

Interhelp Newsletter, Spring 2012

Dear Interhelpers and Friends,

Turning Toward Community: Finding Resilience in Difficult Times. This is the theme for **Gathering 2012**, developed during a recent Interhelp Council meeting. We dipped into Joanna Macy's new book *Active Hope* and are planning a weekend that will be fresh and lively, heartfelt and profound. Gathering will take place **October 12 -14** at **Woolman Hill** in western Massachusetts.

For Gathering details and registration form, see www.interhelpnetwork.org.

There's a lot going on this year. Please see below for a sampling of upcoming Work That Reconnects events, tales of recent happenings, and links to favorite books and interviews. Notices, reports and links that directly involve The Work That Reconnects are welcome for future issues.

Hoping to see you in October!
Paula Hendrick
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BOOKS and LINKS

The online bookstore **100 Fires** (www.100fires.com) is run by Paul Cienfuegos, an Interhelper who in the 1980s led many "despair and empowerment" workshops in Europe. Direct links to his site are provided for each of the books we're excited about right now. Foremost is ***Active Hope: How to Face the Mess We're in Without Going Crazy*** by Joanna Macy and Chris Johnstone (New World Library). This brand new book includes options for personal study, lends itself to study groups, and is an all-around refreshing presentation of ideas tried and true (also fresh and new) from both authors. Chris has kept us informed of events in Great Britain through the Great Turning Times. Here's the link: <http://100fires.com?q=9781577319726>

In ***The Empowerment Manual: A Guide for Collaborative Groups*** Starhawk draws on four decades of experience to show how collaborative groups can generate the cooperation, efficacy, and commitment critical to success. Very practical and inviting to read.
<http://100fires.com?q=9780865716971>

In a new interview in the Buddhist publication *Inquiring Mind*, Joanna Macy offers reflections from a Buddhist point of view, sharing insights from her three-month winter retreat, and concluding with her exquisite **Prayer to Future Beings**. See <http://www.inquiringmind.com/Articles/WomanEdgeofTime.html>

To hear Joanna exploring the topic of **nuclear guardianship**, go to:

<http://mainsite.radioboise.org/news/2012/01/the-great-turning-joanna-macy-interview/>

Finally, a plug for the exceptional magazine *Orion: Nature / Culture / Place* (<http://www.orionmagazine.org>) I subscribe to the print edition (advertising-free, beautifully produced). Many articles (along with poems, stories and visual art) explore the interconnected themes of the Great Turning and the Great Unraveling. Please check it out.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Following upon a winter workshop, First Unitarian Church in **New Bedford, MA** has invited Emily Johns to help convene a small, open to the community group exploring the Work That Reconnects and related topics on a monthly basis. Contact Emily at 508-994-2164.

Karina Lutz, joined by Jim Tull, will offer a weekend on **June 16-17** at a lovely home and tipi in the woods and fields in **Exeter, RI**. Their first workshop at the tipi in November was magical and well received. As Karina says, there is nothing like being “in a circle in a circle.” More about this Deep Ecology/Work That Reconnects workshop at <http://events.r20.constantcontact.com/register/event?llr=uydq4jjab&oeidk=a07e5t0ud7w1344caf0>

Starseed Sanctuary and Retreat Center, a beautiful location in the village of Savoy in the hills of western MA, will be the site of two weekend workshops in July:

The Work That Reconnects will take place **July 13-15** with facilitation by Aravinda Ananda, Carol Harley, Paula Hendrick, and Joseph Rotella. Part of the program will happen out on the land. We will explore our interconnectedness with the web of life and our authority to take action on its behalf. Content and practices from the *Active Hope: How to Face the Mess We're in Without Going Crazy* will be included. Whether you are completely new to The Work That Reconnects, or well experienced in it, this will be a powerful opportunity to reconnect and deepen in our service to life on Earth.

The second weekend at **Starseed** will be **For The Sake of Life on Earth – A Weekend of Deep Ecology, July 27-29**. Join Jeremiah Wallack, Joseph Rotella, and Aravinda Ananda as we explore the challenges we face on our beautiful planet and draw on our collective power, strength and wisdom to act for the healing of our world. We will embark on a rare journey together, building our weekend community and engaging in a powerful series of Re-Earthing rituals created by John Seed, Joanna Macy and others, designed to help end the sense of alienation from the living Earth that many of us feel. This workshop will renew the spirit and vision of those who serve the Earth and connect us with deep sources of joy, and inspiration.

Cost for each of the **Starseed** workshops is Sliding Scale \$200-\$300 and includes meals, program, and a tent site. For an additional \$45 per night you can stay in a shared room in the retreat house. Some partial barterers are available. For more information about either event, contact [aravinda.ananda\[at\]gmail.com](mailto:aravinda.ananda[at]gmail.com). (<http://www.starseedsanctuary.org/calendar.html>)

RECENT EVENTS AND WORKSHOPS

In March **The Bioregional Group (BRG) of New Haven, CT** hosted a three-hour workshop called **Heart and Mind in this Place: Appreciating the journey that has been and support for the journey ahead.** Thirteen BRG committee members gathered to participate in exercises from *The Work that Reconnects* with facilitation by Abigail Tischler. In a follow-up letter to Abigail, one of the organizers reported that the experience has "... set off some significant conversations [that seem] to be going a lot deeper into our feelings than any of our previous conversations. We often refer back to things that happened during that event with you that have affected us and that keep coming back to us." From participant comments: "We were touching difficult and 'charged' issues. They were very powerful exercises.... The experience clarified sequestered feelings into a fiery ball — I felt energized about our purpose."

Karma Triyana Dharmachakra Monastery in Woodstock, NY, held a Green Living Day in October. Joyce Reeves presented an afternoon *Work That Reconnects* workshop for eco-activists.

Emily Johns and Karina Lutz share their facilitation experiences:

We led two turns around the Spiral this past winter. Mary Beth Splaine and Jack Weinhold hosted a workshop on **Nantucket** as part of their effort to bring this kind of experiential learning to the Island's year-round community. In bright winter sun, we were able to play the Systems Game scooting between stands of tall grass in the yard, with only a modicum of bundling.

At the friendly and comfy **New Bedford Unitarian Church**, folks from Rhode Island, western MA and Albany, NY joined Emily's colleagues from the local spiritual and activist communities. The *gratitude* was ripe; diving in through the Milling allowed for soulful connections (especially with folks from their own community) to deepen. The hardest task for the facilitator was to stop people from connecting and hugging while they were still supposed to be bustling past each other!

For *honoring our pain*, Emily led a Truth Mandala, which tapped emotions just enough (but not too much) for a one-day workshop, though it was clear there was more to share. