USA. They were communists. They met at age eighteen and were married when they were almost twenty. They were strong allies to each other, and they each taught their children about the other's heritage.

My mother was targeted with racism in New York City. She was accused of cheating when she did well on a paper. She got beat up by Irish and Italian young people and early on found her allies among Jews. Her lighter-skinned mother had to be the one who applied for apartments.

When my father graduated from college in 1951, because of his political beliefs no one would hire him in his field of mathematical biology. The Korean war had just broken out, and he and my mother decided to move to Puerto Rico to get to know my mother's country and have some time together in case my father was jailed for refusing to fight in the war. They were also prevented from working in Puerto Rico. On advice from an elder, they bought land so they could at least feed themselves. That is the land I now live on.

My parents were consciously anti-racist and feminist, although it took time for my father to understand how sexism showed up [was enacted] in our home. I was the first child and was always encouraged to use my mind and pursue my interests. I was in Puerto Rico from when I was born until age five, in New York from age two to seven (my family went back and forth a few times), and in Puerto Rico from age seven to thirteen. Then we moved to Chicago, Illinois, USA. The period of age seven to thirteen was the core of my childhood and shaped much of my sense of identity. I lived in the United States from 1967 to 2019. I moved back to the farm in late 2019.

I was aware of class. We had electricity, a cistern, and a water pump while my friends used kerosene lamps and hauled water from a spring down the hill. I was called *americanita* [little American] even though my mother was Puerto Rican. I had an insider-outsider life. I was aware of "colorism" and sexism in the community. My best friend and I were the only girls who wore pants or climbed trees. There was a lot of domestic violence and early pregnancy, which is partly why we left Puerto Rico when I was thirteen.

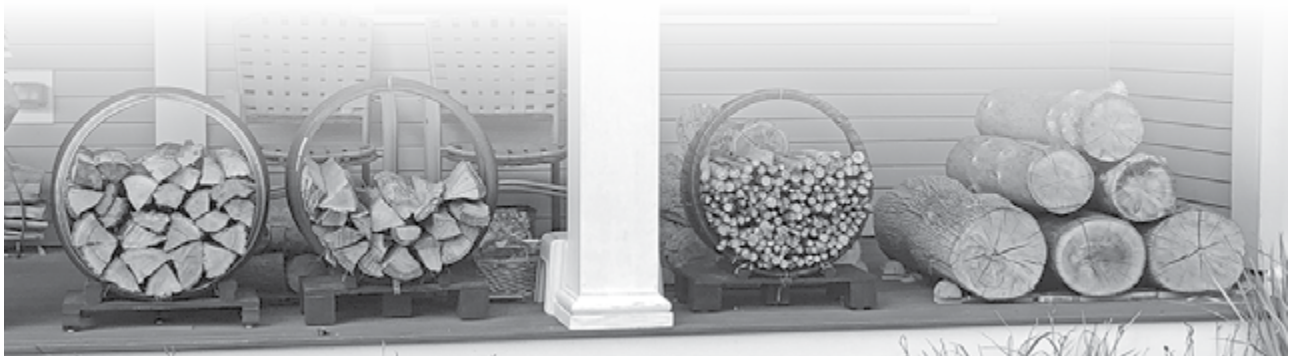
I encountered intense racism as a Puerto Rican when we moved to Chicago. I was called names and accused of bringing cockroaches with me. The women's liberation movement was exploding into life, along with Black power and Chicano/a movements. I was the youngest member of the Chicago Women's Liberation Union, which my mother was also in.

Growing up in Puerto Rico, and ever since, I have found it hard that there is no such thing as Jewish Latino/a people. The assumption is that all Latino/a people are Catholic or at least Christian and that all Jews are white.

Aurora Levins Morales

Maricao, Puerto Rico

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



FIREWOOD ON A PORCH • ILANA STREIT



PESCADERO, CALIFORNIA, USA • PAM ROBY

Interacting with Three of the RC Websites

The RC Communities maintain three different websites that you can interact with. They are not connected to each other, so login information is not shared between them.

<www.rc.org>

This is the public website for RC, where you can find articles on many topics, the *Guidelines for the Re-evaluation Counseling Communities*, and much more.

It can be freely accessed by anyone without a login.

It also gives subscribers access to their digital subscriptions, such as for the digital *Present Time* and the *RC Teacher Update* audio recordings (RCTUs). You will need to create a Member ID and password to access your digital subscriptions.

Please contact litsales@rc.org with issues related to your digital subscriptions. Contact ircc@rc.org for other RC website issues.

<www.rationalisland.com>

This is the website for Rational Island Publishers, where you can order RC books, pamphlets, journals, DVDs, and audio recordings as well as subscriptions to online publications. You will need to create a User ID and password to order literature using this website.

Please contact litsales@rc.org with any issues.

<list.rc.org>

This is the website for the RC e-mail discussion lists. To subscribe to a list, please set up an account at this site and then apply there to be subscribed.

You will need to create a User ID and password.

For help, see [page 89](#) of this *Present Time*.

We have a tiny staff, so please keep careful track of your IDs and passwords rather than asking us to remind you of them.

We also have several other websites—for people new to RC and for the general public. Please see [page 88](#) of this *Present Time* for information about them.



In addition, we recently developed a website, <www.listeningwell.info>, to answer questions about RC that have been raised in criticisms of RC.



Black Re-emergence No. 14



The journal *Black Re-emergence* No. 14 has emerged!

Read the brilliant thinking of African-heritage Co-Counselors from around the world about the re-emergence of African-heritage people and our liberation.

Read about Black Liberation and Community Development (BLCD) 2020 that had over three hundred Black people from the African diaspora in attendance.

Read Barbara Love's article "The State of Black Liberation 2021."

Read about ending racism and about women's liberation, men's liberation, "mental health" liberation, Black Community development, Sustaining All Life (SAL), and more.

Order your copies today. Share *Black Re-emergence* No. 14 with your RC Community and with the world around you.

Sondra D. McCurry
Coordinating Editor, Black Re-emergence

Print version: \$5.00 (U.S.), plus postage and handling
Ordering information on [page 111](#), and at www.rationalisland.com

Short Audio Recordings by Tim Jackins

Rational Island Publishers has been producing a series of audio recordings 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 recording is produced each quarter. The series is called *RC Teacher Updates*.

For a complete list of all the audio recordings produced up until now, see [pages 106](#) and [107](#) of this *Present Time*.

Anyone can order any of the audio recordings for \$10 each, plus postage and handling.

The 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, and 2021 four-CD sets are available to RC teachers for \$25 per set, and to others for \$35 per set, while supplies last.

The 12-CD sets for 2006, 2007, and 2008; for 2009, 2010, and 2011; for 2012, 2013, and 2014; for 2015, 2016, and 2017; and for 2018, 2019, and 2020 are each available to anyone for \$40 per set.

If you are a certified RC teacher, the upcoming four audio recordings per year are available on a subscription basis, for \$25 a year, and are sent out quarterly. If you are not a certified RC teacher, you can subscribe for \$35 a year. Anyone can order up to three years at a time.

RCTUs 1 to 61 are available as CDs only. RCTUs 62 and beyond are available as digital downloads (the CDs are available by request to Rational Island Publishers). A link and a password to access the digital downloads will be sent out quarterly.



JO PERRY

Ordering information on [pages 111](#) and [112](#), and at www.rationalisland.com

Side By Side No. 4, Volume 1



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

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

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

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

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

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

\$5.00 (U.S.), plus postage and handling



Working Together to End Racism

A pamphlet introducing RC from the perspective of ending racism,
by Tim Jackins and others

\$2.00 (U.S.), plus postage and handling

To order, go to [page 111](#) or to www.rationalisland.com.



