

Building Regenerative Communities: Strength in Collaboration

A Conversation and Resource Guide

To assist community groups to shape vital conversations and
discuss resource sharing to address community renewal

A collaborative project sponsored by

Mid-States Shared Gifting Program of RSF Social Finance

Great Lakes Region of AWSNA (Association of Waldorf Schools of North America)

Central Regional Council of the Anthroposophical Society

edited by

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This resource guide was funded through the generosity of the Mid-States Shared Gifting Fund and program of RSF Social Finance. This fund has been actively supporting the furtherance of Rudolf Steiner's work in the mid-states region over the last thirty plus years, and is now trying to rebuild in order deepen associative economic activity. If you appreciate this guide, made available for free, please consider making a gift to the Mid-States Shared Gifting Fund at RSF Social Finance. Follow this link: <http://www.rsfsocialfinance.org/donate-now/> and thank you for your support.

Introduction: Genesis of This Guide

In November 2010 the idea for the collaboration behind this Conversation and Resource Guide developed at the Waldorf Schools Fund Sharing Group meeting. Since 1984 this group has met to study issues of economics, social development and money, and to engage in a unique relationship-based philanthropy to support the member schools. These activities foster mutual support and collaboration among peer organizations and develop associative endeavors between them. The group selects one or more recipients for an annual grant, which is provided by the Mid-States Shared Gifting Program of RSF Social Finance.

Discussions at that 2010 meeting centered on the financial and social challenges Waldorf schools face in light of the world financial changes that have been taking place since autumn 2008. How are we to meet these challenges? We were aware that it was becoming more difficult to simply “sustain” the schools from within. The same was true for other nonprofit organizations.

We also heard a report about a conference, “The Economics of Peace: Transforming Money, Rebuilding Community, Redefining Wealth,” that took place in Sonoma, California, in October 2009, sponsored by Praxis Peace Institute and RFS Social Finance. The vision of that conference—collaborative business practices that are working to address social and economic concerns—inspired the idea of organizing a conference to seed new economic thought and resource sharing, moving the activity of our group out to a wider public.

Questions we asked: Could Rudolf Steiner’s ideas for the renewal of social life stimulate creative new approaches to our resource needs? Could the Schools Fund Sharing Group facilitate a conference or a series of meetings where the focus would be to meet our potential partners, people with similar concerns, needs and perhaps resources to exchange or build upon? As serendipity would have it, groups were represented in that meeting which formed a natural starting point for a conversation on these topics, including the advisers of the Mid-States Shared Gifting Program of RSF Social Finance—the group that has granted funds to all of these organizations. Thus, a partnership between the Schools Fund Sharing Group (SFSG), the Central Regional Council of the Anthroposophical Council (CRC), the Association of Waldorf Schools of North America (AWSNA) and RSF Social Finance was born which led to the February 2012 conference, “Straight From the Heart(land): Building Regenerative Communities,” and the development of this guide. (See Appendix.)

Our intention in creating this guide is to facilitate continuing the conversations that were begun in seed form during the Fund Sharing Group's conversations; during the CRC's annual meeting in May 2011 in Ann Arbor, titled "Currency, Community and Culture: Beginning the Conversation"; and in workshops and presentations at the February 2012 conference. It is meant to be a supportive tool for any group, branch, school or initiative as they attempt to host enlivened social discourse and self-education opportunities on associative economics, Steiner's threefold social principles, regenerative communities and ecology-based economics, among other topics.

Such dialogue may demand new ways of working in groups. It may require deeper dialogue and coming to an *understanding rather than answers* through conversation. This guide is formatted to initiate simple, honest, human conversation. We pose questions to get people talking. More elements to these conversations may be discovered and can be explored as you work with it. The primary goal is to provide an initial framework to build confidence and some skill toward creating a safe, open space in which to exchange ideas.

Themes: We based this guide on the themes from the "Straight From the Heart(land)" conference. Additional articles and quotes from books not included as part of the conference are referenced because they are pertinent to the basic themes and widened the circle of input in a healthy way. We created some activities for certain themes in an effort to "bring the theme into action." It is clear that if we take up an activity on specific content it has a much greater chance of becoming a part of who we are and how we relate to the world around us.

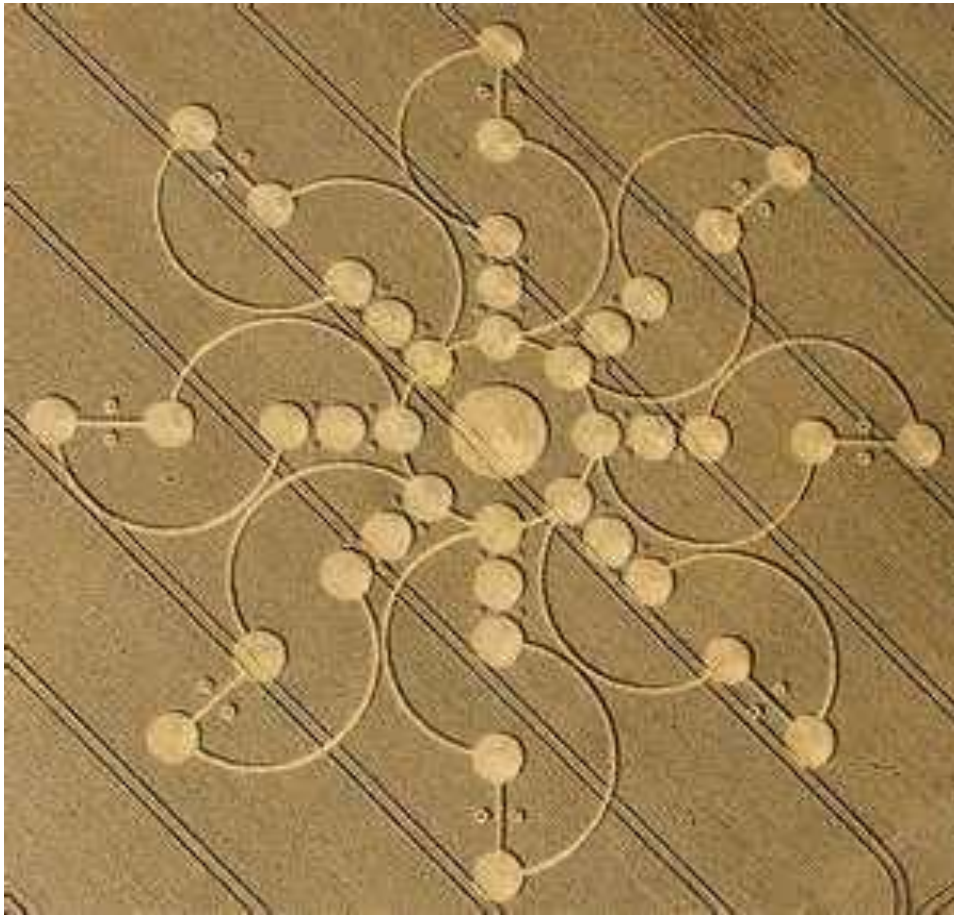
We encourage you to refer to the periodical resources that we drew from to complete this guide. They continue to put out amazing publications and thought-provoking content that can stimulate discourse.

We are grateful to the Mid-States Shared Gifting Program of RSF Social Finance, AWSNA, CRC, Anthroposophical Society. We also owe deep gratitude to all those who contributed to the conference and to the texts referenced in this guide.

Enjoy the conversations.

Mary Christenson and Marianne Fieber, co-editors
June 2014

**Calling the Conversation:
How to Use this Conversation
and
Resource Guide**



Using This Guide

There are no shoulds, oughts or musts in using this Conversation and Resource Guide. As was stated in the Introduction, the goal for this collection of thoughts and ideas is to provide some structure and confidence for any person or group wishing to call people together for a conversation around these topics. Engaging in dialogue has the power to transform our thinking and perhaps spur follow-up action for the good of humanity and the world in which we live.

This Guide is made up of seven primary parts. Parts II through V are devoted to specific topic areas and include a series of case studies that can be used to seed a conversation. Each is self-contained and can be used on its own. Choose something that is interesting to your group, read the introductory text, and then dive into the questions and see where it takes you.

If your group is committed to more than one meeting, you may choose to move through an entire section or choose one case study per meeting on which to base your conversations. You may want to address more than one case within a single meeting, depending on how engaged your group is and how deeply you wish to work. Although you may also consider using this Guide as a “self-study,” we believe that engaging these topics in discussion with others is more conducive to community building.

Additional exercises and activities follow some of the sections. The exercises and activities have been designed to deepen your engagement of the broader topic by bringing thoughts into action.

Part I provides a variety of examples of tools for setting up conversations. Tips and strategies are offered for you to create the most open, clear and safe space possible into which participants may speak. Links for different conversational approaches are included to help deepen your understanding of how each method may serve to bring structure to your conversation or dialogue.

Parts II through V provide case studies for discussion on various topics.

Part VI includes examples of different types of projects and activities that have already been imagined and undertaken towards creating conscious communities. There are many others but this is a sampling and may provide you and your group with inspiration to develop your own or support the work of others committed to regenerating society.

Part VII lists a variety of additional resources that may be of interest to deepen your understanding of the topics included in this Guide. They may lead you to further ideas, activities and insights.

Getting Started

- Invite friends, colleagues, working partners or put up a public notice.
- Call a meeting by determining a date, time and location.
- Determine the length of your meeting — 1½ to 2 hours is most productive.
- Determine whether you plan to develop a series or if this will be a single conversation.
- Set some ground rules for conversation (see the following conversation guidelines).
- Choose your topic(s) and case(s) from this Conversation and Resource Guide.
- Have everyone read the leading thoughts for the case either silently or aloud as a group.
- Open the dialogue with any questions that arise directly from the written text.
- Continue the conversation with the discussion questions that follow the case.
- Feel free to go where the conversation wants to go.
- Refer back to the text if needed.
- Consider engaging in the additional exercises or activities offered at the end of some sections or develop projects coming out of your group.

Have fun and meet one another with openness and interest.

Share your insights freely and create your own conscious community of researchers.

~Mary Christenson and Marianne Fieber

Conversation Guidelines

Facilitating conversations is a social art. Everyone present needs to feel safe and able to contribute as they wish without fear of either overt or subtle judgments from other participants. The following are helpful social qualities to review prior to beginning each conversation. Each supports a harmonious yet dynamic conversation which allows for everyone's point of view. Read them aloud as you begin.

- Open-mindedness: Listen to and respect all points of view.
- Acceptance: Suspend judgment as best you can.
- Curiosity: Seek to understand rather than persuade.
- Discovery: Question assumptions, look for new insights.
- Sincerity: Speak from your heart and personal experience.
- Brevity: Go for honesty and depth but don't go on and on.

Also keep in mind **active listening**:

- Hear what others have to say.
- Share when you have something to add.
- Avoid composing your contribution while another person is speaking

Other Tips

You may choose to open and close the conversation with an appropriate and/or inspirational quote, poem or verse. There are several scattered throughout the guide.

If the participants assembled do not know one another, have a round of introductions where each person gives their name and perhaps a brief statement about why they were drawn to such a conversation.

Identify someone in the group as a facilitator who calls the group back to order when needed to honor the conversation guidelines.

Sharing food or refreshments as part of the gathering is attractive and feeds the social gesture of the meeting. Consider offering tea, coffee and something to nibble.

Personal Readiness

We recommend that each participant become familiar with and practice the Five Agreements outlined by Don Miguel Ruiz:

1. **Be impeccable with your word.**
Speak with integrity. Say only what you mean. Avoid using the word to speak against yourself or to gossip about others. Use the power of your word in the direction of truth and love.
2. **Don't take anything personally.**
Nothing others do is because of you. What others say and do is a projection of their own reality, their own dream. When you are immune to the opinions and actions of others, you won't be the victim of needless suffering.
3. **Don't make assumptions.**
Find the courage to ask questions and to express what you really want. Communicate with others as clearly as you can to avoid misunderstandings, sadness, and drama. With just this one agreement, you can completely transform your life.
4. **Always do your best.**
Your best is going to change from moment to moment; it will be different when you are tired as opposed to well rested. Under any circumstance, simply do your best, and you will avoid self-judgment, self-abuse, and regret.
5. **Be skeptical, but learn to listen.**
Don't believe yourself or anybody else. Use the power of doubt to question everything you hear: Is it really the truth? Listen to the intent behind the words, and you will understand the real message.

As Don Miguel Ruiz says, "By practicing the Five Agreements, what you are really doing is respecting everything in creation. You are respecting your dream; you are respecting everybody else's dream. If you use these tools, your effort is really for everyone, because your joy, your happiness, your peace, and your heaven are contagious. When you are happy, the people around you are happy too, and it inspires them to change their own world."

~ Marianne Fieber

Reference

[The Five Agreements by Don Miguel Ruiz « Waking Giant Blog,](http://wakinggiant.wordpress.com/2010/01/17/the-five-agreements-by-don-miguel-ruiz/)
<http://wakinggiant.wordpress.com/2010/01/17/the-five-agreements-by-don-miguel-ruiz/>

Part I:

Introduction to Conversation Tools

Bright Moments, Brilliant Corners

--Louis Alemayehu

Here I am
Bright moment
In a brilliant corner
Sometimes I'm surrounded by the light.
 Ignited by the fire,
Sometimes, sometimes
 Despite the material conditions of the world,
 The physical conditions of my life
The Creator reminds me
 Of the sacredness of each atom
 Of each molecule
 Of each rock, plant, drop, flicker, creature, being
The Creator despite my agony,
 Constriction,
 Distance from,
 Awareness of,
 My true self in any timeless moment says, "It doesn't matter child!"
Whispers fiercely into my numb ears:
 Hey look! Dear one, precious one,
 The Inner Mounting Flame is right there! The Allwhere holiness is
Righteousness, is right there in my storm,
 In my whirlwinds
 In the placid breathing of a crib cradled baby
 In an adolescent's bored sigh, in the old wary one's cry
 In the toddler's rage, YES! Right there!!
Right there!
In the corner where you are.
ALONE? HA!

PeerSpirit

The circle, or council, is an ancient form of meeting that has gathered human beings into respectful conversation for thousands of years and is the basis for PeerSpirit Circles. The name of this process contains two elements: “peer” implies that each member of a circle shares responsibility and leadership, regardless of their position or social status outside the circle; and “spirit” indicates that putting purpose in the center invites emergent wisdom and action that rises directly from collective synergy.

Several actions set this modern circle in motion. Participants are called by an invitation that clarifies the intention. A circle host welcomes people, followed by a round of check-in so that every voice is heard. People respect agreements that define how individuals treat each other. Topic and intention guide the conversation and action.

Three Guiding Principles:

The circle is an all-leader group.

1. **Leadership rotates** among all circle members.
2. **Responsibility is shared** for the quality of experience.
3. **Reliance is on wholeness**, rather than on any personal agenda.

Circle practiced in this way is a foundational practice that is embedded within World Café, Pro Action Café, Dialogue and other hosting methodologies.

The link below will take you to further explanations and basic guidelines about PeerSpirit.

