Time for Change

A Toolkit for Transformation

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Views Expressed in this Report

Consistent with the epistemic foundations of Cooperative Inquiry, the findings, ideas, and recommencations contained in this report are the product of the CI group's inquiry process. Accordingly, they are based on the experience and views of the members of the inquiry group and do not necessarily represent the positions of the Research Center for Leadership in Action.

About the Toolkit for Transformation

Four social change leaders and two facilitators began a research project using the Cooperative Inquiry (CI) method in the fall of 2006. The following 14 months proved far more akin to a journey together than a research project. The participants' decision to join the CI was based on a mutual interest in the broad topic proposed for the inquiry: "What is the relationship between transformation of the self and transformation of our society?" Our time together resulted not only in a deep understanding of our topic but also in a great friendship among the participants and clarity about the connection between our personal lives and the social change work we have chosen to do.

Our group included participants Bob Fulkerson, director of the Progressive Leadership Alliance of Nevada; LuAnn Leonard, executive director of the Hopi Education Endowment Fund; Roger Sherman, program director/organizer for United Vision for Idaho; Loris Taylor, director, The Hopi Foundation and Center for Native American Public Radio; and facilitators Meredith Herr, assistant research scientist at the Research Center for Leadership in Action; and Theresa Holden, executive director of the Artistic and Community Connection.

What is Cooperative Inquiry?

Cooperative Inquiry (CI) is a participatory research technique in which a small group of participants use their own experience to generate insights around an issue that is of burning concern to all of them. In this type of inquiry, participants formulate a question, agree upon a course of action, individually engage in action through their work, and then collectively make meaning from the data generated by their actions. This cycle of reflection-action-reflection is repeated several times until the group feels it has successfully addressed its concerns. On occasion, facilitators support the group to ensure that its members use the process to its full advantage. CI contributes to creating new knowledge grounded in practice, deepens the participants' leadership potential, and strengthens relationships among group members.

About this report

This inquiry took the six of us on a meaningful and enlightening journey that motivated the creation of this three-part document:

The Story of a Cooperative Inquiry Journey is an integral part of this toolkit. In fact, we believe that the process and methods used during our meetings and the activities we chose to do between our meetings could be models for organizations wanting to undertake their own Cooperative Inquiry. They were the catalyst for the **book of exercises** and are fully described in that section.

The Guiding Principles and Pathways for Change shares our conceptual findings about the pathways that can lead toward transformation. It also presents the guiding principles that led us in developing these pathways and guide the use of this toolkit.

Taking Time for Transformation: A Book of Exercises describes in detail the procedures and steps for several of the methods and actions we used to answer our question. It also includes the reports and essays written by our participants that came out of these actions and methods. We offer these writings in this manual for two purposes—to share our findings and ideas about the answer to our question and as catalytic resources for a leader to use or choose from as she/he guides a group through a retreat, workshop, or Cooperative Inquiry.

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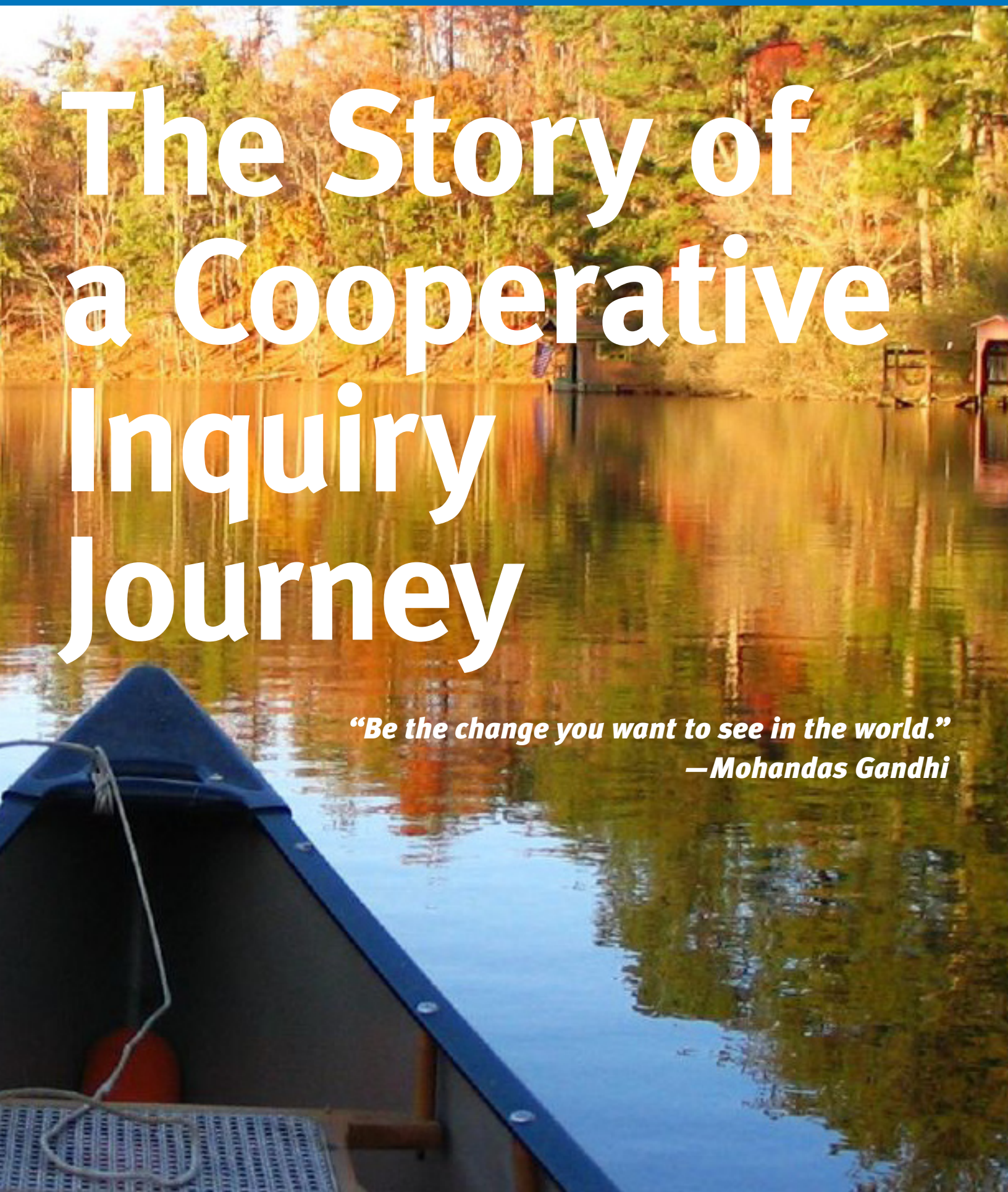


The Story of a Cooperative Inquiry Journey

"Be the change you want to see in the world."
—Mohandas Gandhi

Our Cooperative Inquiry (CI) met five times in five different locations, but it would not be until the third meeting that we arrived at our final question:

> ***How can social change leaders help cultivate in ourselves and others change from within that inspires individual liberation and builds a movement for social justice?***

Referring to Gandhi's great quote, we often spoke of our "celestial questions": How can we be the change we want to see in the world, and how can we help cultivate that change in others and our organizations?

It is the practice of CI for participants to develop exactly the "right" question, which they will then spend their time together researching. Our quest for this question, as in most CIs, was a turning and twisting path. We were *not* researching the best methods for building a movement for social justice, although each and every participant's organization hopes that it stands ready to take part in such a movement.

Our quest was rather to discover what each of us can do *personally* to foster within ourselves change that imitates our vision for a just and free society. Furthermore, we wanted to discover if it is possible for our *organizations*—and their leaders—to help our staffs, boards, and volunteers, as well as the people of the communities we serve, to develop such personal change. Finally, we wanted to discover what practices, policies, and methods our own and other organizations for social change could develop that would make them stand as examples for creating the type of equitable, respectful, and just governments, communities, and society we all visualize.

We came to understand that without first working on our own personal commitment and a deep understanding of what this change or transformation would look like, we could not be prepared to visualize a community-wide movement for social justice, much less a national or worldwide movement for change. We also realized that our organizations needed to practice within their own walls and among their own colleagues the very changes they are seeking to effect in their communities, states, nation, and world. It was this quest that guided our inquiry and the activities and research we undertook.

We begin this toolkit by sharing with you the story of our CI process, the methods and techniques we used, and discoveries we made because as we came to discover, the beginning of our story is also its end. The journey we took created the answers we offer.

The participants of this CI came to the inquiry already grounded and believing in the four ideas that we would later articulate and present as the guiding principles necessary for all individual and organizations seeking personal, organizational, and societal transformation:

> **Respect and appreciate all people.**
> **Take care of oneself and loved ones.**
> **Be open to reflection and change.**
> **Acknowledge that racism, prejudice, injustice, and oppression exist.**

These ideas were unspoken at first, but through our CI journey we had time to note their importance in our work and clearly articulate their role in creating social justice movements. Therefore, at the end of our CI, we defined these principles and now offer them as the necessary foundation from which transformation can arise.

Secondly, we came to the CI to do serious research into the relationship between personal, organizational, and societal transformation. In order to do this, we carefully undertook a process using certain tools and methodologies and gave ourselves abundant time for stories, reflection, writing, meditation, and dialogue. In the end, we learned that the answer to our questions lay in and along the path we took while seeking the answer. Indeed, one of our first readings, *We Make The Road by Walking*, by Myles Horton and Paulo Freire, seemed to foreshadow what we would come to discover. Therefore, in the end we offer our journey, its methods, strategies, and pathways to others who are seeking personal and organizational transformation in their quest for societal change.

Should your organization choose to undertake a cooperative research project to reenergize and re-vision or a retreat to think about how you can cultivate transformation for both individuals and your organization, we offer this story of our journey as a map that you can follow in undertaking your journey. The process and the methods can remain the same regardless of your particular "question" or the purpose for your retreat. The methods work because they focus on equality of voice, respect for each individual, dialogue as opposed to debate or opinion, and taking time for the whole self (body, breath, and mind), and they encourage our shared humanity through stories. The process and methods are the backbone for helping you really *take time* in your quest, and they will prove themselves the key to a truly transformational retreat.

Key Meeting Activities and Their Outcomes

The outward freedom that we shall attain will only be in exact proportion to the inner freedom to which we may have grown at any given moment. Our chief energy, therefore, must be concentrated upon achieving change from within.

—Mohandas Gandhi

Following are the eight main activities we practiced during our time together. After each brief description, we offer the beneficial outcomes that resulted from the activity. We believe that others will find similar benefits from utilizing these activities in their organizational work. Throughout, you will find links that will take you to a full description of the activity in the book of execises and/or some of the resulting essays from our CI.

1. Use of Quotes, Readings, and Objects

As the group came to the first **meeting** knowing that the broad topic was about personal transformation and its connection to transforming society, we each brought to the meeting readings and quotes that helped us understand this topic. Each of us also brought a story or an object that helped share our personal histories. We shared these photos, objects, and stories.

Outcomes:

- We found the use of readings, quotes, and objects to be grounding, catalytic, and knowledge building, all of which helped to build a close team and create productive dialogues. We continued to share readings, quotes, and objects to the end of the CI.

To see one of the objects we used, click here:

A Hopi: The Traditional Values and Visions

LuAnn Leonard, one of the CI participants, brought this object during our first meeting. We were all struck by how this statement of the values and visions of being a Hopi seemed to be a perfect guide to discovering the connection between personal and societal transformation. We returned to its wisdom often throughout our CI.

2. Story Circle Methodology

One of our facilitators, Theresa Holden, guided us in the Story Circle Method, which we would use many times throughout the process. The purpose of this method was for us to have an equitable and respectful way to learn more about each other quickly through story. With a process that focuses on listening first and foremost and equality of time for each storyteller, we each told a story about what brought us into the work we do in social change organizations.

The Story Circle Method was perhaps the single most effective method we used to create a bond of understanding between our diverse group and open a space in our research project for equality of our voices and deep and respectful listening. This in turn motivated productive dialogues in our group. The book of exercises, with strategies and methods for transformation, includes the Story Circle Method as a primary tool for personal and group transformation.

Outcomes:

- We helped to build an open and respectful space in which to undertake our work;
- Forged a team by listening to each other's stories about what brought them to social change work, which forged connections, empathy, and/or built knowledge; and
- Created a principle of equality in our group.

For step-by-step instructions on how to use the Story Circle Methodology as a power tool in your meetings or retreats, click here.

3. Question Mapping

During our first meeting we also struggled to discover the exact question that we would be researching. To do this, we used a method called "Question Mapping," in which each participant writes various questions. From these, the group decides which questions are most "central" and which are background or more future oriented. Our question map from the first meeting shows both the complexity and the struggle we experienced in trying to discover our "central question."

Outcomes:

- We learned to value and seek consensus building in our group;
- Created a culture in the group for seeking other opinions and ideas; and
- Learned to push ourselves to dig deeper for answers by looking for the second and third ideas, not just the first that comes.

For brief instructions on using this technique and to see our completed Question Map, click here.

4. Yoga and Breathing Exercises

In this first meeting, we began the practice of using our bodies, not just our minds and mouths. We had two yoga and breathing breaks. We noticed immediately how refreshed and ready to continue we were after these exercises.

Outcomes:

- After the first meeting, our group committed to taking time in every meeting for our bodies as well as our minds. Taking this time for physical and meditative practice proved essential. Yoga, breathing, stretching, walking, or any form of moving our bodies brought creativity, energy, revived focus, clarity, and joy to challenging and difficult mental work.

To see four simple yoga and breathing exercises you can use in your retreats or workshops, click here.

5. Being in Nature

We made a point of spending time out of doors. To be aware of the natural world around us was important from the beginning of our CI. We moved our various exercises, such as small group work, meditation, and individual writing time, outside whenever possible. During one of our excursions to Walnut Canyon, the ancient Havasupai people's cliff dwelling in Arizona, we noted the following quote by Lemuel Paya: "We used to climb a little hill at the end of the day—all work done—and look out over the land and just feel good to be alive." We followed this wisdom for the rest of our collaboration.

Outcomes:

- Spending time in natural settings changed our literal and internal "vista." We saw things in a new light after time in nature.
- We learned that the smallest and grandest creations in nature hold many answers to our challenges and struggles. Nature has many lessons to share if we have the time and mind to hear and see them.
- By focusing on the beauty and every-changing qualities of nature instead of the constant struggle with our minds to "solve the problems," we gave our subconscious and creative brains a chance to respond so that often ideas and solutions arose with greater clarity and energy.

In response to spending time in natural environments, two CI co-authors wrote essays that point to the importance and transformative power of our connection to nature. To read them, click on the following links:

Bob Fulkerson's "On Personal, Organizational, and Social Transformation"
Loris Taylor's "Potskwaniat"

6. Text-Based Dialogue

This is an exercise in which we all read pre-selected excerpts from two documents brought by Meredith and Theresa. This was followed by each of the participants reading aloud a brief section of the document and commenting on why or how it helped to answer our question.

Outcomes:

- This served our group as a powerful, nontraditional tool for "knowledge building."
- It helped expose us to new topics in a safe and supportive setting with others serving as "teachers" as they explained what they understood from the reading.
- It built our leadership capacity as individuals, enabling us to share what we found meaningful and insightful.
- It proved an excellent listening and learning tool.
- It created a safe and supportive place for sharing conflicting opinions and discovering how to hear others' points-of-view.

For simple instructions on how to use this tool, along with a writing exercise to use in your workshop or retreat, click here:

Text-Based Dialogue and Writing Exercise

7. Freefall Writing Exercise

This is a simple, fast, non-threatening way to "get your ideas down on paper." We tried our first freefall writing in response to the prompt: "What have you learned since the beginning of this meeting?" The idea is to keep your pen on the paper, moving at all times and writing with as little self-critique as possible. We did this exercise several times during our CI and often shared our writings.

Outcomes:

- This tool helped us overcome "fear" of writing down ideas. It proved an excellent way to introduce writing or journaling to a group that may not at first have been open to the importance of writing in their work.
- It helped us discover similarities and differences in sharing our own cultures and histories and served as a safe, non-threatening point of departure for vibrant and intense dialogue.
- It helped participants become aware of the value of their own thinking and writing, which they often did not recognize or appreciate.

For simple instructions for how to conduct the Freefall Writing and Dialogue exercise in your workshops or retreat, click here.

We also offer two essays by CI co-authors, first written during a Freefall Writing exercise, as catalysts for your group when striving to develop leadership within your organization and/or help cultivate deeper commitment to social justice work. To read the essays, please click on the following links:

Roger Sherman's Strengthening Leadership
LuAnn Leonard's Future of Our Children

8. Interviews at Our Organizations

As part of our Cooperative Inquiry, we decided that the action we would undertake before the second meeting would be for individuals to interview two or three colleagues using predetermined questions. After we conducted two rounds of interviews and shared the discoveries we made, we observed that the use of interviewing not only helped our CI find our answers but also provided a powerful tool for social change work.

Outcomes:

- By promoting and teaching active listening skills through interviewing, this tool helped each interviewer build knowledge, empathy, and understanding.
- It opened doors for new leadership, as interviewees were able to tell their story and realize the importance of their own lives to the work.
- It helped others see the connection between their "stories of struggle" with others' struggles.
- It helped build bridges between organizations and the communities they work with.

Our participants interviewed their colleagues and community members as a way to help answer our Cooperative Inquiry question. We share the interview questions that we used, as we believe they can be used in interviews in many organizations seeking to deepen their understanding of what brings and keeps people in social justice work. We also share the discoveries and outcomes that resulted from several of our interviews. To access these questions and outcomes, click on the following links:

Interviews, Dialogues, and Writing Exercise
Discoveries from Interview and Dialogue Exercise

Our Journey toward Principles and Pathways

> ***In the process of mobilizing, of organizing, you need from time to time to stop a little bit with the leaders in the group in order to think about the space you already walked. In reflecting on the action of mobilizing and organizing, you begin to teach something.***
>
> **—Paulo Freire**

We offer this description of our Cooperative Inquiry journey as a catalyst and guide to social justice leaders. We hope you will appreciate the power of these strategies and that you will stop and take some time for reflection and renewal in your organization. Inside that time lies the possibility of both individual and organizational transformation, which is ultimately how we will transform our society.

Through the exercises in which we participated during our five meetings, we began to arrive at the answer to our question:

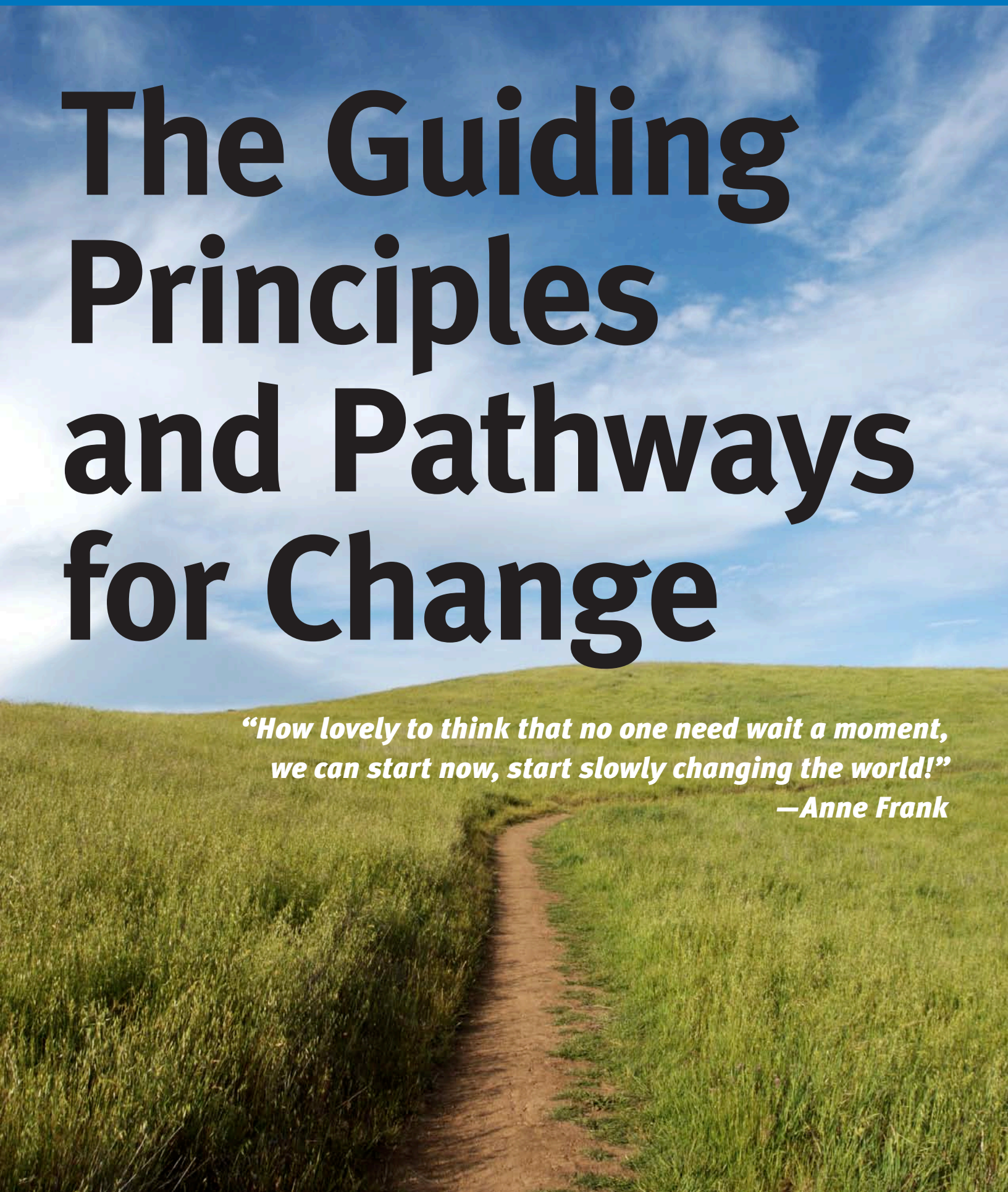
> ***How can we, as leaders, help cultivate in ourselves and in others change from within that inspires individual liberation and sustains a movement for social justice?***

Our answer is framed inside our discovery of four paths, where transformation can and often does occur. These pathways to personal and societal transformation include:

Culture, Community, and Spirituality
Leadership and Mentoring
Retreat and Reflection, and
Education and Knowledge Building

As noted in the Introduction, our group constructed these pathways through a belief in four powerful guiding principles. These were at first unspoken, but we came to feel the need to articulate them, as they greatly influence the pathways.

In the next section of this toolkit, we outline those Guiding Principles and the Pathways to Transformation.



The Guiding Principles and Pathways for Change

"How lovely to think that no one need wait a moment, we can start now, start slowly changing the world!"
—Anne Frank

The Four Guiding Principles

As we set about describing the pathways and strategies that lead to transformation, we stepped back and decided that as a group we must first name the guiding principles that inform our actions. These principles are at the root of our work and shape our goals and activities. The pathways and strategies for cultivating change—in individuals, organizations, and society—grow from the following four fundamental principles:

Respect and appreciate all people;
Take care of oneself and loved ones;
Be open to reflection and change; and
Acknowledge the existence of racism, prejudice, injustice, and oppression.

1. Respect and appreciate all people

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

—The US Declaration of Independence

Respecting and appreciating all people is at the core of social change. We believe that individuals must accept and welcome people as they are. By respecting and valuing difference, we can fully understand our shared goals and work to build trust and collective action. Respecting the varied experience of others is central to this tenet.

Within any group or organization there will be a wide range of experiences, with staff members having different levels of personal experience with the injustices we seek to change, and we acknowledge the expertise of the people who have direct experience with inequality. We also assert that all participants are simultaneously both learners and teachers. Teaching and learning should be seen as a cyclical method of sharing knowledge and experiences.

2. Take care of oneself and loved ones

I hear the approaching thunder that, one day, will destroy us too. I feel the suffering of millions. And yet, when I look up at the sky, I somehow feel that everything will change for the better, that this cruelty too shall end, that peace and tranquility will return once more. In the meantime, I must hold on to my ideals.

—Anne Frank

The dominant culture, and often our social change work itself, can create a sense of guilt about the time we take for ourselves. However, setting aside this time is essential for renewing our focus and developing our ability to be effective leaders. In order to continue the difficult and demanding work of social change, we must take intentional steps to avoid "burn out." As leaders, we must be prepared and willing to sustain ourselves and encourage leadership among our constituents and colleagues.

To be effective and sustainable leaders, we must take care of our loved ones in addition to taking care of our work. We suggest that taking care of one's self and loved ones is sometimes a necessary act of resistance against social pressures that tell us that we must work until physical, mental, and emotional exhaustion. In other words, we must secure our own oxygen masks before we can assist others.

3. Be open to reflection and change

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

—Margaret Mead

Our social change work must move beyond developing organizing techniques to developing individual awareness and growth. Personal transformation is cultivated not only by encouraging and promoting reflection but by providing tangible opportunities for staff to engage in activities that provide space and time to explore personal experience and goals.

Organizational transformation is made possible by continually revisiting one's mission and goals. Approaching this reflection with openness and acknowledging that current activities and programs may need to shift are necessary for strengthening and maintaining the continued impact of our work.

4. Acknowledge the existence of racism, prejudice, injustice, and oppression

Make injustice visible.

—Mohandas Gandhi

At the very foundation of our work is an understanding that a continued history of intolerance shapes our institutions, social structures, and daily experiences. We believe that *oppression*, *racism*, and *prejudice* cause pain across our society and to undertake truly transformative work at both the individual and organizational levels, we must be prepared to undertake the often uncomfortable examination of societal inequality.

We acknowledge that there is a difference between people who have been personally victimized by oppression and racism and those individuals who have only witnessed such prejudice. We have chosen to recognize these differing experiences by referring to these groups as Experiencers and Witness-bearers. However, we believe that there can be a fluidity between these roles; that a person who was an Experiencer in one case can be an effective and radical worker in creating change, a Witness-bearer, within another oppressed group. Our social change organizations should thus seek to bridge our silos of work, which keep us narrowly focused on a specific locality or issue area, and strive toward an understanding that exploitative and oppressive factors in the world are linked.

To read Roger Sherman's thoughts on the subject, go here:
On Bearing Witness to and Experiencing Oppression.

Pathways to Personal and Societal Transformation

Where, after all, do universal human rights begin? In small places close to home… Yet they are the world of the individual person: the neighborhood he lives in, the factory, farm, or office… Such are the places where every man, woman, and child seeks equal justice, equal opportunity, equal dignity without discrimination. Unless these rights have meaning there, they have little meaning anywhere.

—Eleanor Roosevelt

Once we established the core principles that guide our work, we were able to explore the ways in which these principles are enacted in our organizations. When we ground ourselves in the principles of respect, compassion, openness, and acceptance, we are laying the groundwork for personal and societal transformation.

Considering the relationship between personal and societal transformation in our conversations, readings, and writings led to the concept of "pathways." We were looking for the moments when we were ripe for change. Transformative shifts can be marked by "emotional sparks"—like vibrations of a drum—that compel one to take action. These turning points, or pathways to change, cannot always be anticipated. However, we can be ready to take advantage of such moments if we engage in processes of reflection and awareness.

Each individual takes a different path toward involvement in social change. For some, motivation is rooted in the personal experience of oppression. For others, the pathway is the act of bearing witness to injustice. Along both of these pathways, transformational shifts occur as one acts to confront the status quo. To affect societal change, moments of individual transformation must include a social component. It is through this attempt at intervention that transformation is cultivated. Let us also be clear that one does not access a singular entry point to engage in social change work, but may follow a multitude of pathways during a lifetime. Involvement in a movement is similar to a long-term relationship, in which commitment must be continually renewed.

We came to identify the initial turning points that shifted us toward social change work as "foundational" moments. For the sake of our inquiry, we were interested in the ways in which we could replicate transformational shifts within ourselves, our organizations, and our communities. Foundational shifts, most often driven by family and upbringing, are clearly outside of our ability to replicate. Consequently, we shifted our focus toward the moments that build on this foundational experience and move us to deepen our commitment to social change.

To read co-author Bob Fulkerson's thoughts on these ideas, go to On Personal, Organizational, and Social Transformation.

When we ground ourselves in the principles of respect, compassion, openness, and acceptance, we are laying the groundwork for personal and societal transformation.

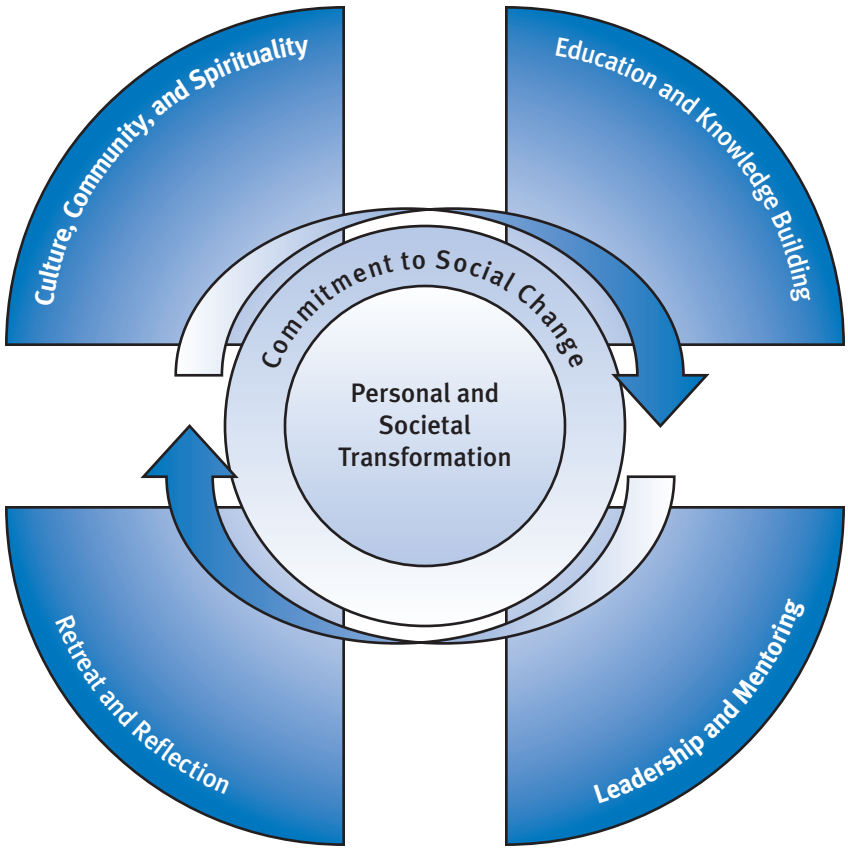
The Four Pathways

Through our inquiry process, we uncovered a series of pathways along which an individual may encounter transformative experiences and lead toward a deeper level of commitment to social change. We explored these pathways in order to develop strategies for creating spaces that encourage and harness transformative experiences. We discovered, through investigating our own experiences and the stories of friends and colleagues, that commitment to social change can be found in **Culture, Community, and Spirituality**; **Leadership and Mentoring**; **Retreat and Reflection**; and **Education and Knowledge Building**.

We developed a diagram (Fig. 1) to visualize movement among the four pathways. At its core is the goal of both personal and societal transformation, linked as one. Around this goal is the essential commitment to social change. One's particular entry point to the pathways in unimportant. Within our group, for example, there are participants who began their transformative journey with a deep connection to culture and community, while for others, it was the positive influence of a mentor. The circular arrangement demonstrates the continuous movement through the pathways. Viewing the diagram as a sphere, one can see the potential to travel from any pathway to the next.

The intent of our inquiry—and particularly of this document—is to ensure that our exploration of individual and societal change will not remain in the realm of dialogue and theory. We aim to impart these strategies to help encourage transformative experiences for ourselves and our communities. Following each of the four pathways are links to related essays written by the Cooperative Inquiry participants during the meetings, as well as links to exercises that we believe will help further develop the pathways within an organization.

FIGURE 1: PATHWAYS TO PERSONAL AND SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION



Pathway 1. Culture, Community, and Spirituality

Together, culture, community, and spirituality form a pathway that repeatedly emerged in our stories and conversations. Times when we receive support from a community dedicated to social change serve to strengthen our commitment to the work. While culture, community, and spirituality vary immensely among individuals, we believe that an awareness and appreciation of these factors is vital for cultivating an environment for individual and societal transformation.

To encourage a full commitment to social change work through the acknowledgment of culture, community, and spirituality, we

must first practice openness, sensitivity, and awareness of identity and spiritual beliefs in our words and actions by being mindful of language we use in daily interactions with staff and constituents. Ask yourself whether your organizational culture, goals, and intentions create an environment that celebrates diversity of worldview and experience. By moving culture and community to the forefront, we can expand and diversify our efforts for societal transformation.

Participating in cultural and community events is a tangible way to reenergize our organizations, learn about our communities, and remember why we are working for change. Another way to reflect on our own paths and the experiences of others is to take time to learn and articulate the history of cultural injustice, especially as it relates to our specific issues and constituents. By collaboratively reflecting on history and current experience, we can cultivate the "frozen seed" of our existing beliefs and values. We can renew our commitment to societal transformation and sustain our energy by bringing joy, culture, and compassion to the work.

Participant Loris Taylor's Potskwaniat is an an essay written reflecting on the role of culture and faith as guides. "Potskwaniat" is "Journey" translated from Hopi. To read the essay, go here.

We also offer descriptions of two exercises that we found useful in understanding the role of culture, community, and spirituality on our own pathway to transformation and on the pathways of our colleagues. You can find them here:

Story Circle Methodology exercise
Freefall Writing and Dialogue exercise

Pathway 2. Leadership and Mentoring

We discovered through an examination of our own personal experiences that mentors play an essential role in maintaining an involvement in the movement. A mentor can show us our own leadership potential while modeling a continuing path toward individual transformation with a social goal. Meaningful mentoring and leadership development extend beyond formal training sessions and move toward intentional leadership recognition. This means that the mentoring can not be overly prescribed, but that an effort must be made to build authentic reciprocal relationships.

The first step toward meaningful mentoring is to grab people with whatever interests them most. What were the initial motivating forces that brought them to the work and how can those moments of inspiration be cultivated in the midst of day-to-day organizational activities? To build authentic relationships, we need to take time to explore openly our diverse and shared motivations and values. This will help bridge divisions and foster a deeper understanding of differences in life experience. We can also work toward authentic relationships with constituents by listening and recognizing their experience and expertise and fully incorporating this knowledge into the organization's goals and activities.

As a leader within an organization, one must be aware of one's position of power and how it affects a staff member's room to grow professionally. Many nonprofits know the pitfalls of "founder's disease," which can be averted by consciously making space for emerging leaders to assume greater levels of responsibility over time. This leadership sharing and

The first step toward meaningful mentoring is to grab people with whatever interests them most.

meaningful mentoring will also contribute to the retention of new, younger members of staff. Being an effective mentor involves allowing oneself to be mentored in return, in the rotating cycle of teacher and learner. Valuing each staff person's own pathway toward personal transformation should extend to more formalized strategies as well, such as establishing personnel policies that reflect this mutual respect.

