

# LILIPOH

the spirit in life

SPRING 2020

**CLIMATE CHANGE  
DEEP ADAPTATION**

## **DIVERSITY + INCLUSION**

IN WALDORF  
SCHOOLS

**BREATH  
AS A CALMING  
CENTER**

WORKING  
THROUGH **FLU  
SYMPTOMS**

**MUTUAL AID**

\$6.00



ISSUE 99 VOL. 26





**Authentic  
Organic**



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Clinton, Michigan

Venerable Eden Foods is the oldest natural food company in North America. We have provided traditional, pure food and inspired organic farming since the 1960s. EDEN Beans are USA grown and purchased directly from known, trusted farmers. This helps support more than 116,000 acres of vital, organic USA farmland on 400 family farms. Eden pioneered availability of BPA, BPS, and phthalate free food cans in the 1990s.



# dear readers



I will always remember where I was on February 29th, the day that our state health department held a press conference telling us that the Novel Coronavirus was beginning to spread in the two counties that border us. And now, five weeks later, it has altered the fabric of our country's society in ways we have never seen in our lifetime.

A section of our dining table is cluttered with bottles of homemade hand sanitizer, essential oils, vitamins, homeopathic and anthroposophic remedies, and homemade Chinese herbal tinctures. I was grateful for Dr. Adam Blanning's article with his step-by-step instructions and specific remedy recommendations for management of flu-like symptoms. We shared it widely on our LILIPOH Facebook page and you will find it in this issue on page 8.

To say we are living in uncertain times is an understatement. One thing I know for sure is that this is not a time to sit on the sidelines. Some spiritual teachers might tell you that we can separate ourselves out from politics, social justice, and active participation in shaping the world we want to live in. That we just need to recite mantras and say our prayers. I could not disagree more.

As longtime readers of LILIPOH, we have been learning side by side about how Camphill co-workers and villagers live in community and care for those of all abilities, how biodynamic farmers grow food and restore the soil, and how anthroposophic doctors and nurses teach us about having agency over our own health through best practices for holistic self-care and care for others. It is times like these that we must put into practice what we have learned, share it with others, and come together in solidarity with those who are in need.

Please take some time to learn about mutual aid, the history, and how to participate in it or start a mutual aid network in your community (page 27). Here are some ideas to get you started:

- Offer some money to a farmer in your community so they can donate food to those in need.
- Check in with friends who are out of work and see if they need groceries picked up, or some cash for supplies or to pay their utility bill.
- Buy a set of the remedies outlined in Dr. Blanning's article for someone in your community who may not be able to afford them.
- Reach out and write to prisoners. Those who are detained are scared because they do not have access to proper sanitation or the capacity for social distancing. [anthroposophyforprisoners.org/](http://anthroposophyforprisoners.org/)

In my own state, I am spending my extra time participating in a Covid-19 resource hotline and relief fund for undocumented workers and community members, all of whom are excluded from unemployment insurance and the \$1200 federal stimulus check. In families where some members are US Citizens, if even one family member uses an ITIN to pay their taxes, no member of that family will be eligible to receive the \$1200 payment coming from the federal government. [scholarshipjunkies.org/relief](http://scholarshipjunkies.org/relief)

There is much work to be done. It can be overwhelming. One of the brightest young activists I know, a transgender, undocumented and unafraid young woman from Mexico, gave me some advice, she said, in the words of Dory from *Finding Nemo*, "Just keep swimming." We're all in this together.

*Chudzy Kowron*

LILIPOH stands for Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness.

*Life can mean the quality of life, inner life, consciousness. in other words, living a life enhanced through understanding. liberty may mean the freedom to choose how one lives. pursuit of happiness is a high term which has often been used superficially. it can mean the joy of helping each other along the road of inner and outer health, and toward a better world.*

## Week 1:

June 28th to July 3rd

### Morning Lectures and the Art of the Child Study

Christof Wiechert will offer daily lectures to all participants, and child study insights to Grades 1-5

### The Joy of Blackboard Drawing and Curriculum Painting in the Upper Elementary Grades

with David Newbatt

#### Grade 1:

### Once Upon A Time

with Christopher Sblendorio

#### Grade 2:

### From Form to Solid Foundation

with Michael Gannon

#### Grade 3:

### Becoming a Steward of the Earth: Awakening to Self and Surroundings

with Kris Ritz

#### Grade 4:

### Celebrating the Earth: Hearing the Voices of our Elders, Reclaiming the Sacred

with Angela Lindstrom

#### Grade 5:

### The Golden Age: Feet upon the Ground, Gaze toward the Heavens

with Monica Lander

#### Grade 6:

### From Romans to Romance

with Lynn Thurrell

#### Grade 7:

### A Year of Awakening and Exploring

with Alison Henry

#### Grade 8:

### From Revolutions to a Free Society

with Heather Handy

#### Also Featuring:

- **Science** with Roberto Trostli (Week 1)
- **Movement** with Gerry LoDolce (Week 1)
- **Singing** with Meg Chittenden (Weeks 1 and 2)
- **Drawing, Painting, or Clay** with Elizabeth Auer (Weeks 1 and 2)
- **Eurythmy** with Cezary Ciaglo (Weeks 1 and 2)
- **Tone Eurythmy** with Leonore Russell (Week 2)



## Welcome to Renewal 2020!

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seeking to deepen their lives through Anthroposophy



Painting by Karine Munk Finser

### Register online at:

[centerforanthroposophy.org](http://centerforanthroposophy.org)

Renewal Courses sponsored by  
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Karine Munk Finser, Director

603-654-2566, [info@centerforanthroposophy.org](mailto:info@centerforanthroposophy.org)

#### Other part-time programs offered by Center for Anthroposophy:

**Explorations: Workshops in the Arts and Contemplative Practices**  
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**Waldorf High School Teacher Education Program**  
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Three-summer program specializing in Arts/Art History  
Biology • English • History • Math • Physics & Chemistry

## Week 2:

July 5th to July 10th

**The Heart of our Spiritual Mission: Healing Impulses and the Call of Destiny**  
with Michaela Glöckler

#### Five-Day Symposium:

**Financing Waldorf Education: A Practical-Solutions-Based Session** with John Bloom, Alice Groh, & Ryder Daniels  
**and Advancing Equity and Diversity in Waldorf Schools**  
with Linda Williams, J. Bloom, et al.

**Biography Life Cycle Work in the Time of Consciousness Soul**  
with Linda Bergh and Jennifer Fox

**The Inner Path to Living Knowledge of Earth & Humanity in Light of Climate Change**  
with Karsten Massei

**Curative Education: Meeting and Understanding Every Child in our Care** with Robyn Brown

**The Human Encounter and Community Building: Waldorf School Administration and Governance**  
with Torin Finser and Carla Comey

**Anthroposophy 101: A Course for Early Childhood/Grades Assistants, Parents, Grandparents, Board Members and Friends of Waldorf Education**  
with Signe Motter and CfA Staff

**Puppetry to Enliven Community: Dry Felting Techniques for Storytelling**  
with Bronia Evers and Melody Brink

**Teaching Students in Mixed or Looping Grades**  
with Angela Lindstrom and Natasha Zimmerman

**Rudolf Steiner's Philosophy of Freedom and Metal Work**  
with Michael D'Aleo

**Veilpainting out of the Imagery of Goethe's Fairy Tale**  
with David Newbatt

**Projective Geometry**  
with Jamie York

**Embroidery: Stitching Inspired by Nature's Geometry**  
with June Albright





# Learn more...

## Upcoming Courses and Conferences:

### ***Seven Life Processes***

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**10/3/19 to 3/5/20, 8:30 pm EST/5:30 pm PST**

Watch the recordings on your own schedule!

### ***Treating the Whole Person***

A fourfold approach for understanding pain, in partnership with the AM student group at NUNM

**Saturday, 2/15/20, Portland, OR**

### ***Anthroposophic End of Life Care***

*Part II: A nursing approach.* A live teaching webinar, for medical providers and nurses with Rolf Heine RN.

**Saturday 3/28/20, 3 pm EST/Noon PST**

### ***Introductory workshop***

Anthroposophic Medicine and Nursing

**Saturday, 5/1/20, New York City**

### ***2020 Training Week:***

*Seven Constitutional Gestures in Diagnosis and Treatment for licensed prescribers (MD, DO, ND, NP, PA, PharmD, DDS)*

Foundational Track - for newcomers

Continuing Education Track - for the more experienced


***Foundation Course in Anthroposophic Nursing:***

Caring for Body, Soul, and Spirit

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**5/2 – 5/9/20, Chestnut Ridge, NY**

# Anthroposophic Medicine and Nursing



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**Wednesday, 1/15/20**

*Hints for a Healthy Diet and Balanced Digestion*

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For further details and a full list of events visit:

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**AnthroposophicNursing.org**

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# LILIPOH

LILIPOH is a quarterly publication featuring an anthroposophic approach to health; encompassing holistic therapies, preservation of childhood, education, the arts, community, agriculture, nutrition and social.

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REDUCING STRESS RESPONSES

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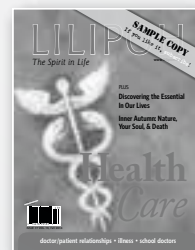
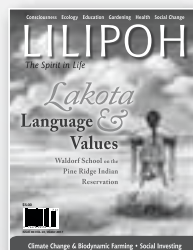
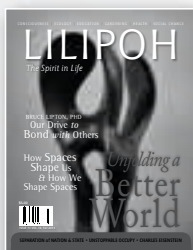
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# Transforming Culture

Rudolf Steiner spoke about  
"a future worthy of the human being."

How do we get there?

**anthroposophy.org**  
Rudolf Steiner's Vision in Action

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working through

# Flu and Flu-like Symptoms

helpful information we should all be  
sharing with each other

ADAM BLANNING, MD



There are many small things we can do to help support each other through a flu. We can collectively work to understand “When I am sick, what is my body trying to accomplish, what does it need to do to get better?” and then we work to support those tasks. Fever is created by the immune system to physiologically aid the process of dissolving and clearing out what has become too isolated, too stuck, too cooled in our own body. Inflammatory reactions—also part of the immune system’s activity—work to recognize and remove those things that do not belong in us, which is why we get inflammations during infections with viruses and bacteria (even when we get a splinter in our finger). It is possible to guide and support the body to accomplish its tasks. The suggestions listed below are helpful for illnesses or flus with strong fever.

One way to help reduce the chances of getting ill is to proactively give the body what it needs. Warmth, whether physical, emotional, or social, helps integrate us into a whole. That’s not just a physiologic process—helping others in

our community by sharing useful information is a social and spiritual correlate to that process. Right now is a time in the world when we need to think about how we help each other, not just get stuck in fear. Consider sharing this with others in your community.

**Please note:** *this is offered as general educational material which cannot replace the evaluation and guidance of a trained medical professional. You should always seek help if someone seems to be seriously ill, if you are worried, or if things are not progressing as you expect.*

But here are some places you can start...

## Things to do at the beginning of a flu illness

(or when you think you are headed that way and want to support good immunity and vitality):

**Slow down and go to bed if you are sick /go to bed early if you are on the edge of illness:** Fear of missing work or school, of inconveniencing other people, or interrupting our own busy schedules too often drives people to eliminate any symptoms as soon as possible. But feeling sick and taking some ibuprofen to get through the rest of the day is not a good strategy for getting through a flu. It hampers your immune system and spreads illnesses (you are often most contagious when you are just starting to get sick). Instead:

- Really slow down and rest quietly, without excessive stimulation. Movies, music, email, Facebook and Netflix are still giving you a very rich “sensory diet”—which takes energy. Cut out non-essential stress or stimulation.
- If you or someone in your family has a fever or the flu, allow space and time for deep, uninterrupted sleep. Don’t rush back into usual

**If you or a loved one are showing signs of Covid19, contact your health care provider. We should all follow the guidelines from our state and local Departments of Health. Unless you are in need of hospitalization, you will be told to stay home—this is where Dr. Blanning’s recommendations below can be very helpful and supportive!**

**The information in this article is presented for educational purposes only. It is not intended to diagnose or prescribe. Please consult your health care provider for diagnosis and treatment.**

—LILIPOH



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# Move Over Dr. Sears...



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activities and responsibilities as soon as some of your symptoms are going—this increases your chance of relapses and complications like pneumonia.

## Support and Protect your Warmth.

Remember, our immune system creates fever because it is an important tool of the immune system. When you block fever you are actually reducing the way your immune system can work with an infection:

- Physically: put on enough layers of clothes so that you have consistently warm hands and feet. If this is not enough, add a hat, hot tea, blankets, or a hot water bottle. Children's bodies are small and they always need at least an extra layer of clothing compared to the adults around them (if you are comfortable in a shirt, put the child in a sweater and hat). This step is especially important at the beginning of a flu illness, when fever is usually rising.
- The best thing you can do when a fever is rising is to help the whole body be warmed, because that is what the immune system is trying to do. You can find a helpful guide for working with fever at [anthromedics.org/PRA-0807-EN#list-sections-3](https://anthromedics.org/PRA-0807-EN#list-sections-3)
- Warmth from natural fibers (such as wool and silk) is best.
- Avoid reflexively medicating with Tylenol or Ibuprofen just because there is an elevated temperature.
- Try not to get stuck in fear—fear makes us cool, harden, and contract, the opposite of what our body really needs to accomplish to work through a flu. See “Fever, Fear and Riding a Bicycle: Working with Fever in a Different

Way” ([denvertherapies.com/fever-fear-and-riding-a-bicycle-working-with-fever-in-a-different-way](https://denvertherapies.com/fever-fear-and-riding-a-bicycle-working-with-fever-in-a-different-way))

**Cleansing.** When you are ill, your body naturally reorients its activity to reduce the amount of outside substances and influences it has to deal with so that it can focus on the illness at hand.

- You can support this process through a simple diet: protein should be avoided; instead teas, vegetable broths or soups, and simple grains can be given. If someone does not have an appetite, don't force them to eat, but do make sure they are still drinking.
- Lots of warm fluids should be taken, particularly Equisetum (Horsetail) Tea, which is useful for both hydration as well as cleansing the kidney system. Thyme, Elderberry blossom,



Lime blossom, and Sage teas (possibly with honey and lemon) are also good for respiratory congestion.

- No caffeine, alcohol, white sugar or processed foods.
- When there is high fever it is a good idea to clean out your digestive system with a dose of Milk of Magnesia or a glycerin suppository. This is especially important if you tend towards constipation or a sluggish digestion.

**Natural Medicines** to help you get through the flu\*: these are anthroposophic or homeopathic preparations (OTC = available over-the-counter, Rx = prescription; TB = True Botanica pharmacy, Ur = Uriel pharmacy, We = Weleda pharmacy)

*It is good to get these medicines so that you have them on hand when you need them—don't wait until you are already in bed with the a fever!*

#### **FOR BOTH PROPHYLAXIS (PREVENTION) AND TREATMENT OF FLU:**

**Meteoric Iron Prunus** pellets or ampules (OTC, Ur)

- For prevention, take 5-10 pellets, once a day
- For treatment of flu symptoms, 5-10 pellets, 3-5 times a day

#### **FOR FEVER:**

**Apis Belladonna** pellets or liquid (OTC, Ur and We, also known as **Erysidoron #1**, Rx, We)

- most helpful in the early stages of a fever, especially when the head is hot but the feet and hands are cool.
- Given as a drop/pellet per year of age, up to 10 drops/pellets for an older child or adult. Can be given up to every two hours.