<http://www.peerspirit.com>

~Mary Christenson

Open Space

This is an open form of meeting where passion and responsibility are combined to empower participants by allowing agenda topics to arise from the group. A facilitator is only visible when the meeting needs re-opening. There are a series of laws or principles to consider with an “open space” meeting. Two of these are:

- The law of two feet: If you find yourself in a situation where you are neither learning nor contributing, move somewhere where you can. This is a law like the law of gravity. You can choose to notice it or not, but it's safer just to notice it.
- The four principles: Whoever comes are the right people; whatever happens is the only thing that could have happened; when it starts is the right time; and when it's over, it's over. These aren't prescriptive—they are the results of thousands of little experiments.

The link below will take you to further explanations about Open Space.

<http://www.openspaceworld.org/cgi/wiki.cgi?OpenSpaceExplanations>

~Marianne Fieber

The World Café

Using seven design principles and a simple method, the World Café is a powerful social technology for engaging people in conversations that matter, offering an effective antidote to the fast-paced fragmentation and lack of connection in today's world. This approach to conversation creates several smaller, intimate groups within a larger group to discuss one question, thereby giving more people an opportunity to dialogue.

Based on the understanding that conversation is the core process that drives personal, business, and organizational life, the World Café is more than a method, process or technique. It's a way of thinking and being together sourced in a philosophy of conversational leadership.

<http://www.theworldcafe.com/tools.html>

Free Resource: Café To Go

This is a quick reference guide to help you get started with the World Café. Open and print it to keep at your fingertips when you choose to employ this style of conversation.

<http://www.theworldcafe.com/pdfs/cafetogo.pdf>

~Marianne Fieber

The Art of Focused Conversation

The Art of Focused Conversation is a useful tool to help people process presented information or reach thoughtful conclusions. There is no “authority” on a topic during a “Focused Conversation”; rather, the wisdom or solution comes from the group. The facilitator prepares and presents questions to the group in a specific order, moving through the four levels of thinking. In order to encourage participation by everyone, the first round of responses is best done by having everyone speak in order around the circle. This method of a “go around” can then be opened up into a more casual or “popcorn” style of sharing. It is important that each contribution to the conversation is allowed to be in the space without judgment from other participants. It is essential to hear each person speak their truth into the circle.

The Focused Conversation method moves through four levels of thinking:

- ↓ *Objective*: dealing with data and sensory observation.
- ↓ *Reflective*: related to personal reactions and associations.
- ↓ *Interpretive*: about meaning, significance and implications.
- ↓ *Decisional*: concerned with resolution.

The Focused Conversation method has the potential to

- a) extend **thinking** and learning capacity.
- b) make **learning** meaningful.
- c) make **communications** in groups effective.
- d) help prevent and **solve problems**.
- e) strengthen the effectiveness of **evaluation**.

Focused Conversation Resources

<http://cct.wikispaces.umb.edu/FocusedConversation>

http://www.wasb.org/websites/gold/File/art_of_focused_conversation_table.pdf

http://www.clevelandconsultinggroup.com/pdfs/focused_conversation-1.pdf

~Marianne Fieber

Theory U

by Otto Scharmer

Using his experience working with some of the world's most accomplished leaders and innovators, Otto Scharmer shows in his book, *Theory U*, how groups and organizations can develop seven leadership capacities in order to create a future that would not otherwise be possible.

Tapping Our Collective Capacity

We live in a time of massive institutional failure, collectively creating results that nobody wants. Climate change. AIDS. Hunger. Poverty. Violence. Terrorism. Destruction of communities, nature, life — the foundations of our social, economic, ecological, and spiritual well being. This time calls for a new consciousness and a new collective leadership capacity to meet challenges in a more conscious, intentional, and strategic way. The development of such a capacity would allow us to create a future of greater possibilities.

Illuminating the Blind Spot

Why do our attempts to deal with the challenges of our time so often fail? Why are we stuck in so many quagmires today? The cause of our collective failure is that we are blind to the deeper dimension of leadership and transformational change. This "blind spot" exists not only in our collective leadership but also in our everyday social interactions. We are blind to the source dimension from which effective leadership and social action come into being. We know a great deal about what leaders do and how they do it. But we know very little about the inner place, the source from which they operate. And it is this source that Theory U attempts to explore.

The U: One Process, Five Movements

When leaders develop the capacity to come near to that source, they experience the future as if it were "wanting to be born" — an experience called "presencing." That experience often carries with it ideas for meeting challenges and for bringing into being an otherwise impossible future. Theory U shows how that capacity for presencing can be developed.

Presencing is a journey with five movements, depicted in the shape of the letter U. We move down one side of the U (connecting us to the world that is outside of our institutional bubble) to the bottom of the U (connecting us to the world that emerges from within) and up the other side of the U (bringing forth the new into the world). On that journey, at the bottom of the U, lies an inner gate that requires us to drop everything that isn't essential. This process of letting-go (of our old ego and self) and letting-come (our highest future possibility: our Self) establishes a subtle connection to a deeper source of knowing. The essence of presencing is that these two selves — our current self and our best future Self — meet at the bottom of the U and begin to listen and resonate with each other. Once a group crosses this threshold, nothing remains the same. Individual members and the group as a whole begin to operate with a heightened level of energy and sense of future possibility. Often they then begin to function as an intentional vehicle for an emerging future.

Seven Theory U Leadership Capacities

The journey through the U develops seven essential leadership capacities:

1. **Holding the space of listening.** The foundational capacity of the U is listening. Listening to others. Listening to oneself. And listening to what emerges from the collective. Effective listening requires the creation of open space in which others can contribute to the whole.
2. **Observing.** The capacity to suspend the "voice of judgment" is key to moving from projection to true observation.
3. **Sensing.** The preparation for the experience at the bottom of the U — presencing — requires the tuning of three instruments: the open mind, the open heart, and the open will. This opening process is not passive but an active "sensing" together as a group. While an open heart allows us to see a situation from the whole, the open will enables us to begin to act from the emerging whole.
4. **Presencing.** The capacity to connect to the deepest source of self and will allows the future to emerge from the whole rather than from a smaller part or special interest group.
5. **Crystallizing.** When a small group of key persons commits itself to the purpose and outcomes of a project, the power of their intention creates an energy field that attracts people, opportunities, and resources that make things happen. This core group functions as a vehicle for the whole to manifest.
6. **Prototyping.** Moving down the left side of the U requires the group to open up and deal with the resistance of thought, emotion, and will; moving up the right side requires the integration of thinking, feeling, and will in the context of practical applications and learning by doing.
7. **Performing.** A prominent violinist once said that he couldn't simply play his violin in Chartres Cathedral; he had to "play" the entire space, what he called the "macro violin," in order to do justice to both the space and the music. Likewise, organizations need to perform at this macro level: they need to convene the right sets of players (frontline people who are connected through the same value chain) and to engage a social technology that allows a multi-stakeholder gathering to shift from debating to co-creating the new.

Theory U Encourages You to Step into the Emerging Future.

Examples of these seven Theory U leadership capacities can be found in a number of multi-stakeholder innovations and corporate applications. The Presencing Institute is dedicated to developing these new social technologies by integrating science, consciousness, and profound social change methodologies.

Reference

Presencing Institute — Executive Summaries: Introducing Theory U
<http://www.presencing.com/node/110>

Biography Work

by Leah Walker

A New Discipline

Biography work was first developed in Europe in the 1970s based on a picture of human development given by Rudolf Steiner early in the twentieth century. Steiner described physical, soul, and spiritual development from birth to death in great detail and included, as a significant aspect of the whole human being, further spiritual growth after death. Steiner knew that in our time, understanding between individuals would become increasingly difficult and eventually rare. He argued that future social understanding would arise from the study of human development—biography work—and initially described it in this way:

As many descriptions as possible of how human beings develop—what I would call the positive natural history of individual human development—must be disseminated in an understanding way. Wherever we can, we should describe how this or that person developed. We should be able to give a loving account of human development, as we have observed it. The study of life is needed, the will to an understanding of life...

Biography work is the exploration of our lives through images. It is not about explaining ourselves or waxing philosophical about what it all means or theorizing or analyzing, but rather it is the practice of describing what actually happened to the best of our memory. Great speakers and teachers know the value of story; they know a living example allows a listener to “live into” an experience—a picture’s worth a thousand words. We can learn to “listen” to the story of our own journey. With practice, objectivity develops—a great gift of biography work—and we begin to see in our individual lives the universal human.

Interest in the Other

Paradoxically, working with our own biography draws us closer to others. As Gertrude Reif Hughes puts it, “I can use my selfhood to understand yours.” We suddenly find ourselves saying, “Tell me what you experienced” and, if we are able to pay attention, we soon become interested; out of interest grows understanding; and that which we understand, we love. We long to connect—with ourselves and each other. We need desperately to remember what it is to be human, to come to know how human life unfolds. Such “study” will foster empathy among us. Biography work, then, is eminently practical. A group that allows time for building understanding among individuals generates goodness.

In talking about what you think, feel and do, try to work with real, concrete examples—actual events and experiences—from your biography.

A Charge

We can strive to be like the sun: fire radiating light. Or, put another way: we can strive to embody enthusiasm. We “shine” on one another when we offer our open and concentrated, warm and awake interest.

*Just as the sun blesses the plants with its light,
so do we bless one another when we love. —Rudolf Steiner*

A Suggestion

In her lovely poem entitled “Gratitude” Mary Oliver asks a number of questions. You may wish to find a copy (published in the collection *What Do We Know*) and use her questions creatively in your group: use one or more of the questions to open a meeting—to reconnect with one another since you last met; or as a closing activity; or allow the conversation of an entire meeting to arise from the questions.

A Question

Who has shown interest in you, particularly around your work, your gifts and/or your struggles? Describe this person and your first or a very important meeting with him or her in as much detail as possible.

For more on biography work for individuals and groups:

www.morningcallproject.com

For a directory of biography workers of North America and a host of related resources: www.biographysocialart.org

~Leah Walker

The precise need of the future is that the social shall be brought to meet the antisocial in a systematic way. For this there are various inner soul methods. One is that we frequently attempt to look back over our life to survey what has happened to us through our relationships with others.... Our gaze then extends over a multitude of people whom we have known in the course of time. If we try to develop a sense of the debt we owe to this or that person—if we try to see ourselves in the mirror of those who have influenced us in the course of time, and who have been associated with us, then we shall be able to experience the opening up of a new sense in our souls, a sense which enables us to gain a picture of the people whom we meet even in the present, with whom we stand face to face today. This is because we have practiced developing an objective picture of our indebtedness to people....

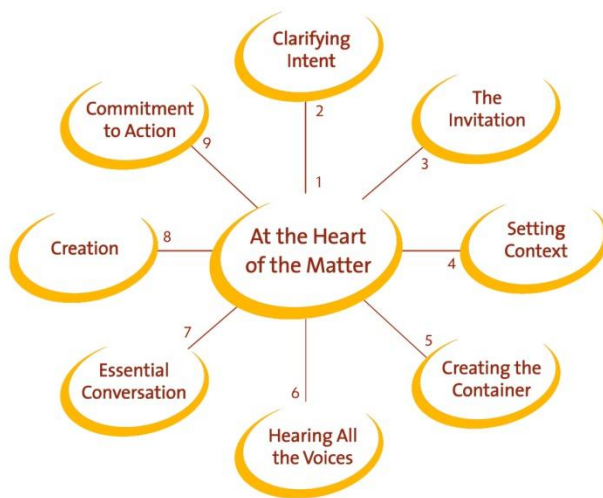
—Rudolf Steiner, from “Social and Anti-Social Forces in the Human Being”

The Art of Convening:

Authentic Engagement in Meetings, Gatherings, and Conversations
by Craig and Patricia Neal with Cynthia Wold

Through the use of a “Convening Wheel” the Art of Convening sets the stage for authentic engagement which is at the heart of meaningful gatherings and conversations. Craig and Patricia Neal explain that authentic engagement is a way of being in relation with one another whereby each person’s truth is honored along with a dedication to listen attentively to what is true for the other.

More than a method or technique toward transformative conversations, the Art of Convening addresses the inner and outer realms of what it means to be in relationship with another or a group of others. It provides a framework for individual development which can be an integral part of regenerative leadership.



The Convening Wheel composed of a center aspect and eight spokes provides a visual form to support the *art of convening*. Each aspect has a challenge and principle along with questions to help embrace its intent. The following provides a glimpse into the wheel which may draw you into greater investigation as a useful tool for your own convening opportunities.

Convening Wheel – a summary

At the Heart of the Matter — Who I am in relationship with others.

Challenge

Staying Connected

Principle

Knowing who I am allows me to be in authentic engagement.

Clarifying Intent — The alignment of our intention with the purpose of our engagement.

Challenge

Doubt

Principle

Our intent has substance that is acted upon.

The Invitation — A sincere offering to engage that integrates purpose and intent.

Challenge

Rejection

Principle

The combination of sincerity, hospitality, and generosity is a strong attractor for full presence.

Setting Context — Communicating the form, function and purpose of our engagement and intent.

Challenge	Principle
Assumption Assume and doom	The clear articulation of purpose and intent allows the highest potential for the actualization of that purpose.

Creating the Container — Creating the physical and energetic field within which we meet.

Challenge	Principle
Reluctance to impose our will on others	Clear and accepted boundaries integrated with an enlivened environment allow safety and openness.

Hearing All the Voices — when each person speaks, is heard and is present and accounted for.

Challenge	Principle
Impatience / Judgment	Each voice is needed to reveal the authentic wisdom in our engagement.

Essential Conversation — Meaningful exchange within an atmosphere of trust.

Challenge	Principle
Self-consciousness	Meaningful exchange creates a connected and interdependent whole.

Creation — Something new that emerges from engagements of shared purpose and trust.

Challenge	Principle
Disengagement	The emergence of something new that did not exist before is the root of innovation and meaningful contribution.

Commitment to Action — An individual and/or collective agreement to be responsible and accountable for the way forward.

Challenge	Principle
Absence of alignment	Shared actions and behaviors create movement toward a common future of consequence and accountability.

Reference

<http://heartlandcircle.com/aoc-main.htm>

~Marianne Fieber

Part II:

Regenerative Communities

Prayer-song for the Common Ground

--Louis Alemayehu

**Sunlight
Came through my
Window
This morning
Splashing colors on the wall,
And I knew
 A new
Day
Was dawning
Bringing peace
To
Us all.
Each
In their own way
Each
In their own time
Evolving
Divine mind,
Something precious
To be found
Many feet
 Many feet
On the Common
Ground.**

Regenerative Communities: What Are They?

When first considering regeneration in its relationship to communities, it may be helpful to begin by recalling the manifestation of regeneration within biological systems. Natural science defines *regeneration* as a process of renewal on a cellular level, within an organism or even an ecosystem. It is the activity of *restoration to health following external stressors which create an imbalance and or damage to a particular system or being*. Some creatures can replace a lost limb, such as salamanders or lizards. A prairie, following a raging fire, can spring back to life in a blaze of glory with lush grasses and colorful blossoms.

In our social world, the communities in which we live are created by human beings and thus are imprinted with our complex human nature. Human beings are more than just the physical components that we can see but contain a whole world of thoughts, feelings and impulses which express our existence. A **regenerative community** then would be one that moves beyond sustainable and is rather in a continual process of renewal and restoration in order to move toward greater and greater health and balance. A regenerative community is able to withstand inevitable external pressures and stressors in the three realms of social life — economics, politics and culture — due to its collaborative nature between these activities in social life.