On Transition



Dear leaders of the RC Community,

First of all, I wish to express my gratitude and appreciation for the work you have done in being part of the leadership of the RC Community. Our Community has continued to develop well and grow throughout the past decades, including in the very challenging last couple of years. Thank you.

The thought and effort needed to function in the last two years because of COVID has put demands on all of us. It has changed the ways we could function and slowed down the implementation of some of our plans. We delayed the Pre-World Conferences for a year, and now they have to be online. This worked, and is continuing to work, but it has changed many things. I missed getting to be with people at the first two Pre-World Conferences, and at this point it appears that I will not get to be with people in person at any of the Pre-Worlds nor at the World Conference.

Because I won't have the same opportunities at the Pre-Worlds as in other years, I want to turn your attention now to an issue we have been working on for many years. I would like all of us who are leading to turn our minds toward encouraging more RCers to lead and take leadership roles in RC.

We have always believed that everyone is capable of leading, and that anyone with a solid knowledge of RC is capable of leading in RC, though they may need to first discharge distresses that would interfere with their leading. We also know how to do the discharge work to clear the paths to leadership. From our [Guidelines](#), "The RC Community wants to provide this opportunity to more people and to

an increasingly diverse group that is representative of the general population (including people of different ages, races, and classes and from other under-represented groups), without losing the leadership abilities and experience of existing Reference Persons."

Teaching fundamentals classes still seems a good place to begin one's leadership in RC. And it encourages the growth of the Community, so there are more places for people to use their leadership. Also, people who have been leading in various Reference Person roles need to be encouraging experienced Co-Counselors to prepare themselves to replace them in those roles. This has been gradually happening, but I think with more thought and discharge it will move more quickly.

Some people have found it difficult to think about giving up an official reference role. Some of this comes out of distresses, but also people continue to get better and better at fulfilling the role, so it stays attractive and interesting. I want Reference Persons to prepare replacements for themselves not because I want them "out of the way" but rather because I want them to take on [undertake] other ways of leading the RC Community, in particular the growth of the RC Community. I also want them around for many years to support their replacement. I think each of us has an important role to play in supporting the person who takes over our role.

Five years ago, at our last World Conference, I told you all that I intended to retire from my role of International Reference Person in eight years. The COVID disruption of our schedule makes it unclear whether that will end up

being eight or nine years, but it is still my intention. I want to be in good enough health to support my replacement and the Community for many years after I step away from the role.

The day after I became International Reference Person when my father died (I had been Alternate International Reference Person), I selected Diane Shisk as my Alternate. It was a good decision. Both she and I have since been confirmed by five World Conferences and have functioned well together for more than two decades. This length of time has been useful in many ways, including in helping us plan for the future of many aspects of our Community, such as the ongoing replacement of leadership.

Diane and I have had discussions about the role of the Alternate International Reference Person—who is committed to becoming the International Reference Person if the existing International Reference Person cannot continue between World Conferences. Her suggestion, and our agreement, is that she step down from being the Alternate at the next World Conference and be replaced in that role. Therefore, at the next World Conference I will ask the conference to agree that Teresa Enrico become the Alternate International Reference Person. I know many, many of you have had contact with Teresa in the many leadership roles she has played in RC over several decades. I believe she is an excellent choice, and I would like everyone to have sessions about leadership and Teresa so that they can support her unreservedly.

With love and appreciation,

Tim Jackins

Janet Kabue—Our Next International Commonality Reference Person for Care of the Environment

A few months ago, Janet Kabue, the Area Reference Person for Nairobi, Kenya, became my apprentice as International Commonality Reference Person (ICRP) for Care of the Environment.

I've been the ICRP since Wytse Visser (the first ICRP) had to retire for health reasons about three and a half years ago. I love the work. Climate change is a key issue for me, and I will always lead on it. But I am very happy that Janet is now working so closely with me and seriously moving toward taking over [assuming] this role.

I have worked alongside Janet with Sustaining All Life (SAL) and the COPs since the COP in Paris in 2015. She has moved into taking on [undertaking] big responsibilities with SAL—leading events, leading the African constituency, then leading the delegation. She has always excelled at what she has taken on.

It's been clear to me for a while that she would be a good person to take on the ICRP role. I first spoke with her about it more than a year ago, and she agreed to discharge about it but didn't say yes. I told her that if she were the ICRP, I would continue doing any leading in the area and playing any supportive role that she wanted me to.

After a few months, we talked again. She said she was seriously considering the role but hadn't yet decided. I told her there was no hurry. Because of our work together with SAL, we had quite a bit of contact, and we kept building our relationship.

I needed more help with the ICRP job and put together a team of people to work with me. She was part of that team—a great team of women who led a series of daylong climate emergency workshops with me that were paired with the Pre-Pre-World Conferences in 2021.

At the end of that series, I again asked Janet what she was thinking, and we talked about how I could best support her to discharge and think about taking on the role. We decided that it would work best for her to agree to do it, but in her own time frame. Hoorah! She's going to do it! There is no hurry. When she wants it, it is hers. Tim [Jackins] has agreed with each of these steps, and it is part of Tim's job as International Reference Person to appoint each ICRP.

I have always thought that this RC leadership role, in particular, should be filled by a person of the Global Majority. Racism and genocide are so intertwined with

the climate emergency that I think being white (and a U.S. person) is a "limiting factor." Janet has always made it clear that her relationship to caring for the environment is grounded in her life as an African woman and that her passion for it reflects her passion for Africa and the African people.

I have seen how our racism targets Janet as an African woman. I know it will not be easy for her to lead all the white people—as well as the other Global Majority and Indigenous (GMI)* people who are doing this work and eventually everyone in the RC Community. We all need to make a commitment now to discharge on our racism toward Black people, and Africans in particular, and to stand against any of our distresses that could interfere with our fully backing Janet as our leader. The job of leading on the climate emergency is a huge job as it is; Janet should not be battling our racism at the same time.

I also think that the RC Community will be best served if many more of us older white leaders turn more of our attention now to supporting GMI, working-class, and younger people to take on our roles. We can encourage them to see their strengths and capabilities as equal to the task. They are in better shape [condition] than we were when we started. And they will have us to back [support] them and to make their transition into these big jobs smoother, though the challenges they face are bigger. I'll be leading groups for white leaders on "passing the baton."

I'm very happy to be on Janet's team as she moves into taking over the leadership of the work to care for the environment.

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

*The peoples of Africa, Asia and the Pacific Islands, and South, Central, and Caribbean America, and Indigenous people, are over eighty percent of the global population. These people also occupy most of the global land mass.

Using the term "Global Majority and Indigenous (GMI)" for these people acknowledges their majority status in the world and interrupts how the dominant (U.S. and European) culture assigns them a minority status.

Many Global Majority and Indigenous people living in dominant-culture countries have been assimilated into the dominant culture—by force, in order to survive, in seeking a better life for themselves and their families, or in pursuing the economic, political, or other inclusion of their communities. Calling these people "Global Majority and Indigenous" contradicts the assimilation.

Pleased to Be Moving Toward Becoming International Commonality Reference Person for Care of the Environment

In 2015, I attended my first International Care of the Environment Workshop. It was led by Wytse Visser and took place in Donostia-San Sebastián in the Basque Country.

There was something about working on leadership, connection, and closeness—and then falling asleep to the sound of a nearby stream—that restored hope.

I grew up in a village surrounded by elders who cared deeply about us. They also cared about the environment and our culture and showed us how to care for them. Life was slow, and that was good.

I see the hearts of my elders breaking about what's happening to our current life and our future. Our rivers are drying up, and the seasons are failing. Capitalism continues to take hold and replace our not-for-profit Indigenous systems that would have sustained both our lives and the planet.

I joined Co-Counseling thirteen years ago. Like everything I do, I brought my elders and ancestors with me in my heart. I grew from being a Co-Counselor, to an RC teacher, to an Area Reference Person. I started noticing how scared I was about climate change and how deep my love is for the continent of Africa.

