

Revised, 2004. Now including planning, consensus process and communal economics.

Light and Shadows

Interpersonal and Group Process in the Sharing Lifestyle

A. Allen Butcher

In the same way that darkness is the absence of light, so also is poor group process and the lack of effective interpersonal communication merely the absence of a commitment to use process tools that energize the light in our lives; the experience of sharing in family and community.



Fourth World Services, P.O. Box 1666, Denver, CO 80201-1666 (303) 355-4501

Foreword

This monograph presents a range of interpersonal process tools for groups of people involved in or forming collective households, ecovillages, cohousing, communal, polyamorous or other intentional communities, networks of communities, and other affinity groups. Some material included is also relevant to direct-action groups, spiritual groups, small cooperatives and worker-owned businesses.

No resource on interpersonal and group process can be thoroughly all-inclusive, so the attempt here is to touch upon various processes that have been used in intentional community. This is a work in progress, building upon the past work of many others, and intended to encourage and facilitate the work of many more communitarians through the future.

Examples of sources for additional information on interpersonal and group process models having application in community are in the books “Winning Through Participation” distributed by the Institute for Cultural Affairs and “The Co-Creator’s Handbook” by the Global Family. The latter provides suggestions for rites of passage and other ceremonies, neither of which are covered in this monograph. Information on these books and organizations is in the Resources section.

Another source of much good material that may become very useful to communities of all types and sizes through the future is the process called “Appreciative Inquiry.” Elements of this process can be seen in some of the material in this monograph, particularly Validation Day and the Self-Examination Response. Like V-Day, Appreciative Inquiry focuses upon the positive, involving the group not in validating individuals as with V-Day, but in appreciating the community’s or organization’s successes. And like the Self-Exam Response, Appreciative Inquiry involves one-on-one interviews, encouraging people to share their personal stories of success within the context of the group. The theory is that since what we focus upon is what we’ll find, then if we focus on successes and the positive actions leading toward them the problems may fade away from lack of attention. The potential benefit of this process in community is intriguing and potentially very promising!

The material used in this monograph is assembled from different sources accumulated by the editor over the last quarter of the 20th Century. Attempts have been made to secure permission from and to credit each source. Contributions of additional material for future editions are welcome, preferably accompanied by as much source information as possible. Please also send corrections and comments on this edition. Intentional communities, movement groups and educational institutions may copy or excerpt and distribute this information freely, with credit given to all sources.

The primary intent for this work is to provide tools for those enjoying or planning the communitarian lifestyle. My appreciation to all those whose work has contributed to the development of community, providing the material presented here. For those engaged in building community, may this monograph, presenting both the light and the shadow sides of community, serve you well.



A. Allen Butcher
July 8, 2004
4thWorld@consultant.com

Contents

Introduction	3
Intentioneering: Designing Interpersonal and Group Process for Community Paradigm Shift, Communitarian Insight and Wisdom, Quotes	
Group Process Formats and Tools	7
The Open Space Meeting	
Ultimate Vehicle Family: Heart Sharing	
Twin Oaks: Trapeze	
Rainbow Family: Heart Songs	
East Wind: Validation Day	
The Talking Circle Council Process	
Tune-Ups, Deepenings, Check-Ins, Getting Present and Light n' Livelies	
Resources	
Moving Through Emotions	
Movement for a New Society Clearness Process, Pointers on Negative Feedback	
Sample Social Contracts	19
Terra Nova: Respects and Responsibilities	
Behavioral Code for Nonviolent Direct Action	
Love Light: Emotional Literacy and Processing	
Values to Teach Our Children	
Planning and Decision-Making	24
Consensus Process	
Shared Leadership	
The Tyranny of Structurelessness	
The Planning Process	
Planning: Complex-Issue Process for Large Groups	
Planning at Twin Oaks Community	
Planning at East Wind Community	
The Shadow Side of Community	35
Ways to Maintain Community Health	
Seven Community Dysfunctions and Functions	
Warning Signs of Spiritual Blight, Recognizing Manipulations	
Negative Behaviors and Intervention in Cohousing	
Anger in Cohousing, Anger in Egalitarian Community	
Re-evaluation Counseling, Constructive Criticism, Active Listening	
Self-Examination Response: Taking Responsibility for Our Behavior	
The Feedback Meeting: Addressing Conflict	
Policy on Sexual Harassment	
Resources	43
Meeting Process, Facilitation & Conflict Resolution	
Definitions for Communitarian Terms	
Classifications of Communitarianism	
Phases of Community Development	
Forms of Legal Organization	
Economic Systems	

Introduction

Intentioneering: Designing Interpersonal and Group Process for Community

If we are truly intelligent beings, it ought to be possible for us to enjoy a society based upon the values of cooperation, sharing and participatory governance, rather than the values of competition, possessiveness and authoritarianism. Given that the latter set of values constitute those of the dominant culture at the dawn of the 21st Century, any culture based upon a different set of values must exist parallel to it. The process of building such a parallel culture deserves a term, and for this purpose the term, "intentioneering" is coined.

The word "intentioneering" merges the terms "intentional community" and "behavioral engineering" to derive one word to be used to refer to the effort to build intentional community. The term also references one of American culture's contemporary idioms for having a good time. The exclamation "... going to Disneyland!" suggests a popular vacation destination, and so it is a suitable adaptation of Disney parlance that the term "imagineering," meaning taking fairy tales and cartoon characters and engineering these figments of imagination into physical, interactive, holiday attractions, and create the new term "intentioneering," referring to deliberate human cultural design. Hopefully, the etymological reference to Disneyland will serve to emphasize the goal of only positive values being involved in the process of intentioneering. This is particularly important as the concept of ones' behavior being engineered is not thought to be a positive idea, since our experience with the dominate culture's ubiquitous and relentless consumer advertising can be considered a negative form of behavior engineering.

What serves to assure that deliberately created socio-psychological processes in intentional community are positive, of course, is the concentration upon participatory governance and the attendant functions of facilitation, constructive feedback, clarity of communication and similar processes.

Paradigm Shift

Rosabeth Moss Kanter said in her preface to *Commitment and Community: Communes and Utopias in Sociological Perspective*, that the intentional commu-

nities movement, "... to succeed, ... needs thinkers as well as doers, intellectuals as well as activists, who will discover and report what is known, provide new ideas, warn of dangers, and suggest alternative directions." She was writing in January, 1972, and later in that century became the editor of the *Harvard Business Review*, applying her sociological perspective developed in her study of intentional community to business and corporate structures. The conclusion to draw is not only that by being intentional about movement-building can we more effectively build community, but also that the lessons learned about interpersonal process in the sharing lifestyle can be appropriate to other cultures as well, including the competitive, possessive, capitalist economy and society. This suggests how the cultural innovations developed in intentional community can be relevant to the larger, dominant culture, thereby on two levels anticipating, reflecting and quickening social change.

Kanter's *Commitment and Community* remains one of the most important introductory works on interpersonal and group process in intentional community, yet much has been experienced in the movement since her writing, with many intellectuals becoming doers, and activists also being thinkers.

A particularly good example of the growing awareness of the importance of effective communication structures and interpersonal process has been the movement in business, frequently championed by the *Harvard Business Review*, of total quality management (TQM) or continuous quality improvement (CQI) and other names. Astonishingly, with the advent of cohousing the circle has been completed. Kanter's study of interpersonal process in community facilitated a process revolution in business (started in large part by W. Edwards Deming's work in Japan), then returned to the communities movement via the awareness among cohousing community builders of the similarities between their focus upon interpersonal and group process, and that found in business.

Stella Tarnay's report of the meeting called "Professionals in Cohousing," held in 1994 as part of a larger cohousing community conference in Boulder, Colorado and at the nearby Nyland Cohousing

Community in Lafayette, sponsored by the Rocky Mountain Cohousing Association, reported the following revelation voiced in the meeting. "... we are in the midst of developing a new kind of relationship between clients and professionals through the CoHousing (sic) process. This is at once immensely satisfying and challenging. It is not unlike the Total Quality Management (TQM) revolution in business which is creating a new paradigm for working together in organizations. We, in the CoHousing movement are in the midst of that paradigm shift We are doing no less than creating a new way of working together to develop housing."

This paradigm shift that Tarnay notes, however, is more than merely a new way to develop housing, it actually represents a potentially whole new industry of developing community. This nascent industry has yet to be clearly defined, yet we can see aspects of it not only in cohousing developments but also in the architectural and land-use concepts of "new urbanism" and of "walk-ability." These involve design patterns that encourage interaction among people, building for the human scale rather than the automotive imperative, echoing the ideas of the early 1800s French utopian socialist Charles Fourier, which he termed "passional attraction." Fourier's ideas subsequently inspired a relatively short-lived communitarian movement in the United States called "Associationism."

Although building intentional community is an old idea, it is not until the advent of cohousing, first in Europe at about 1970 and later in the United States at about 1990, that we can begin to see community-building as an industry. For the cohousing movement this involves real estate developers, builders and finance professionals becoming aware of "community" as a marketable commodity, using the condominium legal design and infusing new meaning in the term "community association." Prior to this, in the United States, advocating "community" was primarily the purview of nonprofit organizations like community development corporations, community land trusts, and of course communal societies. With a transition of the communities movement into an industry, we are bound to see travesties and fiascos, yet it would be a good thing for the movement and for society in general if community organizers were paid for their work, enabling a greater degree of professionalism and quality of service.

At the same time that we see community developing as an industry, so also do we see community arising as a natural extension of the family. As any three or more unrelated people may see themselves as an intentional community, such extended families become subject to many of the same issues of interpersonal and group process as would a community of many more people.

Additionally, the growing awareness of and increasing experience of the polyamorous lifestyle is accompanied by a similarly developing need for communication processes that support an intimate level of sharing. Actually, we find that some of the best ideas for learning and practicing effective group process come out of the social innovation of multiple intimate partners in mindfully aware and emotionally sensitive intentional communities. It is the diffusion of these group process innovations throughout our culture, such as via the cohousing movement, that will encourage the acceptance of polyamory and other forms of communitarianism, and the attendant practice of good interpersonal and group process.

Communitarian Insight and Wisdom

As intentional community is a different culture from what may be called the "circumstantial community" found in neighborhoods, villages and small towns of the dominant culture, it stands to reason that appropriate tools have to be devised for creating community, and thus the need for this monograph discussing interpersonal and group process. Presented here is a collection of insights into how we function in community, and the wisdom gained from that experience.

In "Love Light Community Guidelines and Rules," Valaris Stuart presents a perspective on the individual's deliberate choice to integrate oneself within a group. She writes (paraphrased), "If we are going to get relationships of a different quality than what we have now, we're going to have to do something different than what we've always done. Communities often develop new language patterns, rituals, games and ways of relating, and in participating in this process it is important that we are as honest with others as honors our highest good at the time. We are as energy systems, with receiving and transmitting stations. Much power and magic and transformation will happen as we follow our instincts, intuition or higher self."

Among the insights into group process developing in community is the evolving process presented in this publication as “moving through emotions.” Being developed and spread by the Lost Valley Community is a form of group commitment-building having a powerful effect of engaging our emotions in a supportive circle, called Naka-Ima. For many people this can be essentially a form of controlled “peak experience” in sharing feelings, so powerful that some organizations charge high fees for the experience, and are sometimes labeled “cults.” Lost Valley has developed the process into one that now is easily accessible while focusing upon the benefits.

To avoid the peril of diving into untested waters, or the paying of the “fools tax” from the unnecessary cost of reinventing wheels, it can be essential to have access to resources like those presented here. Some of the best of this material was created by those in the Movement for a New Society (MNS), a political-cultural activist organization of the 1970s and ’80s that encouraged many political actions and the development of many collective households around the country. Some of which, particularly in Philadelphia, exist today in the form of a community land trust. The material reprinted here from the MNS *Clearness* manual develops process details for collective living. Although the *Clearness* manual is out-of-print (and NSP no longer claims copywrite), the *Resource Manual for a Living Revolution*, covering issues of group process and action, and works on a variety of other subjects, are available from New Society Press (see the resources section).

Other resources provided in this publication include sections on consensus process, shared leadership, structurelessness, and considerable material on various planning process used in egalitarian communities. All of which is important for maintaining a sense of openness and participation among members.

The Shadow Side

In the “Shadow Side” discussion there are many ideas for avoiding the worst experiences or negative aspects of community. In their zealotry, some communities have experimented with mutual criticism, confrontational practices and other harsh forms of group process. How to recognize and avoid such tendencies can be the difference between life and death for a community.

On the other hand, as Rob Sandelin points out in the section, “Negative Behaviors in Cohousing,” communities can go too far the other way in not being careful to address issues and conflicts that arise. He wrote in an email message, “I have heard, on several occasions, words to the effect of, ‘I didn’t come here to do personal growth work, this ain’t no New Age commune. This kind of stuff is not what cohousing is about.’ If your group has this lack of commitment to community-building, this will clearly make it very difficult to move forward. A lack of commitment to making things better for everyone means little personal energy will go toward changes.”

Sandelin’s concern suggests the value of social contracts or behavior codes in community. Recognizing the need to bring into open discussion many of the various issues about how people interact in community can provide a solid “psycho-socio foundation,” or agreement upon values and processes, that defines a group and nurtures its development. Yet working for consensus on a social contract can be like dancing on the line between the realms of chaos and order. To design a society that will maintain a balance between the emptiness and chaos from which brilliant ideas arise, and the form and structure which can assure that meaningful traditions are maintained, requires at times an intense concentration, and at other times a free-flowing energy. Flexibility and the willingness to take risks must be balanced with a steadfast adherence to convictions.

The intention in the social contract is therefore not to enforce community, but to affirm an environment where community is nurtured and encouraged. A community might therefore state a desire for each member to be able to live in the manner in which each person will be able to find community in their own way. As we can never really know in advance all of the consequences of our choices, our social contract may be represented as a statement-of-intent to embark on an adventure in social innovation.

In recognizing the contributions of numerous people in the development of these insights into how we can best live, and toward the hope of increasing the understanding of the wisdom of community, this monograph is dedicated to all those who have committed their time and energy to building community.

A. Allen Butcher

Quotes

Whatever you can do, or dream you can, begin it!
Boldness has genius, power, and magic in it.
— Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749-1832)

Utopias are often only premature truths.
— Alfonse de Lamartine

Some day, when we have harnessed the power of the sun and the waves and gravity, we will learn how to harness the power of love. And then, for the second time, we will have discovered fire.
— Pierre Teillard de Chardin (1881-1955)

The more you love, the more you can love and the more intensely you love. Nor is there any limit on how many you can love. If a person had time enough, he could love all that majority who are decent & just.
— Robert Heinlein

The human being of the West has abandoned being human and has turned himself into an individual ... community has died in them.
— Nicolas Aguilar Sayritupac, Aymara Indian, Lake Titicaca, Bolivia

The life of the individual only has meaning in so far as it aids in making the life of every living thing nobler and more beautiful.
— Albert Einstein (1879 - 1955)

How selfish so ever man may be supposed, there are evidently some principles in his nature, which interest him in the fortune of others, and render their happiness necessary to him, though he derives nothing from it, except the pleasure of seeing it.
— Adam Smith, *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, 1790

As man advances in civilization and small tribes are united into larger communities, the simplest reason would tell each individual that he ought to extend his social instinct and sympathies to all members of the same nation, though personally unknown to him.
— Charles Darwin, *The Descent of Man and Selection in Relation to Sex*, 1904.

Sharing, not hunting or gathering as such, is what made us human. ... People help each other all the time, and they are motivated to, not by repeated calculations of the ultimate benefit to themselves

through returned favors, but because they are psychologically motivated to do so. This is precisely what one would expect; over countless generations natural selection favored the emergence of emotions that made reciprocal altruism work, emotions such as sympathy, gratitude, guilt and moral indignation.
— Richard Leakey, *People of the Lake: Mankind and Its Beginnings*, 1978.

People must get away from the idea that the serious work is restricted to beating to death a well-defined problem in a narrow discipline, while broadly integrative thinking is relegated to cocktail parties.
— Murray Gell-Mann, Santa Fe Institute

Fear not the path of the truth because of the lack of people walking on it. — Fadia Rafeedie

I must not fear. Fear is the mind-killer. Fear is the little-death that brings total obliteration. I will face my fear. I will permit it to pass over me and through me. And when it has gone past I will turn the inner eye to see its path. Where the fear has gone there will be nothing. Only I will remain.
— Frank Herbert, *Dune*

If we don't do the impossible, we shall be faced with the unthinkable.
—Petra Kelly

At the root of all Green political action is nonviolence, starting with how we live our lives, taking small, unilateral steps toward peace in everything we do. Green politics requires us to be both tender and subversive. Affirming tenderness as a political value is already subversive. In Green politics, we practice tenderness in relations with others; in caring for ideas, art, language, and culture; and in cherishing and protecting the Earth. To think Green is to build solidarity with those working for social justice and human rights everywhere, not bound by ideologies.
— Petra Kelly

Meditation is not an individual matter. We have to do it together. It is possible that the next Buddha will not take the form of an individual. The next Buddha may take the form of community, practising understanding and lovingkindness, a community practising mindful living. And the practice can be carried out as a group, as a city, as a nation.
— Thich Nhat Hanh

Group Process Formats and Tools

The Open Space Meeting

The laws of Open Space are quite Zenlike—When it starts it starts. Whoever comes are the right people. Whatever happens is the only thing that could have happened. When it's finished; it's finished. The Law of Two Feet- If you are not learning or contributing, use them. Butterflies and Bumblebees are okay—people can move from group to group and cross-pollinate ideas. It's ok to be a butterfly and make space for a different sort of encounter. People are responsible for their own experience. Anyone may facilitate a workshop/dialogue/presentation on any topic and post it on the wall under a time and place slot. We can negotiate, combine sessions. People can sign up on the sessions that they are interested in to smooth out conflicts.

Purpose: To provide a flexible structure for creative thinking and risk-taking action.

Qualities: Adaptive, self-driven, encouraging and requiring personal responsibility. Suited for community time, not regular business meetings.

Form: Each person brings whatever topics they want to for the agenda, and participates in whatever small group discussions that interest them. The first time Open Space is used, it is best to dedicate a full day to it; when the group becomes more practiced, less time may be needed. Also for the first time, an outside facilitator is recommended. For further information: *_Riding the Tiger_* by Harrison Owen (1991, Abbott Publishing).

Guidelines: The basic elements are a Theme (determined ahead of time by the whole group, can be as simple as “What’s Up?”), Start and Stop Times, the Community Bulletin Board, and the Village Market Place. The Four Principles: whoever comes are the right people; whatever happens is the only thing that could have; whenever it starts is the right time; when it's over, it's over. The Law of Two Feet: everybody has them, and is responsible for their use; there is a time to talk and a time to walk.