In general, I feel optimistic about the future. The rapid changes in our attitude toward the earth are also a source of hope. As recently as a decade ago, we thoughtlessly devoured the resources of the world, as if there were no end to them. We failed to realize that unchecked consumerism was disastrous for both the environment and social welfare. Now, individuals and governments are seeking a new ecological and economic order.

—The Dalai Lama
(Speech at the Parliamentary Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, July 7, 1992)

~Marianne Fieber

Discussion Questions

Look at your own communities and assess where they are or are not working towards being regenerative.

What are some of the underlying assumptions we have about our community and how we might work toward building a more regenerative community?

What tools would we need to align the values in our communities that might lead to greater regeneration?

Regenerative Community Systems: A Pathway for a Thriving Future

Regenerative community implies that people are thinking beyond sustainability — keeping vital what one already has — to a community that is resilient and constantly renewing. This awareness is developing because the world is changing so rapidly. We commonly hear about climate change, peak oil, resource depletion, economic systems failures and other crises.

We also hear about positive responses to local, regional and global problems: Live off the grid; live more simply for the children's sake and also for the parents' sake; awaken to nature/place/spirituality to more fully tap your inner resources.

How and where to begin to change the way you think about sustainability? Consider these principles developed by Ariane Burgess at <http://rl2online.com/community/>

- Everyone takes part in designing our future.
- We all have the capacity for responsible and conscious leadership.
- It is my mission to make you an effective leader of real sustainability, who contributes to our thriving planetary future.

Regenerative Community Lotus:

Her eight week program offers an integrated approach for designing sustainable and regenerative solutions into your life, organization, and communities. It is approached in these 5 ways:

1. Social Design: Understand the complex interactions among people in a society and how to expand sustainability in community.
2. Economic Design: Learn to recognize the capabilities within the community to source new viable economic venues in the face of today's global economy.
3. Ecological Design: Understand the complexities and choices available in appropriate technologies that create a sustainable and regenerative community.
4. Worldview: Integrate your own perspectives into an emerging worldview that creates from the whole.
5. Cultural Design: Learn the important role the arts play in creating a vibrant and authentic local culture that gives rise to a sense of place and meaning.

Discussion Questions

Does what you own or buy promote activity, self-reliance and involvement, or does it induce passivity and dependence?

How tied are your present job and lifestyle to installment payments, maintenance and repair costs and the expectations of other?

Are you now practicing or actively involved with a particular inner-growth process? Do you feel supported by friends and the larger community?

~Mary Christenson

Reference

<http://arianeburgess.com/about/regenerative-culture/>

Kipuka /ki'pu ka/ n. [*Hawaiian*]

1. A small patch of forest surrounded by lava flow that becomes the source of regeneration in a burned landscape.
2. A group of qualities that help regenerate humans' relationship to the natural world, *i.e.*, inspiration, imagination and wonder.
3. A community that fosters hope, encourages storytelling, and promotes a livable future.

See also: resilient ecosystem; abundant creativity; *Orion* magazine.

Cultivating Leadership

The Center for Regenerative Society (<http://www.regenerativesociety.org/>) states on their website that “a regenerative society cannot be sustained around us unless it is being cultivated within us. This need to cultivate regenerative soils, souls and society requires us to reconnect with that which sustains us, both physically and spiritually — to live and lead from within.” In order for there to be the possibility of regenerative communities, organizations or systems, leaders must cultivate new skills. The new skills are not merely technical or even “people” skills but expand to a kind of personal and spiritual development. A significant connection must be made between the physical, relational and spiritual aspects of life. Healthy regeneration on any scale requires a balanced development of all three aspects.

Discussion Questions

How do the physical, relational and spiritual aspects of life intersect? Can you draw a map or diagram to demonstrate these relationships?

What sort of thinking, agreements or activities would need modification in order to align more toward regeneration within your own self?

What strategies might be considered toward meeting the challenge of cultivating regeneration within our own souls and, in turn, our communities?

~Marianne Fieber

I Am the Decisive Element

I have come to the frightening conclusion that I am the decisive element.
It is my personal approach that creates the climate.
It is my daily mood that makes the weather.
I possess tremendous power to make life miserable or joyous.
I can be a tool of torture or an instrument of inspiration,
I can humiliate or humor, hurt or heal.
In all situations, it is my response that decides whether a crisis
is escalated or de-escalated, and a person is humanized or de-humanized.

If we treat people as they are, we make them worse.
If we treat people as they ought to be,
we help them become what they are capable of becoming.

—Haim G. Ginott, *Teacher and Child: A Book for Parents and Teachers*

Regenerative Relationship to the Land: Biodynamic Agriculture

Biodynamics is defined by the Biodynamic Farming and Gardening Association as “a spiritual-ethical-ecological approach to agriculture, food production and nutrition” where the farmers cultivate a relationship with the land that fosters health and growth. It is a holistic approach toward creating not only more enriched food but also enriched thinking.

Discussion Questions

What do you think is meant by “enriched” thinking?

Explore how working to care for the earth to create “enriched” food might also lead to “enriched” thinking.

Where is the nearest biodynamic farm to you?

Plan a trip to visit a biodynamic farm and speak with a farmer about their view of regeneration.

~Marianne Fieber



BIODYNAMIC ASSOCIATION

Reference

[What Is Biodynamics? | Biodynamic Farming and Gardening Association](#)

Seek the real practical material life,
But seek it in such a way that it does not blind you to the spirit working in it.

Seek the spirit, but seek it not out of spiritual greed or spiritual egoism,
But look for it because you want to apply it selflessly in practical life,
In the material world.

Apply the ancient principle:
Spirit is never without matter, matter is never without spirit!
And say to yourselves:
We will do everything material in the light of the spirit,
And we will seek the light of the spirit in a way
That it enkindles warmth in us for our practical deeds.

—Rudolf Steiner

Authentic Threefolding: Exploring Subtle Gestures

The concept of a threefold society, which balances the interests of business, government and civil/cultural organizations, by the very fact that it is a natural expression of our humanity, is being explored by several individuals, organizations and countries. The principles underlying each of the three sectors can be difficult to integrate into our current frame of reference wherein the business or economic interests appear to have a greater voice or power within public discourse. A renewal of society will require a departure from the systems and thinking currently at play and create a level arena in which learning and sharing flows in all directions. It is exciting to recognize the striving for greater harmony and balance within our world through tri-sector partnerships as seen in the work of Steve Waddell and the Global Public Policy Project. There are important nuances to be considered in terms of sustainability or authenticity between the frameworks put forth by the Global Public Policy project and by the Principles of Unity of the Philippine Agenda 21, shaped through the work of Nicanor Perlas. The following table presents these two conceptual frames for each of the three realms.

Comparison of the Global Public Policy and Principles of Unity		
Sector of Society	Global Public Policy ¹	Principles of Unity ²
Business	Business's primary playing field is with economic systems where owners are given preeminent power and the principal mechanism to induce people to do what an organization desires through monetary (remunerative) rewards.	Business is the key actor in the realm of the economy, where the central social concern and process is the mutually beneficial production and distribution of goods and services to meet the physical needs of human beings.
Government	Government's primary sphere of activity is with a political system focusing upon the creation of rules that can be enforced through the (coercive) vehicles of the police and courts.	Government is the key actor in the realm of politics, where the central social concern and process is participatory, democratic governance and rule making to secure the human rights of all citizens, including justice and equity.
Civil Society as Cultural Institution	In contrast, civil society organizations are seen to focus upon social systems and relationships around values and beliefs. These organizations derive their power from their ability to speak to tradition, community good and values—a normative power base.	Civil society is the key actor in the realm of culture, where the central social concern and process is the development of the social and spiritual capacities of the human beings in order to, among other things, advance the frontiers of knowledge, achieve clarity and coherence of values, and advocate the public interest.

¹ Steve Waddell, "The Evolving Strategic Benefits for Business in Collaboration with Nonprofits in Civil Society: A Strategic Resources, Capabilities and Competencies Perspective." Presentation to the World Bank's Global Public Policy Network, Washington, November 8, 1999.

² Nicanor Perlas et al., "PA21 Principles of Unity." *Philippine Agenda 21 Handbook* (Metro Manila: Center for Alternative Development Initiatives, 1999).

Discussion Questions

Look at each sector of society listed above and consider the two characterizations as outlined according to (a) the Global Public Policy Project and (b) the Principles of Unity from the Philippine Agenda 21.

What are the nuances in each sector?

Discuss how one or the other may create greater collaboration within its realm of influence or in society as a whole.

~Marianne Fieber

What Constitutes Success

by Bessie Stanley (1905)

*He has achieved success who has lived well,
laughed often and loved much;
who has gained the respect of intelligent men
and the love of little children;
who has filled his niche and accomplished his task;
who has left the world better than he found it,
whether by an improved poppy, a perfect poem, or a rescued
soul;
who has never lacked appreciation of earth's beauty
or failed to express it;
who has always looked for the best in others
and given them the best he had;
whose life was an inspiration;
whose memory a benediction.*

Comparison of Worldviews: Modernist vs. Cultural Creative

Industrial/Materialistic	Reflective/Living system
Cosmos is mostly dead matter; not alive.	Cosmos is fundamentally alive.
Cosmos has no meaning.	Cosmos has a deep ecology. What we do matters.
Consciousness is a by-product of the biochemistry of the brain.	Consciousness permeates the universe. Reflective capability exists.
Goal in life: material and social success.	Goal in life: balance inner and outer and live in a way that is sustainable and compassionate.
Conspicuous consumption.	Conscious consumption.
Identity defined by material possessions.	Sense of self grows through conscious, loving, creative participation in life.
Emphasis on personal autonomy.	Emphasis on development and community.
Nature as raw material for humans.	Nature as integral to all community of life.
Cut-throat competition; free market.	Cooperation.
Media promote hyper-consumption.	Media awaken all to the challenge of sustainability and meaning in life.
Nations adopt a "lifeboat ethic" in global relations. Each one to its own.	Nations adopt a "spaceship ethic": all have a collective responsibility for the earth.

Table based on a 1997 study by Elgin, D. and LeDrew, C. *Global Consciousness Change: Indicators of an Emerging Paradigm* (San Francisco: Millennium Project) pp. 11-12. Table 4 referenced in Nicanor Perlas, *Shaping Globalization* (New Society Publishers, 2003), p. 155.

Discussion Questions

Consider the two different worldviews outlined in the above table. Discuss how each may support or prevent the fostering of a regenerative community.

Explore how these different paradigms may exist in your own frame of reference.

~Marianne Fieber

Regenerative Communities – Exercises and Activities

Imagination: What does a regenerative community look like?

Describe the components that could exist: the people, businesses, services, activities, resources. How do these elements contribute to regeneration?

Consider your own community:

- Are there any commonalities to what has been shared regarding regenerative community?
- Where do you find or see regeneration, even in small ways, already under way in your community?
- Can this be built upon?
- Is there an office in your city/township that has regeneration on its agenda?
- List the greatest hurdles to regeneration in your community.

Artistic activity: With paper and pastels or colored chalk, consider your community or organization:

- Individually or in small groups, create a gesture drawing* of what it looks or feels like at this point in time and space. (15 minutes)
- Individually or in small groups, create a gesture drawing* of what a regenerative community would look or feel like.
- Sitting in a circle, if working in a group, present your first picture of the current state of your community. Share the components that are pictured. After each group/person has shared, present the second picture of regeneration. Notice and articulate the components and explore how this type of community could be cultivated.

*A gesture drawing is not necessarily an artistic representation of anything specific but is filled with an impression or feeling of something you are trying to communicate. A particular color or movement of line may speak more toward the “gesture” you wish to offer. Be still and let an image or gesture come to you, or let your fingers and hands take the lead, allowing the image to develop.

~Marianne Fieber

The Holy Land Is All the Earth

—Louis Alemayehu

Sometimes I hardly know what to say
In this High Tech Dark age:
"...and one day a Sun will rise with healing in its wings."
And loving dew will sparkle on our bare flesh,
Innocent, naked...
Do you know the way from here to there, dear friend?
Through the storm?
Are the rocks still screaming?
When I am silent, really quiet
I hear voices:
The Holy Land is all the Earth
And all the Earth is holy.
The Earth is our only physical home... Creation,
Yes, all the Earth is holy:
The water — holy,
The air — holy,
The creatures that crawl and the creatures that swim — holy,
The two-legged and the winged — holy,
Let us touch with kind hands
Blessing all that lives,
All that laments.
Rise! Be robust and brave in the face of dawn.
YOU are the face of Dawn,
Face it!
Integrity of Water, Light and Love can sustain us now.
THIS is the Fire Next Time
NOW, at last real power!
And the new world begins on this breath.
Breathe...
Now is the time, now is the time
Embracing in the silence of our after-weeping,
Resting on the breast
Of Our Mother's Sacred Heart
Beating, beating, beating...

(written for the February 2012 conference)

Part III

Nature Systems/Ecology-Based Economics

The recovery of soils can only take place through a philosophy which sees soil fertility, not cash, as agricultural capital...which puts nature and human needs, not markets, at the centre of sustainable agriculture and land use. If soils and people are to live, we must stop converting soil fertility into cash and productive lands into deserts.

—Vandana Shiva, *Staying Alive*

Biodynamics doesn't exploit the soil. It tries to get the most out of the Earth but in a win-win with nature. Most economies are based on illness and war and profits for a few. This is because most [businesses] have lost their connection to human beings and to the Earth. But you can't treat the earth as if it's a machine. It is a living, growing thing. You can't take the spiritual part out of it.

—Clifford Kurtz, co-founder
Dr. Hauschka Skin Care

Knowing the World: From Where Do We Begin?

Human beings strive to know and understand the world in which they live. Everything is or may be a focus of study toward greater clarity into its substance, function or beneficial properties. Over the course of human development, the lens through which we peer at the phenomena of the world has changed. Discoveries, hypotheses and guesses have attempted to provide answers to life's mysteries. If our point of departure has changed, what is the truth? How can we know the world?

Current scientific thought suggests that only what is "sense-able" through our five common senses is objective and valid for scientific study. This "objective" approach requires that matter be separate from human subjectivity in order to truly understand it. Rudolf Steiner challenges this prevailing notion that considering anything in a purely materialistic or mechanistic framework divorced from its relationship to humanity yields a complete picture. He turns the current paradigm of internal and external science on its head by asserting that in order to truly know something in the outside world, we need to explore its inner nature. To study only that which is material is to study dead matter. Dead matter was at one time living, and therefore understanding its living nature is an integral part of knowing the object in its entirety.

Steiner states that our thinking itself is dead. It is a mere "semblance" and devoid of a relationship to the living essence of a thing. If we allow ourselves to consider this deeply, we experience a void within our being. A longing wells up within our soul—a desire to look beyond the semblance to reveal the true nature or "nascent"

When we learn, through a new, anthroposophically imbued natural science, to let the calls of infinite longing for the spirit, sent out into the world, resound in our inner being..., we will find the answer to the yearning call for the spirit, desperately sounded out into the universe.