In response to the text-based and question-guided exercises, the participants discovered the role of leadership and mentoring in their lives and current social change work. We offer their essays, along with descriptions of these exercises, to help you explore these themes within your organization. Click on the links below:

Roger Sherman's Strengthening Leadership
LuAnn Leonard's Future of Our Children
Bob Fulkerson's Deeper Level
Story Circle Methodology exercise
Text-Based Reading, Dialogue, and Writing exercise
Question-Guided Meditation, Dialogue, and Writing exercise
Interviews, Dialogues, and Writing exercise

Pathway 3. Retreat and Reflection

One of the most challenging tasks is convincing others (and even oneself) to take time out of a demanding work schedule for retreat and reflection. Through the Cooperative Inquiry process itself, we discovered the power of reflection for understanding our own pathways to social change work. Reflection is vital for the growth of both individuals and organizations. We recognize that productive reflection is difficult and often involves a willingness to build trust and embrace discomfort. Reflection, however, is a powerful strategy for identifying and encouraging transformative shifts.

...reflection is more likely to occur if it is not only encouraged but supported by personnel policies.

Incorporating reflection into an organizational culture requires you to grant yourself permission to take care of yourself. The reflective time should be used to reposition oneself in the world and the work. By building in time to step back from day-to-day tasks for approximately two hours a week, we will have the opportunity to think more fully about our own role in the large social change movement and be more effective and focused leaders. You can reflect individually or collectively as a staff on the connections between personal and organizational actions and societal shifts. As with developing meaningful mentoring opportunities within your organization, reflection is more likely to occur if it is not only encouraged but supported by personnel policies.

Taking the reflection process a step further, we believe it is vital to hold intentional retreats that delve deeper than strategic planning. Retreats can include time for guided or individual meditation and should be in settings that allow staff members to step away from distractions and refocus on their role as individuals within an organization and a broader social movement. Personal transformation is not a final goal but is rather an ongoing process, cultivated and renewed through purposeful reflection. The techniques of the Cooperative Inquiry methodology

are helpful ways to practice these cycles of action and reflection. We also found the process of storytelling to be a fruitful method to deepen our relationships and better understand our own underlying principles and pathways toward personal transformation and engagement in social change work.

Finding time away from day-to-day work is a challenge. We offer these simple techniques, as well as an inspirational essay developed from the question-guided meditation, to guide your colleagues through an exercise in retreat and reflection. To access them, click on the appropriate link:

Loris Taylor's New Landscape
Story Circle Methodology exercise
Yoga and Breathing exercises
Question-Guided Meditation, Dialogue, and Writing exercise

Pathway 4. Education and Knowledge Building

For many individuals, transformational shifts occur in response to new ideas. Through an investigation of our own experiences, we discovered that education plays a key role in moving us toward a deeper level of commitment to social change. We chose to broaden the term "education" beyond formal and traditional methods to include the concept of "knowledge building." Through this process of knowledge building, one moves beyond developing skills-training to building upon existing beliefs and connecting with historical and national contexts. In an organizational context, it is also important to continue to align the new learning with programs and activities by revisiting your organizational mission.

For many individuals, transformational shifts occur in response to new ideas.

You can begin incorporating education and knowledge building opportunities into your organization's work by first recognizing colleagues and constituents as resources and taking time to share experiences through story circles. This strategy connects with the Leadership and Mentoring pathway, as well as the pathway of Retreat and Reflection in an effort to acknowledge the wisdom that already exists within an organization. The activity of knowledge sharing through storytelling can thus be incorporated with a broad range of benefits for encouraging transformative shifts.

Another initiative we recommend is developing communications strategies, such as popular education or teach-in events. The events could comprise only internal staff activities or extend to a public audience, depending on the issue area. With an expansive spectrum of participants and topics, the event can serve to move an organization out of our issue-based silos to diversify and strengthen our understanding of our different efforts to contribute to societal transformation.

We offer both the Freefall and Text-Based exercises as fruitful and rewarding ways to engage participants in thought and discussion generating activities. You can find them here:

Freefall Writing and Dialogue exercise
Text-Based Reading, Dialogue, and Writing exercise

Taking Time for Transformation: A Book of Exercises

Introduction

Roger Sherman

By now, we have all heard the quote from Mohandas Gandhi, "You must be the change you wish to see in the world." It remains profound despite its widespread use. Along with a small group of social change leaders from throughout the country, I had an opportunity to explore that idea in several retreats over the last couple of years. My main insight is that "being the change" means trying to work and live in a way that conforms to the values I hold. Among those values are that we all need each other, we can all learn from each other, peoples' stories matter, and we all have something to add to the whole. Our belief in each other is a key component for changing the world.

These exercises are part of a journey that we took to learn how to be the change that we want to see in the world. We learned that we must work to shape the world around us as we work to transform ourselves. By focusing on and engaging in social change, each one of us can transform ourselves. *And we must transform ourselves in order for social change to be successful*. None of us can truly be well when we live in a sick world.

Trying to maintain integrity between what we do and what we believe in is tough work, but ultimately, it is what makes us healthy. I think *maybe* Gandhi achieved that. But as my friend and colleague Bob Fulkerson says, "It's not like we all need to become Gandhi." We just need to work at living as closely as we can to what we believe. Even Gandhi described his life as *experiments* with truth.

This series of exercises is offered in that spirit of experimentation. It is our journal and more. It is meant to be used by social change practitioners, and we hope you will add to it. These methodologies—story circles, yoga, meditation, writing—are all forms of reflection that effectively extend our vision both before and after we take action for change. As practitioners of social change, we find that when we don't give enough time to reflection, we shortchange both our organizations and the individuals working with us.

The work of social transformation continues to take many forms. In our Leadership for a Changing World group, as an example, there are people working with youths in Harlem and inner city Milwaukee, and there is a former NBA player who raises food in greenhouses in urban Milwaukee and Chicago and teaches people how to live more sustainably. Two women from the Hopi reservation are working to build community among Native Americans nationwide by creating access for radio programming. A couple from North Carolina is using the truth and reconciliation process created in South Africa to try to heal the wounds of America's own apartheid. There are five women whose work in the Chicago schools has started to transform them into centers for the whole community.

Whatever that work is, we each need to be that change. It won't be easy. We will fail often. But we need to keep working on it. We can't wait for other people to step up. As many have said, "We are the ones we've been waiting for." Be the change *you* wish to see in the world.

Preface

From the onset, our Cooperative Inquiry (CI) group was in consensus that our work must extend beyond its circle of participants. Our intent was to extend our conversations and methods to you—our colleagues, friends, community members, and fellow social change practitioners—so that you could take pieces of our inquiry experience and replicate them within your own organizations.

To help with this process, we have designed the following book of exercises, outlining those that we employed and found incredibly useful when exploring a complex and, at times, emotionally challenging topic.

For each of the following exercises, we have provided an outline, examples of how it was used within our specific inquiry, readings to inspire your own exercises, and space for you to tailor the methods to your own organization or group.

In addition, we have included writings that are deeply personal and are not intended to be seen as findings, but rather to demonstrate our various points of departure along our continuing journey. The essays illustrate the thinking that was emerging from each activity. Through them we share our thoughts about the connections between individual and societal transformation in the hope that you will use them as catalytic resources to guide your group through a retreat, workshop, or CI. Enjoy!

Story Circle Methodology

Theresa Holden

The Power of Stories

From ancient times, storytelling has been a powerful way of teaching and learning. Here are just a few ways that stories can transform both the teller and the listener:

- Stories are a way of collecting information.
- Stories identify and explore patterns.
- Stories build on previous knowledge before moving to new information.
- Stories allow us to see possibilities we have not seen before.
- Stories redefine problems.
- Stories allow us to discover ways on our own to solve problems.
- Stories illuminate our similarities and our differences in a non-threatening manner.
- Stories break down assumptions, stereotypes, and generalities.
- Stories can build a common memory among diverse persons.
- Stories can build common goals and/or consensus among diverse persons.
- Stories give us strength from our memory base and from our value base.
- Stories give us strength to move on.

The Method

This method of telling stories emphasizes listening, equality, and respect.

Below are the simplified "regulations." Story circle facilitators should be trained in the method and all of its nuances.

- Small groups of people (we recommend 8 to 12 per group) sit in a circle to tell stories.
- Each person has the same amount of time to tell his or her story (we recommend three minutes).
- A broad theme for the stories is presented: "Tell a story about…"
- Each person tells a story or passes his or her turn to the next person in the circle.
- There is no "cross circle" talk or interruption until each person has had a chance to tell her or his story.
- Silence for contemplation or reflection on the story just told is good.
- Listening is more important than thinking of what story you will tell. Trust the story circle to "bring your story to you."
- After a round of stories are told, the facilitator asks if those who passed on their turn would like to tell a story.
- When all stories are told, the circle opens up to dialogue or comments about the stories.
- The group then reflects on what they, as a group, have heard and what central themes or ideas arose from the stories.
- Finally, if there are multiple circles, each circle decides on how they will "report" on their stories or the common themes of the stories, and the groups reconvene and share their "reports."

For case studies using the Story Circle Methodology, click here.

Plans for Using the Story Circle Methodology

When _____

Where _____

What group _____

Time _____

Who facilitates or leads exercise _____

Goal or purpose _____

Story prompts

- Always begin your prompt with the phrase "Tell a story about…"

Story prompt examples from our group

- Tell a story about an event or person that helped shape your beliefs, your ideas.
- Tell a story about a time or person in your life that might have helped bring you into the work you do today.
- Tell a story about a time you have experienced or witnessed another experience of prejudice or injustice.

Story prompts for your group

Leader's notes

Yoga and Breathing Exercises

Bob Fulkerson

At its root, yoga (from "yoke" or "union") is about self-transformation. It helps us understand intuitively that we are united with the divine presence in our lives. Yoga is more than stretching or muscle building; it is in fact a spiritual practice. Scientific studies and centuries of experience have demonstrated that profound physiological improvements can take place from regular yoga practice. These notes are just a very brief attempt to look at two major aspects of the power of yoga in our lives: breathing and stress reduction.

We all live under varying degrees of stress or anxiety. Stress contributes to most major health problems, including high blood pressure, heart disease, obesity, diabetes, and even cancer. This is why simply stopping to take a deep breath in times of stress sometimes allows us to think more clearly in a critical situation. Yoga is not simply about flat abs, looking good, or asana (postures) on the mat. The Eight-Fold Path ("Ashtanga," meaning "eight") of yoga laid down in the *Yoga Sutras of Patanjali* (see BKY Iyengar's *Light on the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali*) is a 5,000-year old remedy for modern ailments and is in line with every religious and spiritual tradition I've come across, from Buddhism to the 12 Steps to Christianity. It is not meant to replace medical treatment for physical ailments, however, so be sure to tell your doctor about your yoga practice.

These notes are offered to the reader, in gratitude to Patanjali; Gyandev McCord at The Expanding Light Yoga School at Ananda; Dr. Timothy McCall, MD, of the *Yoga Journal*; and the long line of yoga teachers and students I've been blessed to know.

Four Simple Yoga Exercises to Use in Your Retreat

You can do these four exercises in as little as ten minutes or for as long as you like. By reading over the descriptions first, any facilitator can guide the participants through the exercises. For maximum effect, it is important not to rush. The participants will emerge from this brief time re-energized and much more focused and ready to return to work. You can also end the exercises in the Sitting Pose and go into a meditation on your work. Most of these exercises can be done by all people. However, you should encourage the participants to adapt them as needed. For example, sitting in a chair instead of on the floor is perfectly permissible. The twist and relaxation exercises can also be done from a chair.

A note to anyone leading a group in these exercises: Always advise your participants to assume these poses only to the extent of their abilities. All of the exercises can be modified, and none should cause stress or pain. Encourage participants to hold any position only for as long as it feels right for their body.

Be sure to remind the participants to breathe and focus on their breathing throughout all exercises. In our CI, we did variety of yoga poses, as we were fortunate to have a yoga instructor in our group. We often did the five exercises described below. The following description of these exercises is excerpted from the ABC-of-Yoga Web site. Begin the exercises by sitting on the floor, or if necessary, a chair.

Neck Stretch

Many people hold tension in their necks and shoulders, leading to stiffness, bad posture, and tension headaches. Repeating these yoga neck exercises eases tension, increases flexibility, and tones the muscles. Do them slowly and keep your spine straight, with your neck relaxed and your shoulders facing forward.

Step 1

First drop your head slowly back, then forward. Returning to upright, keep your head erect, and turn it all the way to the right, back to center, all the way to the left, and back to center. Next drop your head forward, and roll it around in as wide a circle as possible. Repeat in the opposite direction.

Step 2

Raise your right shoulder, and then drop it down. Repeat with the left. Last, raise both shoulders at once, then drop them down again.

Standing Forward Bend

Step 1

Start with the Mountain Pose (standing with arms at your sides and feet shoulder width apart).

Step 2

As you inhale, raise your arms above your head.

Step 3

Bend forward until your hands touch your feet.

Step 4

Slowly bend further so that your belly is touching your upper legs. Grasp your toes and breathe deeply. When you have grabbed your ankles or toes, use a slight stretching force to lengthen the body. Pulling with the hands, move your belly to your upper legs. Don't allow your chest to sink and lose the supportive power of the lower back during the exercise.

Yogic Breathing

Breathing exercises can be done in two- to five-minute breaks to give participants a fast way to re-energize and refocus. This is especially helpful when you have been sitting around a table for long sessions, with more still to cover. Sit upright or lie down on your back. Relax the face and shoulders, and soften the gaze.

Step 1

Inhalation

Inhale deeply, preferably through the nose, and place a hand below your belly button. Feel the hand rise as you inhale. Take your other hand and place on your ribs. On your next inhalation, follow the breath from the

belly to the ribs. Take a couple breaths, and feel the air move from the lower part of the lungs at the top of the belly to the upper part of the lungs behind the ribs. If you're cutting off the inhalation before the lungs are fully expanded, understand that we can inflate the lungs to take in up to ten times more air volume than that of the shallow breathing most of us do.

Step 2

Exhalation

After several cycles of focusing on inhalation, become aware of the exhalation too. Exhale through your nose or slightly purse your lips (to regulate the slow flow). Feel the air leaving the lungs in reverse, from the chest, then leaving the lower ribs, and finally the belly. At the end of your exhalation, squeeze and engage your stomach and diaphragm muscles. Is there any stale, excess air trapped at the bottom of the lungs? Get rid of it, and make way for new, fresh air to enter. Also be aware that the Sanscrit word for breath, *Prana*, means life force and energy. Repeat this for three to five minutes, focusing on the breath.

Sitting Pose (Meditation Pose)

This is a relaxation pose intended for meditation. It promotes inner calm and straightens the spine, opens the hips, and relieves tiredness. As the name suggests, this pose is very easy to do. In this section, learn how to do the Easy Pose.

Step 1

Sit down on the floor or a yoga mat.

Step 2

Cross your legs, placing your feet below your knees.

Step 3

Clasp your hands around your knees.

Step 4

Keep your head and body straight.

You can find more information at the ABC-of-Yoga Web site at www.abc-of-yoga.com/yogapractice/yogabasicsession.asp

Plans for Using Yoga and Breathing Exercises

When _____

Where _____

Who _____

Time _____

Goal or purpose _____

Who facilitates or leads exercise _____

Exercises

- Neck Stretch
- Standing Forward Bend
- Yogic Breathing
- Sitting Pose (Meditation Pose)

Leader's notes

Freefall Writing Exercise and Dialogue Exercise

Meredith Herr

The exercise is based on the premise that we can learn to write without censoring our thoughts. For many, writing can be a daunting process. Freefall writing can reduce these anxieties by promoting spontaneity and discouraging self-criticism. The result is a flow of thoughts and impressions that allows us to reveal a deeper, more creative part of ourselves.

I first encountered freefall writing at a retreat organized by the University of Bath School of Management's Centre for Action Research in Professional Practice. I was struck by its ability to reduce the internal editor that each of us carries with us as we write and to allow me to express my thoughts in a wholly new and uncensored way. For more information from those who developed the technique, see Barbara Turner-Vesselago's *Freefall: Writing without a Parachute* (The Writing Space, 1996) and Natalie Goldberg's *Writing Down the Bones: Freeing the Writer Within* (Shambhala Publications, 1986).

To facilitate a freefall writing exercise with a group, introduce the concept that freefall writing is about "talking on paper" and allowing ourselves to see and embrace our thoughts in a new way. Begin with short writing times of ten to twenty minutes, and then expand to longer periods of freefall writing, if desired.

The rules of freefall writing

- **Keep the hand moving:** Don't pause and reread.
- **Don't cross out:** Even if you don't like something you've written, keep going.
- **Don't worry about spelling, punctuation, or grammar:** You can always go back and use your freefall exercise as the starting point for another piece.
- **Don't think.** Write.

To get started with the method, we began with a prompt that was unrelated to our question. This allowed the group to attempt freefall writing in a more comfortable way. Our first prompt was, "Write about a sound you remember from your childhood." Our second prompt, connected to our inquiry question, was, "Write about something that you've learned since you've been at this second meeting." We then shared our writing with one another and were impressed by the depth of emotion and insight that emerged.

At our third meeting, we offered the prompt, "Free yourselves from the constraints of your own organizations, and design a series of events, workshops, meetings, and readings that help individuals set aside time for self-reflection and transformation and help them move to a deeper level of commitment to social justice work and movements." Freefall writing is a terrific way to train yourself to write without self-censoring, and the products can be helpful guides as you write or engage in other aspects of your work.

Click here for examples to inspire Freefall Writing and Dialogue exercises.

Plans for Using the Freefall Writing and Dialogue Exercises

When _____

Where _____

Who _____

Time _____

Goal or purpose _____

Who facilitates or leads this exercise _____

Freefall writing rules

- Keep your hand moving.
- Don't cross out.
- Don't worry about spelling, punctuation, or grammar.
- Don't think. Write.

Prompts to use for writing

_____

_____

Examples of prompts

- "What brought you to social change work?"
- "What is one thing you've learned since beginning to work at your organization?"

Leader's notes

_____

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Text-Based Reading, Dialogue, and Writing Exercise

Meredith Herr and Theresa Holden

Another way we tried to capture our thinking was by engaging in Text-Based Dialogue and Writing. In this exercise, the facilitator or group members choose a reading selection to share. The text should be chosen to help stimulate and enhance the current conversation and/or to expand on the knowledge the group has of the subject, question, or issue. Each of the group members moves to a different part of the room to read the piece. (Or as we discovered, the most renewing and inspirational times were when we were able to move out of doors).

Everyone takes time to find excerpts that are personally meaningful. When the group reconvenes, the participants take turns reading their selections and describing their impressions. The group then creates a list of ways in which the information that resonated with each individual member may or may not be of use to the group.

During our second CI meeting in New Orleans, we engaged in Text-Based Dialogue for the first time. We read a piece on the role of spirituality in organizational transformation, shared the sections that we found salient, and concluded the exercise with a discussion and note taking.

The exercise was popular, and we repeated it during our third meeting, where we read a selection from Chetkovich and Kunreuther's *From the Ground Up: Grassroots Organizations Making Social Change* and *The Courage to Change: Salvadoran Stories of Personal and Social Transformation* by Audrey Celeste Rosa. The dialogue from the Rosa excerpt was energetic, and the group decided to extend this energy with time for personal reflection and writing.

Having time for individual writing after the group dialogue on the text proved to be very helpful in bringing clarity from the text to our research.

> ***It is my contention that social change is strengthened by authentic personal change and that by engaging in social change, we are often changed personally. I believe that self-reflection divorced from action will never lead to authentic personal transformation, precisely because our praxis reveals who we are, not who we think we are.***
>
> **—Audrey Celeste Rosa**

For an example to inspire Text-Based Dialogue and Writing exercises, click here.

Plans for Using the Text-Based Reading, Dialogue, and Writing Exercise

When _____

Where _____

Who _____

Time _____

Goal or purpose _____

Who facilitates or leads this exercise _____

See the Bibliography for suggested text-based readings from our group.

List of text or excerpts that will be used

Leader's notes

Question-Guided Meditation, Dialogue, and Writing

Theresa Holden

One of the exercises that we found most helpful and effective in our inquiry was a form of meditation. In traditional meditation, one is supposed to focus on his or her breathing and perhaps a mantra or one simple word throughout the meditation time. In this exercise, our group decided on a simple question for the whole group to meditate on. The main purpose of this exercise is to work on a question or theory by using our subconscious and creativity to help discover the answer. When we first hear a question or problem, our initial response is to have an *opinion* about the *right* answer. We often voice this opinion before we have given our whole brain a chance to deeply consider or meditate on the problem. By meditating on the broad theme of the question, we allow our inner creative brain to discover new, often out-of-the-box solutions. Our group discovered that many of the most innovative and creative ideas about our question came through this meditation exercise.

Following is the technique that we used for this meditation:

Step 1

The group decides on one or two simple questions that have to do with their inquiry or the issue they are working to resolve.

Step 2

Each person finds a quiet space for his or her meditation time. If outdoors and in a natural setting, each person can go off to his or her own space. If limited by space or time and the group must stay in one meeting room, each person can go to his or her own space within the room. In either case, the person meditating can sit in Sitting Pose, lie comfortably prone with legs apart, or lie with their legs up on a wall or draped over a chair. Of course, any person may feel free to sit on a chair, if this is more comfortable.

Step 3

The group decides upon a length of time. We suggest 10 to 15 minutes in solo meditation, five to 10 minutes in note taking or writing about what emerges during the meditation, five to ten minutes in sharing discoveries, and 10 to 15 minutes in dialogue about the groups' discoveries. It is a most productive 30- to 45-minute exercise.

Step 4

At the beginning of the solo meditation, concentrate only on your breathing and being present. Relax. Focus your attention on your inhalations and exhalations. Choose one or two simple words or a simple phrase from your question, and breathe in and out on that word or phrase. Do not think too hard about the question; rather let the question float in and out of your mind with your breath. Continue this for a while. Change words or phrases, if you so choose. Our meditation questions were: "What is the change I want to see in myself? What is the change I want to see in the world? What are the obstacles? Am I being the change I want to see in the world?" During meditation, a person might have breathed in and out on the phrase "my change" or "change."

Step 5

Be aware of not thinking through your question; merely see what images, words, ideas float into your mind with your breath. Let those images and ideas remain loose rather than rigid; these are the beginnings of your answers to the question.

Step 6

After 10 to 15 minutes in meditation, the facilitator asks people to take some time and journal some of their discoveries.

Step 7

The group comes back together in the same space, making sure to stay relaxed and calm in the moment (do not return to the "meeting table"). The participants share either their writings or tell about their discoveries.

Step 8

The exercise ends with the group discussing any themes that emerged from the meditations and how those ideas and themes help to answer the question or issue they are working on.

To read essays that came out of the Question-Guided Meditation exercise, click here.

Plans for Using the Question-Guided Meditation, Dialogue, and Writing Exercise

When _____

Where _____

Who _____

Time _____

Goal or purpose _____

Who facilitates or leads this exercise _____

Examples of some questions for guided meditation from our group

- How can I be the change I want to see in the world?
- How can we create positive change toward justice within our own organization?
- Can I help others cultivate their commitment to social justice?

Questions for your guided meditation

_____

_____

_____

Leader's notes

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Interviews, Dialogues, and Writing Exercise *Meredith Herr*

In our second CI meeting in New Orleans, the group decided that we would like to pose our question to colleagues. We were excited by our discussions in our small group and were curious to hear the reactions of others who are engaging in similar pathways to transformation through their social change work. This way we could have an opportunity to expand our thinking and consider the experiences of others as we continue with our investigation.