Gretchen Westlight, Cascadia Commons Cohousing, Portland, Oregon, email, 2 Dec 1999

Ultimate Vehicle Family: Heart Sharing

Heart Sharing is a variation of the “talking-totem council” designed for small groups. This particular outline was created by the people who later brought us *Your Money or Your Life* (1992), Joe Dominquez and Vicki Robin, a book now used in the voluntary simplicity movement. They were part of the U.V. Family, a polyamory group using a recreational vehicle, the “ultimate vehicle” (UV), and the New Road Map Foundation. They followed this Heart Sharing process nightly for a number of years.

This and similar processes work well to bring out people's deepest thoughts, feelings and emotions. Therefore, the group has to be ready and willing to deal with those sharings and take care of each other, whatever results. This process can not be taken lightly, as it is designed to bring out to the group each person's inner self. What is presented in Heart Sharing is not to be discussed with others outside of the group unless agreed by all.

No interruption, quiet, water only, no food during the sharing. Comfortable seating in a circle, dim lighting. Begin with silent meditation, prayer, quiet time, circle handholding or other “attunement” process. No body contact during sharing unless requested (hugs, handholding, etc.) Each participant announces their beginning of sharing, holding the floor until announcing “end.”

Intent listening without judgment, with love. No interruptions, comments, manipulative fidgeting, yawning, breath-catching, etc. No time limit on sharing. Acknowledgement of each person's sharing (“thank you”) regardless of content. NO FEEDBACK unless requested, then only in most respectful way. 10 minutes silence for those who “have nothing to say.” Second and third times to talk okay. Between turns, quiet, gentle conversation. After each person has a turn, perhaps have a short break with refreshments, remaining in circle. End the session with a quiet, gentle, loving spirit, cherishing the gift of knowing other's inner selves.

U. V. Family, edited from the article in *In Context*, Spring, 1984

Twin Oaks Community: Trapeze

... The group listened as everyone checked in—sometimes as many as thirty attendees, and then time was allotted to help people in the most distress or with a time-sensitive problem. I was impressed with how respectful and attentive the group was, even when the content or the person didn't seem to be willing to accept help, but just wanted to complain. The group often had possible strategies and solutions that made a difference—and remarkably rapidly. All those good minds together with a mutual goal of helping someone see themselves more clearly as well as seeing their situation in other ways. The group spoke in ordinary language, expressed their own feelings and frustrations, and any confrontive statements were made with real compassion. In the last couple of years, people seem less interested in having this group. It takes a core group of dedicated participants to make it work and meet regularly and like many other things, it seems to have fizzled a bit.

In some ways, this is also about the whole issue of emotional control—how to be emotionally controlled in a way that's mature and responsible, but still be honest, candid, and real (authentic) with other people. And I see the (seeming) profusion of violence among young people as being evidence of kids who don't know their feelings or don't know what to do with them.

Joan Mazza, 1999, Twin Oaks Net email

The hot seat was not much used, most likely to be used when we were out of standing issues needing work. My memory is that the hot seat did not mean "it's your turn for negative / critical feedback." Rather it meant you're the focus for an extended time and people say a lot about their relationship to you and their perceptions of you.

My memory is that Trapeze started Fall 1994 and ended Spring 1998. I think Trapeze has a new incarnation but I don't know it's charter. I know the orientation is much more to visions and goals, less to issues / problems / feedback. My only complaint is the lack of enduring commitment on the part of most participants. Endurance by itself is maybe worth something. I think steady commitment for years would produce something more valuable for all involved. There were very few of us that offered that. McCune, Twin Oaks, 28 Jul 1999, Twin Oaks Net

Rainbow Family: Heart Songs

Within the Rainbow Family, a network of individuals and communities coming together for periodic Gatherings at various times and locations around the world, Council meetings, involving all interested participants, usually begin with "Heart Songs." Rainbow Council's are more than decision-making bodies, as they provide forums for the "personal passions and poetics of individual participants." (Niman, p. 40) They provide a sacred, therapeutic effect and a healing space for members of the tribe, common to traditional societies but lost by Western civilization. When people "speak from the heart" on their concerns, fears and joys, a sense of empathic caring and commitment to the group is nurtured.

Typically a focal object is passed around the group, sometimes up to thousands of people, with those wishing to speak coming to the center. Such Council's can continue for more than a day. Any topic may be presented, from personal to spiritual to practical. Long diatribes may be followed with stretching or other activity. Hugs, song or poetry may be presented, along with issues needing a decision, often presented with details on another time and place to meet to address the topic in more depth.

"We feel this is an advanced and subtle process that puts the benefit of everyone at its heart, that recognizes the innate intelligence of the human character, that keeps poetry, music and lightness in the midst of our debate and that awakens us to the experience of direct personal participation in the process of our association. It is so sweet, We have ... found it to be an effective means of self-organization ... to be an effective aid in the prevention of political decay." (Garrick Beck, "Basic Rainbow Pamphlet," 1986, New York: self-published, quoted in Niman, p. 41)

"Meetings specifically held for such 'confessions' have been acknowledged by sociologists as important ingredients for success in many different groups ranging from the Shakers to Alcoholics Anonymous." (Niman, p. 44) Michael I. Niman, "People of the Rainbow: A Nomadic Utopia," University of Tennessee Press, Knoxville, 1997, ISBN 0-87049-988-2 Reviewed by Allen Butcher for *Communal Societies*, 2000, Volume 20, Communal Societies Association, University of Southern Indiana, Evansville, IN, and for the journal of the Society for Utopian Studies.

East Wind Community: Validation Day

Celebrated on February 14th is Validation Day, some years with a holiday meal and dance. The week or so before V-Day a small group often including children creates a unique card for each member reflecting their interests or personality, as a creative effort in the common dining room. Members then write something validating in other's cards without looking at their own, until V-Day. Most members treasure V-Day cards, keeping them after they leave community. The tradition started at EWC from the co-counseling validation process, and spread to Twin Oaks Comm.

The Talking Circle Council Process

Purpose: Each council member brings a piece of the truth to the circle—an essential piece, but only a part of the whole, to uncover greater understanding. For finding all voices, conflict resolution, story telling, brainstorming, co-visioning, NOT decision-making.

Qualities: Derived from a Native American format to consider the impact of our truths today unto seven generations. Deep, mindful listening; heart speaking.

Form: In a circle, the Council Chief opens & closes, and reminds the group of the guidelines as needed. The talking stick entitles one person to speak at a time; returned to the central “children’s fire” between speakers. The children’s fire serves as a reminder of the generations to come and the future repercussions of our words (a physical manifestation is important; candles can represent the community hearth).

Guidelines: Speak honestly from the heart to the perspective of the children’s fire. No interrupting, responding, negating, except to say “Ho!” for deep agreement or when someone’s words have expressed your heart. Be brief. Listen from the heart—planning ahead what to say in response hinders the weaving of the council’s magic thread. Pause between speakers—hear the truth in silence. Complete confidentiality is maintained outside the circle, as the truth is in what each person’s heart hears for itself (retelling it biases it by the teller’s filters). Council Process may also be done with each person assigned to represent a specific perspective (e.g., the land, the children, etc.).

Gretchen Westlight, Cascadia Commons Cohousing, Portland, Oregon, email 2 Dec. 1999

Tune-Ups, Deepenings, Check-Ins, Getting Present and Light n’ Livelies

Generally, for meetings where the participants know each other, the meeting starts with a simple statement from each participant on things on their mind that may influence their participation in the meeting. For meetings where people don’t know each other, the meeting can start with a short statement on some topic relevant to the group’s issues, so that each person may learn something about the others in the context of the meeting topic. These are often called “Tune-Ups,” “Check-Ins” or “Getting Present.”

Quick activities during breaks in the middle of meetings are called “Light n’ Livelies,” and can be as simple as a stretching break or more imaginative, for example where someone has an imaginary ball and hits it volley-ball style to someone on the other side of the circle, calling their name (a good way to learn names), who then hits it to another in the circle. Another Light n’ Lively is where someone pulls out of their pocket an imaginary glob and shapes it into something that others try to guess, then passes it on.

Other activities have been devised for helping people in groups to build a sense of group awareness and commitment. Following is a small sampling.

Life’s Events

Learning about others in the group. Indicate that the room represents a map of the United States, designating cardinal directions. Have each person stand at roughly the location on the map of their birth. Ask each person to share something about their first 5 years that had a significant influence upon who they are today. Then have each person move to the location where they spent most of their grade school years, then their high school years, their 20s or first career job, or first marriage, or college, or what ever, then their 30s, then their 40s etc., each time stating something significant that influenced their lives at that time and location.

Stone People

Giving and receiving feedback on the group’s style, roles people play, the bonding that has taken place, and how each perceives others. (May require an attentive facilitator.) Have each person find a stone that has some feature or marking or item taped or tied to it such that all in the group will be able to easily

identify the individual represented by the stone. Have each person explain what it is about the stone or its addition that establishes its association with them, placing the stone randomly in the center of the circle of people. For as long as it takes to reach group agreement, have the group arrange the stones in whatever way they feel represents how the community or group looks, operates or behaves, according to whatever criteria the group decides upon, except that if the group decides that a perfect circle represents the community, they are not working hard enough! At the end, evaluate the process.

Community Life

We have initiated a monthly gathering on the second Sunday of the month. We've had two of these gatherings with great success. The first had two fantastic exercises. One was called "Two Truths and a Lie" where each member told just that, and we all had to guess which was which ... it was hilarious and we all learned something new about one another.

The second exercise was a group dynamics/problem solving kind of thing. In less than an hour we discovered which of us were Visionaries, Structurers, Action-takers or Caregivers. Each of the groups identified themselves, spoke about which of the other groups were the most frustrating to work with, created a poster with key concepts and formed strategies about how to best work with the other groups to get things done. We learned that a healthy community needs contributions from each of the four groups to sustain itself. A succinct comment from Floyd, our process mentor, summed up the exercise. He said: "If we were to take a vacation trip together, the Visionaries would be the ones to decide where we would go. The Structurers would get the maps and create the itinerary. The Action-takers would find and drive the bus. And the Caregivers would make sure that everyone had a fantastic time."

Patty Mara, cohousing community member, email

Salon or Talking Circle

1. We start the gathering with some informal time.
2. We announce the context/subject of the gathering.
3. We describe the format and its purpose. (Below)
4. We ALL write any topics, ideas for discussion, or questions on slips of paper and place in a bowl.
5. We draw a question and the process begins.
6. The conversation continues as long as on topic.
7. We do another topic/question/whatever and keep

repeating these stages until the evening winds down.

Although it is called a Talking Circle, it can be more about listening, ensuring a conversation that is deep in insight and rich in perspectives. We pass this sacred talking stick throughout the conversation. This is NOT for having a debate or even arriving at a conclusion or the "right" answer. It is a model that guarantees that all perspectives present are heard and new territories are explored in the conversation.

Arthur Brock, The Gathering Place, 3 Mar '99 email

Resources

Forbess-Greene, Sue (1983) *The Encyclopedia of Icebreakers: Structured Activities that Warm-Up, Motivate, Challenge, Acquaint, and Energize*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass/Pfeiffer.

The New Encyclopedia of Icebreakers (w/CD) Miriam McLaughlin, Sandra Peyser, ISBN: 0-7879-6873-0 Loose-leaf, 376 pages, March 2004, \$110.00

Fluegelman, A. (Ed.) (1976). *The new games book* and (1981) *More new games book*. New York: Doubleday.

Weinstein, Matt and Goodman, Joel. *Playfair: Everybody's Guide to Noncompetitive Play*. Impact Publishers, San Luis Obispo, CA, 1980.

Rhonke, K. (1989) *Cowtails and Cobras II: A guide to games, Initiatives, Ropes Courses and Adventure Curriculum*, and *Quicksilver: Adventure Games, Initiative Problems, trust activities, and a guide to effective leadership*, and (1984) *Silver Bullets: A guide to Initiative problems, adventure games, and trust activities*. Dubuque, IA: Kendall/Hunt. Rhonke, K. *Bag of tricks: Adventure notes from Karl Rohnke*. A periodic newsletter with many creative and fun activities. Karl Rohnke, P. O. Box 77, Hamilton, MA 01936.

Scannell, E., & Newstrom, J. (1980) *Games trainers play: Experiential learning exercises*, and (1983) *More games trainers play: Experiential learning exercises* and (1991) *Still more games trainers play ...* New York: McGraw-Hill.

Schoel, Jim, Prouty, Dick, & Radcliffe, Paul. *Islands of Healing: A Guide to Adventure-Based Counseling*. Project Adventure, Inc., Hamilton, MA, 1988.

Moving Through Emotions

Developing agreement on methods and a common language for members of a diverse and changing community to stay in honest and loving communication with one another.

Many people seek intentional community out of a desire to live more mindfully, some focusing primarily upon sustainable, ecological lifestyles, others an awareness of political and/or economic processes, others from various spiritual and/or cultural orientations, yet for many the intent of mindfulness is for deeper, more rich interpersonal relationships than is afforded by life outside of community. This monograph samples some of the various processes that have been developed, and most are relatively simple. The more complex processes will be called here, for the purposes of coining a generic term, “moving through emotions.” The central feature in these involves emotional expressions of feelings on the part of an individual in the center of a group of supportive people who have each shared their own feelings through similar emotional expressions in the group.

It is unclear where this process started, and it may have started independently in both

Western and Eastern cultures. The earliest expression found by this writer came out of the work of Wilhelm Reich as adapted by the intentional community network called Actions Analysis Organization in Austria in the early 1970s. Their process, called “Selbstdarstellung,” influenced the Center for Experimental Cultural Design in Germany (Zentrum für experimentelle Gesellschaftsgestaltung or ZEGG) and their process called “Forum.” Various groups in the US have been inspired by ZEGG, such as Network for a New Culture.

Many other organizations have developed aspects of this process in their own proprietary programs. The human potential movement saw many organizations integrate “moving through emotions” in what psychologists call “large group awareness trainings.” Some used the Zen master approach, which can be abusive, demeaning, and authoritarian, and some

threaten lawsuits against anyone who publicizes details of their process. Werner Erhard’s EST (Erhard Seminar Training), Landmark Education’s Forum, and the ManKind Project’s events all used or use various forms of this process.

Naka-Ima is a Japanese expression meaning “here-now,” or “inside the present moment,” and the process by this name may have started in Japan. As Larry Kaplowitz wrote in the article, “Naka-Ima: Healing and Growing in Community” (*Communities Magazine*, No. 104, Fall 1999), a workshop leader from a small progressive town in British Columbia led a Naka-Ima process at Lost Valley Educational Center in 1996, and there are now Naka-Ima “practice groups” using

this moving-through-emotions process in various cities on the Northwest Coast.

Through Lost Valley’s efforts in sharing and teaching this process it is now readily available for any community or group of people to

use to create community. The following is found at: www.lostvalley.org/naka-ima.html

Benefits of Naka-Ima expressed by participants:

- More fulfilling relationships with family & friends
- Ease in connecting with others
- Deeper intimacy with friends and loved ones
- Greater ability to freely give and receive love
- Self-acceptance, self-confidence, and self-esteem
- Liberation of creativity and self-expression
- Inner peace, clarity and sense of purpose
- Ability to release stress, fear, and anxiety
- Relief from physical pains and conditions
- Greater sense of energy, personal power, effectiveness, and control over one’s own life
- More fun, pleasure, and enjoyment of life
- Increased capacity to trust in one’s self & others
- Community, lasting friendships with people met through Naka-Ima



Naka-Ima: Living in the Present

The essence of Naka-Ima is the practice of being present with your whole self: your emotions, your thoughts, your body, and, beyond that, the part of you that is connected to everyone and everything, and from which your dreams and visions spring. When you are present with yourself, you can be present with others and with the situations and circumstances of your life. In this place of presence, you are free from the limitations that have held you back, and all possibilities are available to you—you are free to create your life as you want it to be.

Naka-Ima 1: The Basics

During the Naka-Ima weekend, between 40 and 50 people come together in supportive, loving community, and through a blend of structured exercises and individual and group interactions, explore how to be fully and authentically be ourselves: alive, in the moment, and deeply connected with others.

Many of us tend to resist our emotions, which can sometimes seem overwhelming. But it's not usually the emotions themselves that are so distressing; it's our resistance to them that causes suffering. Once we allow ourselves to feel our emotions, there is often a sense of relief and even pleasure; they naturally flow from one to another and we experience being present.

Naka-Ima 2: The Practice

A Course in Creating Intimacy and Community Through the Practice of Honesty. The Practice is an opportunity to develop your skills in showing yourself and seeing others authentically, and creating alignment with others for mutual empowerment and fulfillment. Naka-Ima 1 can be like a whirlwind of emotions, insights, and connections, and it can be challenging to integrate these into day-to-day life. The Practice gives a deeper experience and understanding of the tools and concepts so they are more easily integrated and readily accessible in your life.

The Practice specifically delves into the past with exercises designed to have you understand and let go of attachments and anger held from childhood. You will identify your core attachment and look at how pervasive it is in your life—how much it actually controls what you do, how you act, and how you respond. You will also explore the ideas and assumptions that color your perception and affect how you relate to others and the world. We will look with humor at ourselves and each other; when viewed

with perspective, our attachments can be very funny!

You will explore your relationship with your body, and have practice in letting emotions move through you. We will also play games that allow us to experience ourselves and our relationships in new ways.

You work with a pod of the same 4 or 5 people throughout the course, which facilitates learning to be honest with groups of people. There is much attention and instruction on communicating clearly and honestly with one another, and contributing to others is learned on a deeper level, with time for both instruction and experimentation in this area.

Assisting

One aspect of Naka-Ima is that there are always more Assistants than participants. In addition to providing the students with an incredible experience of support, this ratio allows Assistants a balance of giving, receiving and joyful teamwork. For assistants who would like to further develop their skills in helping others, we offer the BREATHE Leadership Training Program and occasional skill-based training days.