—Rudolf Steiner, *The Origins of Natural Science, Lecture IX*

state of being in the world around us. This desire sends a call out to the world, and within our own inner being we experience a response, an echo of knowing the world that is more complete than that of "dead" knowing. This interaction towards a living understanding of an object in its entirety reconnects nature and the human being. The human being is therefore a more important instrument for understanding the external natural world than merely the charts and formulas derived from current

scientific study. This method of knowing takes a great deal of effort and time and requires the collaboration of many people committed to working collaboratively together.

Discussion Questions

Explore your relationship to knowing the world around you. What helps you make sense of the differing phenomena?

Explore your relationship to subjective and objective ways of study. Find a time in your life when you have experienced each of these and describe what you did.

What conditions do you think would be required to invite your inner being to send a call out to the universe and comprehend the response? Have you had such an experience at another time in your life? Reflect on what made such an experience possible at that time.

~Marianne Fieber

Reference

Rudolf Steiner, *The Origins of Natural Science*, Lecture IX: Dornach, Switzerland, January 6, 1923 (Great Barrington, MA: SteinerBooks, 1985).

Even after all this time
The sun never says to the
earth,
"You owe me."
Look what happens
with a love like that,
It lights the whole sky.
—Hafiz

There is a Knighthood of the twentieth century whose members do not ride through the darkness of physical forests, as of old, but through forests of darkened minds. They are armed with a spiritual armor, and an inner Sun makes them radiant. Out of them shines healing, healing that flows from the knowledge of the image of the human being as a spiritual being. They must create inner order, inner justice, peace and conviction in the darkness of our times.

—Karl König

Putting Soil Fertility Back into the Calculus of Investing

“Putting soil fertility back into the calculus of investing” is the vision of executive director of Slow Money, Woody Tasch, expanding the data points considered in analyzing a traditional bottom line in an investment portfolio. In an *Ode* magazine article published in November 2008 entitled “Slow and Steady Wins the Race,” Carleen Hawn explores Tasch’s ideas which unearth the far-reaching benefits of social investing and considering the Earth as another beneficiary. The Slow Money movement is the name given to these types of investments. They may grow more slowly than traditional investments but they take into account the impact on the resources found in the Earth, which plays into future sustainability. Tasch considers community-based investing the most sensible strategy but realizes there are hurdles to overcome before this idea has a chance of creating the kind of change that is possible. More and more people are making choices to shop locally. There appears to be a growing awareness of the benefit these simple actions have for the future.

It’s remarkable, but people who grow their own food, who reconnect with the soil, can immediately appreciate the implications of an economy that doesn’t respect the power of ecology.

—Woody Tasch,
founder of the Slow Money movement

In a financial paradigm that espouses as its guiding principle “The market demands growth,” is it possible to participate in turning the tide? Tasch challenges us to consider the creation of a new market imagination: “The alternative is not no growth. But we can have a market where growth can be slower, where the return horizon is longer and slower and where the risk [profile] and rate of return are different. That is Slow Money.”

Discussion Questions

What is your relationship to investing?

How or from where did you receive your investing information or support?

What types of industries are you currently investing in?

What would it mean for you if you were to slow down your investments and support more sustainable industries?

In what ways have you “invested” locally?

Considering your local merchants, what changes could you make to have them supply more of your needs?

~Marianne Fieber

References

Carleen Hawn, “Slow and Steady Wins the Race.” *Ode*, November 2008, pp. 27-30.
[Slow Money: Investment strategies appropriate to the realities of the 21st century \(slowmoney.org\)](http://slowmoney.org)

Gravity and Levity: Two Forces for a Balanced World

What do cows and bees have in common? Perhaps a better question is what are the special gifts each of these sentient beings offer for a balanced world? Gantt Charping explores the gifts of milk and honey and their relationship to gravity and levity in an article entitled "Milk and Honey: A Holistic Metaphor." A delightful picture of collaboration for a balanced world emerges through the consideration of the following:

	Cows	Bees
Activity	Digestion	Pollination
Spatial realm	Soil	Atmosphere
Effect	Reduces matter to its simplest form to be returned to the earth	Helps plants come to fruition through pollination.
By-product	Milk	Honey
Benefits	Nutrients and formative forces important to the early stages of human development. Supports development of physical body and human "I."	Refines the development of human formative forces after the change of teeth.
Force	Gravity	Levity
Cosmic force	Physical matter	Etheric substance
	Heavy	Light
Gesture	From the center outward	From the periphery inward
Social gesture	Ego focus	Community focus

"Understanding the principles of levity can bring an expanded awareness to consciousness, allowing us to gaze beyond individual fulfillment to the awareness of functioning within the larger community," states Charping, stressing that the dynamic interplay between gravity and levity produces the balance for us, our society and the earth.

Discussion Questions

Consider the table above. Explore other dynamic polarities at play in us, in our communities and in our world—for example, sympathy and antipathy, light and dark, hot and cold. What others can you think of? What are the implications and impacts of each?

~Marianne Fieber

Reference

Grant Charping, "Milk and Honey: A Holistic Metaphor," *Lilipoh* 52:13 (Summer 2008).

Part IV

Associative Economics:

Economic and Social Renewal

ONE no matter what...

Granpa (Daniel Jones) 1889-1975

—Louis Alemayehu

If you looked into my grandfather's face
Where all the times and trials have come to rest,
Into his eyes,
You would see that
All the world
Merges into ONE dream
ONE
Linking unity,
Like the Earth,
The Sun,
And the holy rain,
ONE eternal circle
Of living and dying
Living and dying,
Moving slowly, slowly
On this wheel of time,
Caked-on muddy of love,
Carrying our ONE soul
To a New Earth.

Who Are You and What Do You Need? Cultivating Interest in the Other

Rudolf Steiner, at the beginning of the 1900s, offered a foundational view of a healthy economic realm within social life which requires the development of a spiritual or ethical gesture in our human nature. Gary Lamb shares one characterization of Steiner's Fundamental Social Law in his book *Associative Economics*:

"The more a person works for the benefit of the community, and the more the community is structured to provide for the needs of each individual, the greater the well-being of the whole community will be." (p. 24)

In Chapter 15, "Egoism and Social Life," Lamb references again Steiner's "fundamental social law" and how egoism and antisocial forces lead to poverty and suffering in the world. The strongest impulse that has the power to create positive change in the social world is that of interest in others. The cultivation of greater and greater interest in our fellow human beings and the world we inhabit is a deed that can lead toward a healthy balance in social life.

Discussion Questions

What do you see as your role in cultivating interest in the "other"?

When have you been freely interested in another? What happened? What did you do? How did the other respond?

What challenges do you experience in relating to "other"?

What "non-human" others are part of your community that may benefit from your conscious interest?

How might organizations such as schools, businesses, civic groups, places of worship and governing bodies begin to assess and then cultivate interest in their constituencies or other organizations within their communities?

A sustainable culture recognizes relationships. That is, it knows that everything is connected.... Sustainability is not a state we reach but something we work toward forever.

Gary Holthaus,
Learning Native Wisdom

~Marianne Fieber

Reference

Gary Lamb, *Associative Economics: Spiritual Activity for the Common Good* (Ghent, NY: Association of Waldorf Schools of North America, 2010).

Spiritual Capitalism: It's Not Just for Hippies

The 1970s spawned a cultural sentiment as a rebellion against the perception that businesses were focused on profits alone. A desire arose among large groups of people to establish alternate currencies, community land trusts and businesses which strove to live by a different set of guiding principles. These principles emphasized relationships: the relationships between employer and employee, between the community and the environment. Many of these endeavors did not succeed, as a business needs more than good intentions to survive.

In a June 2008 article in *Ode* magazine entitled "The Gospel According to Adam Smith," Terry Mollner, co-founder of the socially responsible investment firm Calvert Group, speaks about the search for a more balanced spiritual ethos within business and investing activity: "If I care about profits then I can't care about being green. But we're in a new era of collective consciousness now in which priorities don't need to be hierarchical. The whole hierarchy is in the service of the common good, including the profit-making."

The article's author, Carleen Hawn, concludes, "Spiritual capitalism is consequently not a zero-sum game, but a holistic approach to business that's quickly becoming more – much more – than the sum of its parts."

Hawn also articulates the vision of the free market as offered by 18th-century philosopher Adam Smith: "[E]very man, so long as he does not violate the laws of justice, is left perfectly free to pursue his own interest his own way, and to bring both his industry and capital into competition with any other man." This is his description of the best way to build wealth. As Hawn reminds us, Smith also argued that the benefits of the free market should accrue not just to individuals but to society as a whole. In considering the current state of our economic affairs, many questions arise with this view of the free market.

Discussion Questions

What do you think are the "laws of justice" that are not to be violated in Adam Smith's vision of the free market?

How can we reconcile the idea that society should benefit from successful free-market ventures with the expectation that businesses must maximize shareholder value?

How can a business do "good" and be successful? Is there a need to redefine economic success? If so, how would you do so?

~Marianne Fieber

Reference

Carleen Hawn, "The Gospel According to Adam Smith," *Ode*, June 2008, pp. 39-47.

The Mystery of Economic Life: Brotherhood and the Future of Humanity

Many people may experience the economy or economic life as a mystery. Our relationship to money and finances or how economics was presented to us in our early years of education plays a role in our ability to understand the ever-increasing complexity of our economic activity. We are unable to produce on our own all that we need to survive. The Darwinian idea of "survival of the fittest," where the weak must perish, sits very differently in our modern culture.

Perhaps this view could be understood as a natural evolutionary necessity in the days before stockyards, produce delivery systems and grocery stores. While poverty is a reality and there are some areas in the world where access to food, water, clothing and shelter are irregular at best, in other areas the majority of human beings have plenty of what they need to survive. There has also been evidence that thriving communities are those that pull together and work for the good of all their members.

In a November 23, 1905, lecture entitled "Brotherhood and the Struggle for

If we give up ourselves to mutual help, through this giving up to the community a powerful strengthening of our organs takes place. If we then speak or act as a member of such a community there speaks or acts in us not the singular soul only but the spirit of the community. This is the secret of progress for the future of mankind: To work out of communities.

—Rudolf Steiner

Existence," Rudolf Steiner posed provocative questions such as: "Is it really true what many believe, that people grow strong by working against a resistance? Is it really above all else their aggressive activities which make them big and strong?" Steiner

shared research from Karl Fedorovich Kessler (1815–1881), a German-Russian zoologist and the first scientist to suggest that animals that help each other rather than fight each other become more adaptive, leading to more certain survival. Human beings, likewise, have a greater chance of survival when working together to meet each member's needs. We can turn then to another of Steiner's questions: "What enhances evolution more, war or mutual help?"

Discussion Questions

Explore weak and strong characteristics that can be found within human beings. Do aggressive activities create "purely" strong or "purely" weak individuals?

How would you answer the question Steiner poses regarding what advances evolution more, war or mutual help? What lies behind your response?

~Marianne Fieber

Reference

Rudolf Steiner, "Brotherhood and the Struggle for Existence," Berlin, November 23, 1905. Available at http://wn.rsarchive.org/Lectures/BroSur_index.html

Economic and Social Renewal: Promise and Peril—Inner and Outer Aspects

John Fuller proposes that economic life and social relationships both are influenced by forces that reside deeply within the human being. Healthy social renewal is possible only when these forces are brought to conscious awareness and kept in balance. Rudolf Steiner also calls our attention to natural forces in human beings that challenge our healthy social relationships.

In his lecture of December 12, 1918, titled "Social and Anti-Social Forces in the Human Being," Steiner speaks about these two forces as a kind of sleeping and waking gesture in the human being. We are most social when we are asleep and most anti-social when awake. He cautions us not to equate "anti-social" with evil, as we are at a stage of development where our "anti-social" nature becomes stronger as we move from a more intellectual view of our relationship with the world around us to a more conscious one. The development of consciousness requires the cultivation of our own individuality alongside qualities that help overcome a certain one-sidedness or egoism. He states:

We live in the age of the Consciousness Soul in which man must become independent. But on what does this depend? It depends on people's ability to become self-assertive, to not allow themselves to be put to sleep. It is the anti-social forces which require development in this time; for consciousness to be present it would not be possible for mankind to accomplish its task if just these anti-social forces did not become ever more powerful; they are indeed the pillars on which personal independence rests.... [T]here must also come about that with which man resists them: a social structure which will balance this anti-social evolutionary tendency...

A useful exercise is to look at ourselves objectively at a time when we were younger. Can we see and experience ourselves or our actions in a free way, without the bindings of sympathy or antipathy?

Discussion Questions

How can we understand the social and anti-social forces residing in our own being?

Recall a moment in your life when you "leaned into" another person's story and became quite involved without realizing it. Describe your experience. Then find a time when you resisted the ideas or actions of another person; describe your experience.

How easy or difficult is it for us to free ourselves from making assumptions?

~Marianne Fieber

Reference

Rudolf Steiner, "Social and Anti-Social Forces in the Human Being, Bern, December 12, 1918.

Is the Economy a Machine?

A popular metaphor for the economy is that of a machine. The various components have to fulfill their function accurately, in a timely way, and without fail, so everyone will automatically have their needs met. However, we have seen time and again throughout history, in big and small ways, that this “machine” breaks down, the cogs and wheels no longer function as hoped, and chaos ensues. The economy, which is created through numerous relationships among human beings, will ultimately fail if the predominant expectation is one of unflinching delivery on an abstract schedule.

Julie A. Nelson speaks about the kind of dialogue that would foster a more integrated metaphor of the economy. The conversation would be between pro-business advocates and anti-market critics. She suggests in her book *Economics for Humans* that both sides bring value to the economic table and that exploring the best of what both have to offer would foster a greater understanding of the relationship between economics and ethics.

	Pro-business Body (Economic)	Anti-market Soul (Ethics)
Positive	I <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Production of goods and services that support survival and flourishing • Creation of employment opportunities • Self-support and financial self-responsibility • Opportunities for creativity, innovation, and growth in the enjoyment of life 	III <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aesthetic, moral and spiritual development • The creation of emotionally healthy, mutually respectful relations among people • Care and concern for the weak and needy • Ecological balance and sustainability
Negative	IV <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An exclusive focus on short-term profit • Creation of boss/worker relations of oppression and alienation • Greed and selfishness • A fixation on growth and runaway consumerism 	II <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Passivity about provisioning of goods and services • Otherworldliness, with little attention to practical needs or constraints • Financial non-responsibility, leading to dependency • Fear of money and power

Discussion Questions

Explore the relationships between Lists I and II, and then between III and IV.

Share with members of your group where you have experienced either a positive element or negative element of either pro-business or anti-market. What sense did you make of that?

Where have you witnessed a striving for balance between economics and ethics?

~Marianne Fieber

Reference

Julie A. Nelson, *Economics for Humans* (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 2006). An excerpt is available at <http://press.uchicago.edu/Misc/Chicago/572021.html>

The Fantasy of Absolute Value

There is a great deal of pressure today to be objective, precise and independent especially when it comes to our economic activity. We have all probably heard the old saying, "Owe no man anything." Could this be translated into, "Don't get involved"?

Economic engagement requires involvement. There is an exchange, an agreement between two people. This agreement opens the door to a relationship. Additional relationships occur between the two parties and the item or service that is exchanged, which determines value: the greater the need, the greater the value. The value of the item or service may be quite different to the person who gives and the person who receives. We can be misled into thinking there is only one value to consider when making an exchange. The sum total of raw components or time invested is only one way to determine value.