We agreed that we would interview two or three colleagues, explaining a little about our own CI process and asking them the following series of questions:

- Can you tell a story about what brought you into the social justice work you do?
- Was there a turning point that deepened your commitment to this work?
- Can we replicate or cultivate these moments and develop practices that keep people involved? If so, what are the strategies?
- Can we intentionally push toward these moments of transformation?
- What's next? Can you offer suggestions for how your organization can push people toward the movement?

Conducting a short, informal interview such as this is an easy way to help your organization generate new ideas about an issue that you are exploring. The interview will help the staff members crystallize their own understanding of the issue as they engage in conversation and help build relationships with people outside of the inquiry group who can provide fresh perspectives on your topic.

To read the insights our interviews generated on individual and societal transformational shifts, go to Discoveries from the Interview and Dialogue Exercise.

Plans for Using Interviews, Dialogues, and Writing Exercise

When _____

Where _____

Who _____

Time _____

Goal or purpose _____

Who facilitates or leads this exercise _____

Questions for Interviews _____

Question examples

- Tell a story about what brought you into the social justice work you do.
- Was there a turning point that deepened your commitment to this work?
- Can we replicate or cultivate these moments and develop practices that keep people involved? If so, what are the strategies?
- Can we intentionally push toward these moments of transformation?
- What's next? Share suggestions for how your organization can push people toward the movement.

Leader's notes

Addenda

1. A Hopi

(Traditional Values and Visions of...)

A Hopi... is one who's lifetime quest is to gain strength and wisdom through prayer, education, and experience; to acquire a practical and spiritual understanding of life in general and to acquire the ability to address life's circumstances and community needs from an eagle's viewpoint with a caring attitude and humility;

A Hopi... is one who fulfills the meaning of Kyavtsi by maintaining the highest degree of respect for and obedience to moral standards and ethics, so as not to knowingly abuse, alter, or oppose the progressive order and cycle of nature and the sacred manifestations of the creator's teachings;

A Hopi... is one who fulfills the meaning of Sumi'nangwa and will come together to do activities for the benefit of all out of a compelling desire and commitment to contribute or return something of value or benefit to society;

A Hopi... is one who fulfills the meaning of Nami'nangwa by helping one another or give aid in times of need, without having to be asked to do so and without expecting compensation for the deed;

A Hopi... is one who fulfills the meaning of Hita'nangwa by having the initiative to take care of something without having to be instructed, asked, or reminded regardless if anyone will notice your effort but that it will make a difference;

A Hopi... is one who places the society's and/or community's interests and benefits ahead of individual and personal interest and gains;

A Hopi... is one who understands that to realize a dream one must not only pray for his or her desires but must make a sincere commitment and work diligently to pursue the dream or goal until it is achieved;

A Hopi... is one who understands that the creator has provided all the necessary resources needed by all living beings to coexist here, including the means by which the human race can achieve a happy, healthy, and self-sustaining life;

A Hopi... is one who understands that the greatest feeling of accomplishment and fulfillment is one's participation in social and community functions or activities and knowing that your contributions have resulted in benefits to the community and people.

Qöyahongniwa,
Soongoopavi 1995

2. Question Map

Abbreviated Instructions for Question Mapping

Question Mapping is a helpful way for a group of people to arrive at the central question that they all agree will guide their research. To do this exercise, the broad theme of the research is posed and then each member of the group writes on a Post-it note what they believe the central question to be. A large paper with three columns is posted on the wall. Each person posts his or her question in the middle, "Central Question," column. When all of the questions are posted, a discussion occurs about which questions deal more with the "Background" of the research and which have to do with the "Future" of the research. Second and third rounds of writing and posting questions occur. The group builds consensus around which questions they believe most accurately embody the essence, nuances, and spirit of the question. The other questions are placed by the group as good background or future research questions. All of the questions can be considered when researching the topic. However, the question that is being answered will be one from the "central" column, or as in our group's case, the final central question becomes a compilation of those questions. (Note: In Rick Ludeman's Question Mapping instructions, he calls for the grid to have nine squares, each for their own type of questions, with the center square being for the Central Question. Our group chose to simplify the grid to three columns.)

Background

- What causes the "phase change" that galvanizes a movement?
- What elements are needed to give birth to transformation?
- Can we cultivate the seeds of transformation? How?
- How does personal transformation occur?
- How does societal transformation occur?
- What causes the "phase change" that moves an individual from inaction to action?
- What do we consider successful transformation?
- Are there universal cross-cultural attributes of transformation?
- Does adversity precede transformation?
- Who are we asking to be transformed, the oppressed or the oppressors?
- Is being open to different pathways of spirituality a requirement for transformation (and fundamentalism an obstacle)?

Central

- How can personal transformation translate into societal transformation?
- How does a person recognize the connection or bridge between his/her transformation and role in changing society?
- What is the "phase change" that creates social movements and new leaders?
- Once we know what the "phase change" is, how do we intentionally bring about personal and societal transformation?
- How does the society develop to nurture personal transformation that leads to good leadership?
- What is the relationship between leadership and transformation?
- What does the leadership bridge look like at the grassroots level?

Future

- What are methods or practices that can lead to individual transformative experiences?
- How do we recognize and support personal transformation as a step toward leadership for social justice?
- Are we willing to accept the responsibility of the results of transformation changing the future?
- Is transformation a sustainable process or a singular event in a person's life?
- Although we know that organizers and community leaders are critical to melding a Movement together, must there be a "rock star" to lead a national Movement?
- What cultural elements inhibit leadership?
- What is the interplay between leaders in electoral politics and leaders in movement-oriented progressive politics?
- What are the false presumptions of leadership?

3. Early Thoughts on Strategic Transformation

Individual and Leadership Strategies

- Creating safe spaces
- Clearly articulating values
- Bringing spirit, song, joy, ceremony, and ritual into workplaces, events, culture
- Integrating culture into work
- Welcoming diversity of thought
- Bringing compassion into work and fighting cynicism
- Encouraging education through storytelling and moving past reports
- Sharing stories/history (untold) of oppression and racism and liberation
- Asking, "What brought you into the movement," finding themes, and replicating those points of entry
- Being aware of dominance and the space one takes up
- Opening up space for others' leadership
- Doing the inner work of leaders by promoting love and hopefulness
- Being a positive role model by taking care of yourself

Organizational Strategies

- Creating social justice leadership academies
- Holding organizational retreats for staff and board to reorganize and to reposition the mission
- Creating national policy agendas and clarifying who you are nationally and what you want to do
- Enlarging your circle of supporters and including them
- Discovering allies and building coalitions, "evangelizing"
- Educating more folks about your work
- Educating constituents about how your work effects/changes their lives
- Offering training at all levels in your communities
- Holding CI-like sessions in our organizations with the staff and board to help discover where your organizations can create platforms for transformation

4. Original Pathways Discussion

1. Culture/Community/Spiritual Path

- Bringing joy, culture, and compassion to work
- Identifying spaces where people hunger to be a part of the community
- Re-energizing staff
- Culture/values at forefront—storytelling
- Entry point is individual identity
- Move to embracing larger movement
- Witness-bearer/experiencer idea—knowing where you stand
- Awareness of and respecting identity (appreciation)
- Celebrate/recognize role of spiritual beliefs as a motivation for transformation

2. Education/Knowledge Building

- Moving deeper than teaching and organizing
- Sharing stories/history
- Moving deeper than techniques
- Education through stories (moving past reports)
- Identifying/replicating individual entry points
- Coalition building/relationship building
- Connecting to national policy
- Ownership
- Mentorship
- Teacher/student (collective learning)
- Spread the word (e.g., radio)
- Action/reflection
- Build on existing beliefs

3. Ways to Build Internal Awareness

- Intentional retreats
- Finding balance (work/self—external/internal)
- Safe spaces
- Permission to take care of self
- Importance of reflection for growth
- Reflective time—reposition oneself
- Embracing discomfort
- Extending CIs to one's own staff
- Meditative space
- Stories

4. Principled Leadership

- Values that move past divisions
- Being aware of dominance
- Role in status quo
- Assets mapping
- Recognizing assets/voice/expertise of constituents
- Awareness of varied entry points (witness-bearer/experiencer)
- Drawing out stories
- Building personnel policies that respect workers and create functional organizations (that don't replicate the dominant culture)

5. Case Studies: Using the Story Circle Methodology

BE THE CHANGE

Roger Sherman

Goal: Get people to recognize that they are the ones they have been waiting for and that the same transformation they have gone through can give them insight into how to engage other people.

This process of transformation of the society and ourselves is connected to the work of social change. In fact, it is by focusing on and engaging in social change that each one of us can transform ourselves.

I have been intrigued with the idea that "we are the ones we've been waiting for" since I first heard it a couple of years ago. This poem is at least one source of it:

> *It is time to speak your truth*
> *Create your community. Be good to each other.*
> *And do not look outside yourself for the leader.*
> *This could be a good time!*
>
> *There is a river flowing now very fast*
> *It is so great and swift that there are those who will be afraid.*
> *They will try to hold onto the shore.*
> *They will feel they are being torn apart and they will suffer greatly.*
> *Know the river has its destination.*
>
> *The elders say we must let go of the shore, and push off and into the river,*
> *Keep our eyes open, and our head above the water.*
> *See who is in there with you and Celebrate.*
> *At this time in history, we are to take nothing personally. Least of all ourselves.*
> *For the moment that we do, our spiritual growth and journey comes to a halt.*
>
> *The time of the lone wolf is over, Gather yourselves!*
> *Banish the word struggle from your attitude and your vocabulary.*
> *All that you do now must be done in a sacred manner*
> *And in celebration.*
>
> *We are the ones we've been waiting for...*

So if we are the ones we've been waiting for, then we need to figure out how to develop more of us.

We will break up into three or four groups. I will get the story circle rules for us to use. So if we run with the idea that it is by focusing on and engaging in social change that each one of us can transform ourselves, let's talk about what has changed us and our world.

Tell a story about the most meaningful—to you—action or campaign for social change you have been involved in? What did you learn from it? How did it change you? Did it change the world for you and/or others?

After we finish the story circles, each group will do a report on it. It can be done any way that the group would like. With the full group back together, I will do a brief presentation of this Wheel of Transformation that we are working on. Then we'll have a short discussion of how United Vision for Idaho can/does provide these opportunities for people to be transformed and step forward as leaders. I hope this will set a tone for the meeting that is about all of us stepping up, taking leadership, and recognizing that we are the ones...

STORY CIRLCE

Loris Taylor and LuAnn Leonard

The Story Circle exercise was conducted with the members of the Hopi Leadership and Professional Mentorship Program, Hopi Foundation Staff, and Hopi Education Endowment Fund Staff for a total of 15 individuals participating, 99 percent of whom were Hopi.

LuAnn and Loris shared the Story Circle Process and information on our CI experience with this exercise. A small ear of white Hopi corn was used in lieu of a feather. As a ground rule, we used three minutes as our time limit for the stories. However, the typical time was four to five minutes. We decided to stay in one group to allow all to hear the diversity of the stories.

Prompt Question

Share a story about a time, event, or point in your life where you decided that life had to be better for the Hopi people and you decided to work for change.

or

Share a story of a turning point that deepened your commitment to your work.

Results

The story process took about one hour and 20 minutes to complete.

The group was asked about themes that arose as a result of their stories. They shared the following list of themes:

Childhood
Recognized leadership
Community
Fear
Teamwork
Passion
Adapting to change
Prayer
Change
A big heart
Courage
Family
Defining values
Sacrifice
Social issues
Emotion
Responsibility
Healing
Clarification
Going against the flow
Acceptance
Endurance
Substance abuse
Struggle
Negatives turned into positives
Sincerity
Forgiveness
Flexibility
Connection to the unknown
Revelation
Compassion
Strength
Discipline

Connections made by sharing the stories included recognizing that:

- Specific moments of change existed in their lives.
- Others had similar stories.
- Listening confirmed things.
- Leadership is natural.
- We haven't figured out all the answers and there are more to come.

- Many are still trying to figure out "what I'm going to be when I grow up"—growing up is still happening.
- No individual can do all of the work needed on his/her own.
- Growing up in dysfunction makes one aware of him/herself.
- Opportunities exist, as demonstrated by the "Someone gave me money" story.
- Leadership can happen at different levels, with some individuals being more effective by giving support to the leader.
- We need to look into the future and be in the future.
- We need for parents and elders to help us grow up.
- We can rise above dysfunction as there are greater beings helping us help others.

CI Question

How can we, as leaders, help cultivate in ourselves and in others change from within that inspires individual liberation and seeks/builds/sustains a movement for social justice?

Celestial Question

How can we be the change we want to see in the world, and how can we help cultivate that change in others and in our organizations?

Observations/Notes

- Real change comes from living the experience. From negative experiences arise positive change.
- One must make a conscious decision to change.
- Traditional leadership among Hopi is passed down from generation to generation. Leadership of this kind is not something one asks for but something someone recognizes within individuals.
- We must make a conscious decision that change is needed. Our energy must be used to provide opportunities to experience with a group of diverse individuals.

6. Examples to Inspire Freefall Writing and Dialogue Exercises

As outlined in the description of the Freefall Writing and Dialogue Exercise (see Taking Time for Transformation), the facilitator provides a prompt to guide the topic of the writing. The following is an example of a prompt we employed and an essay that resulted.

Prompt: "Be the creator of events and activities that help individuals move to a deeper level of commitment to social justice work."

STRENGTHENING LEADERSHIP

Roger Sherman

What is the intentional work we can do to strengthen the leadership of the social change movement?

I am thinking that the best techniques come out of the action/reflection ideas based in the Freirean popular education methodology. The learning needs to be peer-to-peer as well as communicated between facilitator and student. The concepts of learner and teacher need to alternate constantly.

I like some of the ideas that United Vision for Idaho has developed with the creation of the Social Change Leadership Academy. It focuses both on creating opportunities for people to experience social change work, to do it, to learn about it, to reflect with a mentor, to learn history, to make history, and to create a cohort of leaders who develop their skills and ideas going forward together.

We take a group of ten to 15 people for nine to 12 months and put them through a series of experiences of doing the work with other people. This work needs to be fun, exciting, and profound. There would be an internship piece of the work to provide cross-training. I like the idea of a council of elders to guide it. These would be people with experience in social change work who could keep the project honest and true to its mission. Out of this, a group of mentors could develop who would also give peer support to one another. It would involve some process for developing the strengths of mentors. It seems to me that this would mostly be a peer-to-peer learning program based in the experience of the group.

Key Components

- Experiential learning environment
  - like Salt Lake City bus action
  - internship with very strong hands on component
- Reflection
  - regular circle for analyzing actions and activities
- Development of cohort—connectedness/peer to peer/ team
- Development of mentors group to shape the program and to support and learn from each other
  - members would be assigned to the leadership candidates

I think that this kind of process reflects the change we want to see in the world. The other thought, reflective of conversations we've had at UVI, is that this program should be developed within a state or even a city so that people can be with each other regularly. It would probably be designed with tracks or levels depending on the role of the participants, e.g., potential elected officials, organizational board and staff, or unaffiliated people in key

communities. And another thing—the leadership program needs to prioritize certain groups, especially immigrants and people of color, youth, people with disabilities, and gays/lesbians/bisexuals/transsexuals (GLBTs).

> ***The real practitioners of social change, like Martin Luther King and Mohandas Gandhi, understood something very important. They knew that you don't change a society by merely replacing one wet-fingered politician (those who put their fingers up to see which way the wind is blowing) with another. You change society by changing the wind…Change the wind, transform the debate, recast the discussion, alter the context in which political decisions are being made, and you will change the outcomes.***
>
> **—Jim Wallis, Sojourners**

FUTURE OF OUR CHILDREN

LuAnn Leonard

Former Hopi Tribal Chairman Wayne Taylor, Jr., stated, "The future of the tribe depends on the future of our children. We must do all we can to help our children succeed." After 20+ years of living and working in the Hopi community, I've come to realize that this is true; the future of our people rests with the future of our children.

I began to think, how could we help our children realize that they are our future and that their decisions today (in all aspects of their lives) will affect the future of the Hopi people. How can we get these youths to become agents of social change? I remembered an experience I had with my daughter when she was about 12 years old. At that time in my life, I was the Director of Youth Affairs for the Hopi Tribe. I had created and brought to fruition a Youth Council consisting of youth leaders from each village of the Tribe. We engaged the youth in civic activities, one of which was trash pickup. During this one particular event, I took my daughter along to help. We picked up all kinds of trash along the highway, mainly beer cans, broken bottles, etc. Thinking she would be upset with me for making her do such hard and dirty work, I was prepared to explain to her the importance of taking care of our land. When we finished she approached me and simply said, "Thank you, mom." I was floored and realized that youth learn best by experiencing.

My idea for helping our youth learn about their place in our history and how they can make a difference in the future of the Hopi people lies with engaging them in the community. I would begin by developing a program where peer mentors would work with the youth in leadership, teambuilding activities as well as "Service Learning" types of projects in the communities. The projects would begin from within their respective villages and include simple things such as trash pick up, whitewashing of elders' homes, cleaning ceremonial trails, and cleaning the village springs. After each activity, we would have elders talk to them about the importance of what they have just done.

Building upon these experiences, we would then expand the circle to include projects in other villages, then local archeological sites such as Dawa Park. Dawa Park is where our ancestors left their "footprints" (petroglyphs) as they made their migrations back to Hopiland. The circle would expand into neighboring communities such as Flagstaff, where there are sites such as Walnut Canyon and Wupatki National Monument. There the youth would see their same footprints. The next phase would be expansion into neighboring states. We'd go to Colorado to Mesa Verde National Monument and to Chaco Canyon in New Mexico, where once again the youth would see their same "footprints." We would eventually partner with youth from other native tribes.

Through these experiences the youth would realize that:

- There is truth to the Hopi migration stories;
- We are all interconnected and that "thinking globally and acting locally" will benefit all mankind;
- Their decisions today will make a difference in our future; and
- That they control our destiny.

From this, we would instill in them the passion to pursue higher education and become the hydrologists, archeologists, engineers, teachers, doctors, and other professionals that we desperately need to survive as a people.

DEEPER LEVEL

Bob Fulkerson

To move people to a deeper level of social justice work, I would:

- Model what it looks like to be more deeply involved (this does not mean doing more, but rather being fully present, engaged, and effective while doing what I can)
- Try to be inspiring to others by making it fun and meaningful
- Offer rewards and incentives
- Help them achieve incremental results so they can see the fruits of their labor
- Support/mentor others

NEW LANDSCAPE

Loris Taylor

I am driven by the fact that a new landscape is being imagined for social justice work—a landscape that is much different from what our parents and even our grandparents had to contend with, but a landscape that offers us new combinations of opportunities. Take media justice work for example. There is a revolution taking place right now in global media and communications. Society is being driven by technological transformation, regulatory and legislative changes, and major shifts in media ownership.

I think we have learned that there are no guardians of democracy other than ourselves. We have to tell our own stories. I am reminded of my great, great, grandfather Lololma's journey to the East, which has been retold from generation to generation among Hopi but never once captured in the history books of the United States I think the moment that we take the pen from the one who is writing our history and start to write it ourselves, that is the moment that we really become free. I also think that leadership has to be our ability to inspire and to align each other toward common goals. One way to do that is to bring people together with the purpose of becoming engaged in a dialogue on how to transform our environment. But I think there has to be a wholeness to true transformation in order for it to occur, meaning that we need to move beyond the fragmentation of issues and instead focus on a common vision and values.

I like the CI model of bringing together people to serve as a think tank away from our work—the luxury of sitting with your peers so that in that special space you can create and sustain compelling and even ambitious and credible visions for our organizations. I think if we really want to be the change that we want to see, we need to be fish out of water. We must first be transformed ourselves. This helps us to deal more effectively with major organizational challenges and allows us to embrace a wide range of processes, perspectives, and solutions.

I also think there needs to be ongoing support for the work that takes places within our communities and through external "retreats," where we can continue to hone our skills and talent. Transformation cannot take place in a vacuum. Even Martin Luther King and Mohandas Gandhi had support networks. On a global scale, I think we have to consciously link communities of interest and build capacity that builds powerful partnerships and acknowledge that this will require work, patience, and long-term nurturing. The Hopi have a teaching that states, "The journey toward a good life is difficult and challenging." Sometimes I think we need to create special spaces to move beyond tools and process and focus on the critical work of engaging ourselves in alliance-building across lines of difference. If we are to be the Martin Luther Kings and Mohandas Gandhis of the world, we have to force ourselves to assume a certain level of humility so that we can truly accept, acknowledge, and embrace the diversity in intellect, leadership skills, talent, culture, history, and wisdom that will "change the wind."

7. Example to Inspire Text-Based Dialogue and Writing Exercise

ON BEARING WITNESS TO AND EXPERIENCING OPPRESSION

Roger Sherman

As social change workers, we are people who have either experienced or borne witness to some form of oppression—racism, sexism, homophobia, classism, war, or torture. (I refer to "work and workers" here without implying that people are paid for their work. I think of it like in the words of a modern folk song: "Your life is more than your work, and your work is so much more than a job.")

In her excellent and insightful thesis, *The Courage to Change: Salvadoran Stories of Personal and Social Transformation*, Audrey Celeste Rosa suggests that whether witnessing or experiencing the factors that predicate personal and social transformation, "...the act of creating both a personal and social praxis, involving a never ending process of action and reflection, seems to be a defining quality of transformative lives." Gandhi called his life story *Experiments with Truth* rather than *How I Found the Truth*.

We explore the idea of what we are calling the "Experiencer" and the "Witness-bearer" as different points of entry. Again in Rosa's paper, she quotes Damian, a fighter in the FMLN in El Salvador in the 1980s, as saying "... generously..." that "...experiencing oppression, as opposed to merely witnessing it, is not necessary in order to dedicate oneself to social change but merely adds what he calls 'more pressure' to do so."

We are drawn to social change work because of a variety of experiences that happen throughout our lives, that transform us on an ongoing basis. Most of us are both experiencers and witness-bearers to oppression once we recognize the relationship between the oppression we have experienced and the experience of others. None of us has experienced all forms of oppression, so we all bear witness to the struggles of others. By connecting these struggles, we build an authentic movement for change rather than just a disconnected collection of issue campaigns or programs.

I have seen glimpses of this, but rarely in the three decades that I have worked in social justice campaigns. In Idaho in 2001, I saw many groups put aside their personal and organizational agendas to fight for passage of a law to include farm workers in the state's minimum wage. This struggle involved many farm workers and allies. It involved tactics including fasting, all night vigils, marches, media work, lobbying, and civil disobedience. People worked together and they worked on parallel tracks. People built relationships with each other and engaged in activities that transformed them. Some hung together for four or five years. Some built lifelong relationships. The change was important, but the transformation of peoples' lives was more so.

8. Essays from Question-Guided Meditation Exercise

In an effort to explore the very root of our question, we presented the participants with the following prompt and have shared the ensuing essay below to inspire your own work. (See the book of execises for a description of the Question-Guided Meditation method.)

Prompt: "What is the nature [of the connection] between personal, organizational, and social transformation?"

PERSONAL, ORGANIZATIONAL, AND SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION

Bob Fulkerson

What is the nature [of the connection] between personal, organizational, and social transformation? My life demonstrates that doing social change work can lead to personal transformation. I also know that when I am strong and clear, the organization I lead is strong as well. And I believe that to achieve a liberated society, we must first liberate ourselves from the demons, those "mind-forged manacles," as Blake said, that we ourselves employ to keep us from soaring.