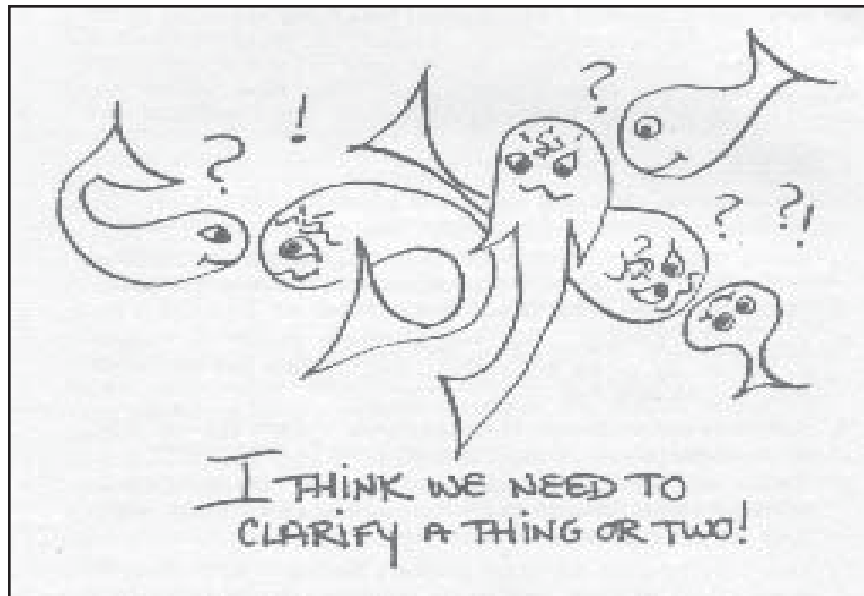
Naka-Ima Practice Groups

Ongoing facilitated Practice Groups serve to deepen one's circle of community, support achievement of goals, and assist in the integration of the insights and skills from your Naka-Ima experience into one's life.

Lost Valley Educational Center, 81868 Lost Valley Lane, Dexter, Oregon 97431 (541) 937-3351
naka-ima@lostvalley.org
<http://www.lostvalley.org/naka-ima.html>

Larry Kaplowitz wrote in the *Communities* article, "The biggest lesson we've learned ... is that sustainable community must have at its foundation sustainable relationships; relationships that give us more than they take from us, that nourish, enliven, and inspire us, that are a continual source of energy, and support us in becoming fully ourselves. ... At Lost Valley we have committed to making our relationships with each other the most important thing we're doing together; to value our love and intimacy with each other over results and accomplishments, to be courageous and take risks with each other. We continually affirm our intention to deepen our connections, and we have become less tolerant of our separateness, isolation and disconnection."

Life in the Fish Bowl



Movement for a New Society: Clearness Process

“Clearness” is borrowed from the Quaker tradition. Although the process is used nowadays mainly to approve the joining of meetings or marriages, in the past clearness was used to help individuals decide a wide variety of things. It should be noted that the word is “clearness,” not “clearance,” implying that clarity rather than permission is sought. The significance of the clearness process is that it counters the notion of rugged individualism. We don’t need to act as though all our personal decisions have to be made by ourselves, without the benefit of other people’s wisdom, support, and questioning. It really is fine to ask for help in making the best decision possible. It also recognizes that our behavior and attitudes affect others. Especially those of us living in community find it important to consider the effects our decisions have on others around us.

Using our collective intelligence we can search for fresh approaches to problems. In this sense it becomes a learning experience for everyone, not just the person who asked for the clearness meeting.

There can also be an application of the clearness process to a network of groups. This may be similar to a strategic planning process, determining how best to coordinate the actions of a number of different groups toward common goals.

Peter Woodrow, *Clearness: Processes for Supporting Individuals and Groups in Decision-Making*, Movement for a New Society, 1976. (See New Society Press in the resources section.) This work on “Clearness” started in the spring of 1974 at the Philadelphia Life Center, an urban social-change community of several collective households, existing today in part as a community land trust. Sandra Boston, Virginia Coover, Susanne Gowan and Peter Woodrow met for about six months, held clearness meetings for each other and their friends, evaluated them and self-consciously developed a process for individual clearness. The basic process for accepting new members was contributed by members of the Youngest Daughter house at the Life Center. Editorial comments were contributed by Pamela Haines, Cynthia Arvio, and Stephen Bedard-Parker. The illustrations were contributed by Liz Lombard.

Note: The following is abbreviated from the full pamphlet. Contact: New Society Publishers
P.O. Box 189
Gabriola Island, BC
Canada, V0R 1X0
Tel: 250-247-9737
Fax: 250-247-7471
info@newsociety.com www.newsociety.com

Support / Feedback Clearness

Preparing for a clearness meeting is as valuable as the meeting. The “focus person” (the “person going through the clearness”) should consider the following steps as part of adequate preparation:

1. **Think, Talk and Counsel.** Set aside time to think things out yourself before asking others to reflect with you. Then talk with friends about the decision you are making. They may have valuable information and insights. For those familiar with Re-evaluation Counseling, it has proven helpful to work in counseling on particular points of stress or difficulty around the decision or consideration being made. If you have no similar discipline, sit down with someone you trust to try to sort out your strong feelings from your good thinking.

2. **Choose the Clearness Group.** About seven people is probably the maximum for an effective meeting; we have had successful meetings with just three in addition to the focus person. As the focus person you should choose people whom you trust and who know you fairly well. There might be one or two from your house or living situation, several close friends, and one or two from your work situation or collective. It is also important to have at least one person who is not closely associated or emotionally involved with you who can be more objective in raising questions than those closer to you. Make sure that the people invited can stay for the entire meeting (usually about three hours) as it is disruptive for folks to come and go.

3. **Choose a Facilitator.** One person from the group should serve as facilitator so that you can give full attention to listening and responding. The facilitator should be someone who will not get over-involved in some of the emotional aspects of the decision to be made. Thus a person faced with similar dilemmas or decisions may not be the best facilitator (see “Role of the Facilitator”).

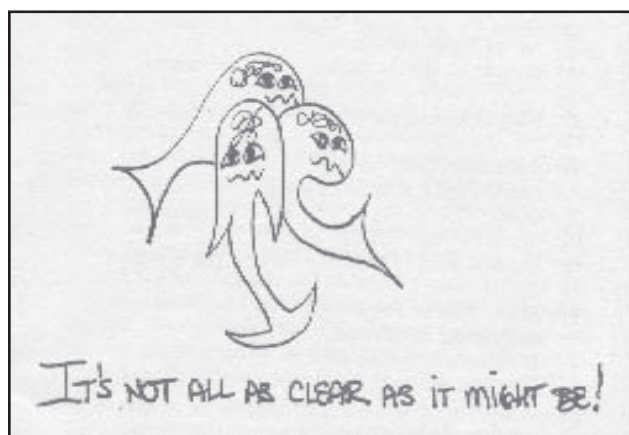
4. **Meet with the Facilitator.** We have found it helpful for the focus person to meet with the facilitator to do several things: a) Clarify the question or decision being brought to the clearness meeting. The question should be focused and narrow enough to be manageable. If there is more than one thing, they should be only one or two fairly precise matters, not several vague concerns. b) Clarify the task of the clearness group. What is the group being asked to do? Make a decision? Give feedback? Generate

suggestions or more options? Help solve a particular problem? Offer support? Another way to ask this is “where do you want to be at the end of the meeting?”

c) Draw up a tentative agenda that meets your needs (see “Suggested Agenda”). d) Look at the general questions for clearness (see “Questions for Clearness”). Decide whether these are the appropriate questions for this meeting and, if not, make up new ones. e) talk about the kind of support you are going to need during the clearness meeting itself, such as points of difficulty for you, or what you are afraid might happen.

5. **Answer the Questions for Clearness.** You should think about these questions ahead of time, answer the appropriate ones, and if possible write up an outline of your answers on newspaper or large sheets of paper so the information can be seen by all. If you have the time it is even better to have given the background information and answers to questions to the clearness group sometime before the meeting. This will save valuable time during the meeting itself and will give members of the group more time to think about you in preparation for the meeting.

Life in the Fish Bowl



Role of the Clearness Group

The role of the clearness group is a difficult one. The people in the group must find ways to be supportive and affirmative while also raising questions forthrightly. There should be a balance between open recognition of good thinking and clear challenges of fuzzy-headedness or false assumptions. The group should try to be as objective as possible, remembering that it is as important to show trust and caring as to exercise intellectual power. Some of the roles the group can play are as follows:

1. Raising Questions. This is not just direct challenges to the focus person, but can be pointing out additional factors that need careful consideration. "Have you considered the implications of X?"
2. Suggest other Options or Possibilities. At times the focus person will bring several options for future directions to the group. The group can give feedback on those, but can also generate new ones not mentioned or combine several in a new way.
3. Point out Irrational Assumptions. One of the most valuable functions a clearness group can perform is to help isolate motivations or assumptions that are clearly irrational and don't need to be acted on but should be worked out in some other way. For instance, people often feel compelled to take some direction in order to fulfill other peoples' expectations (parents, relatives, close friends or lovers) or to reach a personal dream or goal that is not rooted in an understanding of themselves or their own needs and growth.
4. The group often functions as a mirror, reflecting back to the focus person the implications of the proposed action and giving feedback as to the merit of some of the ideas. A balance between positive and negative feedback should be maintained, however. Where strong negatives are expressed, the group should work toward possible solutions and concrete steps that can be taken to improve the situation or develop a different plan of action.
5. Throughout the meeting the group should remain sensitive to feelings, creating a safe environment in which they can be expressed. However, the group should also be sure that members of the group are not permitted to press their own "agenda" or emotional feelings on the focus person.
6. The group can be helpful after the clearness meeting. Members of the group might help the focus person with some particularly difficult task.. In some cases, there will be a need for further meetings to give more reflection on the problem after some time. If the clearness group may come to function as ongoing support to the person or persons involved. In any case, it is often useful toward the end of the meeting to ask the focus person to indicate specifically how members of the group can be of further assistance.

Role of the Facilitator of a Clearness Meeting

The initial role of the facilitator is described above under "Preparation for a Clearness Meeting." During

the actual meeting the facilitator serves a number of functions:

1. Plays the usual role of facilitator in small group meetings, such as, getting group approval of the agenda, watching time, encouraging full participation of all group members, being sensitive to the need for breaks, etc. As the role has been developed the facilitator is someone who helps the group decide what it wants to do, being particularly sensitive to process and group dynamics, rather than content.
2. In a clearness meeting there often needs to be space for feelings to be expressed, especially in those instances where the decision to be made has a strong emotional component for either the focus person or members of the clearness group. The facilitator needs to watch for people who are having strong feelings or who are getting upset, especially the focus person, so that they can be given support or space to share what is happening to them if that is appropriate. It may be wise to call for a break if things get too "heavy." The facilitator should try to keep a light tone to the proceedings, however, so that people can continue to think well.
3. At times the focus person may become overwhelmed, either by the amount of ideas generated, certain kinds of negative feedback, or just by the amount of attention directed at her/him. The facilitator should watch for this and call for a break or a period of silence, challenge unfair question, or just slow down the pace of the discussion. The facilitator should protect the focus person from angry or hostile expression of feelings by other members of the clearness group. If something important is being said, it may be appropriate to ask the person to restate it in a way that the focus person can hear.
4. While keeping in mind the needs of the whole group, the facilitator should give particular attention to the needs of the focus person, checking with her/him constantly to see if questions are being answered or feedback is being offered in desired areas. The facilitator keeps the end goal of the clearness meeting in mind and keeps the group from straying too far from it.
5. In meetings where an actual decision must be made, the facilitator helps the group to come to the decision. (In the case of accepting house members or collectives members, see "Joining / Leaving Clearness.") In consensus style meetings such as clearness meetings, after some discussion of the issue, the facilitator states what s/he thinks the group as a whole is saying. This is called "testing for consen-

sus.” The group is asked whether this statement is a fair representation of their feelings. If not, then discussion and tries at consensus continue until all agree to a statement. Of course, if the facilitator feels confused, another person in the group can be asked to state what they think is consensus.

Question for Clearness

The questions listed below are suggested for individuals involved in social change considering making changes in their lives, reordering priorities, or leaving a community and going elsewhere, etc. They are only suggestions and not all of them will be appropriate for every clearness meeting. The facilitator and the focus person can develop other basic background questions relating directly to the decision being made. As noted above under “Preparation for a Clearness Meeting” it is best to try to write up answers to these questions and distribute them to the members of the clearness group several days before the meetings (questions 1-8 only).

- 1) A quick personal history - highlighting those events and facts that have particular relevance to the decision being made.
- 2) What are your present commitments? (If a person is trying to reorder time priorities, a pie chart of where time gets spent is helpful.)
- 3) What are your present sources of learning, support and affirmation?
- 4) What are your basic necessities in order to function well and creatively?
- 5) What are your goals, both long and short-range in terms of a) personal growth and b) social change work?
- 6) What are your dreams and what do you perceive are those things which are holding you back from reaching them?
- 7) What are the various options for the future you are considering?
- 8) What are the implications of your proposed action or change in direction for your community - both those closest to you and the wider community of support?
- 9) What are the positive and negative factors in each of the options you are considering? (It has been useful to do force-field analysis of this, but let the whole group help fill in the chart.)

Suggested Agenda for a

Support / Feedback Clearness Meeting

The agenda which follows is only a suggestion, although it is one we have found to work well. The times indicated add up to about three hours. If some information (such as answers to questions for clearness) has been shared ahead of time then the meeting could be shorter, but the group may wish instead to expand the time devoted to open-ended discussion and feedback. In any case, the focus person and the facilitator should work out a proposed agenda - either an adaptation of this one or their own creation. This agenda and the terms used in it are explained below.

Proposed Agenda:

- 1) Gathering - singing, excitement sharing (10 min.)
- 2) Agenda Review and Choose Recorder (or agree to rotate) (5 min.)
- 3) Share on Memories of Good Times (10 min.)
- 4) Statement of Questions for Clearness and Role of the Clearness Group (5 min.)
- 5) Check for Personal Biases (5 min.)
- 6) Sharing from the Focus Person on Questions for Clearness, Explanation of Options or Directions etc. (30 min. at most)
- 7) Questions of Clarification (10 min.)
- 8) BREAK (wphew!) (10 min.)
- 9) Brainstorm Strengths of Focus Person (5 min.)
- 10) Think Time - silence (5 to 10 min.)
- 11) Brainstorm of Questions/Concerns from the group (5 min.)
- 12) Open time - for feedback, discussion, filling out force-field on options, questions, etc. (60 min.)
- 13) Check on next steps for Focus Person and Follow-up roles of Clearness Group (10 min.)
- 14) Evaluation (5 min.)
- 15) Closing (however long it takes)

Notes on the Agenda:

- 1) Gathering: The purpose of this time is to do something that brings the group together that is light and perhaps fun. In “excitement sharing” people quickly share something positive that has happened recently in their lives. Singing is also a good group builder.
- 2) Agenda Review and Choosing Recorder: It is best that everyone in the group knows what the process for the meeting will be, shares the same information, and agrees to the agenda at the beginning. Otherwise, halfway through the meeting there may be objections that will cause unnecessary delays. As for recording, it is not always necessary, but the

focus person often appreciates having a record of some of the thoughts and questions brought out during the feedback and discussion time to refer to later. We have found it best to rotate this role, each person taking notes for ten minutes or so, in order that no one person is kept from participating fully for the whole discussion. Another option is to invite someone to the meeting to serve specifically as recorder the whole time. Or you can make a tape recording.

3) **Sharing on Memories of Good Times with the Focus Person:** The purpose of this short exercise is to direct the attention of the group to the focus person in a way that reaffirms each person's connection by recalling good or funny occasions from the past. Each person speaks briefly until everyone has had a chance to share.

4) **Statement of the Question for Clearness and the Role of the Group:** At this point the focus person states the question(s) s/he is wrestling with and indicates what is being asked of the group. It might be appropriate at this point also to read aloud the section of this manual on the "Role of the Clearness Group," especially if there are several people who have never served on clearness committees before. In any case, keep this section brief - there is plenty of time for questions later.

5) **Check for Personal Biases:** Since some of the members of the clearness group may have close personal relationships with the focus person, it is often helpful to have any strong feelings stated openly early in the meeting. This will help the whole group to understand where people are "coming from" and have any real prejudices revealed. It is also important to share any biases that arise from an individual's perspective on the question being addressed. For instance, if the focus person is considering going to graduate school, there may be individuals in the group who have absolutely no use for academic institutions and what they do to people. This is not to say that people with biases in certain areas can not be effective members of clearness committees, but the group must understand what the biases are so that they can try to balance the views in an effort to achieve an overall sense of objectivity.

6) **Sharing from the Focus Person:** If the focus person has not already distributed answers to the questions for clearness, that information is shared. If the information was given out ahead, then the focus person should fill in any other pertinent facts or feelings, but keep this section of the meeting as brief as possible in any case, since people tend to lose

attention when there is too much information flowing in one direction.

7) **Questions of Clarification:** These are merely questions to clarify the information that has been given or to elicit information that is missing, not to engage in discussion or feedback yet.

8) **Break:** Use your judgment as to when the break should occur. People may just need to do something apart from each other for ten minutes. Someone should be responsible for calling the group back together - otherwise ten-minute breaks end up thirty minutes long.

9) **Brainstorm Strengths of Focus Person:** This lets the focus person know how people in the group appreciate her/him in quite specific ways and is good preparation for later parts of the meeting when critical or challenging feedback may occur. The usual process is that someone records on a flip chart (large piece of newsprint) while the focus person starts out by stating four or five strengths s/he sees in her/himself. Then the others chime in brainstorm fashion - no comments or discussion allowed, definite time limit set (i.e. the strengths that group members mention go on the sheet whether or not everyone agrees - this is not a consensus exercise!).

10) **Think Time:** People often appreciate some minutes of quiet in which to reflect on the information that has been shared, to center their thoughts and pull together their questions. In a religious community, particularly among Quakers, the whole remaining part of the meeting would be in the form of "worshipful seeking" and "discussion out of the silence." But in the meetings we have had, this initial quiet time has been more a time for reflection and focusing that has led to a regular discussion. In respect to the use and meaning of the silence, the wishes of the focus person should be respected.

11) **Brainstorm of Questions or Concerns from the Group:** We have found it helpful to hear the initial questions people have all at once. This will give a sense of the scope of the discussion and provide people with a notion of what others are thinking. It also allows the focus person to choose from among the questions those s/he most wishes the group to reflect on. Also if there is not time to consider all the concerns raised, they have been listed and can be pursued with individuals later. Again, flip chart the questions and concerns so all can see them. If you schedule a break right after this item, the facilitator can try to group the questions into a more organized list to help structure the discussion which follows.

12) Time for Feedback and Discussion: This is open time for discussion, questioning, and direct feedback. It is during this part of the meeting that the focus person may want someone to record. Usually it is well to leave this part of the meeting fairly unstructured, but the focus person and facilitator can decide how they want the time used. The brainstormed questions/concerns can be used as a sort of agenda.

13) Check on Next Steps and Follow-up Roles of the Clearness Group. Towards the end of the discussion time, the facilitator should ask the focus person whether s/he feels a greater sense of clarity in relation to the question for clearness. It is often helpful to ask the focus person if s/he has a notion of what the next steps are in relation to the decision. This is also the time to see if members of the clearness group can be of assistance after the meeting or if the group may be needed to convene again at some later time.