The connections with our fellow humans are revealed through borrowing/lending. In giving we connect our individual spirit with the spirit of the world throughout eternity.

—Siegfried Finser

Discussion Questions

How do you value the items you acquire?

Do you continue to look for the best deal on products or services without thinking of the chain of costs of both human and material resources?

How comfortable are you with haggling at a market?

Describe your differing values when shopping at a farmer's market, craft fair, supermarket or independent shop. How does this impact your experience of shopping?

What might this say about the value of a product?

~Marianne Fieber

Reference

"The True Value of Money: Interview with Siegfried Finser," *Lilipoh*, Winter 2007, pp. 70-72, [winter2007 | Lilipoh | Health Magazine, Nutrition Magazine, Environment Magazine](#)

Money: The Keystone to Transcendence of the Left and the Right

Richard Kotlarz of Minnesota engages in public conversations on topics such as economics and politics. In one such conversation he was interviewed by Diana Longerie for a program entitled *Off the Record News*, broadcast on a suburban public TV channel in the Twin Cities area. The interview was part of a series of shows focusing on Charles and David Koch, described as “a billionaire team of siblings who fund conservative political causes.” During Kotlarz’s interview a video entitled *Koch Brothers Exposed* was referenced as a resource for the series. Kotlarz views this type of exposé in a unique light. For decades, he was a self-proclaimed lefty/progressive political activist, but he says he strives to strike a more transcendent view of polarizing topics where the authentic, heartfelt inspirations of people on both the “left” and “right” can be heard and appreciated. He writes:

The gist of my approach is that the ideals of the “left” and the “right” are not by nature irreconcilable. On the contrary, they are actually two sides of a more transcendent truth, one that we need to get to if we are to have any hope of keeping the social order and our relationship to the earth from flying apart. Perhaps the main factor that stops these two sides from coming together into a healing dialogue is that neither understands the true nature of money, the ubiquitous holdings forth about taxing, spending and balancing budgets notwithstanding. The understandable frustration experienced by folks of both points of view due to their inability to realize their ideals in practical ways tends often to be focused in a lightning-rod way on a handful of “money-bags” financiers (e.g., the Koch brothers on the conservative side, George Soros on the liberal) who are funding in some supposedly conspiratorial way the nefarious activities of the other side. The activity of such public figures is indeed a legitimate topic for examination, but they are people, not demons, and not the heart of the problem in any case.

Discussion Questions

What do you think is required to resist slipping into a polarizing debate around heated topics such as economics and politics?

What other topics seem to cultivate a right and left side?

When have you found yourself debating a position vehemently when you didn’t have all the facts?

What would your responsibility be toward bringing greater balance into hot-topic dialogues? What is the benefit to doing so?

~Marianne Fieber

Reference

From an email written by Richard Kotlarz, October 24, 2012.

Economic and Social Renewal – Exercises and Activities

Daily Exchanges

Choose one day out of your week. Carry a log notebook, clicker or an app on your phone. Track how many people you experience an exchange with during the course of the day. An exchange could be as simple as a smile, greeting, handshake, holding a door open or picking up something for another person. Conversations, meetings and purchases are also exchanges. At the end of the day, tally up how many times you had an interchange with another human being.

Weekly Deeds

Choose one day out of your week. Take notice of your actions and personal decisions. Whenever possible during the course of the day, write them down. At the end of the day, consider the effect of these actions. What is the ripple effect whether directly or indirectly on another person or group of people?

Counting Exercise (from Julia Cameron's book *The Artists Way*, p. 112)

Choose one week to discover how you spend money. Use a small pocket notepad and write down every nickel you spend. It doesn't matter what it is for, how tiny the purchase, how petty the amount.

Each day, date a page and count—what you bought, what you spent, where your money went, whether it was for groceries, lunch in a diner, a cab ride, subway fares, or a loan to your brother. Be meticulous. Be thorough. Be non-judgmental. This is an exercise in self-observation—*not* self-flagellation.

This exercise will teach you what you value in terms of your spending. Often spending differs from our real values.

~Marianne Fieber

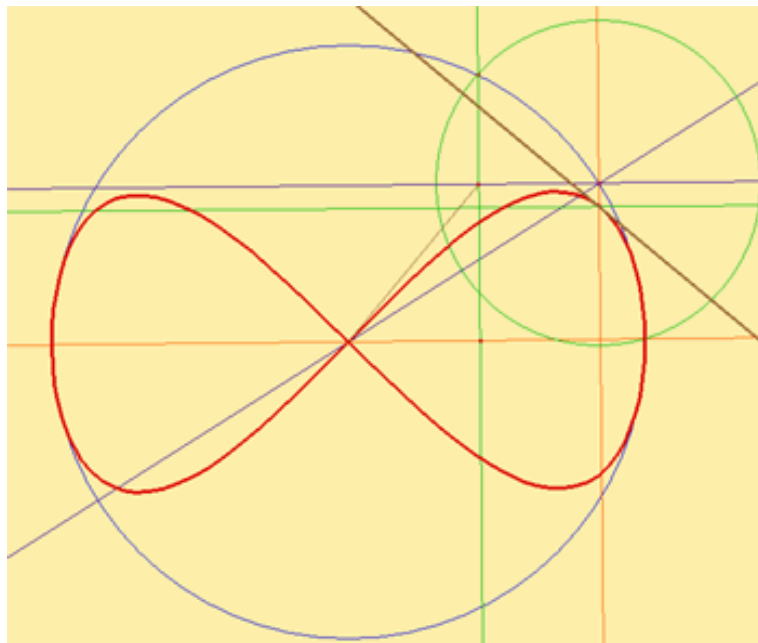
Reference

Julia Cameron, *The Artists Way: A Spiritual Path to Higher Creativity* (New York, NY: Jeremy P. Tarcher/Putnam, 1992).

Part V

Cultural Renewal:

Gifts to Society Through Human Inspiration and Striving



Money and Spirit: Regenerative Philanthropy

Chapter 6 of *The Genius of Money* by John Bloom is entitled "A Degenerative and Regenerative Economics of Philanthropy and Gift." The theme of this chapter challenges us to look at how we invest resources and to consider philanthropy or gift money in a new light.

Money which has been heavily or continuously used either for purchase or investment, or held in "cold storage" such as land or real estate where its primary purpose is an increase in monetary value, needs to be recirculated into the economy through gifts to support research, education and other activities that foster human capacity for cultural renewal and envisioning the future. And, in its purest form, this renewal is done without any expectation of monetary return (though there may be a tax benefit). Where money makes possible the furtherance of human capacity, money is given, in a sense, a new life. Its value has increased for the benefit of culture and humanity rather than for the benefit of its giver.

Surplus capital re-titled into the cultivation of the highest in human endeavor for the good of our whole human race has behind it a significantly different gesture than surplus capital which is invested to amass greater wealth for an individual or family.

Discussion Questions

In what ways have you expressed a philanthropic gesture in your decisions?

How can you meet the need to provide for long-term security through investment *and* participate in the kind of philanthropy discussed above?

To understand money in the deepest sense is to journey inwardly to grapple with the "money self," to become more conscious economic participants in financial transactions with the world, and last but not least, to work to meet the material needs of others so that our economic needs are met through others' work. This formulation describes a three-fold virtuous cycle, one that represents a radical transformation from our current world circumstance, which tends to revolve around and end with self-interest, unsupportable accumulation, and fear of never-enough.

—John Bloom

~Marianne Fieber

Reference

John Bloom, *The Genius of Money: Essays and Interviews Reimagining the Financial World* (Great Barrington, MA: SteinerBooks, 2009).

<http://www.steinerbooks.org/detail.html?id=9780880106344>

Toward Conscious Threefolding

Globalization—and more specifically, elite globalization—is a reality in the current state of the world. No longer are we, as human beings, relating with one another at a purely local level to have our needs met. Much of what we consume, whether food, clothing or equipment, comes from all corners of the globe. Services as well are managed through technologies which have us weaving a web of energy around the world.

Throughout history, the really fundamental changes in societies have come about not from dictates of governments and the results of battles but through a vast number of people changing their minds—sometimes only a little bit.

—Willis Harman, *Global Mind Change*

This elite globalization is ruled by powerful forces coming from the economic and governmental interests of society. In his book *Shaping Globalization: Civil Society, Cultural Power and Threefolding*, Nicanor Perlas states that such elite globalization has created misery and suffering among billions of people along with destruction to the ecology

of the earth, yet it has also spawned a global civil society. **This global civil society has begun to recognize its place as one of three forces in the world: economic, political and cultural.** Civil society "...realizes that it dwells in the cultural realm just as naturally as business dwells in the economic realm and government dwells in the political realm."

Perlas describes three stages in the evolution of *threefolding* and equates them with three phases of human development. The first is *de facto* or the "childhood phase," when "one of the three global institutional powers asserts its autonomy and defends its realm from perceived or real invasions from the two other powers and realms of society." It is much like the child's consciousness in that the players involved in *de facto threefolding* do not fully understand what is being laid down as a seed for the future of humanity.

The second phase is *conscious threefolding*. This is the result "when the three institutional powers recognize that society has three realms and that they are the three key institutions of these three social realms.... The three key institutions know that, in conscious threefolding, they place their respective talents toward the pursuit of comprehensive sustainable development, balancing economic, political, and cultural, social, ecological, human and spiritual imperatives of development."

In conscious threefolding no single realm exerts greater power over another at the expense of its rightful place toward balance within the social world. This gesture is crucial in cultivating our future.

The third phase, *advanced threefolding*, takes us to the adult stage of this process. Here we see cultivated the required qualities of trust and respect among the institutions which strive to further the concepts of threefolding towards ever greater balance of the three sectors.

Discussion Questions

Consider the different types of institutions and organizations that make up our society today. Do you see evidence of any of the stages of threefolding described by Nicanor Perlas?

Explore your relationship to globalization. Can you trace from where your food, clothing and material goods come? What impacts do these items have on the environment? How do you think the institutions/corporations are considering the ecological, human and spiritual impact of their business strategies and/or activities?

~Marianne Fieber

References

Nicanor Perlas, *Shaping Globalization: Civil Society, Cultural Power and Threefolding* (Saratoga Springs, NY: GlobeNet3; and Quezon City, Philippines: The Center for Alternative Development Initiatives, 2000)

www.globenet3.org

Tri-sector Dialogues or Partnerships

Nicanor Perlas, in his book *Shaping Globalization*, describes tri-sector dialogues or partnerships as those that engage the voices of the three key participants in the creation of our social society: the business sector, the government sector and the civil or cultural sector. Each has its own set of principles and guidelines for planning and decision-making. Decisions or future planning at any level which strives to meet the needs of all sectors in a manner that honors what it means to be a human being will have the greatest potential for sustainable success. Therefore fostering openness to tri-sector dialogues will in turn foster a more harmonious experience of society.

Discussion Questions

Can we identify these different sectors within our organization and community?

When we begin to explore and create new systems within our organization or community, do we take the time to determine who should be part of the conversation to ensure we consider all possible angles?

~Marianne Fieber

Social Capital: The Ties That Bind

Do you remember the days, some years back, when communities were knit together through the deepening relationships forged by reciprocal agreements, exchange and generous acts of kindness? Neighbors helping neighbors: no money exchanged, no balance sheet to ensure a measure-for-measure value equivalence. One man with a snow blower might blow snow halfway down the block to ensure the elderly couple four houses down has easy access to the street following a storm. The man right next door to the snow blower happens to be a fine craftsman in wood and repairs his neighbor's dining room table leaf that had been broken for years. The children of one family were watched by the other as needs arose, and no money changed hands.

These types of relationships within the community have been slowly dissolving in the increasing monetization of services or skills that were once freely exchanged. Cash payments for services such as these have depersonalized our relationships with our neighbors. This fosters a degree of standardization of skill or service scrubbed of the rich individualized color and flavor found in more humanized exchanges. Value is determined by cost rather than an awareness of the thread that weaves us with one another. Because we now pay for many services that were once exchanged, there is a reduction in the frequency and quality of contact we may have with our neighbors. In fact, many people don't know their neighbors at all. Charles Eisenstein, in his book *Sacred Economics: Money, Gift & Society in the Age of Transition*, writes:

The commoditization of social relationships leaves us with nothing to do together but to consume. Joint consumption does nothing to build community because it requires no gifts. I think the oft-lamented vacuity of most social gatherings arises from the inchoate knowledge, "I don't need you." I don't need you to help me consume food, drink, drugs, or entertainment. Consumption calls upon no one's gifts, calls forth none of anyone's true being. Community and intimacy cannot come from joint consumption, but only from giving and co-creativity. (p. 78)

Discussion Questions

Reflect on a time or place in which you experienced neighborly exchanges based on need. What happened? When did that occur? Describe how you felt or remembered feeling in this environment.

Consider your community now. Do you know your neighbors? Do you know their gifts? Do you know their needs?

How would you approach a possible exchange with gifts you may have?

~Marianne Fieber

Reference

Charles Eisenstein, *Sacred Economics: Money Gift & Society in the Age of Transition* (Berkeley, CA: North Atlantic Books, 2011).

Part VI

Examples of Conscious Community-Building Initiatives

Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it's the only thing that ever has.

—Margaret Mead



A New Science Integrating Humanity and the Environment

SENSRI's mission is to promote research, education and the exchange of ideas growing out of science based on human perception and experience. By developing new and deeper capacities of sensing and thinking, we create a scientific understanding resulting in creative environmental technology, in harmony with nature, meeting human needs.

[Real Hope, Real Change \(download PDF\)](#)

A recent essay by Michael D'Aleo about how to meet the future by developing a practice of experiencing the present.

BIONEERS

Revolution from the heart of nature

Bioneers is inspiring a shift to live on Earth in ways that honor the web of life, each other and future generations.

Bioneers is a nonprofit educational organization that highlights breakthrough solutions for restoring people and planet. Since 1990, Bioneers has acted as a fertile hub of social and scientific innovators with nature-inspired approaches for the world's most pressing environmental and social challenges. We connect people with solutions and each other. [Our Mission — Bioneers](#)



Mission: Nature around us is whole and interconnected. Though we are part of nature, we do not yet fathom her depths, and our actions do not embody her wisdom. A fundamental shift in our way of viewing the world is necessary if we would contribute to nature's unity rather than dissolution. At The Nature Institute, we develop new qualitative and holistic approaches to seeing and understanding nature and technology. Through research, publications, and educational programs we work to create a new paradigm that embraces nature's wisdom in shaping a sustainable and healthy future. [The Nature Institute - About Us](#)



RSF Social Finance (RSF) is a pioneering nonprofit financial services organization dedicated to transforming the way the world works with money. In partnership with a community of investors and donors, RSF provides capital to nonprofit and for-profit social enterprises addressing key issues in the areas of Food & Agriculture, Education & the Arts, and Ecological Stewardship.

Inspired by the work of Rudolf Steiner, we believe that money has a deeply spiritual dimension. In our view, money is a form of energy that connects one person to another and strengthens the bonds of community. Our innovative financial products not only meet the constantly shifting needs of the market, but also encourage meaningful and direct relationships among investors and social entrepreneurs, donors and grantees.