At the Healing from War Workshops in Poland, I really looked at hopelessness, discouragement, and fears about survival.

In 2018, I had a conversation with Diane Shisk (International Commonality Reference Person for Care of the Environment) about the climate situation. I shared a PowerPoint I was making for a class on care of the environment. I thought it was horrible—she thought it was powerful. Her exact words were, “Thank you. Very powerful.”

I have shown myself, good and bad, fully to Diane. She has been a real ally, backing [supporting]

me to see reality past my distress and fully appreciate myself as a leader. As an African woman, I grew up surrounded by conflict and hardship, and now, as an adult, I'm surrounded by racism. It takes a bit of extra effort to be hopeful. Showing up and leading has made it necessary to reach for hope and work on whatever comes up. Leading on the climate emergency—in classes, forums, support groups, and workshops, and finally leading a delegation to COP26—is a constant reminder of the importance of our work. We reach for hope by joining the voices that are calling for an end to the destruction of our planet.

I am pleased to be an apprentice to Diane as International Commonality Reference Person for Care of the Environment and to be helping the climate movement go in a hopeful direction.

*Janet Kabue
Area Reference Person
for Nairobi, Kenya
Nairobi, Kenya*



SOUTH AFRICA • WILLIAM M. LOVING

The Retirement of Jo Saunders

I am announcing the retirement of Jo Saunders from the role of RC International Liberation Reference Person (ILRP) for Owing-Class People.

Jo has functioned beautifully in this role for many years, helping to develop our understanding of the capitalist form of economy that currently dominates so much of the world. We have benefited tremendously from her deep understanding of RC theory and practice, her caring about and commitment to every human being, and her tireless work to help each of us move toward liberation from distress and a fuller understanding of classism.

Handing the ILRP role over to someone else will allow her to use her time and abilities more flexibly in the RC Community, including in support of the next ILRP for Owing-Class People.

I am pleased to announce that Ali Bourne will be the next ILRP for Owing-Class People. Ali has been part of the RC Community since childhood, has worked well in many parts of the Community, and has the necessary understanding and commitment to lead well in this important area.

Tim Jackins

..... From Jo

The following are excerpts from a letter Jo Saunders wrote to her constituency in November 2021, upon retiring from the job of International Liberation Reference Person for Owing-Class People.

I asked a Jewish leader if there was something I should do before handing owning-class leadership over to Ali Bourne. Their reply was to write a love letter to owning-class Jews. So, this letter is first to the Jews. Then it is to owning-class people targeted by racism, and then to my whole owning-class constituency.

Why first to the Jews? The owning class has been the cradle of anti-Semitism. I took my line from the Danes who saved Jews from being taken out of Denmark: "We took care of our own."

Anti-Semitism is a trip wire for Gentiles, made all the worse because it is so invisible to us, and is the age-old, well-worn mechanism by which owning-class Gentiles safeguard their wealth. So I prioritised creating a safe place for currently rich Jews and Jews with a heritage of wealth.

To owning-class Jews: You and your people have become my dearest loves, my tutors, and my guides. You have given me your trust and risked acknowledging where you are oppressors. You have shared with me your culture and expected me to step up to the plate [meet the challenges] for you and correct my actions and policies every time I have



AUSTRALIA • DIANE SHISK

faltered. Never once have you stopped loving me. How many Gentiles have had riches like that offered to them? Thank you from the bottom of my heart.

To those targeted by racism: You have made me acutely aware of the imperialism of the British Empire. You have given me your hearts, shared the joys of your heritages, forgiven me repeatedly for my racism, and taken responsibility for your own oppressor role in being owning class. You have been so generous, so loving, so brave and dear! You make my heart full.

To my whole constituency: I have been able to show and share with the RC Community how good we owning-class people are and how willing we are to face our responsibility for the horrors of classism.

What a fantastic bunch of people I was given to lead! Loving you, knowing you, having you walk in step with me, has given me meaning and challenge and deep satisfaction for over forty years.

The best part is that I am going to stay with you! I am merely handing the baton over. I am not dying, not leaving—just facing a different task: how to back [support] Ali, how to give up control, how to stay in touch with all of you whom I love so much, without a name written on my hat.

Nobody has ever had a job like mine. I've had the opportunity to think about how the owning class can contribute significantly to the transformation of society.

I have not succeeded in my goals, but I have not failed either, and that is because you have chosen to travel with me and do this, too.

We know that we who are owning class have been deeply hurt by not having been allowed to show how much we care, by our loved ones not showing how much they cared for us, and by not being connected to one another. Yet you and I have managed to deal those distress recordings serious blows! I care for you deeply and have shown it as best I can. You in your turn have shown how much you love and care for me, and I have known it.

Between us we have done real damage to owning-class conditioning!

Jo Saunders

Winchester, Hampshire, England
Reprinted from the RC e-mail discussion
list for leaders of owning-class people

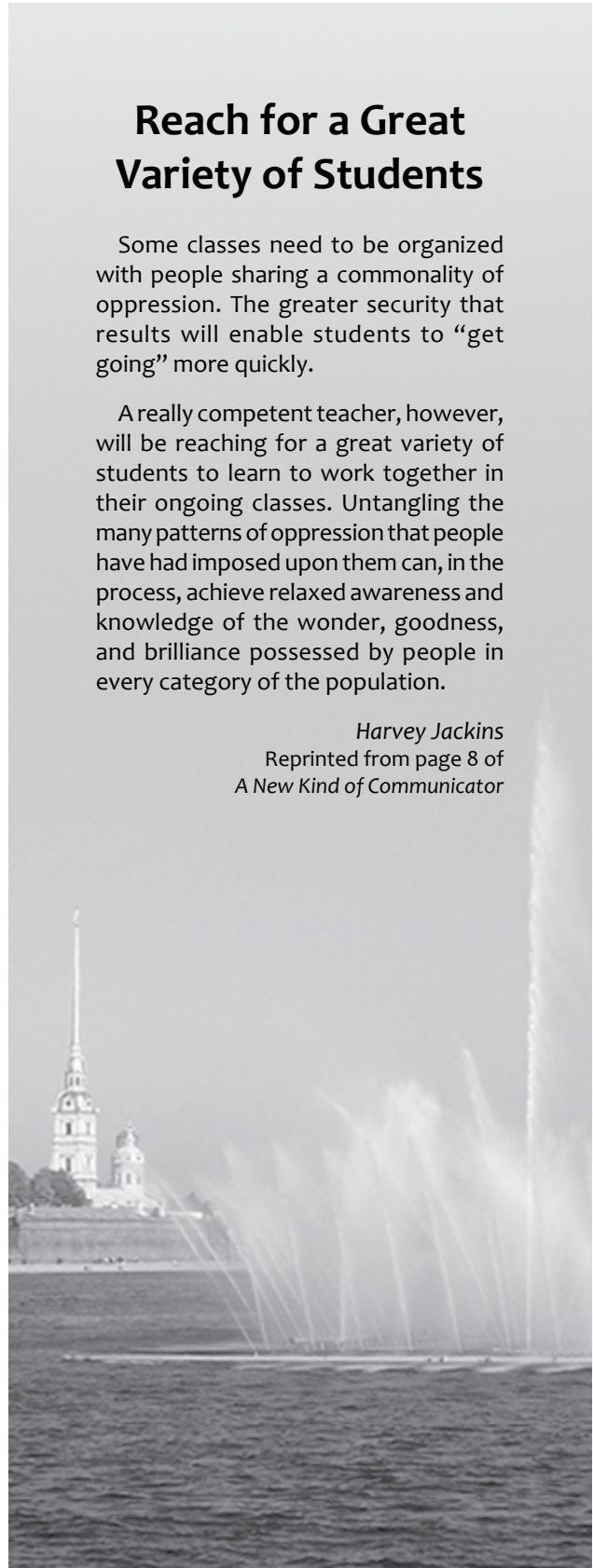
Reach for a Great Variety of Students

Some classes need to be organized with people sharing a commonality of oppression. The greater security that results will enable students to “get going” more quickly.