14) Evaluation: Since clearness is a growing and changing process that we are still learning to do better, evaluating the meeting will ensure that folks continue to think about the process. Start by asking the focus person whether s/he found the meeting helpful - specific positive and negative aspects. Then the group as a whole looks first at positive things about the meeting and then negatives (“not-so-goods” as we call them). Again, evaluations are done brainstorm style - individuals state their views without direct comments or challenges from other group members. Contrary opinions can be stated in the brainstorm too, of course. It is helpful when stating a negative to try, to come up with a suggestion for improvement for next time.

15) Closing: A closing is something to end the meeting on a positive note. It might be hugs all around. It might be a game. If the meeting has been difficult or full of stress, your closing could be more structured affirmation of each member of the group by the others. Or you might just want to have songs, silence or refreshments.

Pointers on Negative Feedback

Most of us have trouble telling other people what we think or feel about things they do that bother us or affect groups we are a part of. We all remember times someone told us something about ourselves when it felt awful, so we don't want to inflict that kind of pain on anyone else. But by avoiding telling people what they need to hear (and we need to say!),

we abort what can be part of a creative process of growing and changing together. It is important to be able to give feedback in such a way that people can hear it, take it in, evaluate it, and change behavior which affects their relationships with others. This is true in clearness meetings and at many other times when living or working with people. A basic premise here is that people really do want to hear what other people have to say about them, both positive and negative. We may have unpleasant feelings about how it has happened in the past, but we do look for all kinds of signals and messages about us from others. When someone takes the time to think about us and give us direct and fearless information about how we are perceived, it can be a quite affirming experience. Some pointers:

1. Be firm, be direct, and don't “waffle.”
2. Be as crystal clear and specific as possible. Specify the objectionable behavior. Try to remember a particular incident.
3. Don't “gunnysack.” You don't need to tell them everything they ever did that hurt you or made you uncomfortable. “Gunnysacking” goes, “And another thing . . . “
4. Own your feelings. Not “some people think” or “some people in the group are saying,” but, “When you do ____, I feel ____, because ____.”
5. Acknowledge your part in the problem - feelings or actions of yours that get in the way or contribute to the problem.
6. Affirm the person when sincerely possible. Do this first - think of things you do like or appreciate about them, ways they act in the group or towards you.
7. Don't try to solve the other person's feelings: leave space for them, listen to them, and try to separate content issues from feelings. You can also say when you have heard enough.
8. Be prepared for their feedback to you.
9. Be clear about what you will & will not negotiate.
10. Practice ahead of time. Find someone you trust to try out what you have to say, and see if it makes

sense. If the whole thing is scary, role play it a couple of times.

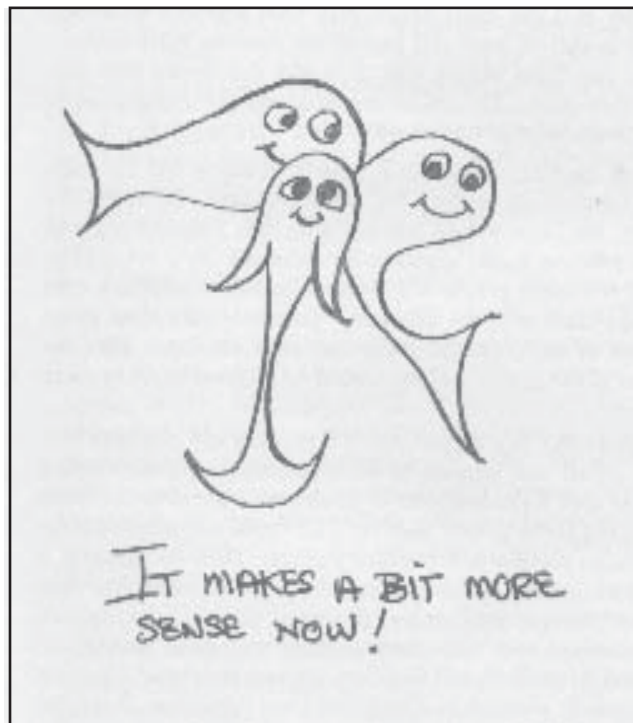
11. Reach out to the person. If it is a person you are close to and are used to touching, it is important to reach out to him/her physically in this situation, too. If touching is not a part of your relationship this is no time to start.

12. Ask for a third person to join you. If you foresee real difficulties, see if there is a person you can both agree upon to be there - to keep you listening to each other, help to clarify what is being said, provide safety, but not to "make it all better" or to "fix it."

Note: This is not the entire "Clearness" pamphlet. About half of the original publication described the "Joining/Leaving Clearness," developed for collective households and work groups.

Terra Nova:

Life in the Fish Bowl



Sample Social Contracts

Respects and Responsibilities

As a member of Tierra Nueva I support the "R & R"s as GUIDING PRINCIPLES for behaviors. Living up to these to the best of my ability, I agree to:

Respects

1. Physical Respect: Respect personal boundaries, Touch others appropriately, Refrain from violence
2. Emotional: Respect others' feelings and emotions, Take responsibility for my own feelings and emotions
3. Verbal: Be honest, hear what others say to me, use respectful forms of communication with others,
4. Territorial: Respect my and others' right to quiet, privacy, solitude, and security in our private space, negotiate the use of community (common) space
5. Material: Care for property, respecting private and community-owned possessions
6. Diversity: Respect the diversity of age, gender, race, sexual orientation, spiritual practice and physical and mental capabilities

7. Community Consensus: Respect the community structure and consensus decision-making process

Responsibilities

1. Be conscientious in attending community meetings.
2. Take responsibility for communicating my ideas and my feelings.
3. Contribute time and energy in the form of work parties and chores. Negotiate duration and terms of any reduction in participation that I may require.
4. Serve as a contributing member of a committee or rotating team, such as facilitator teams or common house manager teams.
5. Be open and conscientious regarding my financial responsibilities.
6. Inform the community about guests staying for extended periods of time and any changes in my personal situation that affect the community and/or my ability to contribute to it.
7. Promptly inform appropriate people about violence or serious violations of the "R & R"s that I witness.

Behavioral Code for

Nonviolent Direct Action

The following behavioral code for nonviolent direct action was developed by peace activists in Minnesota who are working to stop weapons production. A guide for nonviolent civil disobedience. Holle Brian, Green Party of Minnesota (612) 822-6593

Commitment to Practice Nonviolence

As peacemakers, we have these commitments:

- We will use our anger at injustice as a positive force for change.
 - We will refuse to return the assaults, verbal or physical of those with whom we disagree.
 - We will refrain from insults and swearing.
 - We will not damage property nor carry weapons.
 - If arrested, as members of a nonviolent vigil or demonstration, we will behave in a nonviolently.
 - We will accept legal consequences of our actions.
 - In the event of a serious disagreement about this commitment to practice nonviolence we will remove ourselves from the action.
 - Our attitude will be one of openness, friendliness and respect toward all people we encounter, including police officers and workers.
 - We will walk & talk love of opponent & neighbor.
- AlliantAction Vigil, Greens Forum, 23Apr 2000

Guidelines for Direct Action

- Choose the tactics of direct action in the context of the overall strategy. When tactics no longer support your goals, change them or take a break. When tactics work, declare your success, state additional injustice and further goals, and go home joyously.
- Individuals and groups can be ranked on a spectrum regarding how they relate to the campaign: active participation, moral and/or material support, neutral, hostile wait-and-see, or actively hostile.
- Decide how to work with each and try to raise people in each group to the more supportive group.
- Use the opponent's mistakes to educate the public as to the reality of the situation. Encourage the opponent to recognize the problem and to change.
- Remain open to negotiation. Respond creatively to reprisals. Use persuasion to widen your support.
- Keep major objectives before the public.
- Maintain a strong social organization, as the best antidote to terror is community.

Resource Manual for a Living Revolution, MNS, p.230, 1977. (New Society Press in "Resources")

Love Light:

Emotional Literacy and Processing

Lovelight Vision

We are together to co-create a space of love, truth and beauty in which we can be as gentle, playful, sacred, sensual, sexual and spiritual as is mutually desired in each moment by all involved parties. We intend to support each other to be our highest and most actualized selves, while co-existing in harmony.

We are desirous and dedicated (allowing for downtime, too) to going where few persons have gone before in sharing our true selves and desires. We want each person to have all the love, attention, support and empowerment they desire. We are practicing idealists who endeavor to create new paradigms for interpersonal intimacy as a prelude to positive social change, by creating a loving field that supports the gentle release of all negative patterns that do not serve our higher good. And we are creating a field of strength that will support members in being positively powerful and actualized in the ways that they choose.

Transparency and Mirroring

Our intention is to share openly with each other about all of our internal dynamics, thoughts, fears, desires, fantasies, dreams, judgments, and so on, in-so-far-as-we-desire. Doing so will help us to learn about ourselves and each other, as well as humanity in general, and help us to be more aware and conscious of whom we are choosing to be. Each person can request the support they desire through active listening to feedback or healing work. Our premise is to avoid invasive analysis, non-constructive criticism, and to "stay out of each other's heads," and let each person take responsibility for their own growth. It is also understood that each person must monitor their own level of transparency, and it is expected that the community will honor each person's need to at times be opaque.

We intend to support each other in discovering and transforming toxic communication patterns with which all of us have been instilled. There is no shame or guilt in this, just loving support and acceptance that we are all "in the same boat," wanting to paddle it to a new shore. Usually our upsets are more about our wounding from the past and the misinterpretation we place on other's motives. Learning and having compassion for each other's wounds will help

us to be gentle with each other and more patient with each other's behaviors.

We understand that we are each wounded and have weaknesses, as well as strengths. We understand that there are dysfunctional patterns and behaviors each of us have that we will be blind to in ourselves. We are intending to be gentle, compassionate mirrors for each other. We desire to serve and love each other, learning to accept each other as we are, as we support each other in being our highest selves.

Healing and Manifestation Process

While our ideal is to be able to transcend our emotional problems or conflicts in spiritual gnosis, our motto is, "if you can't transcend it, deal with it on the level on which it needs to be addressed." We are multi-faceted beings and we intend to honor all that we are by being present in the way that most serves the individual's need. Providing for this ideal requires either regular gatherings, or gatherings at a member's request, creating a loving, safe and healing space to do one or more of the following: Being available for deep emotional work, from re-parenting the inner child, to listening to or helping someone to process an issue. There are many processes available for emotional work. The simplest is "heart sharing." Manifestation work may include finding and releasing blocks to good coming into our lives, or active manifestation process.

Anger or Rage Work

We intend to honor our anger and be present with it, or not deny it. There are various methods for releasing anger in a safe and positive way. These do not include name calling, yelling at others, damaging property or hitting another person. Pillow work (alone or with others present) and talking in "I statements" are two strategies.

You Are Always At Choice

Honor your true needs and desires and only do what feels right for you in each moment. As a safe space, community can be a place to take risks, challenge our perceived limitations, and explore the edges; things that you are not good at, are just coming to, or that you want to try or explore. Often, our point of power is to focus on what we want now in this moment. Getting what you want or need in the moment is one of the most powerful things you can do to break free of your limiting patterns and history and move into

the life that you have always wanted.

Help Create the Experiences You Want

Community is a place where you can drop any superficial or habitual talk or actions that do not serve your truest self. Explore only speaking when you feel deeply moved, and speak about things that really matter to you or that are fun for you. We can build a strong and loving field of group energy, amazingly supportive of our growth, healing and actualization. One of the most powerful ways to do this is for us to speak from our deepest needs, desires and "higher" guidance/self as much as possible. Of course, there will be times for silliness and laughter as well, which has a connecting and heart-warming effect when it comes of people relating authentically.

Be Gentle and Honor Your Own and Other's Boundaries

We were all raised differently and have different levels of emotional literacy, social skills, and ideas about what is right. People are amazing in their capacity to love, create beauty and care for others, considering what we have been through in life. If we look for the beauty and what is good in others, we will see it. And that is one of the greatest ways to support someone to let go of any ways of being that do not serve them or represent their authentic self. Often, we were most hurt when we were reaching out for love, fun or connection with people, so when we reach again we often experience fear. Feeling fear does not mean that we should stop, but that we are getting ready to go for what we really want. So go at your own pace and know that others, too, are dealing with their own wounds, hurts and prisons they live in due to their conditioning. Having compassion for ourselves and others helps us move into the beings we truly are and the lives we want to live.

Each person must know their own boundaries, and protect them. Before touching another physically, or sharing with them deeply, request a verbal acceptance. People move at different paces and have different needs at different times. There is no "wrong or right," just "different." Don't underestimate the power of a simple act of love or of taking a small step in the direction of your heart or soul's desire. Our lives can be deeply transformed for the better, in a moment of realization or action. You will need to learn to read your body and energy signals, and often the way to learn is to just do something

while being very mindful and having your internal “witness” present. Later, you may find a “signal” to mean something different than what you thought. Or you may find that what you thought was an “error” turned out to lead you to your highest good.

Helping Others With Their Issues

If people ask for your help, be aware that you are playing with fire. If you decide to help, small doses of intervention are recommended. It is too easy to distract ourselves from our own pain or issues by being the “great helper,” or making other’s lives our “project.” Helping is a seductive past-time that can lead one right back into being critical, judgmental, arrogant and creating inferior-superior polarities. At the same time, we want to be available to those who may benefit from our understandings and experiences, and encourage each other to know when and how to ask for help. Recognize when it is appropriate to serve as authentic authorities, or as mentors or elders, and act with sincerity and integrity.

Helping another with psychological and interpersonal issues can take us away from seeing the perfection of the moment and of the person in front of us. It also can disempower others to manage their own process and find their own source of wisdom and power. Two of the greatest things you can do are: Pray to spirit that it helps the person, or hold the energy/wish/ thought that they will find their own answers. That is the source that can most help the person. To help a person find their own answers, ask, “What do you think about the issue; what is your best understanding?” “If you had a guess about the answer, what might it be?” It is important that we support others to find their own answers that isn’t dependent upon us. Be careful of taking credit for helping others which can lead us to thinking that we have “a patent on truth,” versus each of us being a channel for truth.

In general, we can see ourselves as rocks in a tumbler. As we interact with each other we smooth our rough edges, and show to the world our shining commonality, without losing our individual luster.

Sensuality, Eroticism and Sexuality

Love and sex are wonderful and powerful forces which can bring us to peak experiences of connection with another. They can bring up our deepest wounds to be healed, or result in creating new pain and scars. It is best to take as much time as you need to build

strong positive connections and good honest communication with others which will help to abate the “TNT” effect of sex, when you do open to it. In addition, most of us have jealousy and insecurity issues that will require the support of platonic relationships that are trusting, safe and honest.

Spiritual Nurturance

As a community, we support each other in connecting with our own spiritual source and in making that as high a priority as each chooses. We want to support each other in identifying with and running our lives from our greater being, which is more than the conditioned personality we acquire in this lifetime.

It is understood that meditating together, sitting in silence or eye-gazing can create powerfully positive bonding and connection to our higher and greater source, and that this is often more powerful than talking in the usual way of processing work or issues. We honor and respect all our relations with other people not a part of our community, with other forms of life, plant and animal, with all the natural systems of our planet, and with all beings, spiritual and corporeal, that comprise the universe.

We expect that other members of the community will be there for us when we have an emergency or are in an emotional crisis, and commit ourselves to being available to others when needed. It is also understood that at times some people will not be there, and that this is their right. Giving is voluntary and on a “feel good” basis, not out of obligation or guilt. We are willing to look at patterns we may have of creating a crisis to get attention, and to learn to ask for attention in positive ways.

Sometimes people have a fear of being powerful. Often there is doubt to overcome, and a challenge to us at the threshold of our coming into our potential. Being supportive of each other in times of coming into our power, congratulatory of personal accomplishments, and in celebration of other’s successes, are part of our goal of being present for each other.

Adapted from Valaris Stuart, “Love Light Intentional Home Social Contract,” “Suggested (Optional) Guidelines for a Wonderful Time,” “Love Light Community Guidelines and Rules.” Love Light Center, PO Box 19294, Boulder, CO 80308-2294.

Values to Teach Our Children



When adults hold agreements involving child care practices and educational processes, the result is a stable environment conducive to healthy and happy child development. Such agreements represent a set of values to teach our children.

Self-reliance and independence are encouraged through providing spaces which are child scale, safe, comfortable and interesting for each age group. The child environment will have as few rules and

limitations upon the child as possible, while also teaching "daily living skills" such as cleaning up and self-direction. Self-reliance is encouraged in the child when adults practice "active listening" to aid the child in recognizing and communicating feelings, and in generally supporting the child's articulation, including teaching hand signals to pre-verbal children. Children are taught to be able to recognize and avoid dangerous situations, to say "no" to adults or other children who are threatening them, to call for help when they need it, and to otherwise preserve their own rights, and to respect other's rights to be safe, strong & free.

Values of self-motivation, initiative and competence are encouraged through the provision of a learning environment which maintains individual interest in and pursuit of learning. The "prepared environment" is one which meets the child at their own level, which permits development at their own speed, and which presents a noncompetitive atmosphere. Trying to do one's best, or better next time, however, creates a valuable sense of competition with oneself, or of self-motivation. Persistence in the face of failure is encouraged when additional effort is recognized as a means to overcome failure. As personal effort is understood as enhancing one's chances of success, personal initiative becomes rewarded by pride in one's accomplishments.

Values of freedom, autonomy and inner discipline are taught as a child is supported in being aware of, and in organizing one's environment in terms of, one's own needs or desires, and in developing one's own unique

personality within a socially responsible context. Children are given as much autonomy as possible, invoking few rules, and expressing many directives as preferences rather than as musts. The child's opinions, desires and rights are respected, giving them choices in what affects them, and forewarning them of things over which they have no control.

The value of a positive self-concept or self-image is conveyed as the child is shown respect by talking with them and explaining things to them. Children's questions are treated seriously, answered honestly and completely to the degree which they are likely to understand. Appropriate expression of feelings (anger, sorrow, joy) is encouraged rather than stifling emotions. A child's self-assurance is nurtured by stressing positive reinforcement whenever possible rather than only giving negative attention when necessary. Positive things about individual children are appreciated when they are noticed, and laughing at children's frustrations is avoided. Children are not talked about in their presence as though they can not understand. Over usage of "no" and "don't" is avoided through creating alternative means of telling a child what is not wanted, then following up with reasons why (health, safety, etc.), thus preserving the child's self-image. By speaking of negative behaviors as separate from the person, a child is encouraged to change their behavior without conveying to them that they are bad. Each child is valued independent of comparisons with other children.

Values of cooperation, responsibility, caring and empathy for others are taught by encouraging children to share, take turns, be polite, listen, and to be considerate of others' person and property. Children are asked to consider how they would feel in an other's position, and to be aware of their own and others' needs. The concepts of exploitation and oppression in relation to sexism, racism, ageism, etc. are explained when appropriate. Children's awareness of environmental and ecological concerns is encouraged in relation to a lifestyle of responsible consumerism and the sharing of material resources. Children are encouraged to take appropriate action to help themselves, each other and other living things.