<http://rsfsocialfinance.org/about-us>

Hawthorne Valley Center for Social Renewal is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to educating the public about the ideas of Rudolf Steiner regarding a threefold social organization consisting of self-administered spheres of social life in the cultural, legal and economic realms. [Hawthorne Valley Center for Social Research - Freedom, Equality, Altruism](#)



Praxis Peace Institute recognizes that peace can only be achieved when there is social and economic justice, responsible civic participation, environmental sustainability, and the desire to transform the systems that support war.

Praxis Peace Institute is dedicated to building coalitions with like-minded organizations, sharing research information, and cooperatively forging sustainable and respectful civil societies. [Praxis Peace Institute](#)



The Transition Movement comprises vibrant, grassroots community initiatives that seek to build community resilience in the face of such challenges as peak oil, climate change and the economic crisis.

Transition Initiatives differentiate themselves from other sustainability and "environmental" groups by seeking to mitigate these converging global crises by engaging their communities in home-grown, citizen-led education, action, and multi-stakeholder planning to increase local self-reliance and resilience. They succeed by regeneratively using their local assets, innovating, networking, collaborating, replicating proven strategies, and respecting the deep patterns of nature and diverse cultures in their place. Transition Initiatives work with deliberation and good cheer to create a fulfilling and inspiring local way of life that can withstand the shocks of rapidly shifting global systems. [The Transition Town Movement | Transition US](#)

Community Supported Agriculture: An Introduction to CSA

(from the Biodynamic Farming and Gardening Association website)

History

Several Biodynamic gardeners independently brought the idea of CSA to North America in the mid-1980s. The initial CSA gardens completed their first year of operation in 1986. Steven McFadden, co-author of the first book on CSA, *Farms of Tomorrow*, estimates that there are between 6,000 and 6,500 CSAs in the U.S. (as of January 2012).

How CSA Works

Consumers and farmers work together on behalf of the Earth and each other. While the farmer is tending the Earth on behalf of others, consumers share the costs of supporting the farm and share the risk of variable harvests (and also share the over-abundance of a particularly fruitful year). Membership in the CSA is based on shares of the harvest. Members are called shareholders and they subscribe or underwrite the harvest for the entire season in advance. Each project handles this relationship in its own fashion. Every farm is different in length of season, crops grown, level of social activities and price they set for their shares.

[Community Supported Agriculture: An Introduction to CSA | Biodynamic Farming and Gardening Association](#)



In 1999, Angelic Organics Learning Center was established as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit educational organization and a partner to Angelic Organics Farm. <http://www.learn-grow-connect.org/>

Mission

Angelic Organics Learning Center empowers people to create sustainable communities of soils, plants, animals and people through educational, creative, and experiential programs. The Learning Center, a nonprofit organization, is the educational partner to Angelic Organics, a vibrant Biodynamic community supported farm.

Vision

We envision a dynamic and enduring partnership between farmers and consumers who strive for economies, ecologies, and cultures that respect the land and honor the people who work it, know healthy food as a human right, celebrate the beauty and mysteries of life and the living earth, encourage authenticity and self-reliance and cooperation, and are sustainable over many generations.

Guiding Principles

We believe:

- Community supported agriculture and organic and Biodynamic farming bring people into positive relationships with the land, food, farmers, and the community.
- Healthy living soils lead to healthy plants, animals, and people.
- Biological and cultural diversity are essential to the health of our world.
- A measure of a healthy society is how we care for the least fortunate among us.
- Change happens when a person connects their passion and talents with the needs of the community.
- We make a powerful impact when we live the change we want to see in the world.



Waldorf School Community

At every level, Waldorf Education seeks to build community. In the classroom, it accomplishes this by replacing competition with collaboration, by setting the stage for deep and lasting relationships among students and between students and their teachers. The Waldorf school tradition of non-hierarchical governance and administration enhances the possibilities for a strong and healthy school community. Community is also built through school festivals, which are often shared with friends from outside the immediate school family, as well as through parent participation in school committees, in the classroom and on the board. Evening classes, lectures and study groups draw eager adult learners from every sector, thus widening the embrace of the Waldorf school. [Why Waldorf Works - Why Waldorf Works](#)

Love is higher than opinion. If people love one another the most varied opinions can be reconciled — this is one of the most important tasks for humankind today and in the future: that we should learn to live together and understand one another. If this human fellowship is not achieved, all talk of development is empty.
—Rudolf Steiner



The Two Rivers Folk School

(TRFS) in Minneapolis/St. Paul, Minnesota, seeks to create a more democratic, humane, and sustainable society by providing means for the

sharing of practical arts, applied technologies, theoretical wisdom, and the capacity to intuit the sources of awareness and intention.

Multi-generational learning

To accomplish this goal we provide shared education in folk arts, health and wellness, sustainable agriculture, and wisdom preservation and exchange from the Indigenous, Eastern and Western paths to knowledge.

Visit the website often in order to read about current workshops and register to take one.

[Two Rivers Folk School | Preserving Wisdom and Craft](#)



Mission of the Driftless Folk School

The mission of the Driftless Folk School is to support healthy, sustainable communities and personal development by providing creative and meaningful educational opportunities and inspiring lifelong learning for individuals and families. [Driftless Folk School](#)

Goals

We strive to accomplish our mission by offering experiences in agriculture, natural history, arts and crafts, and traditions of rural Wisconsin and other cultures. This includes offering:

- practical guidance for farmstead practices and land stewardship.
- family activities, children's workshops and childcare.
- traditional and contemporary skills that have proven to be sustainable.
- a context for dialogue and exploration of issues meaningful to human life.
- a noncompetitive and supportive learning environment.

Think OutWord is a peer-led training in social threefolding for young adults that began in 2008 and is loosely situated in the northeastern United States. It is grounded in, though not limited to, an understanding of the threefold nature of the human being and of society, primarily as it was articulated by the early 20th century philosopher Rudolf Steiner. Through the training, participants gain deeper insight into contemporary social phenomena and explore different methods by which they can become increasingly engaged in socially transformative work. thinkoutword.org



Community Supported Anthroposophical Medicine (CSAM), founded in 1997, is dedicated to providing patient care, education and research in health care based on anthroposophic medical approaches. CSAM provides outpatient care at its medical office staffed by two medical doctors

(MDs). All patients interested in a holistic approach can be treated with a combination of standard and anthroposophic medical care. [Community Supported Anthroposophical Medicine](#).

Additionally, CSAM oversees the Rudolf Steiner Health Center, which holds two-week inpatient intensive retreats for those needing more support for chronic illnesses. The Retreat program establishes a rhythm of healing that includes diet, nursing applications, artistic therapies, movement therapies and physician consultations.

A sustaining aspect of CSAM is the activity and support of the Patient Organization.

The **Patient Organization** is a collective of patients organized in association with CSAM but with its own governing by-laws. Members of the Patient Organization form a community and together determine the range of services CSAM will provide to all members who join with a monthly fee. In this way each member contributes to the health of the community and in turn the community supports each member. Physicians are able to practice more effective care through a personal relationship with their patients. More frequent visits to monitor a health concern, ongoing educational activities and check-ups are part of a healthy strategy for Patient Organization members. As the current trend in health care is directed against diversity in paradigms of care, we need to consider the creation of economically independent models in order to maintain anthroposophical medicine as an option. The reimbursement system is moving toward a pre-determined treatment approach with no consideration of patient or doctor wishes.

Gathering for a CSAM class or sharing a meal at a Patient Organization meeting nurtures the growing community. This broad and inclusive approach to wellness and medicine provides a seed for the future, and a free relationship between physician or therapist and patient. [Patient Organization – CSAM](#)

Rights and Obligations of Patient Organization members are as follows:

- -To seek medical care as needed.
- -To place one's own needs in balance with the needs of the community.
- -To attend meetings and offer one's skills and time to support the organization.
- -To grow in understanding of the nature of health and illness.

Illuminating Anthroposophy: Newsletter of the Anthroposophical Prison Outreach

Illuminating Anthroposophy is a newsletter that builds community among inmates involved with the Anthroposophical Prison Outreach program by sharing insights and interpretations of the sometimes highly esoteric writings by Rudolf Steiner. Though its readers are in prison, the newsletter ensures that these individuals are not left to understand the readings alone. The newsletter is sent to all members of the Anthroposophical Society in America as well as other friends and supporters, providing them with insight into the circumstances of incarcerated individuals and their inspirational transformation evidenced through reflections, poems, stories and drawings.

The APO program is designed to encourage inmates to take responsibility for their lives. The specific objective is to encourage and support self-rehabilitation through self-discovery. Once an incarcerated individual begins to balance his or her inner life, the outer life can also become more harmonious and meaningful. This increases their potential for successful re-integration into society after their release. [Illuminating Anthroposophy-APO newsletter](#)



The Songtrails Project is an independently created initiative striving to reawaken in human beings a connection to the natural world and Spirit of Place.

A Songtrail weaves singing, poems, prayers and stories of the land with walking along a chosen path. Singing unites us directly with the harmony of the spheres, while

walking grounds us and slows us down, allowing us to turn our focus to the beauty around us and, like a friend, attend to the rich stories embedded in the land from the formation of its substance to the history impressed upon it through human activity.

Songtrails honor the four directions and thank all beings, the earth and cosmos. Our loving interest and creative interaction with the world has the power to enliven subtle life forces toward regeneration.

Songtrails began in Chicago, Illinois, and have been offered throughout the central region of the United States. For more information on creating a Songtrail Festival in your area, contact:
marianne.fieber@yahoo.com

Great Spirit of the East, where the sun rises and life begins, unite us all together. Create of us one family.

Great Spirit of the South, send us your warm, healing winds so that we, as brother and sister, may touch and heal the pain around us.

Great Spirit of the West, help us to work together in love so that we may meet together someday and be one with the Creator.

Great Spirit of the North, you send the cold winds of discipline and purification. May they unify us in peace and love.

Father Sky, Teach us to live in peace and harmony in all four directions.

Mother Earth, our greatest gift — we come from you and we return to you.

Help us to work together to take care of our earth and obey her rules. Show us how to respect her.

Transforming Detroit — A Community of Practice

Neighborhoods throughout Detroit, Michigan, have become victims of blight due to the economic collapse which was felt in this automotive town earlier than in the rest of the nation. Something had to be done to breathe life back into this important Midwest city. Transformation on the scale of an entire city neighborhood would require the good will, creativity and dedicated collaboration of community partners. Through the advocacy of a collaborative core group, many have come together to make remarkable changes occur for the whole.

The work began with the physical body of the city. In 2009 a once grid-like garden was transformed into Spirit Park, a spiral garden wherein hand-sculpted red sandstone sculptures grace the land. In 2010 the focus was on the disturbed energy and disrupted life rhythms. Projects during that summer included the Farm Way, Urban Gardens, and a spiral bench with meandering paths. A group of volunteers and community members also boarded up and artistically painted houses.

The next focus of transformation by the growing group of partners was the relational issues such as separation (brother vs. brother) and race/class/social isolation. The projects for 2011 included greater community engagement, international and inter-generational partnerships, transforming an overgrown lot into a Children's Earth Solidarity Tree Dome and creating a memorial garden on-site at Detroit Community Schools—as one young participant put it, “transforming the hideous into the beautiful.”

In 2012, the focus turned toward the individual with programs designed to cultivate leadership skills and entrepreneurial experiences. The partnership agreements were expanded and formalized to create a year-long youth development effort, the Brightmoor Youth Development Collaborative (BYDC). Projects undertaken by the BYDC include:

- Open-space management
- Urban Gardening
- Artistically rendering abandoned homes
- Detroit Community Market Garden
- Brightmoor Bikes and Trailers
- Brightmoor Woodworkers

Engaging young people to work alongside other community members plants the seed of possibility. Young eyes opened to the world around them see that a better way is possible; a beautiful place in which to live is within their power to create. A sense of pride and ownership along with strengthening will increase the chance that these neighborhoods, this city, will rise in a way that was at one time unimaginable.

Youth workers have come from Neighbors Building Brightmoor I and II, Student Conservation Association/Greening of Detroit, The Promise at Baber Memorial AME, and Detroit Community Schools.

Financial support has come from the College for Creative Studies, Community for the Renewal of Education and Work, East Michigan Environmental Action Council, Fisher Foundation, Marjorie Fisher, Kellogg Foundation, Malama Foundation, RSF Social Finance, and Skillman-Prevention Network/Community Connections.

Many hundreds of volunteers have given their time, financial resources, creativity and good will to so many transformative projects. The community continues to strengthen as many will forces come together to manifest common goals.

Community partners include Baber Memorial AME, Brightmoor Alliance, Brightmoor College Career Access Network, City Mission, Detroit Community Schools, DYES/WARM Training/AmeriCorps, Hub of Detroit, Neighbors Building Brightmoor, Shade Tree Multicultural Foundation, St. Christine's Soup Kitchen, Trinity/Mt. Vernon Missionary Baptist Church and the University of Michigan.

For more information or to participate in any upcoming projects, contact Bart Eddy at 313-477-7346 or beddy@detcomschools.org

Speak to the Earth

Speak to the Earth
And it shall teach thee
How to not
Destroy ourselves so fast.
Speak to it
Softly
And it will release its
Secrets to you in
The swish of the stream,
The chirp of the birds
And the rhythm of its wind.
Stop and breathe
Slowly
And you will feel
The heart of man,
The Spirit of God
And the urgency of attaining this Peace.
In mid-pace
Meditate
And touch the land.
Embrace the naturalness,
And you will reach the sky; see the senselessness in
What we do
And cry at the preciousness that we miss and destroy.
Pray to it
Which is He, She, Love, Hope and Oneness.
This is all we have,
So let's make it better for us.
Speak to the Earth
And it shall teach thee.

— *Kenneth Foster*

Mr. Foster is a participant in the Anthroposophical Prison Outreach Program. He has worked himself off death row and is now working for his full freedom.

Part VII

Additional Resources,

References

and

Biographies

When we had a lot of community and not much stuff, it made sense that we aimed for stuff. But why do we keep aiming for it? Why don't we realize we have enough, and turn our attention elsewhere?

—Bill McKibben, *Deep Economy*

Organizations

The Center for Ecoliteracy supports and advances education for sustainable living. Best known for our work in school food reform and integrating sustainability into K-12 curricula, we have engaged with educators from across the United States and six continents.

[What We Do | Center for Ecoliteracy](#)

The Center for an Agricultural Economy

Working towards local, sustainable food systems for Vermont and beyond.

Our mission is to build a regenerative, locally based, healthy food system by engaging the greater Hardwick community through collaboration opportunities, educational outreach and providing infrastructure. Furthermore, CAE encourages the development of a local system that meets the needs and aspirations of the community and ensures economic and ecological stability and abundance. Through community involvement, integrated and responsible agri-business, and a commitment to economic, ecologic and nutritional health, the Center for an Agricultural Economy supports a vibrant regional food system.

[The Center for an Agricultural Economy | About Us](#)



SEKEM was founded with the idea of sustainable development and giving back to the community. The vision that brought Dr. Ibrahim Abouleish to dig the first well in the vast desert land still resounds in SEKEM's approach of conducting business. Like a compass, our vision, mission and values guide us in the everyday work in all SEKEM companies.