#### **FOR FEVER AND CHILLS, BODY ACHES, BRONCHITIS:**

**Gelsemium Bryonia** pellets (OTC, Ur), especially if feeling weak, pale, with dull headache

- Children 5 pellets, Adults 10 pellets, up to 5x/day

**Infludo liquid** or **Infludoron pillules** (Rx, We), for flu symptoms that are more in the airways, and for prevention of pneumonia:

- Children 10-20 drops of Infludo liquid in ½ cup of water, sip slowly through the day, or ages 1-5, 3-5 Infludoron pillules every two hours, ages 6-12, 5-10 pillules up to every two hours
- Adults 8-10 drops of Infludo liquid up to every 2 hours, 10-15 Infludoron pillules up to every two hours

#### **FOR MUSCLE ACHES, HEADACHE THAT COMES WITH STRONG FEVER:**

**Arnica 30x** (widely available OTC), can be used up to five times a day

#### **FOR SWOLLEN GLANDS, CONGESTION:**

**Archangelica oil** (OTC, TB), **Archangelica Eucalyptus ointment** (OTC, Ur and We)

- Rub into swollen gland 2-3 times a day

#### **IN THE RECOVERY PHASE:**

**Blackthorn Tonic** (OTC, TB) or **Prunus liquid** (OTC, Ur, We), **Prunus body oil** (OTC, Ur)

#### **EXTERNAL TREATMENTS\*:**

**Wrapped compresses:** for bronchitis and working to prevent pneumonia.

- e.g., Wrapped quark (curd, or “Farmer’s cheese”) compresses. These have been found to be very helpful. *Note:* American cottage cheese, with the liquid squeezed out, can serve as a replacement if you are



unable to find quark. For instructions, see: [pflege-vademecum.de/qbw.php](https://pflege-vademecum.de/qbw.php)


- Wrapped mustard compresses can be helpful for the elderly and those who are bed-ridden, though it is a strong treatment and needs to be done with caution and care, as the mustard can actually burn the skin if the compress is left in place for too long. Mustard compresses are best done with the guidance or assistance of someone experienced in this process. For instructions, see: [pflege-vademecum.de/senf-thorax-wickel.php](https://pflege-vademecum.de/senf-thorax-wickel.php)
- Wrapped ginger compresses bring a deep, lasting, penetrating warmth, for when you are inwardly chilled but not having a strong fever reaction. For instructions, see: [pflege-vademecum.de/itrw.php](https://pflege-vademecum.de/itrw.php)

**Inhalations:** which can be done simply by making a tent with a towel draped over an open bowl:

- Table salt steam inhalation: for mild obstructive bronchitis, for congestion and sinus pressure.

## OVERALL:

- Keep yourself dressed warmly enough that you cannot get a chill; especially protect your chest and neck from getting cold. This is helpful before (preventatively), during, and for some time after an illness
- Take the time you need to recover
- Seek help when you need it
- If you are well, make someone else who is sick a pot of soup

You can find more information about local anthroposophic practitioners, nurses and therapists at [AnthroposophicHealth.org](https://AnthroposophicHealth.org) 

\* Some of the descriptions about medicines and nursing treatments listed here draw from more complete information which can be found at [vademecum.org](https://vademecum.org)

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strengthening the community

# Together in Trauma

SUSAN OVERHAUSER, PHD

We all experience setbacks and challenges in life, sometimes even downright roadblocks. We are forced to move, a relationship breaks apart, a workplace conflict urges us to change jobs, or perhaps we find ourselves swamped in debt. These life challenges are very hard but spur us on to make needed changes in our life. Often, the process of change is difficult, and we feel dis-ease. With time and numerous adjustments, however, we typically find ourselves back on course.

But what about those events which are so shocking and profound that they seem to stop

us in our tracks, causing us to freeze, unable to move on? These are life's traumatic events. They seem to come out of left field, unexpectedly, and often they drastically alter our life, for the worse it seems. A terrible car accident may leave us in great pain, unable to work, and unable to care for ourselves and our family. A significant betrayal may break our trust in humanity, causing us to isolate and withdraw from social engagement. Or perhaps it is a daily betrayal, such as domestic violence or child abuse where our very safety may be at risk. We might be witness to a terrible shooting or victims of



terrorism. How do we cope with these significant traumas?

Sudden shocks alter how we experience events. With a sudden shock, we are as if shaken out of ourselves. Instead of processing the event with our thinking engaged, we are placed in a state of alarm. The bells of our nervous system are ringing high alert. The amygdala lights up and fires warning signals. In response, the frontal lobes (the part of our brain which supports reasoning), go offline, unable to respond. Instead, blood flows to our limbs in the hope we can perhaps avert danger by fighting or fleeing. In this bodily state, perceptions of the world go directly into our body-mind, unfiltered by thinking. Traumatic events can become lodged in the perceptual memory supported by our right brain—without being connected to linear time and our autobiographical sense of self. We become stuck in a trauma time where the dangerous event is omnipresent and our life is always in danger. Normal memory fails at these times. People often report amnesia during and immediately after traumatic events. It is as if our biology is protecting us from the reality of knowing how much our life is or was at stake.

After the traumatic event passes, the body's functioning gradually returns. Animals will typically go through a phase of trembling to release the nervous tension of the situation, before getting back up to enter life again. People blessed with resilience will draw family and friends close and process the experience with those they trust. Ideally, they allow time to recover and recuperate. Many humans, however, often try to resume daily life as soon as possible after a trauma, without taking time to realize how deeply the trauma impacted them. Once again, it is as if the psyche doesn't want the whole person to be aware of the depth of the trauma. It is these unresolved traumas, stuck in trauma time, which cause so much trouble for us.

With deeply impactful trauma such as being near an explosion or being threatened with a knife, or with traumatic experiences repeated over time (such as repeated physical or sexual abuse), the tracks of trauma on the body and nervous system are deeply grooved. Individuals experience hyper-vigilance, an expectation that bad things may occur at any moment. Sudden or loud noises cause an immediate and excessive startle response. Part of one's attention is always alert to potential sources of danger. One finds oneself always orienting to

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“ BUT WHAT ABOUT THOSE EVENTS WHICH ARE SO SHOCKING AND PROFOUND THAT THEY SEEM TO STOP US IN OUR TRACKS, CAUSING US TO FREEZE, UNABLE TO MOVE ON?

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doorways and exits or making sure no one is ever behind one's back. This is very draining for the nervous system and the human being. The trauma(s), stuck in omnipresent trauma time, is never over, but is potentially happening again at every moment. This is the type of trauma which requires help and intervention from caring others.

There are several different types of approaches to treating trauma. One is a top-down approach, using cognition to make sense of what happened to one, and developing insight. This is accomplished through what is called talk therapy, which includes much more than mere talk. Good therapy includes warm caring from the counselor, a holding empathic environment, the development of a collaborative trusting relationship, and working through issues not just cognitively, but also through the counseling relationship. For many survivors of childhood neglect or abuse, the relationship with the therapist is the first genuine empathic relationship they have allowed themselves to truly take in, and this itself is the source of much healing.

The flooding approach is not used much anymore



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because of the risk of re-traumatization, but many techniques now exist which titrate processing of traumatic memory. Flooding involves re-experiencing the traumatic event almost as if it is happening in the moment, this time feeling the full impact on one's feelings—experiencing

flooding, aspects of the trauma may remain in the body as tension patterns or automatic patterned responses to certain events (panic upon being behind the wheel of a car, for example). In these instances, a body-based approach is called for. There are several new forms of somatic therapy

“SUDDEN SHOCKS ALTER HOW WE EXPERIENCE EVENTS. WITH A SUDDEN SHOCK, WE ARE AS IF SHAKEN OUT OF OURSELVES. INSTEAD OF PROCESSING THE EVENT WITH OUR THINKING ENGAGED, WE ARE PLACED IN A STATE OF ALARM.

the terror, panic, grief, and loss. Experiencing the feelings and implications in full consciousness allows emotional processing to occur. If the full event is recalled, including what happened before and after the event, the trauma is properly placed in autobiographical time, and the body-mind no longer regards the experience as omnipresent. In other words, it is moved from trauma time to ordinary time in the memory.

This type of work can now be done much less intensely and more safely with methods such as Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR). However, with both talk therapy and

particularly effective at processing trauma which is held in body memory. Most widely known are Somatic Experiencing, which works quite well with single incident trauma, and Sensorimotor Psychotherapy, which works with developmental trauma as well as single incident trauma.


One of the complicating factors of significant traumatic events is amnesia. It is the nature of trauma to overwhelm the natural meaning-making systems at the time of the event. The danger to life or limb, the danger to important attachment relationships, and the danger to the sense of self can be so intense that the psyche cannot tolerate

knowing what is happening. In these instances, the body-mind will typically dissociate. To dissociate means the event is compartmentalized and not connected with the rest of ongoing reality; the event is lost in an unremembered dissociative fog. Dissociation is an amazing capacity of the mind to break off intolerable emotion and sequester it in hidden areas of the mind where it is lost to easy access. Dissociation is a very powerful defense. Once a person begins using dissociation, it is then often used for all intolerable emotional experiences afterwards. That is, the experience of overwhelming trauma leaves the individual vulnerable to a style of coping which includes avoidance of strong emotion and amnesia for large sections of life experience. This in turn causes the individual to feel confused by life events, as he finds himself responding in ways which don't correlate directly with events themselves. A variety of triggers in the environment may automatically set off old response patterns, or hyper-reactive emotional responses. One is triggered and either gets overly emotionally wrought (panicky, anxious, hyperactive)—hyper-aroused—or one goes numb (frozen, sleepy, depressed)—hypo-aroused. A reaction in one direction is followed frequently by a reaction in the other direction; suddenly the person's life seems like a chaotic mess, an emotional roller-coaster.

It is particularly impactful when children are exposed to trauma over long periods of time. While experiencing trauma and dissociation, children lack the cognitive and emotional resources to cope with the rest of life, even if life is normal. The developmental tasks of the stages during and after the trauma might be skipped over or engaged with on a surface level, without much success. These afflicted souls might find themselves as adults, finally away from the abusive settings, unable to cope with the challenges of adult life. These individuals benefit from therapy with a psychotherapist

who specializes in treating trauma, as the resulting issues are complex and multifaceted.

Developing resilience is both the antidote to trauma and a protective factor. Resilience is a term used to characterize all those qualities and aptitudes which help one to manage life's very challenging moments with greater ease. A very important feature of resilience is social support. Individuals with strong attachment relationships to parents or romantic partners fare better. People with considerable social support—whether in the form of close friendships or group membership—also tend to respond better. The most significant determinant of whether a trauma will have lasting effects is whether or not the individual has someone with whom to talk deeply about the experience very soon after it happens. Additional resources include financial stability, intelligence, adaptability, a sense of competence, and an internal locus of control—a sense that one has control over one's life, rather than life just happens to one.

Each and every one of us is capable of reducing the level of trauma in the world by helping our friends and acquaintances when they are challenged by life events. Association treats dissociation. Friendship heals alienation. Integration heals compartmentalization. Trust heals mistrust. These brief rules-of-thumb can serve as helpful reminders when we forget how to cope with reactions and emotions that arise from something perhaps forgotten! As we seek and find the true humanity in each other, the whole community strengthens. Trauma can bring people together. We gather strength from each other. Living in true togetherness, we are the solution. 

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*Special thanks to David Tresemer, Cindy Taylor, Zheni Nasi, and Tonya Stoddard for providing feedback on an earlier version of this article.*

# Breath as a Calming Center

## Introducing the Take Four Out-Breathing Technique

PATRICE KEATS, PHD

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*The Take Four Out-Breathing Technique is a short practice which aims to work with the rhythm of a particular aspect of the breath, emphasizing the out-breath cycle (passive, inward aspect of the breath) that increases the heart rate coherence and slows the breath for assistance with anxious states.*

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In the lecture titled “Concerning the Soul Life in the Breathing Process,” Rudolf Steiner gave an example of how “anxiety depends simply on inhalation and exhalation,” and linked the breathing process as a means of triggering the experience of panic in a nightmare. Anxiety, in its many forms, is the most common health issue of our time. It is certainly a common issue seen by health professionals and educators. Here I will briefly discuss the breathing process within the human rhythmical system, research on the connection between breath and health, and how to anchor the breath as a path to wellbeing and calm by introducing the Take Four Out-Breathing Technique.

In numerous lectures, Rudolf Steiner discusses the breathing process as a measured rhythmical experience in the human being (for example, in “The Metamorphoses of the Soul Forces,” Berlin,





1917; and “The Relationship Between the Breathing and the Circulation of the Blood,” Dornach, 1923), specifically noting we take eighteen breaths every seventy-two heartbeat—or one breath every four beats. He also notes this rhythmical measure is connected to the breathing process of the earth (such as the rhythms of night and day, sleeping and waking, and lived experience in the world), where we take in daily experiences of life as well as give something of ourselves out to the world. He also highlights the earth’s rhythm with the sun during the four seasons. For example, in “The Cycle of the Year as Breathing-Process of the Earth,” he explains the characteristics of the seasons and all of the cosmic events which take place during those times (mid-winter as a deep inward holding of the breath, spring as the beginning of the outward movement of the breath, mid-summer as a complete exhale, and the autumn as the breathing forces beginning the return movement inwardly again). In brief, there is a correlation between the outside universe and what happens within each person, so “that our inner rhythm can be found outside on earth as well.” Significantly, it is important to see the rhythmic systems within the human being and of the earth are tireless and constantly in motion—moving perpetually in a lemniscate of activity and rest.

Steiner’s ideas about the connection between the measures of heart rate and breath show up in modern research focused on heart rhythm coherence (McCraty & Tomasino, 2004): the “orderly and harmonious synchronization among various systems in the body such as the heart, respiratory system and blood-pressure rhythms” (HeartMath Institute, 2020). Researchers have found this pattern of heart rate and breath is directly connected to health outcomes. For example, they have been able to see how an erratic or disordered heart rhythm pattern related to frustration can shift to a smooth, harmonious, and coherent pattern when a person self-generates a heartfelt feeling of appreciation. Using brief practices of heart-focused

breathing while remembering positive emotional states (such as appreciation, care, or love), people have been able to increase and maintain extended periods of heart rhythm coherence, preventing or reducing stress responses (McCraty & Tomasino, 2004). Research on slow breathing has also been shown to have positive health effects, due to the increase in breath and heart rate synchronicity, lowered blood pressure, and an overall state of relaxation (Russo, Santarelli, & O’Rourke, 2017).

In light of these ideas, the Take Four Out-Breathing Technique is a short practice which aims to work with the rhythm of a particular aspect of the breath, emphasizing the out-breath cycle (passive, inward aspect of the breath) that increases the heart rate coherence and slows the breath for assistance with anxious states. The practice is as follows:

## Take Four Out-Breathing Technique

(Time of exercise: approximately one minute)


- Make sure to keep the eyes open during the exercise.
- Take a long sigh to help the body experience the physiological feeling of the quick and full out-breathing experience. Muscles should significantly let go in the upper body leaving a feeling of dropping down and releasing all muscle tension.
- Take a second sigh to re-experience the drop-down letting-go experience. A feeling of heaviness may be experienced.
- Take a normal in-breath (how much the body needs without pressure to breathe in deeply). Allow the body to do what it needs to do to breathe in normally.
- Breathe out slowly (follow the breath out and down to the relaxed, letting-go state where the lungs are totally empty). Mentally count one.

# “BRIEF PRACTICES OF HEART-FOCUSED BREATHING WHILE REMEMBERING POSITIVE EMOTIONAL STATES... [CAN] INCREASE AND MAINTAIN EXTENDED PERIODS OF HEART RHYTHM COHERENCE.

- Take a second normal in-breath.
- Breathe out slowly. Mentally count two.
- Take a third normal in-breath.
- Breathe out as slowly as possible. Mentally count three.
- Take a fourth normal in-breath.
- Breathe out as slowly as possible. Mentally count four.
- Take a fifth normal in-breath.

I recommend patients practice for four days, a minimum of four times a day in relaxed times, to teach the body to feel and experience the relaxed, passive state of the out-breath before using it in anxious or stressful times. The practice can be done at any time, walking, sitting, or lying down. A cue word can also be added to the breath count; a word that triggers the body to relax such as calm, let go, or relax. The cue word can be added in the following way. Breathe out as slowly as possible: follow the breath out and down to the relaxed, letting-go state where the lungs are totally empty; mentally, count one and

say the cue word; then continue on through the remaining steps of the technique. If the practice is done consistently, saying the cue word to oneself can trigger the relaxation state and the Take Four breathing process can begin easily.