Allen Butcher, 1987, Fourth World Services, Post Office Box 1666, Denver, Colorado 80201-1666

Planning and Decision-Making

Consensus Process

Testing for Agreement

As soon as a decision seems to be emerging, or when consensus is sought, first restate the item:

- **"We are seeking consensus on ..."**

Then ask for disagreements:

- **"Is there anyone who does not agree that ..."**

Voiced concerns require additional work, otherwise state the tentative consensus as a question:

- **"Do we all agree that ..."**
- **Insist upon a response (see hand signals).**
Silence is not consent. (Except among Quakers, who developed consensus process.)
- **If necessary, ask each person individually for support or reservation.** (Participants need to affirm the contract they are making with one another.)
- **Specific wording of the agreement must be written in the minutes.** (For contentious issues, suggest a trial and review period or other limits as appropriate. If there is no agreement, ask for amendments and test for agreement on these individually, then when all are agreed upon, state the amended proposal and test for consensus on the whole.)

Team or Self-Facilitation

The Process Service may have any number of members, referred to as the Process Team. (In self-facilitation everyone is responsible for all roles.) It is best if the Process Team meets before each meeting to decide facilitation roles (and set the agenda if not done), and again after each meeting to talk about how the facilitation was managed. Always include a short evaluation at the end of the meeting to get Team or group feedback. The Process Team divides (and may rotate during the meeting) among themselves the following roles:

- **Greeters:** Introduces new people to the organization's mission and group process. May become a separate education and outreach committee for recruitment into the organization.
- **Process Observer/Time Keeper/FlipChart Scribe:** Pays attention to compliance with the agreed upon process, and records errors and successes for discussion during evaluation. "Vibes

watching" notes unexpressed feelings, tensions, and the need to call breaks. Watches time. Scribe task may include of decisions and accepted tasks.

- **Notetaker:** Records at least the meeting attendance, proposals, amendments, decisions, and task lists. May record details of discussions.
- **Facilitator:** Finalizes and solicits agreement on the agenda. Manages participation by "stacking" names (5 max) for order of speaking, calls for "go-arounds" and otherwise assures that everyone is heard. Identifies and affirms the group's values mission, and goals ("common ground"). Helps the group resolve conflicts and find compromises by summarizing, repeating, or rephrasing proposals and positions as necessary. If the frustration level with an item is high, suggests that a small group work on the issue away from the large group, bringing their revised proposal back to the group at a later time. Leads the group in refusing to permit verbal or other attacks or domination of the meeting. Remains neutral on all topics. Steps down to participate in issues.

Consensus Process

- The goal of the consensus process is to reach a decision with which everyone can agree, without resort to the win-lose decision-making of voting.
- As a group process, consensus requires that each person places their highest priority upon the good of the group as a whole, with personal needs and wants being secondary.
- Proposals and decisions should be evaluated in terms of whether they are consistent with the stated goals and values of the group.
- Consensus does not necessarily mean unanimity. A group can proceed with an action without having total agreement.

Standing Aside and Blocking

In the event that an individual or small group cannot agree with a given proposal and is blocking consensus, the facilitator may ask if the individual(s)

are willing to "stand aside" and allow the group to act, or if they feel so strongly about the issue that they are unwilling for the group to act. If the individual(s) agree to stand aside, their disagreements can be noted in the minutes of the meeting, and the group is free to act on the decision. Blocking or "standing in the way of" a decision is used only when an individual feels that what is happening is going to have disastrous effects for the group (not for personal disagreement) and it becomes their responsibility to work for a compromise or substitute agreement.

Small to Large Group Consensus

Complicated issues, or issues proposed to a very large group, can begin with a brainstorm list of solutions made by the whole group. This group then breaks into small groups, each to develop its own proposal. These proposals are presented to the large group, which discusses them and works toward consensus. Contested points are sent back to small groups.

Meeting Flow

Items for the agenda should be listed in the minutes of the last meeting. If the agenda is not already prepared, the Process Team creates a Draft Agenda including a presenter at the meeting and a length of time for each item, while new people are greeted and oriented to the process. The agenda is presented and accepted by consensus after intros.

Introductions

The facilitator calls the meeting with each person stating their name and a "check-in" to present one's thoughts or feelings affecting meeting conduct. Other relevant comments may be used.

Time Keeping

Before an item goes over its allotted time, the group must contract for an additional block of time to be used for that discussion, taking time away from other items or extending the meeting. Alternatively, the group may accept temporary closure, or tabling of the issue, postponing it until after all of the other issues are completed (cooler) or until another meeting (freezer). This process may seem awkward, yet it helps keep comments short and to the point, and affirms the group's time contract.

Announcements and Breaks

A break is essential after 90 minutes. Scheduling announcements just before the break accommodates late arrivers and early leavers, and provides for discussion of announcements during the break.

Proposals

An item for consensus is to be in writing, assuring that detailed thought has been given. If the issue falls under a standing committee, that committee should see it before the group.

Sample Agenda

Introductions, Check-In, Getting Present, Tune-Up
Agenda Review and Consensus: 2-5 minutes
Announcements: 5-10 min. Committee Reports
Old business from earlier meetings then new, or arrange items as appropriate for the group.
Task List: Confirmation of tasks accepted.
Next Meeting: Agenda, Date, Time, Place
Evaluation: "Good and to be Improved"

Ways of Objecting to a Proposal Without Blocking

- **Non-Support** "I don't agree, but I'll go along."
- **Reservations** "I think this is a mistake because ..., but I'll live with it."
- **Standing Aside** "I personally can't do this, but I won't block others from doing it."
- **Withdrawing from the Group** "I will not be a part of this." "I'll find another group."

If the individual(s) are not willing to stand aside, and state that they block action on the proposal, **it becomes their responsibility to work for a compromise or substitute agreement.** They and one or more others should leave the large group to work out a compromise to bring back to the whole group. This prevents the large group from getting stuck on one issue, and assures that the dissenters are concerned enough about the issue to work out a compromise. Alternatively, the issue could be postponed until later in the meeting, or until the next meeting, or the time allotted could be extended if resolution is near.

Emergency Decisions (2 Kinds)

These are later brought to full consensus meeting for agreement or reversal. Failure to place the item on the group's agenda indicates acceptance by default.

1. A member or committee makes a decision affecting the group that cannot wait for a full meeting. A serious error in judgement results in consequences determined by the group.
2. A decision must be made by the whole group and no consensual agreement can be found. One application of this is if it is suspected that a member or small group is intentionally blocking decisions in order to subvert the purpose of the group, such as in the case of an "agent provocateur." A member may then request an "Emergency Decision." If 80% agree, then a vote on the Emergency Decision issue is taken, requiring a super-majority of 80% agreement. Keep in mind that this is a vote, and therefore constitutes leaving the consensus process, which should only be done in an emergency situation where immediate action is absolutely necessary. The percentage for the super-majority vote can be changed, but it is best to set the percentage before an emergency happens rather than try to do so during an emergency.

Conflict Resolution

Methods of responding to conflict, include:

- Avoidance—issue may be relatively unimportant, timing is wrong, cooling-off needed, escape desired
- Diffusion—delaying tactics keeps issues unclear and confrontation improbable, differences are played down, resentment and defensiveness result
- Confrontation through Power—issue is settled by authority and may provide no appeal for loser
- Confrontation through Negotiation—resolves conflict through a mutually acceptable compromise

Creative Conflict Resolution

1. Define the problem in terms of individual's needs or preferences, not their solutions.
2. State the issue with both sides' positions.
3. Brainstorm possible solutions, no discussion, until both sides identify multiple potentially acceptable solutions or elements of a solution.
4. Evaluate alternative solutions, or construct a

- solution from suggested elements. Each person eliminates unacceptable solutions or elements. Never tell another person what their needs are, but use "I Statements" and Active Listening (for feelings and specific points, reflect them back in your words to confirm that you heard correctly).
5. Decide on the best solution, acceptable to everyone, and make a mutual agreement to try it.
 6. Implement the decision. Decide who will do what. Set a time to evaluate the implementation.
 7. Evaluate. If necessary, restart resolution process.

HAND SIGNALS for CONSENSUS

1. Point of Process or Information

Recognized immediately by facilitator and is next in stacking order. · Process question, suggestion of alternate process, or process objection. · Point of Information - request for information, clarification, or offer of information. · Personal Need - response to insult or defamation, request to open window, etc...



2. Call on me! For voicing an opinion, comment or suggestion (not information or process). Recognized in a stacking order.



3. Focus! Indicates process failure, or lack of and need for focus, e.g., two people talking at once, distraction, talking off subject (called: "cross-town bus"), rambling or repeating what has already been said.



4. Silent Applause! Indicates agreement with what has been said, without being recognized by the facilitator.



5. Consent "YES." Agreement. "Life to the proposal."



6. Stand Aside Allows group to proceed with proposal but will not participate.



7. Block Definite "NO" indicating a moral stand in keeping with the group's values, not a personal stand.



Shared Leadership

Leadership is the use of power by individuals to influence others and their use of the decision-making structure of the association. Therefore, participatory decision-making processes alone are not enough to prevent power from concentrating in the hands of a few people. Shared leadership is needed.

Leadership includes two major functions, both of which can or should become group responsibilities. These functions are goal setting and achievement (task functions), and group maintenance or cohesion (morale functions). Shared leadership requires that these functions be met flexibly, with a smooth shifting of persons from one function to another, and a high priority set on the morale functions.

Task Functions

- **Information and Opinion Giving:** offers facts, opinions, ideas, suggestions and relevant information
- **Information and Opinion Seeking:** asks for facts, information, opinions, ideas and feelings
- **Starter:** proposes goals and tasks and initiates action within the group
- **Direction-Giving:** develops plans on how to proceed and focuses attention on the task at hand
- **Summarizing:** pulls together related ideas, suggestions, plans, proposals, and restates them by summarizing major points
- **Coordinating:** keeps perspective on relationships between various subgroups and individuals, between activities and proposed next steps, and keeps the group functioning smoothly overall (keeps things from slipping through the cracks)
- **Diagnoser:** figures out sources of difficulty the group has in working together and the blocks to accomplishing its goals
- **Energizer:** stimulates quality work from the group
- **Reality-Tester:** examines the practicality and workability of ideas, evaluates alternative solutions by applying them to real situations to see how they may work, drawing on past experiences and history
- **Evaluating:** compares group decisions, and accomplishments with long-range goals and with values and standards the group has set for itself, drawing implications for the future.

Morale Functions

- **Encouraging Participation:** gives support to members through recognition of contributions, being warm, accepting, open, responsive and attentive to group members' needs for involvement
- **Harmonizing and Compromising:** helps turn conflict into opportunity for creative and constructive solution-finding, finding common elements in conflicts, helping others keep unity when they disagree
- **Relieving Tension:** creates fun, safe and relaxed atmosphere where members feel secure, joking, playing games, taking breaks, non-work activities
- **Helping Communication:** accuracy and clarification of misunderstandings
- **Evaluating Emotional Climate:** sees how people are feeling about the group and each other, helping people express feelings by sharing one's own
- **Process Observer:** examines and provides information and evaluation for process improvement
- **Setting Standards:** restates goals, direction and accomplishments, norms and procedures, affirming group acceptance and commitment
- **Building Trust:** supports openness, and creates a safe environment for risk-taking

Shared leadership liberates leaders! It frees people from the pattern of accepting extra responsibilities and the resulting "burn out." Most importantly, it puts the members of the group in charge. It also demystifies leadership by getting everything into the open, and clarifies each individual's opportunities for maintaining and changing the group's direction.

Shared leadership reduces irresponsible withdrawal because everyone can see clearly that the functions are shared, and that blame cannot be dumped on "the leader." It inhibits power seekers still under the influence of patriarchal styles. Because everyone performs some leadership functions at some time, it builds appreciation for the work of leadership—not the old appreciation born of indebtedness to the leader who does so much for us, but an appreciation rooted in our experience of power & responsibility.

From "Leadership for Change," Bruce Kokopeli, George Lakey, Movement for a New Society

The Tyranny of Structurelessness

Joreen, Jo Freeman, wrote this article in 1973 in the context of feminist groups, and it can be found today in many forms via an Internet search. This short version adapts its concepts to intentional community.

One of the motivations for intentional community is to create alternatives to the forms of social control and patriarchal authoritarianism found in the dominant society. Anarchism is presented as the extreme alternative, and this article has been a basis of much debate within anarchist groups regarding their process. Since anarchism, like feminism, democracy, socialism and many other social-political-economic structures, can be defined in various ways, it may be sufficient to affirm that the term "intentional" assumes some degree of structure, and thus the value of this article to intentional community life-styles.

There is no such thing as a structureless group. Any group of people coming together for any length of time for any purpose will inevitably structure itself in some fashion. The structure may be flexible, vary over time, and evenly or unevenly distribute tasks, power, and resources among group members, yet a structure will be formed regardless of the abilities, personalities, or intentions of the people involved. The very fact that we are individuals, with different talents and backgrounds makes this inevitable. Only if we refused to relate or interact on any basis whatsoever could we approximate structurelessness; but that is not the nature of human groups.

The idea of structurelessness does not prevent the formation of informal structures, only formal ones. A "laissez faire" ideal for group structure becomes a method for the strong or lucky to establish hegemony over others. Structurelessness becomes a way of masking power. As long as the structure of the group is informal, the rules of how decisions are made are known only to a few, and power is limited to those who know the rules. For everyone to have the opportunity to be involved in a group and to participate in its activities, the structure must be explicit, not implicit. Decision making must be available to everyone, and this can happen only if it is formalized.

This is not to say that formal structure in a group will destroy the informal structure. But it does hinder the informal structure from having predominant control

and makes available some means of formal negotiation if the informal leaders are not at least responsive to the needs of the group at large.

Principles essential to participatory structures:

1. Delegation by group process to individuals for specific tasks. If people are selected to do a task they have made a commitment not easily be ignored.
2. Responsiveness of those to whom authority has been delegated to those who delegated it. Individuals may exercise power, but it is the group that has ultimate say over how the power is exercised, and that controls people in positions of authority.
3. Distribution of authority among as many people as is reasonably possible. This decentralization prevents monopoly of power by requiring those in positions of authority to consult with others, and gives many people the opportunity to have responsibility for specific tasks and thereby to learn different skills.
4. Rotation of tasks among individuals. Responsibilities held too long by one person come to be seen as that person's property. Yet, if tasks are rotated too frequently the individual does not have time to learn the job and acquire satisfaction from doing it well.
5. Allocation of tasks along rational criteria such as ability, interest, and responsibility.
6. Diffusion of information to everyone as frequently as possible. Information is power. Access to information enhances one's power.
7. Access to needed resources. Skills can be made available equitably only when members are willing to teach what they know to others.

As communities go through various stages of development and positions of authority are rotated among different members, the group will gain experience in determining which of their members can provide the effective leadership needed to meet different challenges and opportunities. Over time, the organization can realize increasing effectiveness and creativity in group endeavors -- joining personal growth and community growth to a common end!

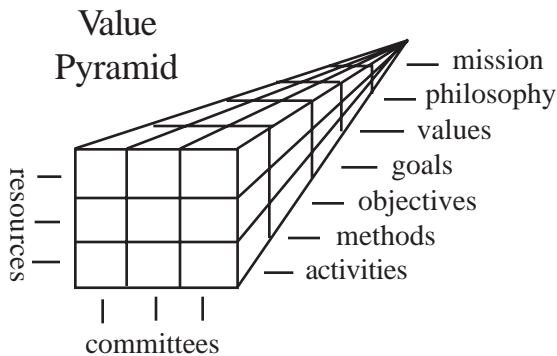
The Planning Process

Shared leadership through an active social consent in governance requires a communication system which encourages and facilitates a high degree of member involvement. Information must be presented by managers, or others entrusted with responsibilities by the membership, in a manner sufficient for individuals to understand, be able to think about the group's direction as it relates to their own preferences and needs, and be able to make functional recommendations and decisions. A planning process, as a form of group communication, can be oriented to fill this need.

The Spirit and The Mundane

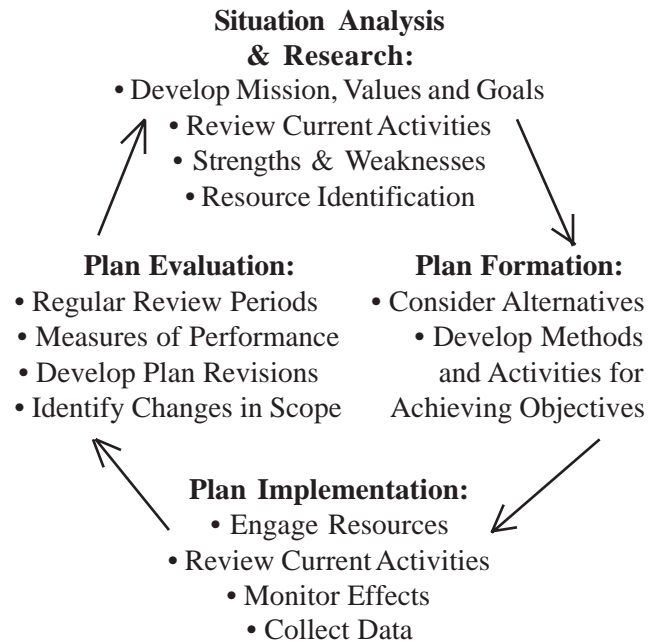
There are two primary aspects of human culture that the planning process attempts to integrate or make synergistic. These are, first, establishing the conceptual connections between the intrinsic, essential nature or abstract philosophy of the organization or culture and the tangible results or expressions of it, and secondly, the coordination of the process of applying or managing that connection in ways that achieve desired results.

The "Value Pyramid" illustrates that the abstract part of the planning process relates to the application of collective resources. All of the many varied activities of people and applications of resources relate in clear and verifiable manners to the organization's mission.



The "Cyclical Planning Process" illustrates the ongoing coordination of the connections of the spirit or theory of participatory process, identified as mission and values and such, with people's activities in the social and material world. Maintaining this effort over the long term results in a community tradition that can assure for the group a collective identity based upon a dynamic of group participation.

Cyclical Planning Model



A Planning Process is a Means to:

- Structure discussion toward discovering commonalities among people
- Find what agreements can be made
- Decide how to apply common resources
- Establish a criteria for evaluating what has been achieved, at regular intervals through the future

Affects of the Failure to Plan:

- Lack of a clear direction
- Crisis decision-making
- Lack of an objective criteria for evaluating progress

Benefits of Planning:

- Encourages participation
- Develops awareness of common values and goals
- Prevents burnout as goals become clear, energy is organized and progress is identified
- Develops procedures for regular evaluations
- Provides methods for continuous informational and educational activities for keeping members in control of their organization
- Provides lead time for necessary action
- Aids effective coordination & efficient resource use
- Insures flexibility and adaptability in planning decision-making and implementation
- Builds momentum with a sense of direction
- Increases chances of survival and success

Planning: Complex-Issue Process for Large Groups

There are many different complex-issue, large-group processes developed by different process training groups, which can be categorized under the general topic of “planning.” Three different planning processes will be profiled here, and although the first was designed primarily for use in for-profit corporations, all are designed to involve the greatest number of people possible in the organization.

Planning processes are particularly important for intentional communities based upon participatory governance. In order to move away from hierarchical structures, consensus process in decision-making, and certainly not democratic majority-rule, by itself is not sufficient. There must also be a method employed to involve as many people as possible in more than just decision-making, yet also in the research into the background for those issues, in the brainstorming of alternatives or possible solutions to issues, in discussions of actions appropriate to the mission, values or goals of the organization, in the follow-through activities, and in the evaluation of actions past with regard to the future of the community. All of these comprise agenda-setting activities, and true democratic and other participatory organizations must encourage citizens or members to be involved in them.

Without open access to all of these processes, concerns of individuals may remain non-issues, and those who are invested in the status quo therefore are permitted by the group to maintain control. Planning processes, in tandem with consensus or at least majority-rule decision-making, together provide the best insurance against the tyranny of structurelessness.

It is often said that the journey is more important than the destination, with regard to how we grow and develop as individuals and groups, and this is as true of decision-making as it is of travel. The larger the group of people involved and the more complex the issues, the more important it therefore becomes to devise and manage ongoing processes supporting group decision-making. Among these may be a

standing “Process Committee” for managing the group’s agreements around process and decision-making, including the orientation of new members to those agreements and the training of process and facilitation to all interested members. For large intentional communities focused upon participatory governance it is also particularly important to consider devising ongoing planning processes for managing the group’s resources of land (natural resources), labor (time and expertise) and capital (money and investments, equipment, buildings and inventory).

The planning processes presented here are presentations of the experiences of Twin Oaks and East Wind Communities in managing resources in relatively large egalitarian communities (approximately 65 to 75 adults).

For the Twin Oaks material the focus is upon the community’s “Social Planning Process” in the late ‘70s, which affirmed one of the basic aspects of the community, or its form of address of one of the most basic issues in large communal societies, that of the relationship of families and other small social groups to the larger community. This issue was revisited in the mid ‘80s with Twin Oaks’ “Child Program Planning Process.” Twin Oaks also manages “Economic Planning” on an annual basis as a routine, systematized and continually refined process.

Like Twin Oaks, East Wind has engaged in various “Vision” processes, and at least two large-group processes have taken place, the “Comprehensive Planning” process in the late ‘70s, and the series of processes related to the community’s “Work Improvement Process” (WIMP) in the early and mid ‘80s. The community has also maintained an “Annual Plan” process, differing in detail through the years.

These examples are presented with the intention of showing the variety of issues that may be addressed, and some of the many different forms that large-group process can take in egalitarian cultures.

Planning at Twin Oaks Community

Social Planning

Land Use Planning at Twin Oaks Community began as early as 1975/76 (with influence from various books, especially *A Timeless Way of Building* [Alexander, 1979], *A Pattern Language* [Shikawa et al., 1977], and *The Oregon Experiment* (Alexander, 1975)). Economic Planning also became an annual event by this time, and both were important tools for managing the community's growth and development. That growth, to over 70 adults, brought the community to the classic issue for intentional community which Rosabeth Moss Kanter describes in *Commitment and Community* (Harvard University Press, 1972: 64) as "how to build close, fulfilling relationships without exclusiveness." Other expressions of the issue include how to balance individuality with commitment to the group. The default in the dominant human society is the emphasis upon family as an economic unit, which is contrary to the purpose and structure of communal society.

TO created two "branches" economically tied but socially separate from the large group, called "Juniper." Motivations were partly due to the intimacy-in-community issue and partly as a strategy to house a growing population. First was "Merion," started in 1972 and comprised of about a dozen somewhat ideologically-unified (labeled as "goat and loom") friendship group from among existing members, settled on a separate parcel of land. For reasons including being very selective of new members and various "us versus them" economic and social conflicts, Merion dwindled in population and ended.

During Merion's decline, "Tupelo" started with a group of a dozen ideologically diverse new members in 1975, largely in response to a housing shortage at Juniper. Tupelo started on a neighbor's abandoned house and grew to around twenty people, while the community built a separate building for the branch on its own land (Juniper). Tupelo remains a sub-group removed from the large group by distance and by its separate "family" style meals and shared parenting processes, in a large building designed with considerable experience in communitarian social and ecologically responsible design.

In 1979 two decentralist proposals were considered by the community. The first was to devolve power

from the centralized board-of-planners to the managerial councils, comprised of managers in related work areas, such as domestic, agricultural, industry, and construction. Lack of interest among most members to assume additional responsibility may be the primary reason for the failure of this proposal. It is often difficult enough to find volunteers for the board-of-planners, which operates differently from managerial level responsibilities.

The second decentralist effort also was made around 1979, called the Social Planning Process. Social sub-groups within the community had become a popular theme, with surveys showing a large majority in favor, but the question remained how best to affect change, given the issues of failure with regard to Merion and with the governmental decentralization proposal.

A Social Planning Group began with surveys of community activities. Next a list of values held by the group was edited into a statement of core values. A goals survey was then done, relating each goal to values already identified, and to methods based upon the community activities list. Questions were posed such as, "how does our method of assigning rooms work in relation to our goal of meeting individual needs?" and "is our goal of being efficient consistent with our goal of being ecologically responsible?"

Three primary goals were identified as:

- the smooth integration of new people into TO
- making the environment safe and healthy
- the nurturance of friendships

A "Fantasy Day" was organized, with tables in the outdoor "Courtyard" festooned with balloons and banners for presenting the work done and for gathering additional ideas in a party atmosphere. Following this, small groups met to discuss concerns such as dining arrangements, the child program and small-group versus large-group living. A fourteen page packet of directional options and questions to address in terms of values and goals was given to members during a weekend "Social Planning Smorgasbord" event accompanied by watermelon, cookies, beer and other incentives for responding. Seventy-three percent of the sixty-seven members "on the farm" participated, although none responded to all of the questions.

The results were formed into a proposal to:

- have small group spaces ranging from six to fifteen
- provide both small group and whole group dining
- have child-adult residences along with the existing child building (which was similar to Israeli Kibbutz)
- have membership be community-wide, with separate application to a small group if desired

It took a year to complete this process affirming what many considered a foregone conclusion; the desire for Small Living Groups (SLGs). Yet the important thing which the process managed was to assure that the result was acceptable to all, given the multiple opportunities for participation. In the end, the community wasn't thrown out with the bath water, since a balance was struck between centralized versus decentralized values. Some considered the resulting small groups as simply "tenants' associations" within a communal society, while others credit groups like the gender-separatist women's group as providing for the social diversity valued by the community. Sentiments about the process itself were expressed, such as "talking a good idea to death," and "I defy anyone to get the community to define what it wants."

Sources: *Living the Dream* by Ingrid Komar (Twin Oaks, 1989) and *Is It Utopia Yet?* by Kat Kinkade (Twin Oaks, 1994)

Economic Planning

At Twin Oaks the Economic Planning Process is the start of the labor credit system, a non-monetary, labor-sharing economic system involving one hour of community-accepted work equaling one credit. The resulting Annual Plan sets the money and labor budgets for each managerial area. The process builds community commitment to the Plan as a result of the shared experience of group decision-making.

The process of arriving at a plan includes presentations by the board-of-planners and by the labor, financial, business, and domestic managers. Discussions involve what happened in the previous year and what is desired in the coming year. Any member may propose special projects, such as constructing a new building, raising the personal allowance, or buying a musical instrument. If the community agrees to put these items high enough on the priority list to receive funding, the project is on its way.

The Planners prepare a first-draft annual plan, a copy of which is provided to each member. Members are

given a form called a "trade-off game" providing specific planning parameters, such as projected income and labor supply, requests for budget changes and proposed new projects along with associated money and labor cost projections. Member "game" responses are tabulated by the Planners, who use this information in developing a Proposed Annual Plan. This Plan is considered in additional meetings until some form of consensus is reached. The plan may be altered in midyear using the same group process.

In the planning process many tradeoffs must be made, such as growth versus standard-of-living, and lowered labor quota (more leisure time) versus increased income-producing work or improved domestic services. The communities' desired income levels are dominating factors, since industry requires 40 to 50 percent of the labor supply. Other work areas usually take about 10 percent each for construction, agriculture, food service and childcare.

The budgets set in the Economic Plan are implemented by the managers. Individual members may follow their job preferences in finding areas to fill their work quotas, but the areas they choose must have sufficient budgeted hours. The weekly work quota is usually from 40 to 49 hours. All domestic work, such as cooking, cleaning, maintenance and child care is included. "Over-quota" work by individuals earns vacation time, either on or off the farm.

The labor quota brings a common awareness of one's fair share while allowing for differences in productivity and type of contribution to the community. The labor system provides for diversification and specialization while also providing a high degree of flexibility. Labor may be transferred swiftly by notifying members of opportunities such as agricultural harvests, sales of community products, training, travel and recreation, meetings or political actions. Hourly labor records (done labor accounting) provides dollar-per-hour figures for comparing income work in the different industries, for comparing self-sufficiency versus industry (e.g., relative value of growing food versus buying it) and for projecting labor cost estimates for new projects. These issues and more are addressed during the Economic Planning Process as the community establishes common priorities.

Source: "The Wonders of Communal Economics," by Allen Butcher, *1990 Directory of Intentional Communities*, FIC/CPC 1991

Planning at East Wind Community

Planning at East Wind arose from a different set of concerns than at Twin Oaks. At EW the issues were not political decentralization and social sub-groups, but more related to member's labor contributions and the distribution of limited resources. This was due to being a younger community than TO and thus having much less housing and other amenities for its population, which was about the same size as TO's in the late 1970s (close to 70 members) due to having less of a member selection process. At about the same time that TO was engaged in their Social Planning Process, EW developed its first planning process.

Comprehensive Planning

The planning process evolving at EW the winter of 1978/79 began with the Planning Commission's four members facilitating the community's identification and agreement upon a set of values and objectives, to be developed by various work groups into specific goals toward which the community would work. 145 such nebulous words and phrases were suggested as: equality, non-sexism, responsiveness to people's needs, and ecologically sound production and consumption. The community was then surveyed to prioritize these values, with "cooperation" receiving the highest response at 92%. Further values clarification was postponed, then never resumed, as it was felt that agreement on the values level would not lead to agreement on the goals and methods levels where decisions more directly affected our lives.

In community meetings a list of objectives were identified, followed by a survey of more specific goals. A concerns survey was done asking members simply, "what do you think is important for the community to deal with this fall?" Meanwhile, the Planning Commission's Three Year Plan (TYP) Group was distilling the input on objectives from broad to specific. Along with the results from the concerns survey providing a list of what a cross-section of the community considered to be the most pressing problems, the TYP Group sent to the board-of-planners a list of recommended "things to go further with" in the short term and of possible TYP objectives. The Planners then formulated a final proposal to the community which determined what areas to concentrate upon.

Eleven categories emerged and interested folks along

with appropriate managers were formed into work groups to crystallize the objectives and form desired goals. The four broadest categories warranted community discussion meetings before workgroups formed. These were: social interaction, equality of the genders, skills (opportunities to learn), and the work quota or alternatives to it (two meetings). The remaining seven categories fit neatly into previously created managerships: cleanliness, cultural committee, agricultural board, industrial board, regionalism (kitchen, network and purchasing managerships), gender ratio and new member integration (membership and visitor managerships).

In workgroups the objectives ultimately yielded the community's first three year plan (1979-81) as a set of objectives, along with a more specific annual plan for '79 with specific methods detailing the allocation of resources of labor, money and space. The work group process involved about a third of the community's 67 members, with those most involved having as many as ten meetings scheduled in three days. This was facilitated by the labor system's assignment schedules and individual labor sheets for arranging meetings in the same way as work assignments, and with the coming of snow in late '78 encouraging the acceptance of the great amount of indoor sedentary work.

Source: Bulletin Board Paper, Micheal & Allen, 1979

Work Improvement Project (WIMP)

The experience of community-building at EW was initially of faster growth than at TO, and due to the lack of building codes in Ozark County permitting "invented shelters" for housing, EW had more of a pioneering aspect than did TO. The two communities shared the same manufacturing industry (hand-woven hammocks) but since TO was more vertically integrated (producing raw materials for finished products) it enjoyed a higher income and thus a higher standard-of-living. EW's relative poverty (very few years has either community had income above taxable levels, when net business income is divided per person) resulted in different social stresses than at TO. In response, changes in EW's agreements on community labor and governance was facilitated by those in the community with concern that the process is at least as important as the result.

WIMPing Along

East Wind, as a sister community to Twin Oaks, initially adopted TO's systems in their entirety, then set to changing them. As both communities considered themselves to be "experimental communities," TO first devised its economic/labor system, then went on to social experimentation with branches and small-living-groups. EW, however, continued experimenting with its labor system, the basis of the communal, non-monetary economy, with less of a focus on social planning and design, although this was a consideration. Much of the documentation of EW's experiments was written by Will EW, as was much of the design of the process itself.

As presented graphically in the paper, "WIMP Rough Outline December 1982," EW experimented with "variable labor credits" (different work activities worth different amount of, or fraction of a credit) from 1973 to 1975. From 1976 to 1978 the standard was 1.0 credit per hour, with extra credit for "Hard To Assign" labor (HTA, e.g., cleaning, etc). From 1978 on the work credit was a standard 1.0 per hour, with various other work agreements added, such as "Units" or credit based upon production rather than time (rewarding efficiency and speed) from '79 to '81, with Units as an option for a few years after that. The revised "HTA System" started in 1979 with everyone being assigned cleaning and other shifts at the 1.0 standard (one credit per hour). Work crews started in 1981, and this became one of the important features of EW's labor system as it WIMPed away from the TO labor system design, eventually ending labor budgeting and labor assigning.

In the same paper there is also a graphical timeline of the WIMP process. Along with organizing initial work groups in 1981 (based upon managerial areas), background information was assembled on concerns about the work system and on alternative work system designs. April through July 1982 saw community meetings on strengths and concerns of the labor system, criteria surveys and other input. In September the Feedback Group formed, presenting a report in October on the main problems (e.g., "not get bogged down," "confusion," "overscheduling"), goals (e.g., "work-life satisfaction," "decentralization," "efficiency") and transition (e.g., "elect new management"). November and December saw presentations of the rough draft WIMP Proposal with feedback in community meetings. These meetings resulted in the

revised "February System" proposal, followed by the "March System." Finally the WIMP Proposal was passed in Community Meeting on April 27, 1983.

Features of WIMP included combining managerial areas into "Branches," with permanent workers in each having a vote in branch decisions, and job security in return for sharing responsibility. Work Committee (coordinating permanent, floater, visitor and HTA labor), Social Committee (membership growth, conflict management, small-group social spaces) and Resource Committee (planning) were created. WIMP maintained the process of labor assigning, and the board-of-planners or "Planners" continued as a self-selecting body, chairing the three Committees. Transition to WIMP was in Oct. '83.

Beyond WIMP

Perhaps the primary value of WIMP was that it made possible the abandonment of traditional ways of doing things. Radical change is often traumatic, and managing the transition was perhaps the value of the long WIMP process. In result, WIMP was actually just a first step, as it made possible further changes.

September 1985 the "Leadership and Administrative Structure" proposal was passed. Chair persons of the Planners, Social and Resource Committees were hence elected positions (Resource and Labor were merged), and the Social Committee was to focus upon advocating the "Caring Society" concept.

In April 1986 Taylor TO spent a week doing Vision, Managerial and Child Program consulting at EW.

In November 1988 EW completed an "Administrative Reorganization," now with just one administrative group, the elected five-person "Board" incorporating the Social and Resource Committees.

In July 1989 the community voted to eliminate labor budgets, starting January 1990 with the annual plan including only money budgets. Each Branch decides which activities are to be creditable, with HTA and IQ (industry quota) continuing. Meeting attendance earns one-half credit.

In 1995 the community voted to replace the election of Board members with a rotation system, each full member now taking a turn, unless declined. Thus affirming the concept of shared leadership at EW.

Shadows

The Shadow Side of Community

Ways to Maintain Community Health

Every person and group has a shadow, just as the full moon possesses a dark side. The secret to becoming whole is in acknowledging the shadow and integrating it into conscious awareness. Following are issues to be considered, or steps toward maintaining balance, avoiding “cult” behavior, and integrating the shadow:

1. How well do you balance task and process? Consider having separate meetings for business and for personal sharing, but keep elements of each in both. Business meetings can start with a personal sharing, called a “check-in,” “tune-up,” “deepening” or “getting present.” Similarly, process or support group meetings may include time for taking care of business or reviewing purposes and goals.
2. Establish the acceptability of negative feelings. If necessary, develop processes to elicit fears, resentments, and sexual politics or tensions, and to make such discussions safe. (“Heart Sharing” and other processes.)
3. Make sure that dissenters are heard and responded to with understanding. Their underlying message may be the key to the community’s health. How does the community treat dissenters, whether member or non-member?
4. What kind of emotional climate exists? Look at your own family history to understand what positive and negative patterns you are carrying into community (father/supporter or patriarch, mother/nurturer or martyr, child/learning or avoiding responsibility, teen/affirming community values or rebelling). In group functions, do you feel relaxed, accepted and welcome or does your body tighten and your defenses go on alert? Do hugs and expressions of caring seem genuine or false? Do members neglect their families, personal lives, and their health to serve community?
5. Try wearing the other hat: practice focusing upon process and vision as much as tasks and the bottom line, and vice versa.
6. How aware is the group of its factions, cliques or

other power balances with regard to information, money, decision-making, or spokesperson role? Does the group examine imbalances and agree to accept or modify them? If you are taking too much responsibility, pass some to others. If you are not taking a fair share or what you can manage, ask for more.

7. Ask for help when you need it; personally and as a group. Self-reliance is a virtue, but some situations require the uninvolved perspective of mediators and facilitators to reestablish the balance of group vs. individual, vision vs. reality, task vs. process.
8. While holding the vision and trusting in miracles, plan for worst-case scenarios. How does the community respond to problems: with blame, or avoidance, or with a strategy and process meeting?
9. Plan regular times to review the group’s vision, accomplishments, and internal dynamics, and to play and celebrate together.

Adapted from: Carolyn Shaffer & Kristin Anundsen, “Creating Community Anywhere,” Tarcher Press, 1993, pages 228, 244, 245.