A really competent teacher, however, will be reaching for a great variety of students to learn to work together in their ongoing classes. Untangling the many patterns of oppression that people have had imposed upon them can, in the process, achieve relaxed awareness and knowledge of the wonder, goodness, and brilliance possessed by people in every category of the population.

Harvey Jackins

Reprinted from page 8 of
A New Kind of Communicator



SAINT PETERSBURG, RUSSIA • TIM JACKINS



The Africa Pre-World Conference



The Africa Pre-World Conference was a thrilling experience for me—educative, liberating, exhilarating, and eye opening.

Tim Jackins taking us “back to the basics” was interesting for me because I wanted to be sure of all that I had learnt earlier on. The three words that keep ringing in my head are love, restimulation, and discharge.

I was reminded that I get restimulated because of similar experiences that have happened in my past. Old feelings from the early hurts come back to be felt in the present. This is what always confuses me—the past masquerading as if it’s in the present. It makes it difficult to think and function as intelligently as I can.

I was reminded once again of the importance of discharging. Anytime I got the opportunity to be in a session, I used it to discharge.

It was exciting to get access to all the materials that were shared, especially about the [Guidelines for the Re-evaluation Counseling Communities](#).

I also learnt what leadership means in RC—that it’s about thinking about the group we are in and not about commanding and telling people what to do. It’s about thinking about others. I need to look at the distresses that get restimulated for me as a leader. Also, it’s likely someone will get upset with me even if I do everything perfectly. I need to remember that it’s about how they were hurt and not about the mistakes I made.

I like that Tim encouraged us not to hide or be too careful or small when

attacks come and that it’s okay to make mistakes along the way. They can be corrected, and they never justify an attack.

My sessions on attacks and my earliest hurts, and getting to think and listen, were all great. I’m glad I got the opportunity to be in sessions with different people.

Discharging on climate change was a good experience for me. The climate emergency should be embraced by all to help get the world back to a better place. The question I keep asking is, how are we going to move on from here? Is it enough for me to start planting trees in my backyard? Is it enough to reduce my use of plastics and get my children and the young people I teach to do the same? Is it enough to get other people interested in the climate crisis? What about the government? How can I get them to act?

I am tired as a young Black person who feels like my voice can’t be heard by anyone. I need a change. I need to see the change now. I need to see that change for my children and the generation unborn.

The highlight of the conference for me was interpreting for Tim on the last day. It was exciting for me because language liberation is very important to me as a young Black Ghanaian woman. I felt like discharging at one point because I could directly connect to what Tim was saying.

I learnt a lot from the Pre-World Conference 2021. I can’t wait to share my experience with the young adults in the Accra, Ghana, Area where I serve as their leader.

Thank you to everyone who had a hand in making this conference a success.

*Ekua Forson
Accra, Ghana*



J. EISENHEIM

Bringing Global Majority and Indigenous People into Our Area

I am white with a mixed raised-poor, working-class, and middle-class background. I have tried many things over thirty years to create an RC Area that has at least half Global Majority and Indigenous (GMI)* people.

Things would work for a while, and then folks would drift away. Finally, eight years ago, we decided that we would not add white people (with the exception of young adults) to our Community until it was over half GMI people. Once we made that decision, things began to change. We had our first class in English and Spanish. That was a wonderful start. Our Area is now almost half GMI people. Most folks are raised poor or working class and also currently working class. A few are middle class.

We held our classes where folks lived. It was a poor and working-class neighborhood. We met at a community center in a dangerous area. I was often scared, but I discharged and got to know people on the block. My perspective changed. For example, once someone started playing loud music outside the community center, and we couldn't hear each other. My reaction was to be mad, but the GMI people all got up and danced. I said to myself, "Oh, I get [understand] how white my perspective is." I started to be more flexible.

* The peoples of Africa, Asia and the Pacific Islands, and South, Central, and Caribbean America, and Indigenous people, are over eighty percent of the global population. These people also occupy most of the global land mass.

Using the term "Global Majority and Indigenous (GMI)" for these people acknowledges their majority status in the world and interrupts how the dominant (U.S. and European) culture assigns them a minority status.

Many Global Majority and Indigenous people living in dominant-culture countries have been assimilated into the dominant culture—by force, in order to survive, in seeking a better life for themselves and their families, or in pursuing the economic, political, or other inclusion of their communities. Calling these people "Global Majority and Indigenous" contradicts the assimilation.

I learned that it was not important that I talk much. It was more important that others got to talk even though I had more RC experience.

We often did not start on time, and we often went late.

Sometimes people brought food, or I did. Other groups meeting in the same building would give us their leftovers. That brought us all together.

We learned to be flexible in how we supported people. We once left our Area workshop to back [support] some folks as they performed. It was a great way to build relationships. I have also accompanied people to doctors' appointments. We have done things like that for each other.



JAPAN • DIANE SHISK

We did many introductory talks, many of them on the spur of the moment [with no advanced planning]. We got good at it. People would stop by and want to know what we were doing, and we would invite them in and do an introduction.

We admitted new people to classes on an ongoing basis. This meant that we continuously restarted fundamentals classes. Some folks heard the same presentations several times. That was not a problem—they added their thinking even when they had only been in RC for a short time.

There is now no such thing as a sixteen-week introductory class. All classes are ongoing and just add people in. A core of folks have stayed throughout. Some have come and left, and some have left and come back. Many more people have been introduced to RC.

I decided that I would not let GMI people face racism in order to spare white people's feelings. So whenever something happened that was racist, we would address it. That made a big difference.

Before every Area workshop I would ask the GMI people what they wanted the white folks to know

continued . . .

... continued

and do, and not do. The first class of the workshop was always on racism. The GMI people would meet separately.

Eventually the GMI people came up with [created] guidelines for our Area. These have been really helpful. We white folks, especially those of us who are middle and upper class, have to monitor how much space we take up—physical space, locational space, and air time [time spent talking]. We need to make room.

After a year, I backed [supported] two GMI people to lead. Now both are teaching RC classes of GMI people, and I'm supporting them. I meet with them and one other white RC teacher once a week on Zoom.

We decided to raise money as an Area for outreach. At first all the GMI people wanted to do the fundraising, with events. Mike Markovits [President of the Re-evaluation Foundation] came (pre-COVID) and did a workshop for us. He said emphatically that the white folks needed to raise the money. We did that for a couple of years, and we still get some gifts from those efforts.

At one point it was suggested that we mix the white classes and the GMI classes. But the GMI people wanted a place for themselves. They talked about the safety of an all-GMI class. So we decided to keep the classes separate and have mixed support groups and Area events.

I would love to hear what others have done and learned.

Susan Seibel
Oxford, Massachusetts, USA
Reprinted from the e-mail discussion
list for RC Community members

We Are Not Teaching Something “Brand-New”

I think the principal reason for the success of our teachers has been that we are not teaching the students something “brand-new” [completely new].

We are communicating to them, we are reassuring them, that the attitudes that they themselves have always really held, and that they have persisted with in some hidden way underneath all the invalidation and counter-conditioning, are really true.

We are saying to people that the ideas that they've always treasured deep within themselves (that human beings are good, are smart, mean well to each other, and should be able to solve their difficulties and get along with each other) are sound.

We are affirming their hidden faith that there are understandable reasons why they haven't been able to do as well as they wanted to do up 'til the present. We are saying that there's a practical solution to removing these reasons and allowing them to regain their human abilities.

We're saying, in effect, to each person that the deeply held concept of themselves as good, intelligent, desiring and able to relate to others is the actual case.

We are saying what they have always felt, that discharge is natural and good and should be encouraged instead of suppressed.

Harvey Jackins
Reprinted from page 4 of
A New Kind of Communicator



MOSI-OA-TUNYA NATIONAL PARK, ZAMBIA • WILLIAM M. LOVING

All print subscriptions to *Present Time* begin with the next issue published. (Digital subscriptions begin with the current issue.) We can't send back issues as part of a new subscription because we rely on bulk mailings to save money and it costs more to send a single copy. You can order back issues as regular literature items (see [pages 104 and 111](#) or go to www.rationalisland.com).

A Format for a Men's Gather-in

I recently conducted two gather-ins for men. They were each two hours long, with thirty to forty men attending. I used the following format.

This was my welcome: "Welcome here! I'm pleased to be with you. We can be very pleased with ourselves and each other. You don't have to be anything special to be here. Just being who you are, exactly as you are right now, is enough. So, I invite you to be who you are, just as you are right now. This gather-in will consist of some randomly assigned mini-sessions and then telling our life stories in small groups. We'll do the first mini-session now. It will be a three-way session, with each person having three minutes."

Immediately after the first mini-session, I set up the next one: "We are going to have another mini-session. This time you can talk about your health. If you can't find much to talk about with that, just talk about how your life is right now. Again, these will be randomly assigned three-ways, three minutes each."

After that we met in small groups to tell our life stories. This is how I talked about it: "We're going to get into groups to tell our life stories. Telling these stories will be a bit different than the usual session. Discharge is welcome, but it's not the main purpose. The purpose is for you to tell people who you are, to give them a "picture" of your life. I suggest that you don't choose a counsellor—just talk to everyone in the group.

"You have all had big, full lives. You have all lived many years of life. There is a lot to talk about! This is a chance to tell some of your life story. You could talk

about your family, friends, school, relationships, work, and more.

"One way to start telling your story is to answer the question, 'Who were you born to, and what happened next?' You may have told your life story before, but each time you tell it, it will be different. You could choose to talk about your whole life or about one part of it in detail.

"If you finish your story (that is, you get up to the present), just go back and start again and tell it with more detail.

"You might want to have a minute of silence after each life story, so people have a chance to notice the story they just heard. You might want a five-minute break in the middle of the group session."



KATIE KAUFFMAN

Then we divided into randomly assigned groups of three or four people and met for seventy minutes (in the breakout rooms).

In closing, I asked a few men to say what had been good about participating in the gather-in.

Karl Lam

Cambridge, England

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

Getting a Broader Picture of Each Other's Lives

Karl's description of life stories [see previous article] reminded me of a conversation I had with Harvey [Jackins] at a workshop forty years ago.

He had met with several leaders of budding Communities and asked us the following questions to get the conversation going: "Where were you born? Were you welcome? What happened next?" He hadn't been offering us a session. He'd just wanted to find out who we were.

We Co-Counsellors often head straight for where discharge can happen. It might make sense sometimes to slow down and let our counsellors see a broader picture of our lives so that they can think about us in a more grounded way.

Jonathan Shaw

Marrickville, New South Wales, Australia

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

Being Encouraged to Lead

I was excited to be invited to the “Mental Health” Liberation Leaders’ Workshop in September 2021. It was led by Jenny Martin, our new International Liberation Reference Person for “Mental Health” Liberation. Part of Jenny’s vision is to have more Co-Counselors leading “mental health” liberation, and writing reports about it, and she set up the workshop to make that happen.

She asked several of us to lead sections on the intersection of “mental health” liberation with the different oppressions. We dealt with language, men, LGBTQ people, young adults, street drugs, psychiatric drugs, suicide, artists, inmates, and more. I led on women and “mental health” liberation.

When Jenny asked me to lead a section on women’s liberation, my first reaction was, “I can’t do that. Why me?” But I made an instant decision not to share my distress with her and agreed to do it. Jenny never heard about my distress patterns. I had a lot of Co-Counseling sessions discharging on leading at the workshop. One Co-Counselor reminded me that I was exactly the right person to do it. Another reminded me that it was an International workshop, and I was an International leader, which brought lots of discharge.

Below is some of what I said at the workshop:

As women we are set up by society to think we are “crazy,” especially when we show how badly we have been hurt. It is sometimes okay for women to cry, because it is seen as an aspect of our “weakness.” It is not okay for women, in particular Global Majority and Indigenous* women, to show our anger.

When we show our distresses in a big way, it is often seen as excessive or as being too emotional. We can get labelled “crazy.” More women than men get

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CHINA • TIM JACKINS

incarcerated in “mental health” facilities and given psychiatric drugs and electroshock.

We are also not supposed to fight for ourselves. We are not supposed to fight to end sexism. When we do, we might be labelled “crazy,” or people might say we have “crazy” ideas. When I’ve spoken up about sexism, people have sometimes said, “There goes Sondra again,” meaning, there I go with those “crazy” ideas again.

Historically, women’s biology was considered the cause of our “mental instability.” European men in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries diagnosed women with “hysteria.” “Hysteria” comes from the Greek word *hysteria*, which means uterus. Hysteria was what we were supposedly experiencing when we were “too” emotional. Guess what the cure was: a hysterectomy—the surgical removal of the uterus, or the uterus and ovaries. This diagnosis was used until 1980 (which is not long ago).

I’d like women to tell their “mental health” stories as women. We can also try using the words “female” and “woman” more often in our Co-Counseling sessions to help us focus on how “mental health” oppression has played a part in our hurts as women.

Thank you, Jenny, for asking me to lead. Not only did I have a chance to lead a section, but I am also writing about it! My next steps are to do more of both.

Sondra D. McCurry
Area Reference Person for
Greater Cleveland, Ohio, USA
Euclid, Ohio, USA

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

Leading Large Women

I'm a large woman, and I committed to discharging on large women's oppression many years ago when Diane Shisk [Alternate International Reference Person for the RC Communities] introduced some of us to that work. It was exciting and unusual to see a woman stand up for us and say that what looked and felt like personal failure was about oppression.

Many women, both large and not large, get excited about doing this work. We know that our experiences of sexism and internalized sexism are at the core of how we feel about our bodies. And we think about other women's bodies so much that it affects our integrity in female relationships. We know that we shouldn't value ourselves and each other based on how we look—but we do. And it's not our fault.

I was one of eight females in a Catholic, mixed-class raised-poor family of ten. We grew up, and mostly remain, large. Out of love for my mother and sisters, I decided to take leadership. Over many years I organised a large women's topic group at every RC workshop I attended. We would sit together with our uncomfortable feelings about our bodies and want desperately to support each other.

I now lead a large women's group twice a month that women from all over Australia attend. This work allows me to keep going against feelings that I'm not able to do much. Leading means I keep coming back to myself for the next steps instead of unawaresly following weight-loss or self-help programs (that may or may not be helpful).

Joani Janaway

Granville, New South Wales, Australia

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

A New Procedure for Organizing Workshops Using the RC Website

Workshop organizers are encouraged to use a registration site on the RC website to securely collect applicant information.

For help in setting up a site, go to
<www.rc.org/workshop/requestregsite>
and use the Registration Site Request Form.



PROVENCE, FRANCE • PAMELA PERROTT

The RC Community and the Working Class

Not long ago, Dan Nickerson (the International Liberation Reference Person for Working-Class People) asked each member of a working-class panel what the RC Community would look like if the working class were well represented. My immediate response was “no pretense.” Someone said that RC would be more accessible.

The following questions come to mind:

Which RC Communities have an increasing number of working-class, raised-poor, and Global Majority and Indigenous (GMI)* people? What have they done differently to make this happen?

Have some rigidities held back our growth? Which ones have presented the biggest obstacles?