Healthy breathing and rhythmical processes have positive and significant impact on well-being, the potential to decrease anxiety, and may increase more positive emotional and physiological states. With practice, the Take Four Out-Breathing Technique can assist patients struggling with anxiety, in its various forms, as a first step towards healing. 

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# Homeostasis of the Soul

DAVID TRESEMER, PHD

Homeostasis describes a thousand miracles happening every moment. If we're hot, our bodies automatically work to cool us down; if we're cold, they work to warm us up—to keep us at the ideal temperature ninety-eight degrees Fahrenheit, plus or minus a couple of degrees. If our body temperature exceeds five degrees colder or warmer, our organs shut down, whole systems fail, we hallucinate, and we die.

People differ in ability to tolerate extremes. Early in World War II, when German submarines began sinking British cargo ships, the old sailors hung on to pieces of wreckage cursing the enemy, until they were rescued. The younger merchant seamen couldn't tolerate the cold water and died. These die-offs were so disturbing England embraced the Outward Bound movement to train young people, who, growing up in factory towns, had not experienced the challenges of the big world. We will call this resilience, the ability to tolerate wider variations in homeostasis.

Understanding homeostasis of the body will help us understand how those old sailors survived. Taken for granted, because unconscious, very sophisticated, overlapping systems are sensitive to small changes in temperature, acidity (pH), the right concentration of hundreds of enzymes and hormones in the blood and gut, and more, human sensory systems respond swiftly. Opening the pores in skin, exuding sweat to evaporate, lifting the hairs to create a bit more insulation, opening

and closing (dilation and constriction) of blood vessels, directing blood to the periphery or to the core, breathing more quickly (or deeper or shallower)—our bodies do all this without thinking. Botanists describe the opening and shutting of the thousands of pores in the leaves of plants, the stomata, with awe. Trees have hormones also, showing at its base, homeostasis of the body occurs in the etheric body (sensitive to conditions of the environment, both outer and inner).

Each organ of the body has its own best level of acidity, temperature, and other qualities. There are many sub-systems within the whole, each with its own watchers and regulators.

Maintaining homeo-stasis (same-state) requires negative feedback loops. When the heat goes up above the normal, an enormous number of unseen assistants react with actions that say, "Don't go that way! Come back to center!"—reacting against stimuli. One gets the picture of multitudinous sense organs and responders pushing away any stimuli taking the body away from the comfort of average. This is the extraordinary ordinary of homeostasis.

Playing soccer, meditating on a mountain top, extreme sports, to such challenges to homeostasis, most people respond, "Nope, not for me, I'd rather stay at home" (a negative feedback loop) "and watch it on my television."

The decision to stay at home introduces the notion of a homeostasis of the soul. What are the hot/cold correlates in the world of soul? The



workshop of soul manages the meeting ground of the dynamic physical world and the I (the spark of spirit come to earth to have experience through the body). Though strong, the I is also delicate. The soul produces a personality to surround and protect the I.

A little life experience can open anyone to the notion of spirit powers residing beyond the edges of our sensory awareness. Those who are oriented to self-development, to spiritual experiences—seekers or indeed anyone who keenly observes the world—have likely had experiences that have proven to them unseen powers exist. And one's destiny is in part to travel back along the path of one's own I to one's origin in spirit-lands. One can feel one's destiny as issuing from spirit-powers; one can ardently desire direct experience of them, as a birthright. However, these powers can be dangerous. One takes a substance, some form of DMT or LSD or any of a number of chemi-

or lingering dullness, or a difficulty with integrating that may last months?

Because of homeostasis of the soul. The human soul cannot tolerate the blast of light, insight, power, energy, kundalini—not beyond a glimpse.

Let's say we have a blast of a different kind—a car-wreck or an explosion or a fall off a ladder. Both body and soul react by rejecting the stimuli as best each can. At the soul level, we edit, misperceive, repress, forget. Homeostasis.

The soul mediates the necessities of physical existence—the homeostasis of the body—and the immense powers of spirit. The soul builds a personality, eccentricities, peculiarities, temperaments, and habits to protect the I. These all act as buffers to protect the body and the I from being burned to a crisp by spirit-powers. The soul will even go to the lengths of creating pathologies. OCD (obsessive-compulsive disorder, DSM #300.3<sup>1</sup>) engages our attention or agoraphobia—

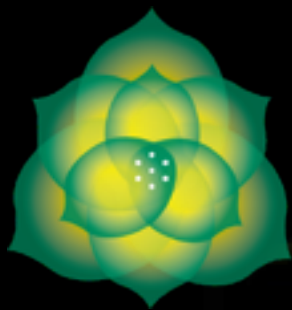
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“ TRAUMA IS WHEN AN EXPERIENCE  
CROSSES THE LINE OF HOMEOSTASIS  
AND HASN'T BEEN CONTROLLED.

cal substances, and has a blast of light, and sees truth, and beholds universes—“To see a world in a grain of sand, and a heaven in a wildflower,” as Blake wrote—and enters paradise. This seems the right direction, returning home, as some say, or seeing the light, or finding God. Why can't one stay there? Why does one come back with a hangover,

fear of public or open places (DSM #300.22) takes our mind off anything spiritual. Psychopathology has so many ways to create consuming distractions—in service of homeostasis.

Are we claiming all the pathologies in the DSM are created by the sufferer as a form of defense? To a degree, yes. It's important to understand how



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disease functions as a necessary defense of our physical and psychological homeostasis. Are we blaming the victim? Understanding disease as an attack from outside on an innocent victim may have some truth to it; the point here is to understand also how homeostasis works from the inside.

frostbitten and can't ignore it. One thing to note about trauma—the traumatized remember only a tiny fraction of what happened. In other words, the rest has been wiped out or submerged by the systems of homeostasis of the soul. What has been remembered so exceeds the normal, it has

“WE ARE INVITED TO CULTIVATE POSITIVITY BECAUSE HUMAN BEINGS TEND TOWARD THE NEGATIVITY OF REJECTING MOST EVERYTHING. BECAUSE OF HOMEOSTASIS, POSITIVITY DOES NOT COME NATURALLY, AND MUST BE ENCOURAGED, DAILY, IN LITTLE STEPS.

Because of negative feedback loops, any experience that exceeds the pleasant dullness of normal is rejected, ignored, suppressed, or misconstrued. Trauma is when an experience crosses the line of homeostasis and hasn't been controlled. Using the metaphor of body homeostasis, trauma is as if one has been burned or

become a conduit for spirit-powers (which have large impacts on a person's life). Everyone has experienced some kind of trauma upon which to test these observations. (More comments about trauma another time.)

In the anthroposophic psychology course, we list the many ways the soul as protector creates



energy-structures in each human. It is like the streets of Paris during a revolution. People feel the spirit-powers (soldiers) coming to overwhelm them; they barricade the streets with their kitchen chairs and tables, their beds, their transport-carts, all precious, all familiar.

In this manner, the soul works to protect against the powers of spirit energy. The familiarity of the pieces constructing our barricades—our personalities—makes it easier to say, “Nah, that’s not a barricade—that’s me, really me!”

Examining homeostasis of soul helps us understand why earnest seekers, some who have meditated or chanted or hyperventilated for years, have accomplished so little. It explains why we see students of spiritual science whose capabilities are obvious, yet they sabotage themselves through crippling self-doubt and debilitating habits and why people who take high doses of LSD or DMT have amazing experiences, but are unable to maintain them, or to get on with their lives. When we attempt to gain access to spirit, we actually work against ourselves.

We use the barricades to protect us from being burned up by spirit. Ironically, we are meant to achieve awareness and cooperation with spirit. We do this not by storming the gates of heaven with intense breakthroughs, but by proceeding step by step, progressively softening our defenses, dismantling our pathologies.

Rudolf Steiner gave exercises that seem so frustratingly slow, yet with patience build strong pathways, small at first, through the barricades meant to protect our I. (We will mention only a few here.) Steiner invites each of us to develop


equanimity. Why? Because humans tend to high dramas that heap the protective barricades higher. Thus equanimity must be cultivated, daily, with active awareness and compassion for oneself.

We are invited to cultivate positivity because human beings tend toward the negativity of rejecting most everything. Because of homeostasis, positivity does not come naturally, and must be encouraged, daily, in little steps.

We are invited to nurture openness because human beings tend to protect ourselves through closed minds and hearts, through prejudice, preconception, and contraction. The best response to the news becomes, “Hmm, how interesting!” and “Wonder what the full story might be?”

All of these are best learned through relationship with other human beings, the friends and foes with whom we came to wrestle again and again, who teach us over time how not to be victims, but co-creators. Relationships will pull us out of the tendency of homeostasis to cocoon ourselves.

At the soul level, these disciplines increase our resilience so, in the world of soul and spirit, we become more like the old sailors in the cold ocean, expanding the limits of what we can tolerate.

This description is simplified from the complexity underlying all these dynamics. Part of this complexity is deliberate obfuscation by the soul—another technique of homeostasis. 

#### NOTES

- 1 *Diagnostic & Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, of the American Psychiatric Association*, fifth edition.

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# solidarity not charity

# Mutual Aid

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## *Cooperation for the Sake of the Common Good*

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During the Covid-19 Outbreak, hundreds of mutual aid networks have sprung up around the US, and the world. The links below will take you to a wealth of interesting information ranging from the kind of activities a mutual aid network can offer, how to start a mutual aid network in your community, the history of mutual aid, and how and why mutual aid differs from top down institutional non-profit organizations and charity.

## What is mutual aid?

According to Dean Spade, Associate Professor at Seattle University School of Law, and scholar of the mutual aid movement, “Mutual aid is a term to describe people giving each other needed material support, trying to resist the control dynamics, hierarchies and system-affirming, oppressive arrangements of charity and social services.

“Mutual aid projects are a form of political participation in which people take responsibility for caring for one another and changing political conditions, not just through symbolic acts or putting pressure on their representatives in government, but by actually building new social relations that are more survivable. Most mutual aid projects are volunteer-based, with people jumping in to participate because they want to change what is going on right now, not wait to convince corporations or politicians to do the right thing.”

Spade lists some of the ways that mutual aid is different from charity:

- An understanding that it is the system, not the people suffering under it, that creates poverty, crisis, and vulnerability
- Governance/control by people who are most effected (can mean having a membership base of those most effected, or being formed in ways that ensure those providing the aid are from the same group as those giving the aid, or models that allow allies to participate but focus on accountability to those being served)
- Transparency about how they work, any money they use or manage (many mutual aid projects are not funded and are all volunteer run)
- Open meetings and pathways for new people to join and participate
- Political education within the organization to help those working in the project to expand their awareness of experiences that are not their own, to build solidarity, and to make the project supportive and welcoming to marginalized people
- Humility and willingness to accept feedback about how to make the project more useful to the people it serves:

- Long-term commitment to provide the aid the project works on
- Connection to and solidarity with other mutual aid projects and other transformative work
- Commitment to dignity and self-determination of people in need or crisis
- Consensus-based decision making rather than majority rule

Source: [bigdoorbrigade.com](http://bigdoorbrigade.com)

## MUTUAL AID 101 TOOLKIT

Mutual aid is “cooperation for the sake of the common good.” It’s getting people to come together to meet each other’s needs, recognizing that as humans, our survival is dependent on one another.

This toolkit developed by Congresswoman Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and organizer Mariame Kaba includes step by step instructions for how you can build your own mutual aid network while staying safe from the spread of COVID-19.

If you’re interested in learning more about the long history, politics and practice of mutual aid, there are links to that information in the toolkit.

[bit.ly/2JQ6sah](https://bit.ly/2JQ6sah)

## BIG DOOR BRIGADE

Big Door Brigade is a group of people based in and near Seattle, Washington offering mutual aid resources for organizers and activists. The website of resources is maintained by Dean Spade.

[bigdoorbrigade.com](http://bigdoorbrigade.com)

## LIST OF COVID-19 MUTUAL AID NETWORKS ACROSS THE US

[itsgoingdown.org/c19-mutual-aid](https://itsgoingdown.org/c19-mutual-aid)

## COVID-19 MUTUAL AID UK

Local organizing to support the most vulnerable in our communities

Over 500 mutual aid groups have sprung up through the UK. Here is a link to lots of resources and tools to get started.

[covidmutualaid.org](https://covidmutualaid.org)

## Vincent van Gogh's painting as ministry to the soul

# To Be “Among the Early Risers”

LEAH WALKER

The paintings of Vincent van Gogh (1853-1890) make a profound contribution to an understanding of the evolution of human consciousness. Along with Greek statues, Giotto's chapel, Rembrandt's portraits, and more, van Gogh's artwork takes its place in the story of humanity's unfolding through time, speaking volumes about movement itself, and also of the possibility of our reawakening to life forces streaming in the physical world.

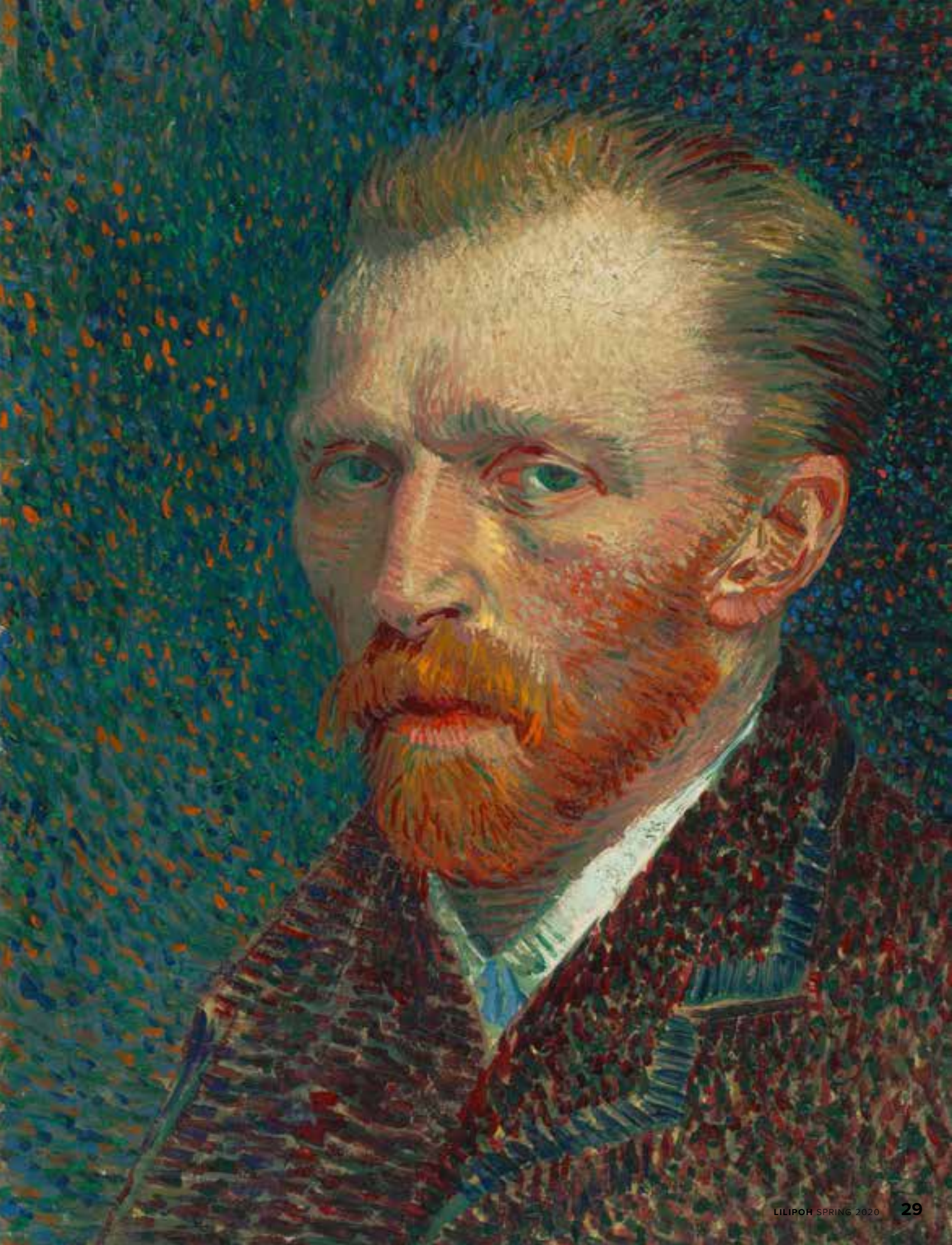
Vincent van Gogh's personal experience also tells a story of and for humanity, in our current era, of the soul's intense struggle to reconcile earthly existence with a call to something higher. His life stands as a kind of advanced guard, informing us of what it is like to undergo torments of soul or soul-illness in the interests of a spiritual way of being and working in the world. This is something felt by many in the modern era who, on a near daily basis, ask: What is mine to do? How can I make a real difference? What do I need personally so that I may give to the greater whole? Do I turn inward? Face outward? Why, when I aspire to something more, do I engage in self-sabotage? It can be confounding, the soul's predicament:

ever vulnerable to lower (astral) impulses while at the same time inspired, whether quietly or noisily, to serve one's individuality and its higher tasks.

At the close of 2019, a major news network discussed the most significant events and issues of the decade, such as climate change, the capture and killing of Osama bin Laden, and so forth, and ranked most significant a grouping they collectively named social ills including, but not limited to, addiction (particularly to opioids and technology), mass shootings, suicide, bullying, and isolation; as well as correlative depression and anxiety. Social ills are not new, as the human condition goes, but in recent years the numbers have spiked—and caught our attention. We are noticing soul-illness now, in ourselves and others, and this is a beginning.

As a young man, van Gogh's search for his vocation took a common course. He tried his hand as an art dealer, like his brother Theo. He took a position teaching young boys, which led to an interest in missionary work. His feeling for the suffering of others being genuine and deep, he began to study to become a clergyman, hoping





in part to please his father. But ministering proved difficult for him; he hadn't the constitution. He drifted for a time. When he awoke to his particular gift at twenty-seven—in his twenty-eighth year, Vincent began to paint. Before shooting himself at thirty-seven, in ten short years, Vincent van Gogh produced some 2100 works, including 860 oil paintings, most of which he completed in the last two years of his life.

Vincent was a prolific writer as well, a fine writer. His entire biography is found in his letters to Theo: 1640 pages (significantly condensed in *Dear Theo: The Autobiography of Vincent van Gogh*). He wanted to share everything: every thought; every image; every spiritual insight; every detail of his surroundings; every new idea about painting, every play of light, every color of the night; every event and escapade. Despite Theo's devotion—he always responded to Vincent's letters—and the occasional opportunity to work with other painters, including a relatively long-term collaboration with Gauguin, van Gogh lived largely isolated. Perhaps Vincent couldn't put his finger on it then, but to the close observer it is plain now: he had no peers. No one else saw what Vincent saw or knew what he knew; this left him alternately depressed and incredibly anxious, longing so to be understood.

Isolation evokes anxiety and leads to despair. And nothing quiets anxiety faster, nothing lifts the soul more readily or provides better comfort than a feeling of being understood, which is an activity of love. Arguably at the root of today's social ills is a failure of understanding, of love. Remarkable as it is, for many people, understanding does not come naturally (though one can learn). As individuality grows, understanding will continue to wane and feelings of isolation, intensify; all the while, ironically, individuality will seek its own recognition, particularly in the mirror of the other. Individuality

wants to experience itself, in relationship, in community. The human being longs to be seen.

Adam Bittleston suggests when we are seen there comes "the tranquility and action of inner peace." Being seen brings tranquility and action. The internal hyper-movement of anxiety (and its obsessions) can come to rest. The stalled movement of depression may be brought into motion when we are seen—perceived, acknowledged, included. One can get on with one's work, find one's place in the scheme of things, belong, and contribute.

Vincent's letters, penned when he was twenty-one to thirty-seven years of age, show changes in his thinking which follow a typical pattern. He was at first idealistic and enthusiastic. He was occasionally deeply affected by others' opinions of him; he was particularly concerned that he not disappoint his brother or father. He desired recognition and financial success (which never came). He grew aware of his fight on earth:

*If we are tired, isn't it then because we have already walked a long way . . . is not then the feeling of weariness and the burning of the head a sign that we have been struggling ? [He finds refuge in nature, in his work; he begins to trust his eye and mastery. He eventually embraces, though fleetingly, the great gift of devotion to something higher—"the painting being for eternity." [Thirteen years before he would paint *The Starry Night*, at age twenty-four (three years before he'd even begun to paint) Vincent wrote:] . . . I looked from the window of my room on the roofs of the houses that can be seen from there, and on the tops of the elm trees, dark against the night sky. Over these roofs, one single star, but a beautiful, large, friendly one (April, 1876).*



It is significant to me that, for Vincent, the star is friendly. In this moment, did his soul recognize something? Connect itself to its task, to something higher? Perhaps perceive its telos? Adam Bittleston describes this soul-spiritual, developmental phenomenon in this way:

*The relationship between the greater and the lesser in the universe is not such that the greater simply commands the lesser being. The greater may reveal a purpose, which the lesser can receive in devoted reverence, and make its own in action. But the greater can also be utterly silent, and wait . . . for the soul to mature into “a more perfect servant of the greater.” “The task of the soul is to discover out of its own resources the inner principle of its own spirit-being. More than discover, [the soul] needs to give birth to the soul’s Light.” The soul may give birth to its own light. The struggle, then, is labor.*

I find it a limited perspective which declares van Gogh mentally ill or dubs him a tortured artistic genius (though he himself referred to periods of imbalance as artistic freaks). Soul-illness is too often viewed as something to get over in order to get on with a so-called normal life. This is consolatory, at best, and hardly inspirational. Instead, we might look to develop sensitivities more like van Gogh’s.

*“The figure of a labourer—some furrows in a ploughed field—a bit of sand, sea and sky—are serious subjects, so difficult, but at the same time so beautiful, that it is indeed worth while to devote one’s life to the task of expressing the poetry hidden in them.” Imagine bringing this quality of perception to the understanding of human life. Imagine manifest life experiences being serious, beautiful, and worthwhile in the search for*



*a glimpse of the hidden individuality that creates them. [Bittleston writes,] In reality there is a self, belonging to each of us, which is not to be found with the ordinary consciousness, but has a hidden existence; it is this self the Angel tries to guard, and to reveal to us at certain moments. The Path is the work of this self in the ordinary consciousness. As we grow in understanding . . . the everyday self changes. It learns to be servant, not unruly lord. . . .*


However chaotically, Vincent successfully negotiated outer influences and expectations, including harsh criticism, to arrive at a self-determined, inner



conviction about the value of his artistic labors and discoveries. His soul—his vulnerable soul, from a certain point of view—proved able to serve something higher. This belongs to the archetypal design of the human life, of human development. And van Gogh accomplished it: he bridged the struggle of the earthly soul to the fulfillment of a preeminent spiritual-artistic task. This is profound transformation. Lead into gold.

I hear tribute to van Gogh in one of Mary Oliver's poems. She sees him, his individuality, and speaks to the community of things he knew so deeply, and to which he belonged, to which we all belong:

*Am I not among the early risers/and the long-distance walkers?/Have I not stood, amazed, as I consider/the perfection of the morning star/above the peaks of the houses, and the crowns of the trees blue in the first light?/Do I not see how the trees tremble, as though sheets of water flowed over them/though it is only wind, that common thing,/free to everyone, and everything?*

Can you picture *The Starry Night*? *The Cypress*? *Wheat Field*? Early in life, and even as Vincent began to paint, he longed to minister to the needs of others—to serve others—serve is the Latin root of minister. I wonder, had he any idea his paintings would do this: minister to the soul, struggling and otherwise? I wonder, how many will he yet serve? 

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# Listen

MARY LOU SANELLI

After the last mass shooting, I lost the capacity for emotional response. I may have glanced at the television screen, but I wasn't allowing it in emotionally, unable to decide if I could let in another deadly shooting after so many. There are certain things you have to do to cope. One of them is to go numb instead of letting yourself go crazy.

I think this may be just about the saddest thing I have ever said.

I go to bed at night worried. I want the House and the Senate to be better than this, better than picking at each other. I want them to act. I scream at them to act, that's how far gone I am. Even if I can no longer keep all the shootings, wars, strikes and attacks straight, I am desperate for them to stop. One of my friends said she has stopped turning on the news. "I'm am less and less armored against the horrors," she said. "The world is driving me nuts."

I can't believe how long it's taken me to write about this, but in 2015 when newspaper writers were gunned down in Paris, it struck the deepest personal chord. I felt as though a huge part of my morale was left lying on the floor of the Charlie Hebdo office. Daily life became problematic for me at best. On the surface I was okay, but I shutdown inside, haunted by how the writers and cartoonists must have felt in their last moments. I decide rather quickly to have nothing but "irreverent and non-conforming" opinions for the rest of my life. I think I will never be able to make peace with this.

That night, after dinner, instead of clearing the dishes I sat staring out the window at the Space

Needle. I told my husband how one of the finest compliments I have ever received came from a poet who was also a Catholic nun: Madeline DeFrees. She told me she enjoyed my irreverent take on things and that I had the soul of a non-conformist. "I will never forget that," I said. "Or how humble she was, generally," which, by the way, is something I always admire in another. I went on to say how most of the poets I knew in the days of my earliest writings had big egos, too big, "greenhouse-strawberry-big," I say, "and as rarely sweet." I talked on and on that night. The dishes never made it to the sink. I think I was trying to break the spell of despair, free the lump in my throat. I started to cry.

Well, not cry exactly. Sob.

In the days after the shooting, I had to take time off from writing, but more importantly, time off from Shouldering Guilt That Does Not Belong To Me. Neither of which I am very good at.

The best way for me to do this is to get outside where at least I have a fighting chance at escaping my mind, where people are talking about, oh, let's see ... how about those Seahawks?

"On your way to the game?" I say to the first man I see. That's all I said. But I felt better already. He wore sunglasses with the Seahawks logo embedded into the lenses, a Seahawks Shirt, a Seahawks cap. He was so happy, this man.

I smile for the first time in days, warm to the idea of losing myself, of wandering. In the Sculpture Park, I spot a woman who clearly needs a hand getting down the wooden steps that lead to the sand. She is ballet-thin and fashionably dressed.

“ I WILL PUT AWAY MY WORK AND GO FOR A WALK, LEAVE MY TERRORS TIED TO MY DESK AND LET THE CITY WASH OVER ME AS I LEARN TO PERSIST, TO BE MORE RESILIENT, TO LAUGH AGAIN.

And for a second I thought she was much younger, but when she lifted her head it was clear she was likely in her eighties.

Her clothes, however, were younger. But not as if she is trying to look younger, just that maybe she likes to keep up, pay attention, just not to every trend. She wore a long, a-symmetrical, wool sweater over black skinny jeans.

“You look lovely,” I said.

She came right back with, “Well, I do love me my clothes. With gusto, according to my husband.” She laughed.

I hadn’t heard the word ‘gusto’ in a while, so I laughed too, but what really touched me is how quickly she responded. I remembered my mother telling me that she longed to talk to people more in her later years but that it didn’t happen much anymore. “Most of the world is so much younger, they don’t want to talk to an old lady,” she said. “They don’t even see me. I’m finding it harder and harder to go out.”

I’m telling you, those words were like a knife to my heart.

“My husband is the same way,” I said to the woman. “You’re not one of those women who take their husbands shopping with you, I hope.”

“Oh, he’s gone now,” she said. But they had a good marriage, she said, “right up until the cancer.”


I listened. And she talked. And I talked. And she listened.

And today as I remember her, I realize she loved being listened to, noticed. But more than that, she loved being included. Conversation helps us feel connected, helps us get out of our heads and into the immediate present. A much better place than spending too much time alone with our fears.

Because, let’s face it, the shooters and terrorists will not let up.

So even if every journalist will need to wear a bulletproof vest, if we let fear lock up our hearts and squash our voices, the terrorists have won.

I realize, while writing that last paragraph, that I’d been holding my breath, and then the words rushed out. With gusto!

I will put away my work and go for a walk, leave my terrors tied to my desk and let the city wash over me as I learn to persist, to be more resilient, to laugh again. 

Author and speaker **Mary Lou Sanelli** has published seven collections of poetry, three works of non-fiction including *Among Friends* (a Goodreads notable title). Her first novel, *The Star Struck Dance Studio of Yucca Springs*, was recently released by Chatwin Books. [marylousanelli.com](http://marylousanelli.com)

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# Climate Change from the Inside Out Shock. Grief. Respond. Relief. Repeat.

VICKI ROBIN

Global warming → global heating. Climate change → Climate chaos. Civilizational in crisis → Civilization headed for collapse. Systemic problems are multiplying with breakneck speed now, and “climate change” has moved, faster than anticipated, from a heady discussion to a gut-wrenching existential issue, reverberating in our hearts. Our inner climates in response to the news and crises deserves attention as inner seawalls (trauma, social breakdown) will crash upon us too.

This post reflects my first efforts, to date, to metabolize rapid climate disruptions and to offer a framework for situation- and self-observation. I'll be at the 25th US Climate Conference in Santiago, Chile with a quiver of questions to investigate while there.

Humans have been here before, I tell myself. The Black Plague picked off half of Europe. Hiroshima and Nagasaki began humanity's flirtation with nuclear energy as weapons of war. The Doomsday Clock was set to 100 seconds to midnight January 23rd, 2020; it now includes climate disruptions and the fake news erosion of democracy in the mix of existential threats.

But have we really been here before, where the whole planet, the basis of life itself, is threatened? In her article Facing Extinction, Buddhist teacher Catherine Ingram opens with a litany of the intersecting global stresses that will eventually decimate our species. If you need the recitation of climate ills to let the data penetrate, her recitation has both heart and integrity.

Maybe every civilization, as it comes down, assumes it's the worst end of the world there's ever been. But this collapse is ours to face and feel, whatever came before, whatever comes next.

The dam broke on my own assumption that climate chaos was still avoidable or at least decades away with the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change report ([ipcc.ch](http://ipcc.ch)). Despite how long and hard I've personally worked to illuminate a better, saner, simpler, smaller, and more beautiful way of life, given the likelihood of overshoot and projected collapse, I was shocked. I never considered we would lurch towards and stumble over the cliff, a point of no return, so soon.

## Shock.

When you hit something so hard your system is rattled and something flies loose: Shock—hat the body does to preserve the core when there's a life-threatening injury. Shock—hen something you never ever thought would happen happens.

I was shocked I had focused so intently on solving the part of our predicament visible to me, that I missed the panoramic view of how far gone we are. This is the form of denial that says, "Yes, it's bad, but we can fix it. Still."

I was shocked that my theory of change had missed the mark by a mile. I was thinking in a linear way about a multivariate complex four- (at least) dimensional problem, applying Newtonian mechanics and good Western rational thinking to a tangled, interwoven, still terra incognita living system. "Give me a lever long enough and a place to stand and I can move the world" seemed like a good heroic motto. If I failed, I assumed I needed a longer lever or a different place to stand—not that I was 90% blind.

I was shocked that my identities were knocked off their moorings. I'd been touted as—and called myself—a social innovator. A scout. A cultural creative. A best-selling author. I'd almost made it to the finish line of life with a beautifully crafted story of my evolution and impact. While I've had a rich, varied, influential, adventuresome life, and more than my fair share of recognition, climate chaos has swamped my personal story. The difference I'd tried to make was not equal to the mess we've collectively made.

I was shocked to find myself tumbling in the waves of shock along with everyone else, unable to find my own footing. If I'm a scout, then my job is climbing the mast or the lookout and help my people find their way. But I could not see how and where the multiplying threats would gather into a perfect storm of mission-critical system collapse. Even the best scientific minds, while accurately

measuring the specific systems spiraling down, cannot say for sure how or when it crosses a threshold, a point of no return. Storms are bigger, in the wrong place at the wrong time, but do these mount in significance to indicators of destabilization or are they just freak storms? Glaciers are melting, but when does this tip the earth systems so far out of balance civilizations cannot contain the damage? Climate chaos as the defining issue of our times has come to the fore just in the last year. Normally cautious, scientists have now broken the glass on the fire alarm and it's screeching. Concurrently, new books have captured public imagination. *The Uninhabitable Earth: Life After Warming* by David Wallace-Wells and *The End of Ice: Bearing Witness and Finding Meaning in the Path of Climate Disruption* by Dahr Jamail both document the unremitting decline.

## Climate Grief

We've long had symptoms. We now have a name for the disease: climate disruptions. But what is the prognosis. The shock for me is that we've gone from a treatable condition to a fatal prognosis. That's what has me reeling. I'm ping-ponging around the well-known stages of grief: denial, anger, bargaining, depression, acceptance without resolution.

Used to being a leader, or at least a scout who is riding shotgun on the stage coach, I felt blind—and if blind, then unable to fulfill my self-assigned duties. People have looked to me. If I just shrug an "I dunno," I'm useless—at least in my estimation.

The shell of my identities and coping mechanisms cracked. I was a china doll after all, not a giant or the Lone Ranger. Shame at my failures, though, turned to relief that I no longer had to drag my successes, identities and roles around anymore. Here we are together, I thought, in the middle of the muddle.



“ IF THIS IS THE END OF OUR WAY OF LIFE, OF RELATIVE SAFETY, OF OUR SPECIES, WE ARE IN THIS TOGETHER. WE ARE MITIGATING AND ADAPTING AND FEELING AND THINKING IN CONCERT.

Next came the emotional impact of all that is perishing in this fire—literal and metaphorical—roaring across our earth. They used to call it shell-shocked in prior wars, this state of seeing everything through the filter of death. The Douglas firs won't be able to thrive here. Gone. The seas in my seaside village will rise, swallowing my town slowly. The children I adore are cursed with scrambling for survival. Forget the old dream of each generation doing better than the last. Or the current media stories of millennials never even getting to the level their parents have enjoyed. There's a nightmare waiting for the little ones.

Friends tried to comfort me. There's good news, they'd say. Look at this project or read that story. Such points of light, though, were swallowed by the darkness of bleaching corals and bubbling methane and calving ice sheets. The weather made me cry. The Empire penguins losing their homes made me cry. The loss of bugs. The loss of birds and the morning chorus. I sobbed over each random story of some new part of the web of life winking out. Not because these are indicators of the bigger picture, but because each precious life is perishing because of greed, blindness, addiction to normalcy, the religion of growth, hubris.

These are not normal times, yet almost everyone seems to be sleepwalking. People and animals and whole species are dying too soon. I felt like the prophets of old, haggard in rags in the public square, preaching collapse while the Romans ate, drank, and were merry.

I knew I was being uncooperative. It's impolite to not cheer up, to be the death of the party, the Eeyore of climate chaos, the depressive in the corner. But I could not go back into can-do solutional mode, and the path forward felt like night in an endless forest. I just had to let grief have its way with me. Guaranteed, it was no fun. I wasn't taking dark pleasure in my pain, being significant in another macabre way. I was despondent and lamenting and it felt like the rightest response to the suffering we have caused. Because we've done this. Just because I've been a Pied Piper of Frugality doesn't get me off the hook. I was born now on the planet. I've inherited the entirety of human history and especially the worldview of Western Civilization: dominance, separation, profit, progress, growth, wealth. Not special. Not separate. Not holier than any thou out there. No smarter. No better equipped. Another naked human, shivering.

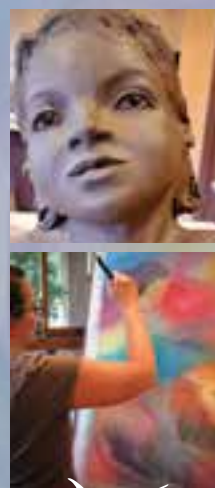
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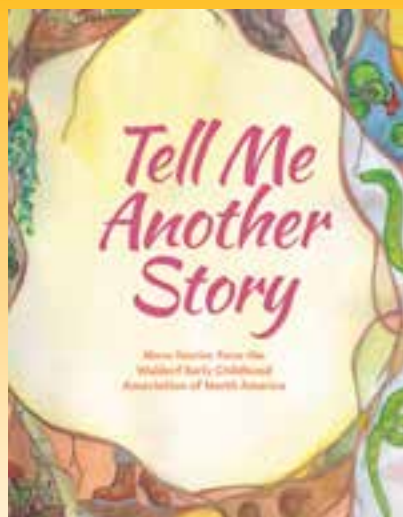
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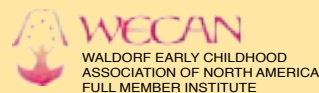
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What broke the spell? In part it was recognizing this enveloping sadness was actually weakening my emotional sturdiness. It's one thing to grieve. It's another to enter unremitting despondency and not take care of yourself. I applied emotional first aid. Activated foundational faith in the essential goodness of life--and in me. Recited gratitude for my blessings, and there are so many. Gratitude began filling my well, not as a resistance to grief, but as a poultice on the wounds. I invited myself to dinner with friends and spent a long evening in the gloaming speaking of this gloom and they simply listened and cared.

Then I discovered the Positive Deep Adaptation Facebook Group (PDA), [facebook.com/groups/deepadaptation](https://www.facebook.com/groups/deepadaptation). More later about Jem Bendell, the academic and sustainability leader who published a well-referenced paper a year ago called "Deep Adaptation: A Map for Navigating Climate Tragedy," that sparked a rapidly spreading conversation, on the PDA Facebook forum and elsewhere, about what time it really is on planet Earth. Are there any critical paths left to reversing climate change or at least stopping the rise in atmospheric CO2 dead in its tracks? The core assumption you buy into on the forum is this: collapse is inevitable, catastrophe is probable, and extinction for humans is possible.

I dove in and found literally thousands of people who are right where I am—shock and grief. They talk about powerlessness and disbelief. They talk about personal and local resilience strategies—gardens and water systems. They wonder whether marches and speeches do anything. They wander into wondering whether famine, overpopulation, environmental refugees, and racism will lead to a Mad Max scenario or whether our better angels will still be singing. They talk about what kinds of economic, financial, and money systems might replace predatory capitalism. They post pictures of gardens and articles that inspire and talk about where to move. They disagree without debating.

They ask questions that elicit hundreds of comments, almost none snarky or belligerent. I spent hours reading every post and the comment strings, finding myself in so many places. The nearly 7,000 members accelerated my learning, added fine detail to my nascent thoughts, added comments to my comments—the biggest, best global conversation I've ever had among peers peering into an unknown future. You can feel despondent and crazy when you're the only one you know going through climate grief because we've lost the prevention game and are into the unknown waters of how to adapt.

Through this I found some footing in this new world where bravery means facing facts not fighting dragons.

Here's the map I made for myself (likely copied from someone else, maybe Jem):

Prevention → Mitigation → Adaptation → Deep Adaptation

My journey started when I closed the door on prevention and to my many creative strategies for standing in the flow of history like a traffic cop. I accepted mitigation is the best we can do. There is so much we can do to mitigate the effects of rising CO2 in the atmosphere. Project Drawdown outlines a hundred known strategies and ranks them by efficacy. A lot have to do with agriculture, a topic that I've studied and written about and promoted locally through my book *Blessing the Hands that Feed Us* and the 10-Day Local Food Challenge ([localfoodchallenge.org](https://localfoodchallenge.org)). I reviewed my notes from the 2019 Global Earth Repair Conference where the possibility of regenerative practices—from water to food to shelter—scaling to meet some portion of the consequences and started informing myself about the state of the movement and best strategies and legal frameworks.

Mitigation is a kick-ass occupation, especially when you don't mistake it for prevention, as though we could turn future collapse back to the past



climate stability. I think this is a very common mistake, because so many strategies have the fervor of solutions rather than the maturity of doing what's needed. If you are a sustainability professional, as Jem Bendell was and still is, you have a stake in the space of prevention staying open. It's both what you do and what you believe will work. What the shock and grief accomplished was stripping even subtle forms of climate consequences denial that infused my uber-cool strategies.

A 2019 article by Jonathan Franzen in *The New Yorker* that mirrors the Deep Adaptation understanding came under blazing fire from sustainability professionals. Do we have to be in denial of death in order to lead and inspire and make crucial decisions? Does recognizing we are in the era of consequences—what we've already done is enough to end the 500-year story of endless economic growth—enervate activists? It did for me in those months of shock and grief, but I was coming out of this... but into what?

I realized that I was in a different and somewhat disorienting territory. If I am not doing my projects in order to make specific changes I believe can be tipping points, what's the point? Why do anything? All change work involves strategies and tactics. Would working for change now be like the classic loyal Japanese soldier found in the woods years after the war ended, still fighting? Or is there a different change? Or a different way to do anything?

I gave up the phrase "in order to," as in I am doing this in order to have that happen. It was like taking all the vowels out of the alphabet. I became mute about anything other than observations in the present moment. I didn't answer emails "in order to." Or read books "in order to." Or hang out with friends "in order to." Things were what they were. I did what I did. I had no linear explanations for why. Had I needed to change things in the past "in order to" feel better? Assuage my conscience? Shut out the horror of living among predatory, selfish

people willing to crash Nature to party on? Do I go to bed "in order to sleep in order to be rested in order to have a good next day or be effective in something? Do I eat "in order to" live? Be healthy? Quash feelings? If I give up "in order to" am a defector from active engagement in supporting or creating much needed change? Am I giving up the fight when I give up the instrumental reason? Am I going all gooey and hippy? Giving up "in order to" stopped the busy buzz of mental processing. Was "in order to" a koan?

At the risk of being corny, what came in as I emptied my transactional mind was love. The grief had picked the lock of my heart and a sense of great love arose along with great honor to just have a human heart that can feel love. I act in love, not in order to love. I do what I do in love, with all my talents, skills, connections in service to us as we emerge from the cocoon of endless growth into these stories of loss, disruption, danger, and reorientation. If I am of use, great. If who or what I know can help someone, somehow, great. If my strategic mind is needed as we all search for a way through our predicament, wonderful. I'd preached "we're all in this together" to stop others with their reckless addiction to growth-as-good. Now, thanks to not-knowing, I know truly we're all in this together.

## Response

Through this reckoning with shock and grief, and finding community among people seeing what I see, I'd moved into responding to the climate crisis in ways that fit for me. Friends and I are hosting a witness circles called Breathing Together as the Climate Changes. I'm on a committee to produce a community event that will include county officials—from commissioners to mayors to agencies to businesses and NGOs. I'm pressuring the county for a Climate Action Plan to at least raise the conversation about mitigation and adaptation

locally. The PDA's Community Action group is discussing how to have online Deep Adaptation Groups and I'm considering becoming a host. I joined our teens for the School Strike. I'm helping a Permaculture Teacher plan a workshop on my island to help prepare us for what's ahead. And I included Deep Adaptation in my recent 5-day workshop on Money, Life, and Meaning—the group was grateful to have the elephant of climate change in our midst.

These are actions, yes, but all come from this shock and grief process. It's not activism per se. It's responding from an activated heart. I am not pressuring anyone, but more than ever I'm a force to be reckoned with because I'm showing up and speaking truth and risking rejection or ridicule or worse. I'm not just focused on Deep Adaptation. I'm working on mitigation and adaptation strategies as well at every level of scale—personal to global.

## Relief

I feel spacious, present, and happy. The shock, grief, and response phases have freed me, widened my scope like a mother's birth canal widening to let a child be born. I am not resisting inevitable climate collapse. Nor am I disabled by grief. It's a strange state because I am working full on for change without thinking we will change in time to avoid the prognosis.

This process of metabolizing our climate predicament I call: **Shock → Grief → Respond → Relief → Repeat.**

Repeat means that we'll keep experiencing shock and grief and being called to respond from our hearts again and again as conditions change. We'll be in acceptance and resistance and lamenting and engaging all at once or in sequence in the years ahead as we see how things unfold. If this is the end of our way of life, of relative safety, of our

species, we are in this together. We are mitigating and adapting and feeling and thinking in concert.

In the Deep Adaptation forum, I wrote:

*I let the grief and despondency grind through my defenses this last half year as I confronted the inevitability of the math and the accelerated timetable of climate chaos. Surprisingly, I've popped through to a state of curiosity, creativity, and spaciousness. What was pulverized: my dejection and anger that nothing I'd done in my 30 years of activism had prevented this, and my illusion of control and agency (if I do x then y will happen), and my self-imposition of false responsibility for people who've looked to me for guidance, my pride that I've been ahead of the curve (and am now in the confusion and despair soup with everyone). I refused to be consoled because what we are facing isn't touched by normal encouragement to buck up or look at the good side. I've shared here and with local friends each step of the journey. I am also taken the Good Grief Network ([goodgriefnetwork.org](http://goodgriefnetwork.org)) course – based on the 12-Step programs – which I highly recommend. Before my heart was ground down along with my will, I activated self-care to put a floor under my descent. Perhaps I was served by having had cancer and undertaken the Descent journey of the Inanna myth so am familiar with the blessing of the stripping away. Both lead to an emptiness that seems to precede a natural buoyancy from lightness rather than exuberance. I still have a kit bag of strategies I've expressed through books and projects and games etc, but the need to push these out to "save us" or even "save" those who listen is gone. And I'm sure I will learn more skills/ strategies/*

“MAYBE EVERY CIVILIZATION, AS IT COMES DOWN, ASSUMES IT’S THE WORST END OF THE WORLD THERE’S EVER BEEN. BUT THIS COLLAPSE IS OURS TO FACE AND FEEL, WHATEVER CAME BEFORE, WHATEVER COMES NEXT.

*games as time goes on. I can still write and speak to groups. As others travel from prevention to mitigation to adaptation I can offer what I’ve learned along the way. So I think it’s the pressure to solve our dilemma and all the handmaidens of resistance to reality that has left my body mind and heart. Prior to this process, creativity curiosity and spaciousness might have felt like denial or resistance or feral seeking an opening in the wall – but now it’s unencumbered. For the nonce until the next round...”*

This is much like the experience of going from diagnosis and treatment to prognosis and preparing to die. When a close friend was diagnosed with lymphoma, treatment began and he seemed to be responding well. At least the cancer was contained. We all went on with life as usual, helping him adjust to this new reality. Four years from diagnosis, the cancer turned into aggressive leukemia. The doctor gave him weeks to live, at best. It was

clear I had gone to sleep on how fatal this cancer could be. I got busy researching alternative treatments as if we could fish a miracle out of the hat. We all got reactive while he went stoic and refused to have any long faces around him. No one really knew what to do. Just as the doctor ordained, he was dead in two weeks. Most of us have these experiences of loss of a loved one. They are so unbelievably painful and the prospect of saying goodbye in every detail to our way of life may be too excruciating for any of us.

## Trauma

One final aside. Concurrent with this process, I’ve been untangling a long-buried relationship trauma. About the time I came to the climate relief phase, I’d gotten to what seems to be the root of my personal issue and the energy of it left my body. I wonder if this is an accidental parallel or if the shock of climate consequences will kick

up old traumas in many people. Will we need climate therapists? Climate social workers? Climate coaches? Are people in these professions ready to receive the influx of traumatized people? Are amateurs like me hosting climate witness circles able to widen our circles? The Position Deep Adaptation network is looking at hosting witness circles via Zoom. I'm sure the professions are waking up to this. For example, Leslie Davenport ([lesliedavenport.net](http://lesliedavenport.net)), author of *Emotional Resilience in the Era of Climate Change*, is developing understanding and practices.

Back to the Deep Adaptation paper by Jem Bendell and the Deep Adaptation online groups. I recommend you read the paper carefully and follow up with his blog, both are available here: [jembendell.com](http://jembendell.com). He is offering an expansive, clear framework for us to weave into our lives. Join the Positive Deep Adaptation Group. There's a search box so any topic that interests you can pop up.

I love the four R's/ Deep Adaptation questions he poses in his paper. They help us focus our minds and work.

- Resilience: what do we most value that we want to keep and how?
- Relinquishment: what do we need to let go of so as not to make matters worse?
- Restoration: what could we bring back to help us with these difficult times?
- Reconciliation: with what and whom shall we make peace as we awaken to our mutual mortality?

In his paper he says:

*In pursuit of a conceptual map of "deep adaptation," we can conceive of resilience of human societies as the capacity to adapt to changing circumstances so as to survive with valued norms and behaviours. Given that analysts are concluding that a social collapse is inevitable, the question becomes: What are the valued norms*

*and behaviours that human societies will wish to maintain as they seek to survive? That highlights how deep adaptation will involve more than "resilience." It brings us to a second area of this agenda, which I have named "relinquishment." It involves people and communities letting go of certain assets, behaviours and beliefs where retaining them could make matters worse. Examples include withdrawing from coastlines, shutting down vulnerable industrial facilities, or giving up expectations for certain types of consumption. The third area can be called "restoration." It involves people and communities rediscovering attitudes and approaches to life and organisation...*

The paper didn't include the last question about Reconciliation. He and the whole community are learning together what adaptation at this level means.

The conversation is open and ongoing.

Repeating and evolving. We are learning together. You are welcome in. Your voice is needed. Your transformation of shock and grief into response and relief is needed. We're all in this together. Humanity finally has a common challenge. It's not the Russians or the Chinese or the Middle East. It's our way of life based on our addiction to oil in service to progress, domination, exploitation, winning that is being shut down by how natural systems are responding to the demands and assaults. Will we rise to it? Stay tuned. 📺

---

**Vicki Robin** is a prolific social innovator, writer, and speaker. She is coauthor with Joe Dominguez of the international best-seller, *Your Money or Your Life: Transforming Your Relationship With Money and Achieving Financial Independence* (Viking Penguin, 1992, 1998, 2008). It was an instant *New York Times* best seller in 1992 and steadily appeared on the *BusinessWeek* Best-Seller list from 1992-1997. It is available now in eleven languages.

Her newest book, *Blessing the Hands that Feed Us*; what eating closer to home can teach us about food, community and our place on earth (Viking/ Penguin 2014) tells how her experiment in 10-mile eating not only changed how she ate, but also renewed her hope and rooted her in her community. She went on to investigate how we might restore the vitality of our regional food systems so everyone could have the benefit of relational eating – healthy food, healthy communities.





intangible inspirations

# Bringing Spirit into the World in the Anthropocene Epoch

NATHANIEL WILLIAMS

We live in a time of great challenges. The environmental crisis, which does not only include climate change but general environmental degradation, certainly stands out. Our moment demands more care and connection with the peculiar regions, beings, and elements of our earth than ever before.

At the same time, we are in the midst of a powerful technological revolution. In the USA we spend around eight to ten hours per day engaged with some kind of screen, whether it be our computer

phones, computers, or television. Even without hardware implants, we have become half cyborg. One central concern voiced by Steven Talbott, and echoed by many, is the possible increasing “inability of children, by the time they have grown up, to experience an organic and deeply motivating connection between themselves and the larger society or between themselves and the physical world.”

We are experiencing a clear demand to foster more meaningful connections with the earth at

the same time we are incorporating technologies into our lives that dilute these very connections.

But there is more.

When we look at culture in the US we can discern two characteristic tendencies. One is basically utilitarian. We cultivate it through much of our scientific and technological culture. Charles Taylor has called it a “disengaged stance of rational analysis and control towards the self” something that involves a striving to “distance ourselves from our embodied understanding of things in order to achieve clear and distinct knowledge.” Taylor has traced this in all manner of instances, such as in modern medicine where we heavily rely on images of the human, such as x-rays and graphs. This process is “alienated from our anchoring in the world, in real fleshy reality; which we can only

On the other hand, we have a culture that celebrates individualism, uniqueness, and expression in people. We feel we are all on journeys to try to achieve authenticity, to follow our passions—perhaps in order to find how we can fit into the greater life of the world and society. We can view each individual as a work of art.

This orientation to one another is certainly profound, but it is also so easily corrupted. We cater to our notions of individualism when we create businesses and commercial enterprises. We present promises of the most profound experiences of authenticity, like love, through activities such as owning cars. “Love, it is what makes a Subaru a Subaru.” We use our utilitarian culture to encourage consumption through data processing that informs both advertising and political propaganda.

“OUR MOMENT DEMANDS MORE CARE AND CONNECTION WITH THE PECULIAR REGIONS, BEINGS, AND ELEMENTS OF OUR EARTH THAN EVER BEFORE.

recover access to through the lived body, whose testimony is being shaped or even denied by ‘virtual’ reality.” He calls this process excarnation. It involves viewing the world at a distance to try to discover abstract and general functions. This can lead us to picture the world, and people, as variables that can be, more or less, arranged and rearranged at our pleasure.

Thus, there is an alarming interaction between the utilitarian tendency and expressive dynamics in our feeling for our lives and society. We all too easily overlook how the very audibility of words and the visibility of actions have a revelatory character. They are openings into an intangible web of political and social life. They are irradiated by meaningfulness and ethical impulses. We are touched by the who



of a speaker, a who embedded in a biography and a wide web of human relations. For all its “intangibility, this in-between is no less real than the world of things we visibly have in common.” How can this web become more connected to solidarity, mutual support, and care for the earth?

Indeed, one fundamental challenge in this situation is how to bring the love of unique and diverse, expressive life toward the earth. Our sciences need to be enriched sites of connection; our notion of individualism needs to be rooted and grounded, to be connected more to others, to our place and context. We need to develop forms of individuality more embedded in the realities of the world and we need more spirit in our science.

A version of the striving to bring spirit into the world, and objectivity into knowledge of ourselves, was beautifully expressed by Rudolf Steiner in a sculpture depicting human nature. On the left you can see two beings, one is below the other. The one on the bottom is rigid and tight, the one above has no feet and is being enclosed in a bubble. On the right we see the same figures above and below, but now a new figure appears in the middle, one that can see the spirit in the earth while overthrowing the spirit that tends to enclose us in egotism.

At Free Columbia a new program is beginning this fall aiming at just this. It is named after Mary Caroline Richards, a potter, poet, essayist, and fierce advocate for the renewal of education. It is a full-time curriculum consisting of arts, sciences, and practical classes. Courses in biology, physics, and mathematics are developed to encourage rich engagement with the enchantment of the natural phenomena, not just their lawfulness. Poetry, visual arts, and singing are pursued to explore the objective, intangible inspirations so central to artistic experience.

Applications are currently being accepted for the cohort beginning in August. Between fifteen to twenty students will be accepted this first year. There is not a program quite like it anywhere in the country. and It is intended as a contribution to the unique challenges of the Anthropocene and the digital revolution. 📐

#### NOTES

- 1 Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009), 614.
- 2 *Ibid.*, 741.
- 3 Hanna Arendt, *The Human Condition* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1958), 246 and 324.
- 4 *Ibid.*, 183.

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**Nathaniel Williams** studied at the neueKUNSTschule in Basel, Switzerland. In 2008, he co-founded Free Columbia, a cultural initiative in Columbia County, New York. His PhD work is on how education and culture can support, or oppose, the current social and ecological challenges. [freecolumbia.org](http://freecolumbia.org)

# HE LIVES IN EVERY ROOM

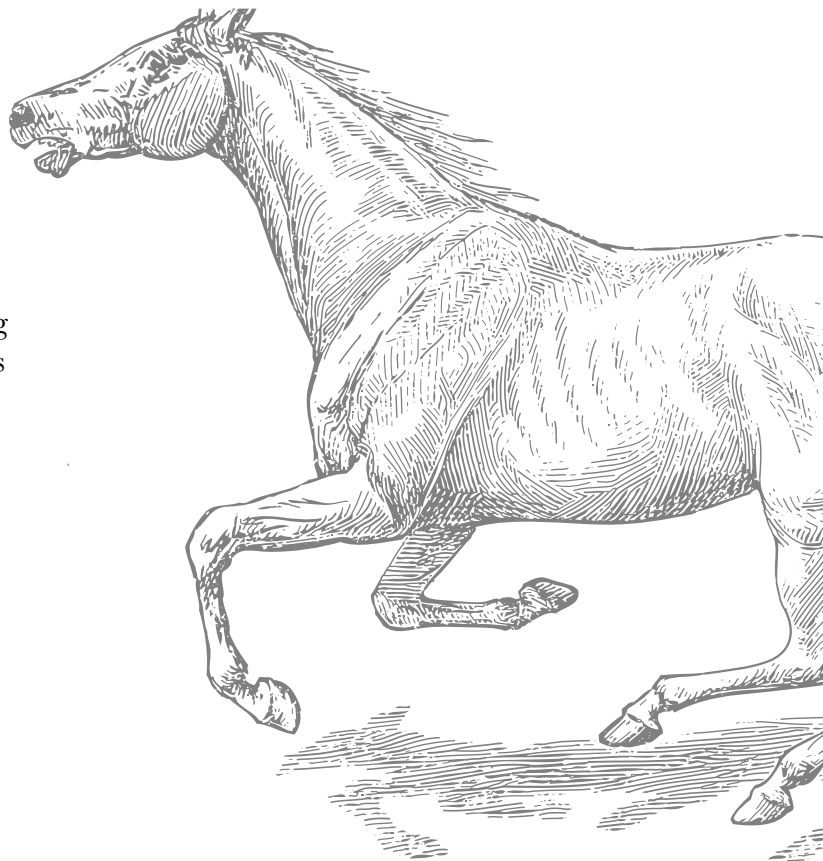
Here in my study in a painting and photographs  
 cookie cutter horses made from paper  
 embedded with his white hair  
 his old horseshoe shaped to his tiny hoof  
 a first commission idealized painting  
 with flowing tail and slender legs  
 and here in my computer all the poems  
 and photos that bring him back to life

In every room there is at least one object  
 a picture of him dressed in cap and gown  
 when he became Professor of Equine Anatomy  
 a life mask I made and hid as treasure  
 a ceramic figurine rolling with hooves up  
 another of him receiving hands on massage

In one cabinet are porcelain bowls  
 branded with his sizzled tail hair  
 and more of that tail hair is braided  
 with silver beads next to my bed  
 and pressed in a glass frame with  
 his photograph printed on paper  
 made with his hair— a bag of which  
 is a favorite bed for Sissy the cat.

Everywhere in every room I see him  
 and he sees me looking out from a drawing  
 that was one of many preliminary sketches  
 made by the artist whose life-bust  
 calls me to the studio each morning  
 where I see him shining in the window

— JOAN DIGBY





# PROMOTION

For most of my adult life  
I have lived and worked  
on a university campus  
instructing riding  
K through college  
in children's summer camp  
then Phys Ed classes  
Fall and Spring terms

This Fall I was promoted  
to Assistant Professor  
of Horse Anatomy  
If this had been an Art course  
I would have been the model  
up on a platform  
for students to draw

But in our Anatomy class  
the Professor herself  
painted right on my body  
rectangles triangles circles  
and lines in blue and green  
(I couldn't see the red)



She marked every major part  
from my poll and nasolacrimal  
duct right down to  
my coronary band  
and suspensory ligaments

Students had to identify  
superficial and deep muscles  
fore and hind limb joints  
scapular femur and canon bones  
I was the midterm practicum  
looking like a Picasso horse  
from his Cubist period

I think I enjoy teaching science  
much more than carrying students  
around in circles and showing them  
the transition from walk to trot  
or how to go over pointless jumps

Anatomy is an intellectual discipline  
that will give me much to reflect on  
when my stay apparatus is locked  
in place and I am free to dream  
during long cold winter nights.

I shall have a sign made for my door  
Assistant Professor Snowball

My stall is my proper office now

— BY SNOWBALL

*"Promotion" was first published in Snowball: New and Selected Poems, New Feral Press (2017)  
"He Lives in Every Room," was first published in Such Sweet Sorrow, New Feral Press (2019).*

**Snowball** and **Joan Digby** were partners for over 20 years at the North Shore Equestrian Center in Brookville, NY. Snowball was first a rodeo then children's camp horse, before coming to Long Island University, where he became Professor Snowball in the Equine Studies program. Jaon was Director of the Honors College, The Poetry Center, and Professor of English—now retired. Snowball was and continues to be her muse.

a winter youth conference  
at the Goetheanum

# Reflections on Climate Change

IOANA VISCRIANU

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*“This conference was a wonderful journey towards a deeper knowledge of my own power, towards feeling my own ability to act.”*

— CONFERENCE PARTICIPANT, 18, ROMANIA



Considering a variety of practical approaches to the climate question based on the foundations of anthroposophy, the 2020 winter youth conference at the Goetheanum in Dornach, Switzerland, was devoted to the theme Bound to the Earth: Freedom, Responsibility, and Destiny in Times of Climate Crises. Over 200 participants from twenty-eight countries gathered to search for approaches to a deeper understanding of the current question of the climate crisis. We explored ways to define individual contributions to shape a healthy future for people and nature.

Contributions ranged from the question of human consciousness. We considered the relevance of the way we shape our relationship to the world and to ourselves—the connection of these

aspects with the current social, economic, and political situation in the world. We discussed the climate question as an inner crisis of mankind. We learned about practical projects and approaches in response to climate challenges.

In discussion groups, workshops, and artistic performances, we deepened our exploration of the above aspects. We opened a space to develop and take away our own approaches to these complex issues.

Throughout the meeting, participants expressed this thought in various ways: this conference gave us hope; we met all sorts of people who are concerned with these same questions and who are committed to doing good. The conference left us with hope that a healthy future for people and nature is conceivable and can be shaped. ■









waldorf education & diversity

# Leading for Inclusion

MONIQUE BRINSON and IDA OBERMAN, PHD

## The Critical Challenge of Our Time

It would be hard to find many issues as strongly defining of our time as our mounting diversity: locally, statewide, nationally, and globally. One might argue it is our time's defining issue.

The distance among groups is growing greater. In the United States alone, more than half of all babies born are people of color. By 2030, the majority of young workers will be people of color. And by 2044, the United States will be a majority people of color nation. Research signals the powerful hope for a shared future in these phenomena.

The wins from diversity are growing clearer in brain research. Diversity is empowering for all who live within its orbit. Brain research shows what many have known intuitively: diversity builds cognitive flexibility with the ability to innovate, be adaptive, and be inclusive.

The wins are already defining action on the stock market. Blue Chip companies are charting the course to value those who are diversity fluent (more even than those who are fluent in math or computer science) because of the bottom line. Intercultural relations have come to be seen by top performing companies to lie at the heart of

organizational effectiveness, enhanced product innovation, and optimal customer relations. Those aiming to do well increasingly seek the one who can reach profitable arrangements across language, race, and gender differences: the one who is comfortable in a boardroom, at a barbeque, and at a Bollywood dance.

Yet, despite the growing diversity and mounting value of being diversity fluent, both economically and socially, we are becoming more segregated. In the United States alone, we are more segregated than sixty-five years ago, despite the 1954 Brown versus Board of Education court ruling. The question is where are the promising practices of how to confront this challenge? Waldorf education offers an important example.

## The Task of Waldorf in its 100th Year

As we celebrate Waldorf's groundbreaking work for justice (pulling down walls of isolation between class, gender, and country), we note the first Waldorf School in 1919 was the first to be coed, kindergarten through twelfth grade, and

cross-class—with the children of the factory owner sitting beside the children of the factory workers.