Seven Community Dysfunctions and Functions

Causing all seven problems is the lack of trained, dedicated facilitators. (As a teacher of facilitators, of course this would be my perspective—R. Sandelin)

Seven Community Dysfunctions:

1. No effective process for resolving issues/problems
 2. Avoiding saying no, saying yes easily, but never following through
 3. Lack of group accepted ground rules
 4. No intervention on ground rules and behaviors
 5. Not enough positive reinforcement
 6. Overstating or unrealistic negatives or fears
 7. Limited or lack of examination or review of process and outcomes
- Rob Sandelin, Northwest Intentional Communities Assoc., 25 Jan 200, Cohousing-L

Seven Determinants of Success in Community:

1. Awareness of the best processes to deal effectively with issues or problems
 2. Make sure saying yes means following through
 3. Establishment of group accepted ground rules
 4. Intervention on ground rules and behaviors
 5. Generous positive reinforcement
 6. Habitual checking of reality or attunement to the effects of mood on thoughts
 7. Systematic review of process and outcomes
- Hans Tilstra, 26 Jan 2000, Cohousing-L

Warning Signs of Spiritual Blight

Taboo Topics or Secrets—Information is suppressed, members prevented from questioning/sharing doubts.

Spiritual Clones—The minor form is stereotypic behavior, as in people walking, talking, eating or dressing like their leader; or more seriously, psychological stereotyping as in an entire group manifesting a narrow range of feeling in any situation, as in always happy, pious, sardonic, or reducing everything to a single explanation (also called “unifocal understanding”) as in both positive and negative events being “Guru’s Grace.”

Group Think—A party line that overrides how individuals actually feel, and the process of imposing conformity of belief and expression.

The Elect—A shared delusion of grandeur that there is no way but this one. The corollary is that you’re lost if you leave the group. Members never leave or “graduate” from the group.

Assembly Lines—Everyone is treated identically, no matter what their differences.

Loyalty Tests—Members prove loyalty to group by doing something that violates their personal ethics.

Duplicity—Group’s public face conceals true nature.

Humorlessness—No irreverence or laughing at sacred cows is permitted. Finding humor in one’s devotions can be a sign of spiritual health.

Daniel Goleman, “Early Warning Signs for the Detection of Spiritual Blight,” *Yoga Journal*, Jul/Aug 1985.

Recognizing Manipulations

The techniques of mind control are not always intentionally manipulative, and some people collude with the system because they want to believe. Understanding how mind control mechanisms work is about reclaiming your power to make your own intelligent choices.

Fear Manipulations—Eternal Damnation, Apocalypse, Isolation and Vulnerability, Shame.

Guilt Manipulations—Christ’s Death (for your sins). You are responsible for other’s spiritual destiny as an inducement to “witness” or proselytize.

Mystical Manipulations—Altered states (fasting, chanting, sleep deprivation). Interpretation of personal experience in a way that makes it proof of the religion. Symbols, ritual, ceremony and miracles are cited as sacred things, and used to transfer spiritual authority to the groups’ or religion’s doctrines.

Denigration of Self—The self must be rejected because it is fundamentally bad or wrong, and must be salvaged by God, the group or the church.

Discrediting of the World—The group, church or “the word of God” is unchallengeable and unchangeable, and must be protected from modernism / secularism.

Group Pressure and Thought Control—True belief requires strict control of thoughts and information, and complete immersion in the church. Considering doubts about one’s religion or questioning church doctrine as being a sin is a form of “thought stopping.” Redefining words in ways which support church or community doctrine (e.g., “love” defined as obedience, or “wisdom” as anything considered “God’s word” with human understanding being foolishness or misguidance).

Closed System of Logic—A religious doctrine may be rationalized by its own logical system or by circular reasoning (e.g., “God is love. You can only know love if you believe in God and Christ.”)

Marlene Winell, *Leaving the Fold: A Guide for Former Fundamentalists and Others Leaving Their Religion*, New Harbinger Publications, 5674 Shattuck Ave., Oakland, CA 94609, 1993.

Negative Behaviors and Intervention in Cohousing

People Feel Bad - Cause Group Ineffectiveness

Intervention is not group therapy. The effective facilitator does not seek to clarify the deep emotional reasons behind behaviors unless that is what the group wants. Intervention is used to support the use of the groups ground rules, to minimize behaviors that are ineffective, and to keep morale high. Intervention has two sides, the supportive side and the corrective side. In general the ratio of positive to corrective interventions should be at least 10 to 1, meaning lots of positive feedback should be happening for every correction needed. Catch 'em being good is a great way to reinforce the behaviors that make meetings effective and go a long way toward creating a positive, good-feeling meeting environment. Once you do this a few times, complementing and praising people becomes a natural part of facilitation, and corrections will come easily and with good will.

My assumption is that yelling and arguing is a behavior you find makes you feel bad. First step is to check this with the rest of the group. Does it make most people feel bad? Do most people want this behavior to stop? Or is this just your perception?

I teach my facilitation students that intervention is one of the key skills of being an excellent facilitator. Along with those skills goes planning, observation, sensitivity and evaluation. Finding someone to intervene effectively may take hiring an outside resource. A good family counselor can help, as couples-counseling can be applied in larger group situations.

First problem to solve: how committed are the members causing the behavior to the community? Often I find in cohousing groups there is wide variation in peoples commitment level to the concept of "community." A lack of commitment to making things better for everyone means little personal energy will go towards changes. I have heard, on several occasions words to the effect of, "I did not come here to do personal growth work, this ain't no new age commune. This kind of stuff is not what cohousing is about." If your group has this lack of commitment to community building, this will clearly make it very difficult to move forward. If you have "feelings meetings" and people don't show up, that shows a low level of commitment,

which in my experience means little will be accomplished. I have observed severely dysfunctional behaviors which individuals use to deliberately create havoc and cause issues. They refuse counseling and mediation work and use their behaviors to accomplish their own ends. This creates huge problems.

Most groups that are not cohousing just move out these folks. Cohousing, based on private, individual ownership, has no way to deal with serious personal dysfunction if the individual is not willing to cooperate. In those circumstances, the best you can do is heal yourselves and create strategies to work around the problems while being aware that the intention to disrupt or damage only succeeds if you let it.

Assuming that individuals with problem behaviors are willing to work toward reconciliation, I have used a tiered intervention system with some good success. The first level of intervention is large group general intervention. We do not specifically note individuals just note issues in general, and people discuss impacts of behaviors in a general way. The format: brainstorm a list of effective behaviors first, then make the list of ineffective behaviors, defining effective as those behaviors which help us work together and feel good about ourselves and our community.

Use the format: When _____(behavior) happens it makes me feel _____. This is sometimes all it takes for a individual to self correct a behavior. This intervention may cover several issues and I simply collect them, make everyone aware of them, and look at general solutions, such as creating group ground rules, communication rules and processes. Having clear group ground rules is an important first step.

The next level of intervention is individual and private. I meet with the individual and explain to them the goals the group is trying to accomplish. I get them to recognize those goals as being worthwhile and worth doing. This works best if there are clear ground rules I can refer to. If I succeed there, then we compare the behavior against the goals, I use specific examples of where the behavior causes impacts on the group that do not meet the goal and I do so in a way that is not confrontational but collaborative. I carefully watch for defensive reactions and smooth them by applying

praise and goal orientation. We are working together to make a better situation for everybody right? From this discussion and work I try to create a contract. The contract acknowledges the impact of the behavior (or behaviors) and the commitment to work to specifically change the behavior. I then reinforce the contract by making a point to praise the individual for their work whenever I can.

Sometimes I have used a simple private communication signal system to help the individual self-correct. For example, I might have worked out with the individual that if they talk too loudly in a meeting I will look at them and rub my ear, indicating that I think the behavior in contract is being displayed. This helps them self-correct and keep their contract.

The last level, and one I personally dislike using the most, is the public direct intervention. In this case, we have done the first two steps, it is still not working, and I publicly intervene in front of everyone, capturing the specific behavior and its consequence to the group at that moment. I have not yet succeeded in doing this in a way such that 100% of the time the individual feels non-defensive, and I tend to employ this level of intervention as a last resort. I might throw it out as something like: "I feel we need to stop this process and look at what just happened." What I just observed was: _____. How do people feel about this? (I would direct the group to use "I" statements if this is not how they usually operate). This opens up the individual for all kinds of potential attacks, and it is enormously difficult for pretty much anybody to hear negative feedback, especially if presented in an angry tone. Keeping this productive takes a good talent, great finesse, sensitivity and a plan. This is absolutely something you need to add to your meeting plan, think about very carefully and prepare for.

People with family counseling backgrounds often disagree with my approach, saying that the direct public intervention is the most effective. I find that the first two approaches almost always seem to work to accomplish the behavioral contracts and that it spares the individual the potential of having their neighbors dump on them. However it does take considerably more time and effort on the part of the intervenor.

Obviously, there is more detail involved with doing an effective intervention but that's the outline of what I have done in several situations with good success in

curbing ineffective behaviors by group members.

Rob Sandelin, Northwest Intentional Communities Assoc., 25 Aug 1999, Cohousing-L email.
The Facilitators Art, 22110 East Lost Lake Rd., Snohomish, WA 98296.
www.infoteam.com/nonprofit/nica

Anger in Cohousing

Anger makes some people feel uncomfortable, others feel uncomfortable by the thought that the anger is not expressed. If expressed, it's channeled as a hurt.

In my work I contrast three approaches to a conflict:
1. who's got the power (e.g., rewarding, including, excluding)
2. who is right & who is wrong (e.g., let's go to the minutes / contract, let's be reasonable)
3. paraphrasing each other's wants & needs, fears & concerns. (ie. Physical needs, security, sense of belonging, need to be loved, control over one's life)

Asking someone what they want or expressing whatever makes the angry person feel understood may lower defenses.

What I find tricky about cohousing is that we're discussing one's shelter, one's territory. Does cohousing require a sharing of control over one's life relative to conventional housing? As the concept of community aims to battle isolation, is there a distinct requirement for confluence, for agreement that overrides a desire to differ?

Hans Tilstra, 27 Aug 1999, Cohousing-L email

There are wide cultural and class variations in how anger is normally expressed. I don't want to make any global judgement about other cultures, but I'm interested in what is culturally appropriate amongst middle class white North Americans and similar cultures (since that covers 99% of the likely potential recruits for a cohousing community). In this context, community members expressing their anger via yelling and similar behaviors carries a number of very significant costs.

Firstly, it makes other community members acutely uncomfortable. Not only is this bad per se, but a community where this behavior is frequent is likely to lose members and have difficulty attracting more.

Secondly, it creates serious power imbalances and

distortions. Many people are instinctively and strongly fearful of someone who blows up regularly. Group members are likely to avoid opposing them on decisions where the angry one is known to feel strongly, or avoid bringing up issues that might elicit that kind of behavior. It has a chilling effect on the group's ability to frankly & honestly discuss problems.

Thirdly, my experience is that, in relationships where people have some option to hate and ignore each other, that is what open expressions of anger and hostility will cause them to do. It works very differently between two neighbors than it might in a marriage, say. In the latter case, yelling at each other does seem to be cathartic and helpful for some couples. I have yet to see a case where community members felt better about each other and more prone to interact because they yelled at each other. Instead they avoid each other and think badly of each other.

Finally, in many cases, it is explicitly against the group's agreements on behavior.
Stuart Staniford-Chen, 25 Aug 1999, Cohousing-L

Anger in Egalitarian Community

“You will not be punished for your anger, you will be punished by your anger.” Buddha

FIRST usually with anger, there is at least a core of a reasonable cause that a person gets angry. They have felt disrespected, or been hurt by something etc. If we say, “Okay, I'm going to let go of the anger.” Then it can feel like we're saying that person's behavior is acceptable (since I'm not going to be upset about it).

BUT THEN we say, “No, actually it's not that you accept the behavior.” Because you can still approach the person when you're calmer, ask for what you believe to be reasonable, and work toward resolution of the core reason or cause for the anger.

SO THEN, either A) change the behavior which leads to the anger disappearing, or B) don't change the behavior, which may lead to more anger!

SO IF B HAPPENS then what are the choices: One choice is to choose to remove yourself from the situation one way or another so you don't have to deal with the person anymore. Often that is difficult or not desirable. Other suggestions are: focus on the

higher perspective, focus on that they and we are all doing the best we can, with different levels of skill in conflict resolution.

Valarie, Twin Oaks Net, 20 Jan 2000

Re-evaluation Counseling

From: *Resource Manual for a Living Revolution*, New Society Press, 1977. Re-evaluation Counseling or “co-counseling” is a process whereby people, regardless of age, education or experience, can learn how to exchange effective help with each other in order to free themselves from the effects of past distress experiences.

The theory assumes that everyone is born with tremendous intellectual potential, natural zest and lovingness, but that these qualities become blocked in adults due to accumulated distress experiences beginning in childhood. When adequate emotional discharge takes 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.

Two people take turns counseling and being counseled. The one acting as the counselor listens, draws the other out and encourages and assists emotional discharge. The one acting as client talks, discharges and re-evaluates. With experience and increased confidence and trust in each other, the process works better with more successful outcomes. If people do not know each other before co-counseling it is suggested that they not develop relationships beyond counseling.

Constructive Criticism and Feedback

- Be descriptive rather than judgmental
- Be specific rather than general
- Deal with things that can be changed
- Give critical feedback when it is desired
- Consider motives for giving & receiving feedback
- Give feedback at the time the behavior takes place
- Criticise when accuracy can be checked by others

Active Listening

- Maintain eye contact with the speaker
- Signal that you're listening with nods and comments
- Show understanding not agreement/disagreement
- Use open-ended questions to encourage elaboration
- Summarize or restate the speaker's remarks
- Respond to expressed feelings, show understanding

Self-Examination Response - Taking Responsibility for our Behavior

Twin Oaks Community Process Team, 1991

Self-Examination RESponse (SERES) also called “issues clarification,” deals with any situation in which people feel that a person is behaving in ways that are having an intolerable impact on the community or the individuals herein. This method provides process steps and self-examination interviews that can be used by individuals and decision-making groups.

Developing tools and methods for finding resolution for interpersonal, ongoing conflicts seems to be a necessary element of living cooperatively. What’s needed by all members is an openness to consider concerns of others, and a willingness to consider changes that will promote harmony. This process was developed due to the belief that we can’t afford to overlook actions which breed and promote mistrust, intimidation, and power plays. Our agreements, bylaws, policies and norms all require a willingness to evaluate in good faith our actions as individuals within the community.

The use of a SERES process could prevent the need for a “Feedback Meeting.” Self-examination can help the person who has concerns about someone else’s behavior as well as helping the person whose behavior has drawn concern. Clarifying one’s own needs and goals may bring resolution by itself.

Self-Examination

The SERES process would begin with one member (A) asking help from the Process Team in resolving a conflict with another person (B), when other avenues have failed, such as face-to-face and facilitated conflict resolution. The issue may be an interpersonal conflict or concerns about B not following community agreements. The Process Team reviews with A what was done and what may yet be done toward resolution, to assure that appropriate and reasonable channels have been tried.

If A agrees, a Self-Examination interview begins with questions such as:

- What is the behavior I’m concerned about?
- What do I feel about this? What do I want?
- What do I need to look at in myself that could be getting in the way of thinking creatively about this?
- What do I understand about B’s needs & feelings?
- Which can I validate, what do I differ with, and

what am I confused about?

- Am I in “attack” mode or “victim” mode?
- Which of my defenses are operating?
- What privileges do I have that B does not?
- What ways can I use my awareness to correct the imbalance?
- How can I help this situation?
- What support can I offer for resolution?
- In what ways are my judgements, assumptions of the person, affecting my thinking about this issue?
- Can I check them to see what truth is in them?
- How can I say what I feel and want in a way that gives the best chance of achieving my desired result?

If after this Self-Examination person A wants to continue, the Process Team informs person B that A wants to pursue an issue about B’s specific behavior. Person B may then choose to do the same Self-Examination process as A has already done. This alone may change the relationship between A and B, perhaps toward resolution.

If person A is not satisfied, or if B has refused to engage in the process, the Process Team sends to all community members a description of the conflict, soliciting input for sharing with the community. After seeing this input, person B is asked to do another Self-Examination asking coself:

- What is the concern expressed about my behavior?
- What was my intent?
- Did I get the desired response? Undesired results?
- What do I understand about the needs and feelings of person A?
- What do I want person A to understand about me?
- In what other ways can I improve the situation?
- In what ways can I take care of my interests and answer the concerns of my fellow communitarians?

If person B completes this process, the responses are shared with the community, along with any intent to change behaviors about which there is concern. If not, or if person A is not satisfied, a community meeting is called to consider all the issues, including the community agreements involved. The group decides whether a violation has occurred, or if a rule or norm may be changed. A “Feedback Meeting” may be called for person B, or B may appeal the group’s decision that a violation has occurred.

The Feedback Meeting - Addressing Conflict

Twin Oaks Community Process Team, 1991

Feedback Meeting - A structured communication for expressing—in as constructive a manner as possible—thoughts and/or feelings on a person's behavior(s), about which there are serious concerns which have not been responsibly addressed by the person(s) for whom the Feedback has been called. A change of behavior expected as a result.

The Feedback meeting is to involve only the members of the community. A Feedback is entirely constructive in intent, and is used only after resolution has been attempted unsatisfactorily in less formal and less public ways. Feedbacks are called in cases where the potential for long-term benefit to the community can be seen, by looking at the situation constructively rather than assuming condemnation.

We advocate a practice of giving feedback based upon subjective experience of another's behavior, not on judgment of the character of the person for whom the Feedback is called, and not for finding "objective" good or evil in a particular behavior.

It is our belief that each member is responsible for keeping open avenues for constructive criticism and for questions about perceived violations of community agreements and norms. The community may aid this responsibility by encouraging informal interpersonal communications which may help to avoid the need for formal Feedback Meetings.

Feedback is "for" the Recipient

A member can ask for a Feedback, or a decision-making body (such as the Membership Team) can do so. A facilitator is usually present, who has already assured that the following has been done:

- A Self-Examination (SERES) has either been done by or rejected by the Feedback recipient.
- Mediation by a neutral person has been tried.
- A decision-making body of the community agrees to the need for, and calls the Feedback meeting.
- A facilitator or the Process Team has formally been asked for assistance and has accepted.
- The person for which the Feedback has been called is directly informed about the issues. The facilitator or Team reviews these issues, and suggests the most constructive and least invasive course of action likely to result in the greatest good for the community.