I got my start in the environmental movement as a hard-driving, drinking, and drugging 23-year old. I had a blast for a while, but then I couldn't stop. Eventually, I realized my addictions were killing me, my work, and my organization. Since I had my turning point and got clean and sober, my life and my work as a social justice activist and executive director of a social change organization have dramatically improved. That's how I know firsthand that personal liberation (knowing your purpose and having the freedom to live it) of leaders does indeed bring about stronger organizations. And clearly, stronger movement organizations are essential to achieving fundamental social justice on a wider scale.

One of the tenets of the Rockwood Leadership Program is that achieving a more just society is an inside job. Movement building and social justice work is not about 24/7 struggle, anger, and working ourselves to death. If we're in better tune with ourselves, tapping into a limitless reservoir of inspiration and energy, we can achieve better results with less effort in our relationships and in our organizations. We need to replace the old ethic of workaholism with a new one that presumes we take care of ourselves. As a fellow Leaders for a Changing World colleague stated at our last program-wide meeting, taking care of ourselves and spending quality time with loved ones is itself an act of resistance.

The much bandied-about quote by Gandhi, "Be the change you wish to see in the world," is almost impossible to live by. I realize this every time I curse the driver who just cut me off, or do my mental litany of judgments against anyone I don't particularly like at the moment. That's what made him such an amazing human being. It's not like we all need to become Gandhi. But we do need to create healthier personal attitudes and ways of living and working in our stressed out world.

Gandhi echoes a verse (13:11) in the Koran that makes the same point: "God does not change a people until they change what is in themselves." Self improvement or changing from within can take many forms, from exercising and eating right to yoga and meditation to laughing and playing with loved ones. These and other liberating actions can and do lead to personal transformation. And with healthier people leading foundations, organizations, and other movement-building institutions, achieving social transformation is indeed closer at hand.

POTSKWANIAT ("JOURNEY" TRANSLATED FROM HOPI)

Loris Taylor

The compass that leads the Hopi through their journey in life always points toward a beautiful life. That is the ultimate aspiration in prayer and daily living.

Yet, why is it that some people cry? The weeping of a child in Darfur, Guatemala, and Chiapas presents the question: What is its intersection with my life?

If we were to give thought to what it means to be Hopi, and if we were to truly test our faith that a beautiful life is for every single human being, then is it not right to take a look at ourselves? For in many instances, we are the ones with fault, and yet we have the power to think beyond our shortcomings. We are weak, and yet our strength is what will build strong communities. Is it not more empowering to lift ourselves up from oppression in order to be truly enlightened?

Hopi faith starts from a premise that when one is born, there is equality and parity present, an equal footing with other Hopis and human beings to chart a beautiful life that is expressed and embedded in the communal prayer of aunts, uncles, grandparents, and extended family. Even before a child is born, there is preparation for the coming of this special spiritual person into the world. On the day of his/her birth, a spiritual home is made for the child symbolized by "*hooma*" spread on the walls in each direction—north, south, east, and west. For 20 days, the child is secluded from any form of outside human contact except for the parents and godmother. It is one of the most sacred of times for this special person who does not yet have a name. Kept in darkness, the spiritual being is kept safe from harm and evil, made strong by his mother's milk.

On the twentieth day, the child is bathed and his/her hair washed with water brought from the homes of clan aunts, before he/she is given names to honor the lineage of the father. In a matrilineal society, the child will carry on the clan of his/her mother but will carry the names of his paternal clan into the future and into the next world. In the early morning darkness, clan aunts whisper an ancient prayer said at every Hopi child's *tiiqaci*, a prayer said by aunts, and their aunts from a time no one can remember. The prayer's meaning is too sacred to be translated.

Um hap qa o'oo'pulkyang
Wutag hashkyavulkyang
Navokyalnakyang
Halay kyang qatuni

Once named, the child is formally introduced to the sun and a feast that gathers the entire village commences with laughter, good thoughts, and blessed conversations with the child. This is the journey's start for every Hopi. A journey marked by prayers that the Hopi say will keep you and the universe around you strong and healthy.

So if we were to give some thought to this ritual that welcomes each spiritual being into Hopi society, is there not a similar ritual for the child in Darfur, Chiapas, Guatemala, Sarajevo, or for that matter, for every single human being?

I have been giving thought to race relations. I recall a conversation I was having with a fellow Hopi among a circle of non-Hopi friends. I remember mentioning that a rainbow had every color of the human race in it and that as a result, we were all people of color. One woman adamantly responded to my comment by saying, "I'm not a person of color. I'm white."

Is not the color white the most dominant color in a rainbow? In Hopi perspective, all colors of corn are important. The yellow corn makes the best corn nuts or *kutuki*; the red corn is used to make special *piki* bread and pudding; the blue corn is the staple; and the white corn is used as *hooma*, special meal for prayers. None is more important than the other.

I remember a simulation game we once did in my high school class where we decided that every single person in our class would be green. The simulation went well and for a moment in time, we all felt harmonious together and bonded as green people. But the color of our lenses were short-lived when at the end of the simulation, the bus driver announced that the light green people could board the bus first.

There is an incredible underlying current even by persons of non-color to continue to distinguish themselves as being apart from their sisters and brothers of color, just as there is a tremendous effort by people of color to do the same. I've always thought that if the rainbow were to be all green, that would be sad and tragic. For all the colors of the rainbow, even white, are what make it so beautiful.

My daughter told me the other day about a study she read as part of her sociology class that described skin color as a result of the environment passed on by genetics. People who live near the equator are darker, but the Eskimos, who we would think could be darker for having so much sun in the summertime, are olive skinned because the fish they eat has plenty of melanin. So the debate rages.

But herein lies the dilemma. Some folks think that because of their skin color they can only be witness-bearers to oppression. But if that were true, would there be an absence of oppression among whites on whites?

When a Hopi spiritual being enters this world, all life is beautiful to begin with. But Hopi teachings tell us that the life of a Hopi will be filled with hardship, trials, and tribulations. Oppression is colorless, and it has a voracious appetite for all colors of the rainbow. Man (and woman) is weak, and in our own ways, we feed oppression, even participate in it, support it, or cause it to flourish—sometimes by our own silence.

The life of a Hopi is a journey of prayer—to center oneself each day, to start fresh and anew each day, to wash away evil, to safeguard against harmful thoughts that if collected could injure an entire people. It is a journey said to be on a path that is narrow like the edge of a blade.

9. Discoveries from Interview and Dialogue Exercise

Discoveries from LuAnn Leonard's interview

- People learn in different ways.
- The way to make change is to "grow your own."
- Students become peer mentors and teachers and able to create a legacy of education.
- There is strength in a community-based approach.
- Grow your own leaders from within your community to make the community flourish.
- This mentoring requires patience and perseverance in the face of challenges.
- Build capacity from within—there is power in the youth.

Discoveries from Roger Sherman's interview

- Building an empowerment movement is vital for authentic societal transformation.
- By tapping into anger as a motivation for involvement, we can channel the motivating factor of anger constructively and creatively.
- There is frustration with younger people who have not seen the history of struggle and may not understand the need to continue to change laws and policies.
- One-on-one mentoring relationships are important.
- Community and fun play important roles.
- Movement activity and political action on campus is an entry point into the work.
- When you make political action the centerpiece of your life, job, and family, your job is your lifestyle.
- Understanding justice and socio-political identity can come from a background in impoverished neighborhoods.
- Work toward hope.
- Involvement in a movement is like a long-term relationship—you have to decide over and over again to stay.
- Mentoring is more than formal training.

In my interview with Gary Sandusky, now the organizing director at the Center for Community Change, whom I [Roger Sherman] have known for the past 20 years, he talked about growing up in poverty—angry and frustrated before he found himself surrounded by the movements of the 1960s and 70s. When he first started to get involved, he found out right away that he "...got it. I got what justice was all about... For the first time I had a place I could put my anger and rage. I could put it somewhere where it was creative, and I could be part of something powerful and effective. It could go somewhere instead of me competing as an individual in my isolated struggle against the rest of society to overcome where I came from."

Initially, volunteering for a social change organization was transformative for Gary, shaping his anger into a force for creating change, which he has engaged in consistently for the past 30 years.

But his was a powerful insight in concluding that there was for him no one transformative moment. Instead, "...it's like being in a long-term relationship. You have to decide to stay involved over and over."

For Kelly Buckland, president of the board of the National Center for Independent Living and a fighter for civil rights for people with disabilities, though, certain moments were transformative, including working on a statewide issue for the first time. "We were no longer talking about curb cuts in Twin Falls. Now we were talking about a bigger change—all the polling places in Idaho."

"...I try to explain what I went through in the mid-70s, when there were no personal attendants, no community-based services," she says. "There were no ramps, there were no curb cuts...no vans with lifts. None of that existed."

Discoveries from Bob Fulkerson's interview

- Increased engagement through responsibilities as a volunteer leads to ownership over a concrete project.
- To find supporters, you don't need to persuade people but rather to strengthen their existing beliefs (Kenneth Burke).
- Personal experience with immigration and public health can seal commitment to social justice.
- Honor personal experiences and grab people through their interests while also promoting deeper analysis and growth.
- It's useful to create culturally relevant avenues for getting involved from one's own perspective and to provide resources.
- It's life and family experiences—foundational and often not replicable—that drive people.
- What builds on these foundational experiences is what we have control over to move people to the next stage.
- There are unique foundations, and transformation depends on whether you choose to act in an empowerment mode as opposed to a self-serving orientation.
- Often fear can be an obstacle to getting involved.
- It is important to make sure that doors are open for involvement in social change work after realizing that there's injustice.
- Also, learning our history is important—realizing injustice can be articulated.

Exerpt from Interview with André Carothers, Executive Director, Rockwood Leadership Program

> *The mission of the Rockwood Leadership Program is to provide leadership and collaboration training for individuals and organizations involved primarily in progressive political advocacy. We bring together coalitions, organizations, and individuals who share a broad common political orientation but are divided by political and strategic focus, organizational boundaries, or issues of race, class, gender, age, and ethnic or national background.*
>
> **—André Carothers**

Bob Fulkerson: Was there a transformational experience in your life that helped to deepen or further your commitment to social justice work or to movement building?

André Carothers: There wasn't a pivotal experience in my life—if there was, it was subatomic and could have gone either way—could have used the catalyst to go to Wall Street.

It had to do with developing an understanding of the common good. The common events of growing up drew me to groups of people who were trying to help other people. Certain things on this path helped reaffirm my purpose and commitment. What keeps the batteries going? Relationships with people. The greatest inhibitor to personal/social transformation is tension with others and detachment from your original purpose. You need the opportunity to revisit the real reason why you got into this work. You need to see the reduction in the times you experience pain and frustration. The extent to which you do these things is the degree to which you are staying in the mix. Young people get into the movement to gain rich, personal experiences. By us tolerating dysfunctional organizations, we are letting these people down—we are weeding out people who would otherwise stick it out. A lot of people say, "I can't take this." A movement should be about attracting.

10. Bibliography

Readings to inspire exercises within your organization

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Pictured above (from left to right): Bob Fulkerson, Theresa Holden, Loris Taylor, Roger Sherman, LuAnn Leonard, and Meredith Herr

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About the Leadership for a Changing World Program

Leadership for a Changing World is a program of the Ford Foundation that recognizes and supports community leaders known in their own communities but not known broadly. In addition, it seeks to shift the public conversation about who are authentic leaders to include the kinds of leaders participating in this program. Each year, Leadership for a Changing World recognizes 17 to 20 leaders and leadership groups. Awardees receive $115,000 and participate in semiannual program meetings, collaborative research, and a strategic communications effort. LCW is a signature program of the Ford Foundation in partnership with the Advocacy Institute and the Research Center for Leadership in Action, NYU Wagner.

About the Research Center for Leadership in Action at the Robert F. Wagner Graduate School of Public Service, New York University

The Research Center for Leadership in Action (RCLA) promotes practice-grounded, social-science based, interdisciplinary research that will help strengthen both the theory and the practice of leadership in public service. The Center for Leadership in Action is based at New York University's Robert F. Wagner Graduate School of Public Service. It was launched in August 2003 with support from the Ford Foundation.

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