[Welcome to SEKEM](#)

SEKEM was founded with the idea of sustainable development and giving back to the community. The vision that brought Dr. Ibrahim Abouleish to dig the first well in the vast desert land still resounds in SEKEM's approach of conducting

Sekem's Vision

Sustainable development towards a future where every human being can unfold his or her individual potential; where mankind is living together in social forms reflecting human dignity; and where all economic activity is conducted in accordance with ecological and ethical principles.



Stewarding life's essentials,
nurturing life's potential

Inspired by the work of Rudolf Steiner, Hawthorne Valley Association seeks to promote social and cultural renewal through the integration of education, agriculture, and the arts by engaging in a unique mix of cultural and economic endeavors. Today, the Association includes:

- Biodynamic Farm and CSA
- Waldorf School
- Farmscape Ecology Program — agricultural research
- Center for Social Research
- Alkion Center — adult education
- Adonis Press

<http://hawthornevalleyassociation.org/>

Ambassador Organics™ is an exemplary working model of a triple-bottom-line business approach. Triple-bottom-line accounting is the expansion of the traditional company reporting framework to take into account financial performance as well as environmental and social performance. The phrase was coined in 1998 by John Elkington in his book *Cannibals with Forks: The Triple Bottom Line of 21st Century Business*. This progressive business approach is being adopted by companies seeking financial profitability while benefiting their local and global communities and natural resources. Ambassador Organics' triple-bottom-line approach is a way of conducting business that financially rewards the people who produce premium organic foods while honoring the environment from which the food came. It also respects the connection between the various policy issues that impact the direction our world will take concerning health, food and farm economies. [Ambassador Organics : Mission - Biodynamic, Organic, Fair Trade Certified Coffee, Tea and Spices](#)

No Impact Project is an international, environmental, nonprofit project, founded in the spring of 2009. It was inspired by Colin Beavan's *No Impact Man* book, film, and blog.

The No Impact Project uses entertainment, education and group action to engage new people in the quest for ways of living that connect individual happiness with service to community and habitat. Central to Beavan's thesis is the notion that deep-seated individual behavior change leads to both cultural change and political engagement. Living low-impact provides a clear entry point into the environmental movement. This thesis is the bedrock of the No Impact Project.

[No Impact Project » About Us](#)



Fifth Season Cooperative

Our multi-stakeholder organization, a unique structure in the United States, includes six member classes that span the entire supply chain at the local level. Producers, producer groups, processors, distributors, buyers, and workers all sit at the same table and make decisions together that are best for the community, the environment, and their businesses.

The motivations behind this organizational structure are to keep local dollars circulating in the community and to develop long-term relationships between growers and buyers that lead to fair pricing and fair treatment of all members of the supply chain.

Our Mission

To produce, process and market healthy, local foods in our region by supporting the values of environmental, social and economic fairness for all.

Vision

- We are a multi-stakeholder cooperative that is mutually responsible to the planet, community and each other's needs.
- We are a sustainable regional food system where the majority of our food is accessed from the region where we live.
- We are rooted in sustainable methods which produce nutritious, high-quality food.
- The true cost of food takes into account ecological stewardship, quality of life and growing nutrient-rich foods.

<http://fifthseason.coop/>



Northwest Earth Institute

Inspiring people to take responsibility for Earth

Since 1993, Northwest Earth Institute (NWEI) has been leading the curious and the motivated to take responsibility for Earth. Our proven process of connection, reflection and action changes you for good. Through discussion courses and the annual EcoChallenge, we help you engage your community in meaningful conversations that lead to “Aha!” moments about the way you live, work, create and consume. The result is a life that is simpler, richer, and better—for you and for Earth.

NWEI discussion courses are offered in community and neighborhood centers; nature and science centers; through nonprofits to boost community involvement and as program offerings to members and stakeholders; and as part of city and municipality level sustainability initiatives. [Northwest Earth Institute](#)

Articles

International Journal of Community Currency Research

[Trophic Currencies: ecosystem modeling and resilient economies](#)

Posted July 8, 2012

An economic system with a single currency will only recognize a very limited set of activities as valuable. As a consequence, many of the activities that constitute a functional community, and in turn a functional economy, lie outside of the value analysis of our existing economies. In this paper we present a theoretical currency model analogous to trophic food chains. As plants, grazers, and predators all have different perspectives on value and operate accordingly, so do similar distinctions exist in society. We suggest that appropriately differentiated currencies from supranational currencies to regional, sectoral and down to timebanking and nonreciprocal exchanges can help better activate the value in the world, empowering communities and economies.

Read the entire article by Marc Brakken, Preston Austin, Stephanie Rearick and Leander Bindewald: <http://ijccr.Trophic Currencies.pdf>

Shared Gifting Funds

RSF Shared Gifting Funds pioneer an innovative model of grant-making designed to encourage collaboration and learning.

RSF Social Finance is dedicated to transforming the way the world works with money. We believe it is possible to transform the dynamics of the philanthropic field by fostering a spirit of collaboration and learning, rather than competition, in the grant making process. RSF has been supporting a "fund sharing" model of grant making through the Mid-States Shared Gifting Program for over 15 years. This program, created by Elise O. Casper, demonstrates a new model of grant making in which the grantees are also grantors as they work together to disburse a pool of funds to each other. Continue reading the article: [Shared Gifting Funds - RSF Social Finance](#)

Shared Gifting: Barn Dance Raises the Sustainable Food Movement

article by Kelley Buhles (September 19, 2011)

The genesis of this event was at the first meeting of the RSF Food and Agriculture Shared Gifting Fund. This program is working to transform the way philanthropic dollars flow to charitable projects in the world by having the grantees themselves determine how funds are directed. Seven organizations from around the Bay Area were selected to participate in a daylong meeting where they shared their stories and needs. It culminated in them collectively deciding how to best use a grant of \$50,000. To read more about this meeting check out this newsletter article. Read the full article: [Shared Gifting Archives - RSF Social Finance](#)

Soil, Soul, and Society article by Martin Ping

On July 30, 2012, Hawthorne Valley Association marked the 40th anniversary of working the soil of agriculture on its land in the Hudson Valley of New York. In all that time it has been Hawthorne Valley's mission to inspire by example social and cultural renewal through the integration of education, agriculture, and the arts. The significance of place and the ability to connect intimately to and through place provide compelling evidence as to why our localized agriculture can be understood as a foundational activity upon which all humanity depends—not just for producing food. To read the full article, click link: [Soil, Soul, and Society - RSF Social Finance](#)

Spring 2008 Biodynamics

Associative Economics and Community Supported Agriculture by Jeff Poppen

When an objective community spirit is working in associations of people providing for each other, a wise intelligence appears; we feel good when everyone gets treated fairly. If we can choose our destiny, let's evolve towards taking what we need, giving what we can, and doing for each other as we would like reciprocated. To read the full article, click link: [Article: Community Supported Agriculture](#)
[Spring 2008 Biodynamics | Biodynamic Farming and Gardening Association](#)

The Rise of the Social Entrepreneur by David Bornstein

If we wanted to build a system that would elicit solutions to complex and unforeseeable problems wherever they were needed, how might we do it?

We might try to identify leaders scattered in communities around the planet and help them address problems as they appeared. We might try to prepare these people with leadership skills, ideas and resources so they could be effective and ethical change-makers. We'd try to create a response mechanism that acts something like the body's immune system. November 13, 2012: The New York Times
<http://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2012/11/13/the-rise-of-social-entrepreneur/>

The Business Alliance for Local Living Economies (BALLE) is the fastest growing business alliance of values-aligned entrepreneurs, business networks, and local economy funders in North America. Together we are building local economies, city by city, town by town, business by business. Use this link to download our *Guide to Community Capital*:

https://bealocalist.org/sites/default/files/a_guide_to_community_capital.pdf

Publications Links

[OdeWire | News for Intelligent Optimists](#)

[Lilipoh ~ the spirit in life | Lilipoh | Health Magazine, Nutrition Magazine, Environment Magazine](#)

[YES! Magazine — Powerful Ideas, Practical Actions — YES! Magazine](#)

RSF Quarterly [Publications - RSF Social Finance](#)

[Biodynamics Journal | Biodynamic Farming and Gardening Association](#)

[Orion Magazine](#)

[Current Issue – Utne Reader](#)

[Spirituality and Health Magazine](#)

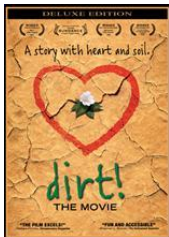
[timeFTW: blog – it's about time For The World](#)

Videos

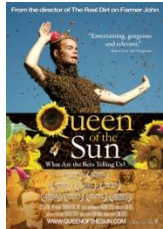


www.Onemanonecow.com

What does an environmentally friendly biodynamic food system capable of feeding everyone actually look like? This film is a blueprint for a post-industrial future. It takes you into the heart of the world's most important renaissance.



Dirt! The Movie tells the amazing and little-known story of the relationship between humans and living dirt. The film offers a vision of a sustainable relationship between humans and dirt through profiles of the global visionaries who are determined to repair the damage we've done before it's too late. There are many ways we can preserve the living skin of the earth for future generations. If you care about your food, water, the air you breathe, your health and happiness... [All About Dirt | Dirt!](#)



Queen of the Sun: What Are the Bees Telling Us? takes us on a journey through the catastrophic disappearance of bees and the mysterious world of the beehive. This alarming and ultimately uplifting film weaves together a dramatic story of the heartfelt struggles of beekeepers, scientists and philosophers around the world. This spellbinding film explores the long-term causes that have led to one of our most urgent global food crises, illuminating the deep link between humans and bees. [Queen of The Sun: movie](#)



The Real Dirt on Farmer John: The epic tale of a maverick Midwestern farmer. An outcast in his community, Farmer John bravely stands amidst a failing economy, vicious rumors, and violence. By melding the traditions of family farming with the power of art and free expression, this powerful story of transformation and renewal heralds a resurrection of farming in America. [Angelic Organics - The Real Dirt on Farmer John](#)



Mama Earth: Her Destiny—Our Hands (written by Brad Overall) Ecological economists, whose work is making a positive impact on the planet, illustrate their models to ease many environmental problems. Concepts of sustainability, ecological economics, and natural capital are defined and we are introduced to concepts that make these results achievable. *Mama Earth* dispels the myth that being eco-friendly is merely an altruistic endeavor. We are introduced to an array of new concepts of how companies in our world are reevaluating and reshaping their businesses to positively impact not only the environment but their bottom line. [Green Planet Films Nature and Environmental DVDs Mama Earth: EcoEcon 101](#)



[No Impact Project](#)

Author Colin Beavan, in research for his next book, began the No Impact experiment in November 2006. A newly self-proclaimed environmentalist who could no longer avoid pointing the finger at himself, Colin leaves behind his liberal complacency and vows to make as little environmental impact as possible for one year. No more automated transportation, no more electricity, no more non-local food, no more material consumption...

IDEAS CHANGE EVERYTHING

Maggie Doyne: Founder of the BlinkNow Foundation - *Why the human family can do better:*

Most people on a gap year are content to just see the world and not to try and change it. But on her return, Maggie decided to start a school... Maggie Doyne is 24 years old. And yet she runs an orphanage and school for 230 children in Nepal. She has since started a foundation called [BlinkNow Foundation](#) to share her ideas with other young people.

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2011/06/01/maggie-doyne-blinknow-nepal_n_869906.html

Why the human family can do better - Do Lectures

<http://www.thedolectures.com/>

Nicanor Perlas – Integral Consciousness (Vimeo)

On the eve of the birth of the Occupy Wall Street movement and the discovery of a particle traveling faster than light, Nicanor Perlas holds this mind-blowing lecture about the kind of consciousness needed to stand strong in today's world. [Nicanor Perlas: Integral Consciousness on Vimeo](#)

e² is an ongoing PBS series about the economies of being environmentally conscious. The first season, e² design, was released in summer 2006. The second season, e² energy and e² design season two, was released in fall/winter 2007. The third season, e² transport and e² design season three, was released in fall/winter 2008. [e² | shop | PBS](#)



THE ECONOMICS OF PEACE

Transforming Money • Rebuilding Community • Redefining Wealth

OCTOBER 18 - 23, 2009 SONOMA, CALIFORNIA

Watch Vimeo productions from this 2009 conference by clicking the following link:

<http://vimeo.com/channels/theeconomicsofpeace>

Books

Blessed Unrest: How the Largest Movement in the World Came Into Being and Why No One Saw it Coming

tells the story of a worldwide movement that is largely unseen by politicians or the media. From billion-dollar nonprofits to single-person causes, these organizations collectively comprise the largest movement on earth. It is organizing from the bottom up and is emerging as an extraordinary and creative expression of people's needs worldwide.

by Paul Hawken; London, England: Viking Penguin, 2007. ISBN: 978-0-670-03852-7 (hc)
[Blessed Unrest - Watch The Video](#)

Small Is Beautiful: Economics As If People Mattered

One of the fundamental books on ecological economics. Writing in a charming and simple style, E. F. Schumacher asks us to look behind the basic assumptions of modern economics. With an Introduction by Theodore Roszak and Foreword by Bill McKibben.

by E. F. Schumacher; Harper Perennial, 1989/2010

Voluntary Simplicity: Toward a Way of Life That Is Outwardly Simple, Inwardly Rich

By embracing, either partially or totally, the tenets of voluntary simplicity—frugal consumption, ecological awareness, and personal growth—people can change their lives. And in the process, they have the power to change the world.

by Duane Elgin; New York: William Morrow and Company, 1993. ISBN: 0-688-12119-5

The Soul of Money: Transforming Your Relationship with Money and Life is a wise and inspiring exploration of the connection between money and leading a fulfilling life. This compelling and fundamentally liberating book shows us that examining our attitudes toward money—earning it, spending it, and giving it away—can offer surprising insight into our lives, our values, and the essence of prosperity. Through personal stories and practical advice, Lynne Twist demonstrates how we can replace feelings of scarcity, guilt, and burden with experiences of sufficiency, freedom, and purpose.

by Lynne Twist; New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2003. ISBN: 978-0-393-0509-74

[About The Soul of Money Institute](#)

Money Can Heal: Evolving Our Consciousness—The Story of RSF and Its Innovations in Social Finance

Exploring the wonders of every kind of monetary transaction, Siegfried Finser reveals how all transactions interact with the human psyche. Finser shows a way beyond money as “a thing one acquires” toward money as “movement” among human souls. You’ll never see money the same way again. “The circulation of money is continuously renewed through the penetration of human spiritual initiative and social interactions.”

by Siegfried Finser; Great Barrington, MA: SteinerBooks, 2006. ISBN: 978-0-88010-573-6

The Price of a Dream: The Story of the Grameen Bank tells the remarkable story of the Grameen Bank. Providing collateral-free “micro-loans” for self-employment to millions of women villagers in Bangladesh—the bank has inspired and shaped the thinking of economists, policy makers, business people, development workers and a generation of social entrepreneurs.

by David Bornstein; Oxford University Press, 2005. ISBN-13: 9780195187496

Slow Investing: How Your Money Can Transform the World, edited and introduced by John Bloom. Money today moves at the pace of electricity, often at the sacrifice of human relationships. Yet it is these relationships that are our greatest asset and would provide support even if there were no money. Slow investing is part of the growing field of social finance, an alternative view of what money is all about. [Books: Slow Investing](#)

Awakening to Community by Rudolf Steiner (lectures given in 1923). GA Dornach, Switzerland and Great Barrington, MA: SteinerBooks/Anthroposophic Press. ISBN: 978-0910142618 [SteinerBooks - Awakening to Community](#)

Philosophy of Freedom (Spiritual Activity) by Rudolf Steiner (1894). Great Barrington, MA: SteinerBooks. ISBN: 978-0880101561 [SteinerBooks - Philosophy of Spiritual Activity](#)

Toward Social Renewal by Rudolf Steiner (1919). Great Barrington, MA: SteinerBooks. ISBN: 978-1855840720 [SteinerBooks - Towards Social Renewal](#)

Turning to One Another: Simple Conversations to Restore Hope to the Future by Margaret J. Wheatley; San Francisco, CA: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, 2002. ISBN: 1-57675-145-7

Mission Possible! Sow Courage; Harvest a New World The book is a tell-all story of an emerging movement called MISSION—Movement of Imaginals for Sustainable Societies through Initiatives, Organizing and Networking—and how it is making strides in transforming the way we think about what it truly means to change the world. [What is the MISSION](#) Nicanor Perlas

Invisible Walls: Why We Ignore the Damage We Inflict on the Planet . . . and Ourselves explores the complex convergence of social, economic and political factors that keep us from acting in our own self-interest.
by Peter Seidel; Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books, 2001. ISBN: 1-57392-899-2

The Nature Principle: Human Restoration and the End of Nature-Deficit Disorder

By tapping into the restorative powers of nature, we can boost mental acuity and creativity; promote health and wellness; build smarter and more sustainable businesses, communities, and economies; and ultimately strengthen human bonds.

by Richard Louv; Chapel Hill, NC: Algonquin Books of Chapel Hill, 2011. ISBN: 978-1-56512-581-0

Ecological Literacy: Educating Our Children for a Sustainable World

Edited by Michael K. Stone and Zenobia Barlow; San Francisco, CA: Sierra Club Books, 2005. ISBN: 978—1-57805-153-3

EcoLiterate: How Educators Are Cultivating Emotional, Social and Ecological Intelligence

by Daniel Goleman, Lisa Bennett and Zenobia Barlow; San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2012.