What questions would you ask to move us forward?

Jacqueline “Jackie” Kane

Albany, New York, USA

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

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An Updated Chapter in the *Fundamentals Teaching Guide*—Part II

We have updated the chapter on LGBTQ+ liberation in the
Fundamentals Teaching Guide and Class Outline (Liberation)—Part II.

You can also download the new chapter from the RC website, at <www.rc.org/page/updates>.



BYRON BAY, NEW SOUTH WALES, AUSTRALIA • ANSON ALLEN

What If the Working Class Were Well Represented?

The following is in answer to the question, “What would the RC Community look like if the working class were well represented?” [See also [previous article](#).]

I live in an intentional community with twenty mostly working-class and raised-poor folks. Many of us are in recovery from drug addiction, have been in jail, were undocumented immigrants, have survived domestic violence, or have other “target” identities. We live here because it meets our needs. The cost of living is low. There is free childcare. We have a large garden that reduces our grocery bills.

I have succeeded in naturalizing RC in my community over the past fifteen years. People regularly discharge during the “check-ins” at the beginning of community meetings. They understand that emotional expression is a healing process. People can “vent” by describing their “grievances” to the group without others being confused about what is going on [happening]. People will also say, “That’s because of classism (or racism, or sexism),” when something oppressive is referred to in meetings or conversations.

We increasingly trust and lean on each other for support. We listen to each other. A few residents have attended a non-RC discharge and liberation class that I teach, and this has supported the naturalizing of RC in our community.

We mostly simply live together and notice the benefits of listening when someone is upset and of reaching for the relationship despite obstacles.

I think recruiting working-class and poor folks means taking action—not just doing emotional processing! We must show with our actions that we are “in there” and available to be human together. Not that we want them to be like us but that we already like them and want to be part of making life better for us all. Not that we have something to teach them but that we want us to be close and learn from each other.

It seems to me that having time to “improve oneself” by learning RC is a privilege. Also, some people are not going to take a class, read handouts, or do something that looks and sounds like therapy. *Co-Counseling?* Really? Just the term turns off [makes uninterested] much of the population that I live and work with. It sounds very middle class!



SANTA CRUZ, CALIFORNIA, USA • PAM ROBY

The most important thing I have done to reach people with target identities is to discharge my oppressor distress. One of the biggest improvements in my relationship with a particular community mate came after I attended an RC workshop on discharging on USer identity. I was able to listen to him and hear what he was saying in a way that I hadn’t been able to before. He noticed it right away.

There are no shortcuts. We need to discharge oppressor distress, make real relationships, and live our lives as a revolution.

Kara Huntermoon

Eugene, Oregon, USA

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

Doing Family Work on Zoom



Excerpts from a talk by Chuck Esser, the International Commonality Reference Person for Family Work, at a European Family Workers' Workshop

In Philadelphia (Pennsylvania, USA) we have been conducting the following groups on Zoom:

FOR BABIES BORN DURING COVID

We have a class for babies born during COVID. Each parent has somebody with them in person, and the baby can be with that person while the parent has a session online or over the phone with another parent. The allies have an online session at the same time. Then the parents do special time with their babies, supported by at least one ally on Zoom.

During the special time, the infant is often more interested in the support person on Zoom than in anything else. So at the beginning, they get to see the support person, but after a few minutes that person turns off their video and offers verbal encouragement to the parent who is doing the special time.

We all gather at the end for open questions. Open questions seem to be important for new parents. They are exhausted and at the same time are trying to do something completely different from what their parents did.

FOR AGES THREE TO SIX

The three-to-six-year-old group may be the hardest on Zoom. We meet once a month for just an hour, because the young people struggle to be on the screen for more time than that. They do use the attention.

We all play together at first, often with the computers. One of the young people loves making himself look different on the computer.

Then each young person is invited to say something that is going well and what is “yukky” (awful). Then the parent (who is physically



BONNIE BECKEL

present with the young person) does special time with them for about twenty minutes, with an ally supporting on Zoom.

When we come back, we all play together again. Sometimes each young person shows us a physical activity, or they might all ride the adults like horses. We often have some pillow fighting or wrestling. Sometimes the allies offer verbal encouragement to each young person, so that everyone is getting a little extra attention.

We close with everybody saying one thing they enjoyed about the group. The young people typically look forward to the next meeting.

This is a limited format without regular session time for parents or allies. Sometimes we can have a short parent or ally mini-session. We try to set up regular sessions outside of the hour together.

FOR AGES EIGHT TO TEN

The eight-to-ten-year-old group meets for two hours once a month. There are also occasional family playdays between the monthly meetings. The members of this group have known each other since they were born.

They are very interested in being with each other (unlike the younger group, who want to have all the attention on themselves). They want to play games, for example, drawing things together or showing each other tricks and music. They like the sense of power over the adults that being on Zoom makes possible—for example, they can change our names, put us in the waiting rooms, and so on. They love the wrestling time.

At some point we do a breakout mini-session on a topic that we know has some tension for most young people. Examples include, “What is school like? What is it like not to be able to be with your friends? What is it like to stay close friends with someone of a different gender than you are? What are your parents’ biggest problems? What is it like with your brothers and sisters? When is a time you felt like a hero? What are you proud of?” These are short mini-sessions, usually with two young people and an ally of their choice. Sometimes they choose someone else’s parent as their ally.

FOR AGES TEN TO ELEVEN

We weren’t sure how to move forward with the ten-to-eleven-year-old group. Then we realized that three of the four parents were

in an ongoing RC class with an experienced family worker as a teacher. The teacher wanted to experiment with teaching family work, so we folded the family class into her class and invited the fourth family to join.

The regular class gets together for the first half hour for a mini-session. Then the families join for an hour. We all share what's going well—and what's terrible. Then we do special time. Each parent-young person pair has an ally. When we get back together, we share what happened in special time and what was fun about it. Then we have short three-way sessions in the same groups (two to four minutes each). Then we close the family class portion with everybody sharing a highlight. The final hour is for discharge and open questions about family work.

This has been a wonderful way for non-parent class members to do family work. They get to know their parent Co-Counselors in a deeper way, and real relationships get built between young people and allies.

FOR YOUNG TEENS

The young teens (thirteen-, fourteen-, and fifteen-year-olds) meet twice a month. We spend a lot of time in the beginning with “roses and thorns.” “What are the roses in your life right now? What are the thorns? What is good? What is mediocre? What is awful?” Both young people and adults share. Some of the young people need to talk at length about what is awful in their lives. This sharing time is often mentioned as a highlight.

Then the young people and parents do special time, sometimes with an ally and sometimes not. If allies are not in the special time, they have a session with each other.

After the special time, the allies and young people play with each other while the parents do sessions. Each family comes up with [thinks of] a game to play for a particular meeting, and they are interesting ones. The young teens know more about computers than the adults. They sometimes show everyone on screen something about their lives—how they have decorated a room, their artwork, their collections, their music.

When the parents come back, we include them in the play. Then we do a three-way mini-session, usually with a young person, a parent, and an ally. We end with highlights.

The adults often need a lot of time to discharge on how hard it is for them to keep up with the computer skills the young people present to us.

Sometimes the young people are bored with being on screens and don't want to come to the group, but they usually love it once they are there. Often the parents must do a lot of work between group meetings to persuade the young people to come again. The young people now have solid Co-Counseling relationships with each other.



STEVE BANBURY

FOR AGES SIXTEEN TO TWENTY-FIVE

The sixteen-to-twenty-five-year-old group meets once a month in a combination young people's class and support group. All the older participants have Co-Counseling sessions outside the group, and most of them are also in a fundamentals or ongoing class.

A young adult whom I support leads the group. Sometimes the participants read something by Harvey Jackins before each class; then we talk about its relevance to their situation. In the last few meetings, we've been working on a re-emergence strategy.

FAMILY WORKSHOPS

We have held several successful weekend family workshops on Zoom. Each has been unique; we are still learning how to do them.

We held a family workshop for Taiwan for the first time. People were able to meet in person while I led the workshop via Zoom (it was like giving lectures, and I couldn't see what was happening). The leadership team did well, and the workshop was successful.

We have held two teen family workshops on Zoom for the English RC Community. They included young people's classes and “challenge time” with allies. It has been hard for this age group to want to be on Zoom, because they are on it so much for school and other events. However, the workshops have been great for the allies—to work on their teen years and to deepen their Co-Counseling relationships with the teens.

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



RC Leadership and Parenting Teenagers

I'm interested in how people have thought about their Co-Counseling leadership, and the time they put into RC, when parenting teenagers.

I have two children. My husband and I are both RC leaders and inevitably lead and are invited to many RC events. This is in addition to the discharging we do to (try to) keep up with everything.

We had to think about this when our children were younger, but it's different now. They are more independent. They get home later and stay up later. They have homework to do and friends they are in touch with when they

are home. I think so much about parenting a teenager is just being there, being part of whatever they are doing, listening whenever they want to talk.

I grew up in RC. When my mother taught an RC class, I made my own dinner and watched television. I said "hi" to the people in her class as they came in and "goodbye" as they left. I occasionally taught them a game or talked to them about young people's liberation. There was only one class a week. There weren't so many workshops! My mother worked hard to be available when I was available, but I don't think she had to

figure that out in terms of her RC participation.

I haven't wanted to pass by the resource generated by being in a workshop or class. However, my children and I also generate resource when we are together with wide open time. So I am now much more "picky" [particular] about how I spend my time.

If you have been or currently are the parent of a teenager, I would like to hear your thoughts about this.

T—
USA

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

RC Events and My Teenage Daughter

If my daughter is home, almost everything is subject to change. I can reliably have Co-Counseling sessions seven days a week before she wakes up in the morning. The same is true of my weekly men's leaders' class. I am not a single parent, so sometimes my spouse and I can take turns.

With attending evening classes and workshops, I tell the organizers that I may not be available at any given moment. In the last twenty months I have probably attempted more RC workshops than I would have otherwise, but I'm not sure I've attended a hundred percent of any of them.

Yes—being "around" seems key. I never know when something "wow" will happen. And "yes" to our family being a place where we generate resource.

M—
USA

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

When I Was a Teenager

I think it is common for people in the United States to believe that teenagers need their parents less than when they were younger. It's nice to discharge and re-evaluate about this.

It has been useful for me to have sessions about needing my parents when I was a teenager, and on how they could be there for me and the ways they could not. For example, I could not tell my parents when something hard was happening in my life. They were also not flexible about scheduling and being available. On the other hand, they always provided me with healthy meals at reliable times—I could focus on school without worrying about food.

I needed them in many ways. However, like most teenagers, I believed that I was now grown up and didn't need them anymore.

H—
USA

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

RC Activities Contribute to My Parenting

I agree that the dominant society in the United States (and maybe elsewhere) gives an inaccurate message that teenagers do not need or want closeness with their parents.

Being available to my daughter continues to be extremely important. As I write this, I am sitting right beside her while she does homework, and we are feeling connected to one another.

Being one-on-one with me is often my daughter's favorite thing to do. It's also important that she have relationships with other people in which she is well thought about and closely connected. Activities that engage her include an athletic team and a summer job working with younger children. When I am participating in RC, she spends time with other adults (including her dad) and with young people.

Co-Counseling sessions and workshops, and teaching RC classes, contribute to the quality of my parenting. My daughter needs me to have those opportunities to discharge and continually think better. It is important for her flourishing and mine that I keep my re-emergence, physical well-being (exercise), and relationships with other adults central. It's not always obvious how to balance all that, and sometimes I need to "drop everything" when my daughter needs me.

Some of the choices available to me arise out of my ample resources as a white middle-class USer who does not, for example, need to work two jobs to pay my expenses.

B—
USA

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



SQUANTUM POINT PARK, QUINCY, MASSACHUSETTS, USA • ALAN EPSTEIN

A Zoom Tech Team Tries Something Different

Last winter I led a Zoom hosting and technical team for our quad-Regional Jewish RC workshop in the Northeast of the United States.

Being on the tech team is an important workshop job. How well the workshop goes (at least in part) is dependent on how well the team does its job.

After having participated in several teams at previous workshops, I decided to try a different organizational structure, one that I hoped would allow team members to focus more fully on their own participation in the workshop while having the technical aspects of the job go as smoothly as possible.

I had noticed that many of us in these jobs, even if we've had prior experience, are learning a tremendous amount in a short amount of time. Also, generally there is not

enough time to discharge on the feelings being restimulated by the job (from early hurts about learning, making mistakes, and so on).

No other workshop job is like the tech job. We do other workshop jobs for the entire workshop. This often means that the job gets easier as the workshop goes on. We work more efficiently as a team as we discharge, get closer, and are reminded of reality.

I wondered what it would be like if the Zoom hosting and tech jobs were broken down into smaller units, with each person keeping the same job for the entire workshop. The first class would be the most difficult—we would be working as a team for the first time and learning our roles—but after that we could do our jobs with much less effort and could pay more attention to the workshop.

After discharging about this method and discussing it with the workshop organizer, I decided to try it. (I had a back-up plan for if it didn't go well: reverting to the more traditional model of small but different teams running each class.)

I polled my team in advance to find out which tasks they'd had experience doing, which ones they might want to learn, and which ones would not be a contradiction to their early distresses. Once I had that information, I assigned each person their role, in a team of two or three. I then offered a couple of one-hour times during the week prior to the workshop during which team members could meet with me, connect and discharge, review their assignment, ask questions, and practice their job.

Everyone had easy access to a spreadsheet with all the needed information. Also, a team member set up a group text on Signal so we could easily communicate as a group during the workshop.

The method worked extremely well. We worked well together as a team. We enjoyed and took pride in our work and that we were helping the workshop run as smoothly as possible. I received positive feedback from my team, the workshop participants, the workshop leader, and the organizer.

With love and appreciation for all the hard work that goes into making workshops accessible to as many people as possible,

Joelle Hochman

Somerville, Massachusetts, USA
Reprinted from the e-mail discussion list for RC Community members



JAMAICA POND, JAMAICA PLAIN, MASSACHUSETTS, USA • MARC GOLDRING



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Fundraising for RC Projects

I recently attended the Fundraising for the Re-evaluation Foundation and RC Projects Workshop, led by Mike Markovits, President of the Re-evaluation Foundation.

I was inspired by Mike's commitment to fundraising for RC: "I refuse to let money be the limiting factor for the growth of RC."

We were twenty-five people from different class backgrounds—mostly from the United States but also from Trinidad and Tobago, England, and South Africa.

Mike shared information about where the Foundation's money has been going. In 2018, nearly half of the \$640,000 total went to support the development of RC in Africa. Mike did a demonstration in which a participant shared what a difference the Foundation's support is making in people's lives.

Developing RC in Africa has remained a priority, as has funding wide world RC projects such as Sustaining All Life. The Foundation also supports more than 110 other projects—from Korean liberation, to healing from war, to helping RCers who otherwise couldn't afford it get Internet access.

We can work on the following (whether we are fundraisers or not):

- Our distresses about money
- Our earliest memory connected to money in any way at all
- Talking about RC and how important it has been in our lives
- Reaching for people who have more than they need
- Asking for what we want

I am currently formulating a fundraising plan for myself. The workshop put the fun back in fundraising!