How have we carried forward this mission? Waldorf schools have grown to be known as an elite educational option, so we are at risk of forgetting our original intent. We have a strong history and global examples of Waldorf leading for inclusion, for example in South Africa Township's Zenzeleni Waldorf School; Monte Azul in Sao Paulo, Brazil; or Israel's El Zeitoun and Ein Bustan, where Arab and Jewish children learn together. Our task now is to build up this heritage, rest-

## Community School for Creative Education (CSCE)

### BRIEF HISTORY

Waldorf schools have historically been founded by groups of dedicated teachers, parents, or a blend. Community School for Creative Education (CSCE) was born from community organizing, with a different entry point. Starting in 2007, CSCE's founder Dr. Ida Oberman, PhD was trained in the Faith in Action leadership model

“COMMUNITY SCHOOL PROVIDES MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES, A MONTHLY FOOD BANK, FREE EXTENDED-DAY ACTIVITIES UNTIL SIX IN THE EVENING EVERY DAY.

ing firmly on Waldorf education's original intent, in the West, as in a public Waldorf school just outside of San Francisco in Oakland, California, known as the Community School for Creative Education.

How can we, as the Waldorf community, strengthen our voice to make the changes for justice and inclusion we were tasked from inception to fulfill? What living thinking is required of us?

(then under PICO's Affiliate Oakland Community Organizations). Under careful tutelage of her organizer, Emma Paulino, Ida learned to do one-on-ones, join with other leaders in research meetings, and then create actions and reflections for renewed one-on-ones. Out of that initiative, local parents led the work to research Waldorf schools and high-performing, high-poverty schools in Oakland's flatlands to make the decision Oakland was ready for a Waldorf

School. After three years of planning and building relations in the Oakland community, the country's first intercultural urban public Waldorf school was born.

The journey was not an easy one. They were declined twice by the district, and once recommended for decline by the County Office of Education staff. Eventually, they were approved in a surprised turn by a board member who became convinced a Waldorf option in the flatlands community was worth the chance. The approval exemplified the power of having a community voice. At the public hearings, fifty-two individuals from different languages, backgrounds, and roles rose up to speak in support. That was a decade ago, June 2010.

Today, CSCE is comprised of grades transitional kindergarten through eighth, serving 283 students. In diverse Oakland, it is among the most diverse schools. The student demographic is comprised of forty-eight percent English Learners; fifteen percent entitled to special education services, over double the average charter school and higher than the district; and eighty-two percent are from low-income families. The student population is ethnically diverse: sixty-two percent Latinx, eighteen percent African American, ten percent Asian American/Pacific Islander, four percent Caucasian, three percent Native American and three percent multiracial.

A full-service community school, Community School provides mental health services, a monthly food bank, free extended-day activities until six in the evening every day (including summer school). Extended-day programs are laced through with watercolor painting, circle time, and main lesson book work. A signature feature of the school is deeply networked in community, in fact, the school serves as the community hub; it is not separate or disconnected.



“THE HOUR IS NOW FOR WALDORF EDUCATION TO STEP FORWARD AND TAKE A SEAT AT THE TABLE AROUND CUTTING-EDGE SOLUTIONS TO CONFRONT THE DEFINING QUESTIONS OF OUR TIME: DIVERSITY AND EQUITY IN OUR WORLD AND IN EDUCATION.

**OUR COMMUNITY:  
ITS RICHES AND CHALLENGES**

We reside in a community that is among the most diverse culturally vibrant neighborhoods in diverse Oakland. Vietnamese, Mexican, and Cambodian restaurants vie for attention. Art from different cultures and religions decorates neighborhood walls and floats as notes through the air. In contrast, the community of which we are a proud part is also known for human trafficking, drugs, and violent crimes at four times the state's rate (and a rate one third higher than the city itself).

**OUR SCHOOL CHARTER AND  
OUR LEADERSHIP**

The idea for an urban public Waldorf school took shape when in 1984, Henry Barnes, founding teacher of the first US Waldorf school in NYC

1928, contacted Ida Oberman when he heard of her intention to start a public Waldorf school in an inner city setting. Henry told Ida, “we have to go where the children are.”

Over the course of the years, the idea became reality. In 2007, the work to form a planning group led to a carefully-crafted school charter document in consultation with veteran Waldorf educators Betty Staley; Dr. Linda Williams, PhD; Mr. Christof Wiechert; renowned scholar Ms. Zaretta Hammond; and the encouragement of Professor Linda Darling Hammond.

In 2017, the seventh year of the school's biography, Principal Monique Brinson and Executive Director Ida Oberman created a formidable leadership team. Grounded in the school's charter, we have been focused, together with the school community, to further develop our urban intercultural



Waldorf model to advance equity, ever aimed at returning to the original intent launched with the first Waldorf school in Stuttgart 1919.

## Three Pillars of Community School and Three Early Fruits

Community School rests on three critical pillars: our community; our Waldorf inspired, standards-aligned, equity-focused program resting on the foundation of the arts; and our adult research and education. Among fruits we count in this early phase are first and foremost our students, then our families, and finally our academic gains.

### *Pillar One: Community*

Our community lives inside and outside the walls of our school. The year is laced with festivals from Day of the Young Child, to Lunar New Year, to the Birthday of the Venerable Prophet Mohammed, to Black History Month. For each festival, families join to bring food, celebrate, decorate, share, learn stories from each other's cultures, and learn to cook each other's favorite foods.

With our families and our community outside the walls of the school, we have done monthly safety walks for example, dear John go home, to fight human trafficking and lift human dignity. Our students, families, and staff have partnered with a nearby district high school to make a mosaic to adorn the outside of our school building. This



# ORGANIC PHYSICS

by **Bertram von Zubern**



Meditatively enhanced thinking, as it was proposed by the philosopher and seer Rudolf Steiner, reveals its inner life. The reader is introduced to the field, where living concepts of time, space

and movement are essential to explore how human spiritual activity brings forth – and overcomes – physical force.

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beautiful artwork faces the street, exemplifying birds escaping a cage to freedom. Included in the art is a phone number for those who want to seek protection from human trafficking.

At the ribbon cutting of this mosaic, the children from Community School and youth from the nearby high school were surrounded by staff families, while the nearby Oakland Cambodian Buddhist Temple chanted songs of peace. Pastors from nearby churches offered prayers. Community leaders spoke up for the power and promise of our neighborhood. Our children were at the center of the celebration, while the chief of police held a watchful, benevolent eye to make sure all traffic slowed, which marked moment of community unity.

Elected officials frequent our halls as readily as do the police or members of the faith community. The mayor of Oakland came to speak to our children on Lunar New Year, as we greeted a revered group of educators from the Waldorf School in Chengdu, China. We were invited to join festivals at the nearby Cambodian Buddhist Temple and received the honor of being allowed to stand a revered distance from the head monk for a picture. We are invited for the festivals of our OH lone brothers and sisters on Indigenous People's Day.

While the police in our community all too often instill fear in children, the sergeants and lieutenants and officers come to us as we celebrate the Day of the Young Child, to read with the children.

## *Pillar 2: Waldorf Inspired, Standards-aligned, Equity-focused Program Resting on the Arts*

### **THE ARTS: FORMING OPENING CIRCLE**

At the center of our work is education as an art. Every morning we open as a whole school community with children, staff, and families, to recite:

"this is our school, let peace dwell here. . ." first used by Cecil Harwood (1898-1975) in the first Waldorf School in an English-speaking country, Michael Hall. Using drums and song and verse in at least three languages, the children and whole community open the day. Through the intensive work since inception with Mr. Bernd Ruff of Friends of Waldorf Education's Emergency Pedagogy and bolted on brain research, we have grown ever more focused on this opening circle as the moment to invite children to find their place, in relation to their own body, to their neighbor, to the whole community, and to nature. Once this fifteen-minute ritual is completed, children sing, by grade, go to their classrooms, and the day begins.

### **THE ARTS: HANDWORK**

Handwork is a central joyous thread that weaves through the life of the school. Founding community member Ms. Nhan Le works with the lower grades to crochet, knit, and finger knit. In the upper grades, students work in paper origami to adorn the space in accordance with holidays. Veteran Waldorf volunteers join for wreath making, silk dying, and crown making.

### **THE ARTS: CLASS PLAYS**

The power of the class play enlivens the children. The fact that Community School English learners and children identified in need of special education services have outperformed the district for the past five years in a row, we attribute to our language, acting, and song-rich environment.

### **THE ARTS: GARDENING**

A key feature of the handwork is the garden work. Blessed by generous donor gifts, we receive support in extended day and during the day so children can combat the research noted nature deficit and experience growth from the planting of the seed, to the bloom, to the harvest, and to the making of the soup.

## THE ARTS: RECITATION

As we recite every morning, we recite every celebration, lifting up for all the rhythm and ritual and power of art through speech. Students learn one world language, Spanish, from Transition Kindergarten on, and we are now building in the option of Mandarin, from middle school on. The power to learn to recite in different world languages was a goal of Dr. Steiner's that Community School has embraced.


## Pillar 3: Academic Steiner Teacher Education

"I do not want to be adulated! I want to be understood," Steiner admonished us. We know at Community School all practice has to be intimately linked to research. Since inception, we have begun our Urban Waldorf Teacher Training under the guidance of Dr. Mary Goral, PhD and co-leadership of lead teachers Ms. Delano Hill and Ms. Sara Alvarado. At the same time, we have benefited by sending our teachers to the Rudolf Steiner College Public School Institute with the generous support of the late Arlene Monks. Most importantly, as of 2018, the Mills Waldorf Professional Development Certified Program was formed through a partnership with Mills College School of Education and Alanis University in Allfer Germany. The program is now recognized by AWSNA, Alliance for Public Waldorf Education, and WECAN. It offers a two-summer, two-week Mills Waldorf Professional Development Certificate with ten graduate credits, with the experience of Waldorf Education training under Mr. Bernd Ruff in Emergency Pedagogy and Jots Scherer, dean of Flanks School of Education. We are proud to begin our third year this summer.

In 2019, on the state test, our African-American students outperformed all other public schools in

the city (district or charter). Our low-income Latinx students won a high growth prize for being in the top ninetieth percentile in growth in English Language Arts and Math. Finally, our students identified as in need of special education outperformed the district by double for a sixth year in a row.

The hour is now for Waldorf education to step forward and take a seat at the table around cutting-edge solutions to confront the defining questions of our time: diversity and equity in our world and in education. Waldorf education can celebrate its power as a tested model to confront challenges and harness opportunities. We know the power of diversity of head, heart, and hand; diversity of the other and me; diversity of the community and us; diversity of our community and the world. We have the wind in our back. The growing body of research on social emotional learning and brain research confirms what Waldorf education has adapted across time, language, class, and culture.

It is time for Waldorf practice and research to speak as the Steiner-hired Waldorf teacher Erich Gabert did, "Waldorf education is not imitation but inquiry; it is not replication but research; Waldorf is not done but unfolding." As we enter Waldorf education's next 100 years, we are called to the task of an unfolding leader in advancing social justice. 

*Adapted from talks given 09/06/2019 at the Alanus University, Allfer, Germany; and Stuttgart Waldorf School Faculty Meeting, Stuttgart, Germany, 09/12/2019*

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As principal of the Community School for Creative Education, **Monique Brinson** brings 10 years experience as an Oakland Principal and 16 years experience in administration along with 10 years experience as a founding teacher/teacher. An athlete and artist as well as an organic academic and community leader; Principal Brinson has embraced an intercultural lens and is passionate about strengthening and extending a Culturally Responsive Teaching Framework as a leader of the country's first Intercultural Public Waldorf Model in Oakland.

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**Ida Oberman** is Dutch born and German educated. A teacher for ten years, she is the founder and now the executive director of Community School for Creative Education, the country's first urban public Waldorf school, located in Oakland, CA.





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## Camphill Village Minnesota

# Finding a Home and My Best Self

OLIVIA TARLTON

I found Camphill Village right when I needed it most. I had just moved back into my parents' house after my plans had fallen through elsewhere. I was stuck, feeling unhappy, and more than a little lost about how to move forward.

While talking with my dad one day, he challenged me to think about the things I'd done in the past that made me feel most uplifted. That's when I began reminiscing about how community has brought me comfort and joy over the years. Though I didn't know what I wanted to do next, I knew I needed a place where I felt a sense of belonging. I knew if I could surround myself with people who challenged and inspired me, I could at least feel supported until I figured out what came next.

As I searched for my path, I made sure to keep up with my journal, capturing snapshots of my journey and my daily experiences and feelings.

Journal Entry, 12/10

I don't know that I can be fully happy, or even satisfied, with a "normal" life for myself... work during the week, then back home, with hobbies & friends & church, etc., etc., etc., sprinkled in where they fit.

I need meaning & community & rest & faith & laughter & good food & activities & celebrations ALL THE TIME, IN WORK & IN PLAY.

So began my search for a place that I could call home, even if just for the time being. While browsing the website **Backdoorjobs.com**, I came across an advertisement from Camphill Association of North America:

"Spend a year developing yourself. Discover your deeper purpose and share your life and gifts in a thriving intentional community with Camphill!... Camphill Volunteers live and work alongside children, youth and adults with developmental and other disabilities in rural communities throughout the U.S. and Canada..."

As I sat reading the description, I reflected on whether this type of place would be right for me. Rural lifestyle? Well, I sort of knew how to garden and farm. Intentional living? I had taken part in some week-long service trips during high school and college. I did have some experience working with people with disabilities from substitute teaching a few special education classes, and I have a close family friend with autism. On paper, it wasn't an exact fit. Still, something about the ad spoke to my soul.









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### **JOURNAL ENTRY, 1/3**

Why Camphill MN sounds like a good (great?) next step...

- Live in community
- Incorporate spirituality & intention into daily life
- Cherish the little things
- Give back, care for others daily, do something important
- Reconnect with nature
- Slow down
- Celebrate life in all its forms
- Develop greater patience & selflessness

Above all, Camphill sounded like a wonderful opportunity to learn all that I could. And, when I visited Camphill Village in Sauk Centre, Minnesota, that’s exactly what I found: a place where everyone can learn and grow. It’s judgment-free—the perfect place to work on improving yourself in all the ways you possibly can, while still being celebrated for who you are at this present moment.

I came to Camphill Village Minnesota for a three-day visit before accepting a residential volunteer (Camphill calls this a coworker) position. But it only took a few hours of being here to know that this is what I had been looking for.

After touring the village set amidst picturesque snow-covered hills and frozen streams, visiting the pigs and cows, exploring the colorful weavery, and savoring the laughter-filled harvest kitchen, we arrived at the home where I would stay for the next few days. I was greeted by the house members, who gifted me with coloring pages exclaiming, “Welcome to our community,” and embraced me in warm hugs. I remember not being able to sleep my first night because I couldn’t believe how incredible and right this place felt for me.

### **JOURNAL ENTRY, 3/21**

I’ve been here for two days & I’ve already been shown immense love & acceptance, laughed a lot, been treated to two fun outings, & cheered others on. I have been humbled & excited to learn all I can from everyone I can, & felt genuinely happy.

Before coming to Camphill, I wasn't sure what it would be like to share a home with folks with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Would they respect my personal space? Would I feel burnt out immediately? Would I have enough patience for the job? What would the learning curve be like?

What I didn't anticipate was just how honest and genuine my housemates would be. I especially love how true they are to themselves, and how they've taught me to embrace who I am, too. I've never been appreciated this much, or made to feel so good about myself. In this community, made up of people with and without disabilities, every day is viewed as a new opportunity to remind each other just how special we are.

**JOURNAL ENTRY, 4/9:**

*Here*

*We dress in our best for outings to Dairy Queen*

*Here*

*Where we are comfortable in our bodies, which are able & determined & filled with goodness*

*Here*

*Where we look forward to Thursday visits to the library*

*Here*

*Where we are thankful for our food & our community & the planting of Easter grass*

*Even though snow's on the way,*

*We feel warmth*

*Here*

*With each other*

While each day looks somewhat different at Camphill Village Minnesota, most weekdays have



a certain schedule that we follow. For example, my Fridays typically look something like this:

7:30 - 8:00: Wake up and get my housemates moving. Cook oatmeal, make coffee and tea, and set the table.

8:00 - 8:30: Say grace and eat breakfast together. Talk about what we did last night, how we slept, and where we all will work today.