The Green Devotional: Active Prayers for a Healthy Planet

Secular and sacred, ancient and new—a soaring collection of words for contemplation and action to ensure the survival of our planet and everything that lives here.

Karen Speerstra (2010): San Francisco, CA. Conari Press ISBN: 978-1-57324-459-6

love letter to the milky way is a slim volume of poems that could change your life. In this book, Drew Dellinger takes us on a beautiful journey into the emerging new universe story, with all its glory and suffering, mystery and meaning. [Love Letter to the Milky Way](#) by Drew Dellinger; Planetize the Movement Press, 2002; Ashland, OR: White Cloud Press, 2010. ISBN 978-1-935952-54-1

Cradle to Cradle: Remaking the Way We Make Things, published in 2002, is widely acknowledged as one of the most important environmental manifestos of our time. by William McDonough and Michael Braungart; North Point Press, 2002. ISBN: 978-0865475873

Biographies

Louis Alemayehu is a writer, educator, activist, poet, father and grandfather of African and Native American heritage. He facilitates workshops on racism, culture, environmental justice and community building. His writing has appeared in national and international publications such as *The International Process Work Journal*. Louis is a cofounder of the Native Arts Circle, the oldest Native American artists' organization in the Upper Midwest. In 2003 the Headwaters Foundation gave Louis an award for life-long commitment to social justice. Louis works deeply across multiple cultural communities with the North American Water Office whose mission is to phase in modern renewable energy and energy efficiency systems and technologies, and phase out abusive energy practices. In 2009 the Minnesota Spoken Word Association gave Alemayehu an Urban Griot award for 30 years of excellence as a pioneering spoken word artist. <http://intermediaarts.org/Louis-Alemayehu1>

John Bloom is Director of Organizational Culture at RSF Social Finance in San Francisco, California. As part of his work at RSF he is developing the Transforming Money Network as well as other educational programs that address the intersection of money and spirit in personal and social transformation. He currently writes a blog, <http://transformingmoney.blogspot.com/>.

The founder of two nonprofits, he has also served as a trustee on several, including Yggdrasil Land Foundation, and has worked with over 100 nonprofits.

Mary Christenson has been an adviser of the Mid-States Shared Gifting Program since 2004 and a member of the Schools Fund Sharing Group since 1995. She has worked in development at Pleasant Ridge Waldorf School since 1995. She is a graduate of the Waldorf School Administration and Community Development program from Sunbridge College in Spring Valley, New York, and has two years of postgraduate work in international development education. Building sustainability into fund-raising efforts in the schools, group process methods and community building are key interests of hers.

Michael D'Aleo is a founding member and director of research at SENSRI. Michael holds a mechanical engineering degree from Rutgers University where he graduated *summa cum laude*. Earlier in his career, Michael was project leader in charge of new product development at Lutron Electronics. His main interest was to find solutions to technical problems that resulted in designs that were artistic and based on processes found in the natural world. Michael also holds a master's degree in education from Sunbridge College. He was a cofounder of the high school at the Waldorf School of Saratoga Springs, where he teaches physical science and mathematics. Michael is also an instructor in the summer Waldorf teacher education program at the Center for Anthroposophy in Wilton, New Hampshire, and in the year-round teacher education program at Sunbridge College in Spring Valley, New York. His current research focuses on applying principles of activity of water to technology, and on developing capacities of conscious sensory perception.

Marianne Fieber has been a member of the Central Regional Council of the Anthroposophical Society in America since 2006. She received her master's degree in education in Waldorf Administration and Community Development from Sunbridge College in Spring Valley, New York. It was during this training that she developed an interest in understanding Rudolf Steiner's Fundamental Social Law and the practicality of a threefold structure of society. She has worked in Waldorf schools as a teacher of children and adults as well as serving in several administrator roles. Since 2004, Marianne has developed and led dozens of Songtrails throughout the central region of the U.S. in an effort to build a living relationship to the Spirit of Place.

John Fuller has been a student of Rudolf Steiner's work since the 1970s and has particular interest in its philosophical foundations, inner work, and the implications of the threefold social organism. He has worked professionally in Waldorf school administration and information technology in higher education. He continues to facilitate courses on the foundational works of anthroposophy for Novalis Institute and is on the board of the Minnesota Waldorf School.

Richard Kotlarz has worked for a quarter century as a technician in the fields of engineering consulting, industrial testing and product design. He admits that this background, which is augmented by military service, work in human services and political activism, does not include significant professional experience in the area of economics. He has come to his interest and learning in economics as a common citizen with a personal mission to understand and resolve the larger issues in the world around him. His quest has taken on a very different nature as a result of his encounter several years ago with the work of Rudolf Steiner and his teachings on the Threefold Social Order. Richard is an intrepid explorer of the rarefied realms of economic contemplation, but as a lifelong Heartlander, demands that his Truth "must grow corn." He is currently active speaking, discussing money and economic matters and in the process of founding a monetary institute, the Institute for the Renewal of Economic Life (IREL), centered in the Twin Cities.

Gary Lamb is co-director of the Hawthorne Valley Center for Social Research. He has a degree in mathematics and technology and over 30 years experience in business and not-for-profit management. His most recent book, *Associative Economics: Spiritual Activity for the Common Good*, is published by AWSNA Publications. He is a board member of the Institute for Social Renewal and previously served as the managing editor of *The Threefold Review* and as the director of the Hope Through Education Scholarship Program. His current interests include local food production and distribution; freedom, funding, and accountability in education; and conversation-based social transformation processes.

Albert Linderman, Ph.D., anthropologist and anthroposophist, is CEO of Sagis Corporation. Albert has trained under Otto Scharmer, is a member of Theory U and uses "Presencing" in his work. He also contributes development expertise to the new Heliopolis University for Sustainable Development (SEKEM, Cairo, Egypt) and is currently directing the establishment of Two Rivers Folk School in St. Paul, Minnesota. Through his career he has led and grown enterprises in higher education and ministry, and assisted in numerous international development projects. For more than 30 years he has contributed in several capacities to various causes for deaf and hard-of-hearing individuals.

Craig Neal awakened to his life's purpose in 1963, and since then has celebrated life as a passionate change leader, publishing executive and organizational executive and guide to those called to authentically show up in life and work. In 1995 Craig concluded his publishing career as publisher of *Utne Reader* magazine and cofounded Heartland Inc. with Patricia, his wife of 25 years. Cofounder of the Conscious Business Alliance and of the Minnesota Magazine Publishers Association, he also served as a founding board member of Business for Social Responsibility and of Responsible Minnesota Business. Craig is currently a board member of the Berrett-Koehler Author Cooperative. Craig and Patricia live in Minneapolis; he loves the land and is an avid gardener, beekeeper and voyageur.

Nicanor Perlas is president of the Center for Alternative Development Initiatives (CADI) in Manila, where he guides research and policy work on globalization, threefolding and their impacts on civil society, cultural power and sustainable development. He is co-convenor of the Global Network for Social Threefolding (GlobeNet3) and the author of several books as well as more than 100 articles and monographs on various topics, including globalization, sustainable development, civil society, philosophy of biology and science, biodynamic and sustainable agriculture, environment, and spiritual science. In recognition of the national and international impact of his work, Mr. Perlas was awarded the UN Environmental Program Global 500 Award for Sustainable Agriculture and The Outstanding Filipino (TOFIL) Award in 1994.

Leah Walker has a deep interest in human development and earth evolution, particularly as described by Rudolf Steiner. She is a biography worker and licensed professional counselor (LPC), as well as a faculty member of the Center for Biography and Social Art. She holds a certificate in homeopathy, worked for many years as a special education counselor in the public school system, and also as a ropes course instructor in the field of addiction treatment. Leah has been an advisor to the Mid-states Shared Gifting Group since 2009. She holds a Master's degree in educational psychology from the University of Texas at Austin.

Index of Poems and Verses

Poems by Louis Alemayehu

[Bright Moments, Brilliant Corners](#)

[Prayer-song for the Common Ground](#)

[The Holy Land Is All The Earth](#)

[One no matter what...Granpa \(Daniel Jones\) 1889-1975](#)

Other Verses

[I Am the Decisive Element](#) by Haim G. Ginott

[What Constitutes Success](#) by Bessie Stanley

[Seek the Real Practical Material Life](#): Rudolf Steiner

[Speak to the Earth](#) by Kenneth Foster

Appendix

AWSNA Great Lakes Regional Conference

February 23-25, 2012

Minnesota Waldorf School, St. Paul, MN

Reflections on the Upcoming Conference New Year's Day 2012

I have begun preparing for the upcoming conference that will take place in Minneapolis in February of this New Year. During a recent trip with Colleen Everhart to the greater Minnesota region in December, Kristi Fackel, Kelly Larson and Gideon Weick provided a lot of background with respect to the place of Minnesota and some of its history. The first day involved a lot of travel and we took in the power you can experience standing at the North Shore of Lake Superior. The Great Lakes play a central role in the North American Continent, and Lake Superior, as the first and most prominent lake, may have an even more important effect on the continent as a whole.

The second day was spent looking more into the historical people of Minnesota. This included both the indigenous people of this area as well as the first Europeans who arrived in the last few centuries. The day ended with us standing at the base of Fort Snelling at the confluence of the Minnesota and Mississippi rivers on Pike Island, an important place in the history of the native people. Over the course of that day I had quite an interest in some of the early interactions between the indigenous and European people. I left with the book on the Great Sioux Uprising of 1862. While many of you will likely know more about this than I, the following thoughts seemed important to me and I share them with you as we prepare for this conference. I am sure there are many perspectives on the causes of this event but what arose in me as I thought about this was the following:

It was interesting to read that the origin of the "uprising" in 1862 was essentially economic in origin. At the most basic level, the Sioux began the uprising as a result of not having received an annuity payment from the federal government that they were entitled to by treaty, was overdue in time and that they needed for their basic survival needs. The last point is very important. The payments were needed by the Sioux because for many of them, their previous means for making a livelihood (more nomadic hunting based) was no longer possible because of the significant influx of settlers from the east and the resulting loss of land. While treaties had been signed and agreements made, these were often changed at another date or did not reflect the interest of all the people that the treaties affected. Attempts had been made by some to help acclimate the Sioux to this new situation and "teach" them how to raise food and live in what must have appeared to be a "new way." We can only imagine that this must have been very odd to be instructed by people who were new to the land, how to live

"off the land." While some Sioux were willing to give this new life a try and some did so successfully, others were either less able or less interested in making a change.

There was a second problem with these annuity payments. Often some of the native people who were to receive the payments found they needed them before the payment actually arrived. While in some cases they were helped out by neighbors, both native or new settlers, many of the Sioux ended up relying upon the credit that was extended to them by traders. These traders played the role of offering credit during hard times and then settling up when annuity or other forms of payment arrived. As you might expect, many of the traders took advantage of their situation and were able to exact high returns on their extension of credit. While there were likely some traders who were fair, those who weren't created very ill will amongst a number of the native people whose actual ability to feed themselves and their families was controlled by the traders.

Once the fighting began, it is interesting to read the individual accounts of who lived and who died. Did it matter that the native person outside your front door was a friend you had eaten dinner with before? Did it matter that you had taken on the ways of the settlers and had chosen not to rise up against them? Did it matter that you had studied the medicine of the Sioux with one of their most respected healers and this was well known in both the native and settler circles? Did it matter that you had traded fairly with the native people or settlers? Did it matter if you stayed or fled?

Or

Did you do what your leaders told you to do? Did you see every native/settler as a person to hate or care for or only those who you knew before were important to you? Was your family the most important? Was that the right thing to do? When you heard the stories of what had happened did you hate "those people" or your "own people" more or less? What is important?

It has been 150 years since these events took place.

As we prepare for this conference we can ask:

In what ways are many human beings, or all, still dependent on annuity payments because they haven't been given the conditions to create their own livelihood?

Who really understands what it means to "live off the land" today? Is this living respectful or are we simply taking the fruits and moving on? Is it possible for all of humanity to live off the land and still have a land in the future to live on?

In what ways have the native people and the settler people still not met?

What does each people, each person, have to offer to the formation of an integrated wholeness?

Have we made the changes in approaches to finance that were a contributing cause to this crisis?

What happens if wholeness and respect are combined with specialization and individual initiative?

Are we still in a time when most people will follow their leaders, fend for themselves, or are they free to choose to do either?

As I come back to the present and think of the situation we have presently:

- high unemployment
- rising rates of people dependent on government subsidies
- financial markets that few understand and with rules that change regularly
- a government that asks us to "see something—say something"
- a media that tells us not to trust "others"
- a sense that corporate agriculture is not going to be sustainably possible much longer (was it ever?)
- business and education that often seems to ignore the people and place

I still ask, "Have we tried all that could or needs to be done?"

Now might be the time to build upon the good work done by those in the past up to the present and take a courageous next step. To go one step beyond what we have done up till now and try to work with what we have, right here, right now.

With this place on earth, at this time, and with each other.

What step might we take in Minnesota in February of 2012?

Looking forward to what we will create together.

—Michael D'Aleo

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