Susan Whitlock
Ann Arbor, Michigan, USA
Reprinted from the RC e-mail
discussion list for owning-class people

The Community RC Website

There is a website for the Re-evaluation Counseling (RC) Community at <www.rc.org>. At this site you will have easy access to a large amount of information about RC, including the following:

- **RC theory** (basic theory, including an introduction to RC, a glossary, *The Art of Listening*, *The Human Side of Human Beings*, and the RC postulates)
- **Introductory talks (in audio)** by Harvey Jackins (1986) and Tim Jackins (2008)
- **RC practice** (*How to Begin RC*, which includes what to do in a session and how to lead support groups), counseling techniques and commitments, and a description of RC classes and the Community
- **The *Guidelines for the Re-evaluation Counseling Communities***, 2017 edition, RC Goals, and forms
- **Translations of articles into many languages, and language liberation information**
- **Articles from recent journals, including *Present Time***, and online publications
- **Resources for workshop organizers, including online workshops**
- **Articles about teaching RC and outlines for teaching fundamentals classes, in Spanish**
- **"Today's Thought"—a short daily thought from a Re-evaluation Counseling perspective**
- **Recent Draft Liberation Policy Statements and Climate Change Draft Program**
- **Care of the Environment materials and information**
- **Resources for Human Liberation**
- **RC Webinars: Description and Schedule**

Website for People New to RC

An RC website for people new to RC can be found at <www.reevaluationcounseling.org>. It contains introductory information about RC that is easy to access.



STEVE BANBURY

How to Contact Us Online

- The International RC Community: ircc@rc.org
- United to End Racism: uer@rc.org
- Rational Island Publishers: litsales@rc.org, for orders and billing questions (or order on our website at <www.rationalisland.com>)
- Re-evaluation Counseling Community Resources (Intensives and office matters only): rcoffice@rc.org
- Automatic response e-mail about RC: info@rc.org
- For sending photos: photos@rc.org
- For inquiries about how to organize RC workshops using the RC website: <www.rc.org/workshop/requestregsite>

We now have websites for four ongoing projects that are taking the work of RC into the broader society. The information on them is geared to people who are not yet a part of RC.

United to End Racism (UER) works with other groups involved in eliminating racism and shares with them the theory and practice of RC. You can find valuable resources and a description of UER's projects at <www.unitedtoendracism.org>. (UER's e-mail address is uer@rc.org.)

No Limits for Women (No Limits) is an international organization of women (and men who are allies to women) dedicated to eliminating sexism and male domination throughout the world. Its website, <www.nolimitsforwomen.net>, features the No Limits Draft Liberation Policy Statement for Women and a video of a No Limits workshop, *Women and Men in Partnership to End Sexism*.

Sustaining All Life (SAL) has been attending conferences on the climate emergency, including the United Nations Conferences of the Parties (COPs) and presenting workshops, public forums, caucuses, support groups, fundamentals classes, and listening projects as part of bringing RC tools to climate change activists. Reports on its activities and more information about it are at <www.sustainingalllife.org>. (SAL's e-mail address is sal@rc.org.)

Jews and Allies United to End Anti-Semitism is a group of people, of all ages and from many countries, working together as Jews and non-Jews to end anti-Semitism. Key parts of the project are to model that there are allies committed to ending anti-Semitism, to stop the use of anti-Semitism to divide progressive movements, and to join with others to make sure that anti-Semitism is included in the work on all oppression issues. Reports on the project's activities along with information from the pamphlet *Anti-Semitism: Why Is It Everyone's Concern?* are at <www.JewsandAllies.org>. (The e-mail address is Info@JewsAndAllies.org.)


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The Human Side of Human Beings The Theory of Re-evaluation Counseling (revised 2021)	<i>By Harvey Jackins</i>	An introduction to a completely new theory of human behavior	Paper: \$4 (ISBN 978-1-58429-243-2)
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Rough Notes from Liberation I & II	<i>By Harvey Jackins and others</i>	Transcript of a workshop for Co-Counselors interested in liberation movements	Paper: \$10 (ISBN 0-911214-42-9) Hardcover: \$15 (ISBN 0-911214-46-1)
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Translations of some materials are also available online at <www.rc.org/translations>, at no charge. (Digital *Present Time* subscribers can access the articles in a particular language by clicking on that language heading.)

The important job of translating RC literature is done by volunteers. Truus Jansen is the Rational Island Publishers Translation Coordinator. If you are interested in volunteering your translation skills, contact Truus, c/o Re-evaluation Counseling Community Resources, 19370 Firlands Way North, Shoreline, Washington 98133-3925, USA. Tel. +1-206-284-0311, e-mail: ircc@rc.org.

The Translation Coordinators for each language are listed on the RC website at <www.rc.org> and on [page 101](#) of this *Present Time*.

LITERATURE IN LANGUAGES OTHER THAN ENGLISH

(If none is noted, Harvey Jackins is the author.)

Several of these publications are also available as downloadable PDFs, for \$1.00 less than the price of the printed versions.

ACHOLI / LUO

Cako Kit Me Leyo Lok
(An Introduction to Co-Counseling)
by Dan Nickerson

Paper: \$1 ISBN 1-58429-062-5

Kit Me Cako Le-he Ki Lok
(How to Begin "Re-evaluation Counseling")

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*Hoe om "Her-evaluering
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Handbog Genvurderingsvejledning
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Paper: \$8 ISBN 0-911214-55-0

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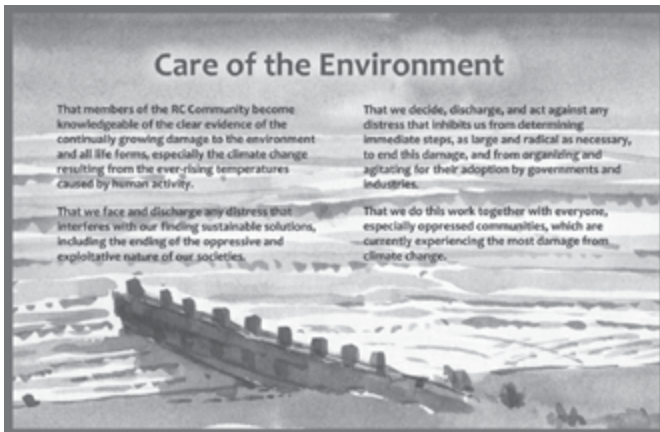
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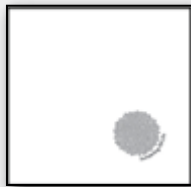
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Re-evaluation Counseling

Re-evaluation Counseling is a process whereby people of all ages and all backgrounds can learn how to exchange effective help with each other in order to free themselves from the effects of past distress experiences.

Re-evaluation Counseling theory provides a model of what a human being can be like in the area of their interaction with other human beings and their environment. The theory assumes that everyone is born with tremendous intellectual potential, natural zest, and lovingness but that these qualities have become blocked and obscured as the result of accumulated distress experiences (of fear, loss, pain, anger, embarrassment, and so on), which begin early in our lives.

Any young person would recover from such distress spontaneously by use of the natural process of emotional discharge (crying, trembling, raging, laughing, yawning, talking). However, this natural process is usually interfered with by well-meaning people ("Don't cry," "Be a big boy," and so on) who erroneously equate the emotional discharge (the healing of the hurt) with the hurt itself.

When adequate emotional discharge can take place, the person is freed from the rigid pattern of behavior and feeling left by the hurt. The basic loving, cooperative, intelligent, and zestful nature is then free to operate. Such a person will tend to be more effective in looking out for their own interests and the interests of others and more capable of acting successfully against injustice.

In recovering and using the natural discharge process, two people take turns counseling and being counseled. The one acting as the counselor listens, draws the other out, and permits, encourages, and assists emotional discharge. The one acting as client talks and discharges and re-evaluates. With experience and increased confidence and trust in each other, the process works better and better.

For more information, you can go to the website <www.reevaluationcounseling.org>.



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