8:30 - 9:00: One housemate does the dishes, while everyone else brushes their teeth. I get dressed and get myself ready for the day. Everyone puts on their coats and heads out to their workplace.

9:00 - 11:30: I work in the weavery this morning. As a crew, we finish setting up one loom, weave red and white placemats on another, and weave tites out of recycled grocery bags on a third loom.

11:30 - 12:00: Leave the weavery, check the mail, chat with the staff in the office, and walk over to the harvest kitchen. Catch up with friends before lunch.

12:00 - 1:00: Enjoy a homemade pizza meal with the rest of the village. On Fridays, that means around 30 people!

1:00 - 2:00: Relax at our house for Rest Hour.

2:00 - 4:30: Housekeeping time! Together we sweep, mop, vacuum, and clean bathrooms. We never forget to break for tea and nonsense jokes.

4:30 - 6:00: Pick up my housemates from their workplaces, and head home for some down time. I cook dinner for our household and someone else sets the table.

6:00 - 6:30: Eat and chat some more at the supper table.

6:30 - 7:00: One housemate does the dishes. Then, we all get ready for community movie night. Don't forget flashlights!

7:00 - 9:00: Enjoy a movie night with friends.





9:00 - 10:00: Help my housemates get ready for bed. Read *Little House on the Prairie* with one of my housemates before he falls asleep.

10:00 - 11:30: I have some time to myself before enjoying a peaceful night's sleep.

### **JOURNAL ENTRY, 8/9**

So far Camphill has taught me to be less intimidated to try new things, less stressed over small things, less quick to judge others, & more comfortable in my skin. I accept that I'm a goofy dancer & horrible singer & am not perfect ever, but I can always be better.

Through all of this, I am learning a lot: how to weave on a loom, how to preserve vegetables, how to confidently cook a meal for large groups of people, how to bake bread and make homemade yogurt, and how to grow apples. Along with these skills, I am developing less-technical—but just as important—life skills, too.

My housemates have taught me a lot about healthy communication. I distinctly remember knocking on a housemate's door and entering before she gave me permission during my first week at Camphill. Later, she told me

that she would appreciate it if I would wait for her to tell me to enter her room. Since then, I've found myself working harder to be upfront and honest about my feelings with other people. It's a process. But my housemates are teaching me more each day about being genuine, setting boundaries, and both asking for and giving forgiveness.

I've also learned to be patient by observing the patience of those around me. It helps that things move at a slower pace in our community. I know that it will take us fifteen extra minutes to get through the line at the grocery store because we're all paying with checks, and I'm okay with that. In fact, I have begun to enjoy it! I'm constantly reminded fast does not equal better. When we go slower, we have more time to talk with the employees and to enjoy each moment more fully.

### **JOURNAL ENTRY, 7/24**

How special is it to share a meal together. Don't take it for granted; acknowledge the sacredness each time.

One of my favorite parts of daily life at Camphill Village is mealtime. The food we eat is incredible because it is fresh and grown on our land. I can

“

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## volunteering at camphill

Residential volunteers are an essential part of daily life at the fifteen Camphill communities and affiliates in North America. Called coworkers, these volunteers live, work, and enjoy daily life alongside fellow community members with and without intellectual and developmental disabilities, such as autism and Down syndrome.

While living in Camphill communities, coworkers undertake diverse responsibilities and learning experiences, from assisting in pottery, weaving, or woodworking studios to helping out in biodynamic farms, gardens, and bakeries; cooking community meals; sharing household duties; and leading excursions to nearby towns and cities.

“Many volunteers describe their time at Camphill as transformative—a chance to discover themselves; develop lasting friendships; and gain creative and interpersonal skills in a diverse and supportive environment,” says Leila Kaplan, Camphill Association of North America’s Volunteer Outreach Coordinator.

In 2019, Camphill Association of North America launched a College Loan Support Program to help make it possible for more young people to work as live-in volunteers at Camphill communities in North America, while continuing to meet their college loan repayment obligations. Camphill volunteers who meet eligibility requirements can receive up to \$250 a month—or \$3,000 a year—in loan repayment support. Select Camphill communities offer additional college loan assistance to accepted applicants who have education debt in excess of this amount.

In addition to loan assistance, coworkers’ basic living needs are met. During their tenures, they receive medical insurance; a monthly stipend; a private room in a beautiful environment; wholesome, mostly organic meals; and other essentials. Camphill’s volunteer program also includes education and mentorship for those who wish to develop their inner mindfulness practices, whether creative, spiritual, or intellectual.

To learn more about the program and residential volunteer positions at Camphill communities in the United States and Canada, visit [camphill.org/clsp](http://camphill.org/clsp) or e-mail [leila@camphill.org](mailto:leila@camphill.org).

think of multiple Saturdays during the summer where at least ten of us—people with and without disabilities alike—harvested green beans together. We shared stories and sang songs as we went, taking time to appreciate the beans that had grown from seeds right before our eyes, the sun that warmed our bodies, and the company of one another.

Similarly, meals are made with love in our community. And enjoying this food alongside wonderful people makes it even more special. As we eat, we talk about how our days are going and what we’re looking forward to. We joke around and tease one another. We play games at the table where we roll our napkin rings to the person across from us and take part in races to be first to blow out the candle.

At the table, we strongly resemble a family. Like any family, our time together is not always light-hearted and fun. Some meals, we’re quiet because we’re still waking up or unable to escape the gloomy weather’s hold on us. Some meals, we’re grouchy or annoyed. Some meals, we just don’t have much to say. Despite our moods and the weather and chaos of the day, we still sit down together and take part in this important ritual, which speaks lengths about our commitment to one another.

### JOURNAL ENTRY, 12/8

I wish all people could experience a place as beautiful as this; a way of life so loving, peaceful & intentional... so full of laughter & compliments & dancing. I didn’t know I was signing up for something that will be so hard to leave. 🌱

---

**Olivia Tarlton** joined Camphill Village Minnesota as a coworker in March 2019. Hailing from the suburbs of Dallas, and more recently, Green Bay, Wisconsin, Olivia enjoys reading, biking, and picnics. She is learning to enjoy the winter. After leaving Camphill, her next adventure will be obtaining her master’s degree in order to become a middle school English teacher.



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guiding our children

# Enter the Flow and then Go

NANCY BLANNING

It is always a rich experience observing interactions between parents and their children at transition times. Drop-offs at school mostly go well. The children are eager to see their friends and have much to look forward to for the day. Pickup at the end of the day, especially if the children are playing with friends, offers a wide view from smooth-and-congenial to distressed-and-stormy interactions. Is there some magic to ending the day well? There probably isn't (drat and blast!). But attentive watching of friendly and smooth(ish) interactions does reveal a common element.

Here's an example. A parent arrives in the play yard to fetch her youngster who is deeply engrossed in play with other children in the sand. As the parent approaches, one of the children holds up a cup with sand piled in it. "Ice cream cones!" is announced. "What flavor?" asks the parent. "Chocolate!" Extending hand forward, the parent asks, "May I have one?" The children look at one another with delight in their eyes and make an especially hearty sand cone, which the parent takes plenty of time to savor. "I really enjoyed that cone. You all make good ice cream. I would like to have some more tomorrow when I come again." After sitting for another couple of minutes the parent announces, "Come on, feet. Let's get moving."

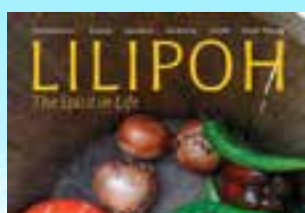
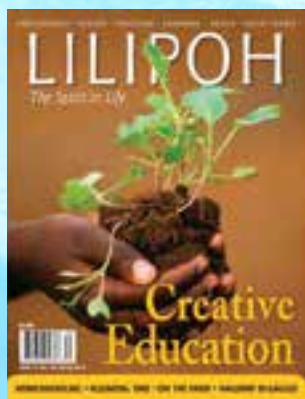
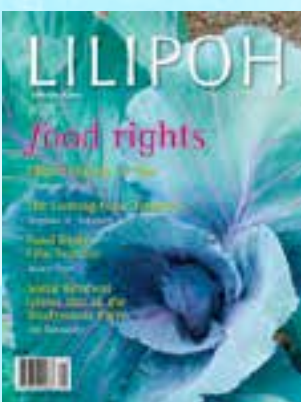
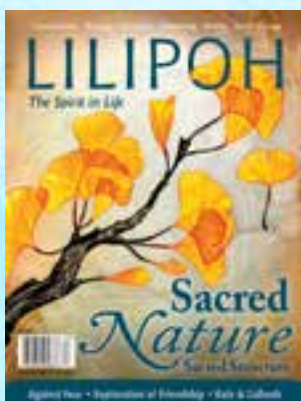
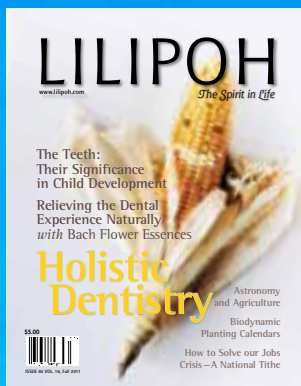
Parent extends a patient and inviting hand, and parent and child head off to go home.

Two children are lying on their bellies on the sand, digging as deeply as their arms, stretched to full length, will reach. A grandfather comes to ferry his grandson home. "What are you digging?" The children reply, "A hole to the center of the earth." "Ummm," says the grandfather. "That is really deep. When I was small, I always wanted to dig deep into the earth. Could I help?" He is readily welcomed. After the trio dig for a while, the grandfather observes, "This digging needs lots more work. I think we will have to keep going again tomorrow. We've gone as far as arms will go. Tomorrow we will need shovels." Grandfather gestures to leave and a satisfied child comes along.

One more slightly different, but irresistible, interaction between a child and a teacher comes to mind to share. In the kindergarten, children were sitting with the teacher on the circle rug. One six-year-old boy sat next to the teacher. The little boy tented his knees, lowered his head, and sort of wrapped his arms to hide his face. Intrigued, the teacher looked to see why he had concealed his head. She saw him blowing a huge spit bubble. She said, "That is the biggest spit bubble I have ever seen. Wow. I know that I couldn't do that." The

# LILIPOH

## *the Spirit in Life*



Articles, art, poetry, reviews of books, and news make **LILIPOH Magazine** a well-rounded, solution-oriented publication for creative, green-minded individuals who have an interest in spiritual inquiry and a desire to make a difference in the world.

### Curbing Climate Change Through Biodynamic Agriculture

By Elizabeth Candelario

As the certifying agency for Biodynamic farms across the USA, Demeter's vision is to heal the planet through agriculture. That's a bold statement, because the very act of farming worldwide is responsible for at least 15% of global greenhouse gas emissions, the leading cause of climate change.

"There is this beautiful symbiosis going on beneath our feet, where the liquid carbon transforms into a solid, and is taken up by the microbiota (bacteria and fungi) that make up healthy soil."

### Helping Money Heal; The Vidar Foundation in Canada

By Trevor Janz, MD

*"...we are responsible for where our money is, and what effect it is having on all the lives it touches."*

The Vidar Foundation is a registered Canadian charity that connects individuals wishing to use their money in positive ways, with borrowers needing money to grow socially responsible enterprises in sustainable agriculture, education, health, cooperatives, and other areas.

(Excerpts from LILIPOH Issue #86, Winter 2017)

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child looked up with a shy but satisfied smile and followed the whole circle with kind and pleasant attention to the teacher.

Each of these scenarios could have turned into an impatient or critical confrontation, but did not. What is the common thread that led each to another place? In each case, the adult entered into the realm of the children's consciousness and joined in the flow of their activity—their play, even their potentially provocative behavior—in an objective, friendly, and interested way.

The adult acknowledged the child's world and affirmed it was a worthy place to be by appropriately entering into it. The parent and teacher entered the flow and then sensed the



“WHATEVER CHILDREN ARE DOING IS COMPLETELY ABSORBING AND THE ONLY THING GOING ON IN THEIR UNIVERSE AT THAT MOMENT. THEY ARE THE ACTIVITY AND ARE COMPLETELY DEVOTED TO IT.”

right moment to guide the child into the world of time and practical matters without a jarring shock to the child.


The consciousness of little children is so different from the adult, time-driven, logical, practical state of, “Come on. Let's get this done.” Little

children do not live in time and are not conscious of time in an awakened way. Whatever children are doing is completely absorbing and the only thing going on in their universe at that moment. They are the activity and are completely devoted to it. They still have the memory of the spiritual



world where they experienced reverence for all things and are continuing such activity on earth. Their consciousness is yet more connected to the there than to the here. One can suggest that they are still living closely to the kingdom of God, as mentioned in spiritual writings.

Holy writings state that, unless one becomes like a little child, one cannot enter the kingdom of God. Many great thinkers speculated what this means. Can it possibly mean we can approach this mystery by intentionally entering the timeless, consciousness-flow of the child's devotion to her task and rest there for a moment? Might we thereby open a doorway to otherwise dim memories of a world from which we came—where all was good?

These are lofty metaphysical questions that may seem rather distant from ice cream cones in the sand box. We can ponder whether playfully and sincerely digging to the center of the earth will bring us closer to the kingdom of God in our own adult ways. Whatever might be true, one sure thing is that entering the flow, dwelling with the child for a moment in this timeless devotedness, can surely help at pickup time. 

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**Nancy Blanning** has been a Waldorf early childhood educator for nearly 30 years, emphasizing therapeutic and developmental support with young children. She also serves on the WECAN board and is co-author with Laurie Clark of *Movement Journeys and Circle Adventures*, a therapeutic movement resource book for teachers. For further information on WECAN and its activities, please visit [waldorfearlychildhood.org](http://waldorfearlychildhood.org). Nancy Blanning is the author of the Foreword to the book, *Slow Parenting*.

## Classifieds

The Community Farm of Ann Arbor - CFAA – is **looking for a dedicated BD farmer** to lead an established community of some 60 members devoted to biodynamic agriculture. The CFAA is a 30-year old CSA and has been in the current location for 25 years. If interested, please contact [communityfarminfo@gmail.com](mailto:communityfarminfo@gmail.com) or The Community Farm of Ann Arbor c/o Karen Chalmer, 5280 Westbury Dr. Chelsea, MI 48118 or call Karen at (734) 475-7451.

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# THE BEAD WEAVER AND THE BROKEN NECKLACE

*A jeweler in a jewelry shop asked for a poem;  
she said her son had died at sixteen three years ago  
and she could not get past it — how could she move on?*

Bead weaver, throw your turquoise beads  
to the howling wind of grief to satisfy it.

Bead weaver, push your sharp silver needle  
through the golden beads of your amber tears.

Pull taut the shared cord of his memory  
through every bead's dark center again and again.

Count a prayer and declare renewal  
on each bead of amber, turquoise, and coral.

Repair this broken necklace, its scattered beads  
rolling 'round and 'round in a shallow cedar tray.

Tap the beads in the canopy of light,  
the bare bulb haloing your head.

Weave the singing necklace back.  
String all the pieces to its clasp.

Hold it all in your hands. Hold it all together  
and make it whole again.

For you the amber beads melt warm honey  
of life's ancient stirrings.

The turquoise beads — shapeshifters —  
spin azure dreams for you.

The coral beads pulse life's sea force —  
walking tides' labyrinth for you.

Hold it all in your hands. Hold it all together  
and make it whole again.

Work the puzzle with your grey green goddess  
eyes.

You know each night the sun bead drops.

You know the path through the night bead's  
darkness.

You know each morning you will string radiance to  
the rising sun.

— BY SHARON METZLER-DOW

**Sharon Metzler-Dow** is published in anthologies *Eternal Snow* (an international collection), *Subject to Change*, *Bay Area Generations*, *2019 For a Better World*; *Poetry Expressed 2019 Magazine* and *Berkeley Daily Planet*. Her poem, *Beyond the Cave Wall*, was published for international readership on The Leakey Foundation website. She was the 2014 Conference Poet for the International Conference for Women's Reproductive Health. Sharon is an invited feature reader throughout the San Francisco Bay Area, Sacramento, and Cincinnati, Ohio.



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