Feedback Process

- The Feedback recipient is notified of the intent to test for support for a Feedback Meeting, along with information on the behavior to be discussed.
- The facilitator or Process Team informs the community of the planned Feedback Meeting, asking for input on the behavior in question. At least 10% of the membership must be willing to speak at the Feedback. 10 days is given for communication about whether a Feedback is warranted.
- After the posting period the facilitator or Team reviews the input and recommends action (or not) to the community, based upon the degree of concern expressed pro and con, seriousness of issues, and the number of people willing to speak at the Feedback.
- If the community agrees to call the Feedback, a date acceptable to all is set. Every effort is made to encourage the recipient to attend and participate constructively, but once called, the feedback is held whether or not the recipient attends. The recipient is consulted about the format, but the community, facilitator or Team decides among the following:
 - the recipient in a room with those wanting to give feedback (the traditional, preferred format),
 - the recipient chooses one or two liaisons to attend the Feedback and report to the recipient, or the liaisons interview those who supported having a Feedback, and report back to the recipient,
 - the recipient may propose another format for agreement by the community.

The goal is for the recipient to hear the feedback, and to consider and comment on what changes he or she is willing to attempt. The recipient's responses are therefore to be either oral at the Feedback meeting, written later, or given at meetings with individuals, depending upon the format of the Feedback. It is the community's decision on the format for the response. Assistance by the facilitator or Team is offered.

Consequences of the Feedback

If the recipient refuses all proposed formats or a timely response, and the negative behaviors continue, members may continually confront the Feedback recipient. If still no correction, counseling may be required. Expulsion from the community results if the behavior is against the principles of the community as written in the bylaws or membership agreement.

Policy on Sexual Harassment

East Wind Community, 1989

In a society characterized by fairness and mutual respect, sexual harassment has no place. We agree to educate ourselves about sexual harassment, increase our awareness of when it happens, and be vigilant in seeing that it not continue.

Definition

Sexual harassment is defined as any act of a sexual nature directed at another person which that person finds offensive, providing that the person who commits such an act has been informed that the act is considered to be offensive to the recipient.

Acts which are likely to offend:

- A person tries to use some perceived power over another to get them involved in sexual activity (e.g., when a member implies that a visitor should be involved sexually with co or others in order to be accepted by the group).
- Obscene advances, including words, jokes, gestures, actions or unwanted touching. What is considered obscene will vary from person to person.
- Staring at or following someone uninvited. This is not only irritating, but can be demeaning or even very threatening.
- Repeated sexual advances, when the recipient has made it clear through words or behavior that they are not interested in the person's company.
- Ridicule of another person's sexual orientation.

Responses to Sexual Harassment

A person who has been the victim of sexual harassment may in some cases feel able to talk directly with the offender about it and resolve the issue. If not, a third party may be called to:

- communicate the perceived offense to the accused person,
- obtain the accused offender's perception of the event(s) in question, and

- assure that the accused understands the community's policy on sexual harassment.

Based on the results of communication with the two parties by a third party, the latter may recommend one or more of the following:

- no further action; assurance from the individual that co intends to abide by the community policy may suffice,
- facilitated discussion involving both parties,
- voluntary behavior contract, in which the individual agrees to abide by the community policy, and accept specific consequences if co breaks the contract, such as leaving the community for a period of time, or permanently,
- community-wide concerns meeting (such as the Feedback Meeting), or
- resolution by Community Meeting instructing the offender to leave the community.

Proactive Suggestions

In a more general, preventive approach, the community may arrange for forums and workshops on sexual harassment and related matters. Support groups, either gender-specific or mixed, can be helpful in raising our consciousness about these issues, and in restoring a sense of safety for persons who have suffered demeaning or frightening experiences.

It is the responsibility of all of us to work for a nonsexist, no-violent, caring society.

Resources

Meeting Process, Facilitation and Conflict Resolution

New Society Publishers (NSP)-Box 189, Gabriola Is., British Columbia, Canada, V0R 1X0 250-247-9737 Fax: 250-247-7471 www.newsociety.com 800-567-6772 info@newsociety.com

Resource Manual for a Living Revolution, Virginia Coover, Ellen Deacon, Charles Esser & Christopher Moore, \$11.00. *Facilitator's Guide to Participatory Decision-Making*, Sam Kaner, \$24.95. *The Mediator's Handbook*, Jennifer Beer, \$19.95.

Community Bookshelf, Fellowship for Intentional Community, www.ic.org *Building United Judgment: A Handbook for Consensus Decision Making*, 124 pp., 1981 *A Manual for Group Facilitators*, 88 pp.

The Center for Nonviolent Communication www.cnvc.org Search under "Compassionate Communication" for many regional centers.

The Art of Consensus Building, Michael Doyle & Associates, 906B Union St., San Francisco, CA 94133 (415)441-0696, 1988

On Conflict and Consensus: A handbook on Formal Consensus Decision-Making, C.T. Lawrence Butler and Amy Rothstein, Food Not Bombs Publ., Rm. 306-35, 1430 Massachusetts Ave., Cambridge, MA 02138 (617)864-8786. Website for Formal Consensus: <http://boutell.com/~ciel/ocac.html> and in more detail at another site <http://www.qvctc.commnet.edu/classes/conflict/weeks.html> Try also: <http://www.tiac.net/users/amyr/OCAC.html>

Institute for Cultural Affairs-1504 25th Ave., Seattle, WA 98122 (206)323-2100. Also: 4750 N. Sheridan Rd., Chicago, IL 60640; 312-769-6393. Active in 35 countries. Initiatives newsletter. Services: Strategic planning, facilitation training, retreats. Technology of Participation (ToP): "Basic Methods of Group Facilitation" & "Basic Strategic Planning Process." International Association of Facilitators is an ICA offshoot: *Winning Through Participation*, Laura Spencer, \$29.95. www.icaworld.org

Commitment and Community: Communes and Utopias in Sociological Perspective. Rosabeth Moss Kaner. 1972. Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

Kevin Wolf & Associates-724 N Street, Davis, CA 95616 kjwolf@dcn.davis.ca.us 530-758-4211 Fax: 530-758-2338 www.wolfandassociates.com Has a meeting manual: www.dcn.davis.ca.us/go/kjwolf/ Discusses facilitation from the differences between the mechanistic and spiritual approaches. The author is a physicist turned facilitator who's philosophy is that people and groups are self organizing systems.

A Model for Nonviolent Communication, Marshall Rosenberg • *The Ways of Peace*, Gray Cox, Paulist Press, 1986 • *Radical Honesty*, Brad Blanton, radicalhonesty.com • *Giving and Receiving Feedback*, Patti Hathaway • *Open Space Technology: A User's Guide*, Harrison Owen • *The Art of Facilitation: How to Create Group Synergy*, Dale Hunter, Anne Bailey & Bill Taylor, 1992 • *Coming Back to Life: Practices to Reconnect Our Lives, Our World*, Joanna Macy & Molly Young Brown • *Nonviolent Communication: A Language of Compassion*, Marshall Rosenberg • *The Zen of Groups*, Dale Hunter, Bailey & Taylor • *Democracy in Small Groups: Participation, Decision Making and Communication*, John Gastil, 1993 • *Getting to Yes: Negotiating Agreement Without Giving In*, Roger Fisher & William Ury, Harvard Negotiation Project, 1981 • *Getting Past No*, William Ury, Bantam, 1991 • *Warriors of the Heart*, Danaan Parry, Sunstone Publications, 1989 • *The Practical Negotiator*, William Zartman & Maureen Berman, Yale Univ. Press, 1982 • *Win-Win Negotiating: Turning Conflict into Agreement*, Fred Jandt & Paul Gillette, Wiley & Sons 1985 • *Sitting in the Fire: Large Group Transformation Using Conflict and Diversity*, Arnold Mindell, Lao Tse Press, 1995 • *Facilitator's Guide to Participatory Decision-Making*, Sam Kaner, 1996 • *Great Meetings! How to Facilitate Like a Pro*, Dee Kelsey & Pam Plumb, Hanson Park Press, 1997.

Audio Tapes by Facilitation Trainers

"Community and Consensus, Parts I & II," Caroline Estes, "Introduction to Consensus," Laird Schaub, "Introduction to Facilitation," Laird Schaub, "Problems and Issues in Consensus Facilitation," Laird Schaub & Betty Didcoct, Audio tape: Celebration, P.O.Box 814, Langley, WA 98260, \$8.50 + \$1 post.

Consultants

International Association of Facilitators (IAF)
Sponsors annual conferences, and a journal. 7630 W.
145th St., Suite 202, St. Paul, MN 55124; 612-891-
3541 iafoffice@igc.apc.org www.iaf-world.org

Growing Community Associates-POBox 5415,
Berkeley, CA 94705 (510) 869-4878. Workshops,
trainings, consultations to increase individual & group
effectiveness, Carolyn Shaffer & Sandra Lewis

Pattern Research, "Consider us your personal
thinktank," Leif Smith and Pat Wagner, POBox 9100,
Denver CO 80209-0100 (303)778-0880 fax: 722-
2680 www.pattern.com leif@pattern.com

Stephan Brown, 303 Hardister, Cloverdale, CA
95425 (707)894-4502. Community building and
legal consultant.

Positive Futures, Will Keepin, 815A, Viejo Rastrow,
Santa Fe, NM 87505 (505) 984-0641.

Groody, Hoewing and Assoc., 3712 Keowee Ave.
Suite C, Knoxville, TN 37919 (615) 525-7376.
Building Community workshops.

Tom Atlee, <http://www.co-intelligence.org/P-dynamicfacilitation.html>

Consensus Facilitation Trainers

Fellowship for Intentional Community's Process
Consultant Clearinghouse, lists 24 consultants.
<http://fic.ic.org/process.html>

- Alpha Institute, Caroline Estes and Lysbeth Borie,
Deadwood, OR 97430 alinst@pioneer.net
www.pioneer.net/~alpha/ai-info.html 503-964-5102
- CANBRIDGE-Consensus & Network Building for
Resolving Impasse, Developing Group Effectiveness,
Rt.1, Box 155, Rutledge, MO 63563 (816) 883-5543.
Laird@ic.org
- Rob Sandelin, The Facilitators Art, 22110 East Lost
Lake Rd., Snohomish, WA 98296.
- The Tree Group - Tree Bressen, 1680 Walnut Street
Eugene, Oregon 97403, 541-484-1156 tree@ic.org

Articles

"Making Decisions and Governing," Carolyn Shaffer
& Kristin Anundsen, *Creating Community Anywhere*,
1993, Tarcher.

"Collaborative Decision Making," Joel David Welty,
Communities Magazine, No. 80/81 Sprg/Smr, 1993.

ACT-UP New York, Civil Disobedience Handbook
[www.actupny.org/documents/CDdocuments/
Consensus.html](http://www.actupny.org/documents/CDdocuments/Consensus.html)

Reclaiming Library of Process Articles: Consensus
decisionmaking by Invert, RFD1, Newport ME 04953
www.reclaiming.org/resources/consensus/invert.html
Nonviolent Action and Cooperative Decision-Making
www.vernalproject.org/RPapers.shtml Randy Schutt

"Checklist for Consensus Process," "Notes on
Consensus Decision-Making," Randy Schutt, POB
60922, Palo Alto, CA 94306 (415)917-0224.

Videos

The Alternatives Center-1740 Walnut St., Berkeley,
CA 94709 (510)548-3330. "Planning a Meeting"
(15 min) & "Facilitating a Meeting" (45 min) with
booklets, includes exercises. \$75 co-ops, \$150 retail.

Center for Conflict Resolution, 731 State Street,
Madison, Wisconsin 53703 (608) 255-0479. Contact
for list of resources.

Alternative Dispute Resolution

*Community Dispute Resolution Manual: Insights
and Guidance from Two Decades of Practice*, The
National Institute for Dispute Resolution, 1901 L St.,
NW, Suite 600, Wash., D.C. 20036 (202)466-4764.

Dispute Resolution Training Manual, Conciliation
Forums of Oakland, 672 13th St., Oakland, CA 94612
(510)763-2117.

"The Face-to-Face Program," Community Alterna-
tives, Inc., 5606 S. Court Place, Littleton, CO 80120
(303)794-3224. (Victims & offenders.)

The Community Boards Program," 149 Ninth St., San
Francisco, CA 94103 (415)552-1250.

Center for Resourceful Mediation-1158 High St.,
Suite 202, Eugene, OR 97401 (503)345-1205.
"Agree" computer mediation prgrm.

Society of Professionals in Dispute Resolution
(SPIDR)-815 15th St., NW, Suite 530, Washington,
D.C., 20005 (202)833-2188.

Definitions for Communitarian Terms

Community—a group of people sharing any common identity or characteristic, whether geographic, economic, political, spiritual, cultural, psychological.

Communitarianism—the idea and practice of mutual responsibility by members of a society.

Circumstantial Community—a group of people living in proximity by chance, such as in a city, neighborhood or village, the residents of which may or may not individually choose to be active participants in the pre-existing association.

Intentional Community—a fellowship of individuals and families practicing common agreement and collective action.

Either circumstantial or intentional community can function as the other. Example: an intentional community may abandon its common agreements, causing the people to drift apart, or a town may pull together in collective action to respond to a common threat.

Intentional Community - Contemporary Culture

As many intentional communities are created in response to problems perceived in the larger culture, these may be seen as small-scale, experimental societies, developing innovations such as in architecture and land use, governance, family and relationships, and other aspects of culture that may provide viable alternatives to the global consumerist society.

As crucibles-of-culture, intentional communities tend to attract many of the new and hopeful ideas of the day, develop them in living, small-scale societies into useful innovations, and then model successful adaptations of these ideas to the outside world.

Although some intentional communities become very doctrinaire, closed societies, frozen in time like many Catholic monasteries and Hutterite Colonies, others are open, encouraging an ongoing exchange with the larger culture. Open communities like cohousing, ecovillages and egalitarian societies provide insights into the direction of the larger society through their successful cultural innovations.

In this way, intentional community serves to anticipate, reflect and quicken social change.

Classifications of Communitarianism

Classifications compare socio-cultural factors in different communities. A relative measure, such as a continuum, presents a range of different approaches to particular issues. Examples: governmental forms may range from authoritarian to democratic to consensus-based decision-making processes, and economic processes may range from common to private ownership, with mixed-system or economic-diversity between. Examples of descriptive terms: activist community, Christian, ecovillage, cohousing.

Pluralist-to-Unified Beliefs Continuum

Beliefs include spirituality, religion and philosophy, but not economic processes. Thus, very different belief structures (and political structures) can have the same economic system. The belief structures of “Pluralism” and of “Few Common Beliefs,” may use either consensus or democratic decision-making processes. Communities with uniform beliefs often have authoritarian governments.

1. Pluralist Belief Structure—Secular; Open society; Inclusive; Integrationist; Expressed individuality; Participatory. Examples: cohousing, land trust, egalitarian community.
2. Few Common Beliefs—Group has a shared belief but is tolerant of differences. Ex. ecovillages (ecology), Kibbutz Artzi (Zionism).
3. Unified Belief Structure—Dogmatic; Closed/Class society; Exclusive; Isolationist; Suppressed individuality; Authoritarian. Examples: monasteries, Hutterites, Kibbutz Dati (Zionism/Judism).

Waves of Communitarianism

- 1st Wave—1600s and 1700s, spiritual and authoritarian German/Swiss Pietist and English Separatist.
- 2nd Wave—crested with the 1840s secular: Anarchist Socialist, Associationist, Mutualist Cooperative, Owenite, Perfectionist, Christian Socialist, Adventist.
- 3rd Wave—1890s (50 years later) Hutterite, Mennonite, Amish, and Georgist single-tax colonies.
- 4th Wave—1930s (40 years later) New Deal Green-Belt Towns, Catholic Worker, Emissaries of Divine Light, School of Living.
- 5th Wave—1960s and 70s (30 years later) peace, ecology, feminism, back-to-the-land, egalitarian.
- 6th Wave—1990s (20 years later) cohousing, ecovillages, various networks founded or expanded.
- 7th Wave—2000s (10 years later) What next?!

Phases of Community Development

From: Carolyn R. Shaffer & Kristin Anundsen, *Creating Community Anywhere: Finding Support and Connection in a Fragmented World*, 1993 (Jeremy P. Tharcher/Perigee: New York, NY), pp 210

M. Scott Peck <i>The Different Drummer</i>	Pseudo-Community	Chaos		Emptiness ———— Community	
Kay & Floyd Tift <i>Community Consultants</i>	Spring / Childhood	Summer / Adolescence	Autumn / Adulthood	Winter / Golden Age	
Susan Campbell <i>The Couple's Journey: Intimacy as a Path to Wholeness</i>	Romance	Power Struggle	Stability	Commitment ———— Co-Creation	
Carolyn Shaffer, Kristin Anundsen <i>Creating Community Anywhere</i>	Excitement: Getting High on Possibilities	Autonomy: Jockeying for Power	Stability: Settling into Roles and Structures	Synergy: Allowing Self and Group to Mutually Unfold	Transformation: Expanding, Segmenting, or Disbanding

Political Economy — The Ownership / Control Matrix

A Political-Economic Classification Structure for Intentional Community

From: <i>Classifications of Communalism</i> , A. Allen Butcher	Communal Common Ownership of Wealth or Shared Common Property	Mixed Ownership - Economically Diverse Some Income Sharing or Some Common Property	Collective Private Ownership of Wealth or Shared Private Property
Participatory and Decentralist Control of Wealth (Consensus & Win-Win Processes)	Egalitarian Communalism - Communal with consensus governance, income sharing, time-based economies	Egalitarian Commonwealth - Participatory with mixed economy (land-value tax, some tribal cultures)	Egalitarian Collectivism - Private property may be shared, or nonprofits may revert to private.
Mixed Political Systems (Majority-Rule and Win-Lose Processes)	Democratic Communalism - Common ownership with democracy (some socialism, Israeli Kibbutz)	Democratic Commonwealth - Mix of tax-exempt org. & for-profit. Some "capitalist" & some "socialist" countries	Economic Democracy - Private equity ownership with majority-rule. (e.g., cooperatives, employee ownership.)
Authoritarian and Centralist Control of Wealth	Totalitarianism State, party or corporate control of economy and government.	Aristocracy, Autocracy, Despotism, Dictatorship, Feudalism, Monarchy, Oligarcy, Theocracy, etc.	Plutocratic Capitalism - For-profit corporations, decision-making based on stock ownership

Fourth World Services

Providing information for a lifestyle
balancing our personal needs
with those of society and nature.

4thWorld@consultant.com

A. Allen Butcher
PO Box 1666
Denver, CO 80201



Fourth World — This term is used:

- In political/economic theory as any decentralized, self-governed society maintaining a locally based economy.
- By the United Nations for the least developed countries.
- In Hopi prophecy as our current era of environmental decline.

Fourth World Services provides information necessary for the building of a lifestyle which respects the integrity of the natural world, which supports the development of a socially responsible culture, and which affirms the inherent worth and dignity of every person.



Fourth World Services, P.O. Box 1666, Denver, CO 80201-1666 (303) 355-4501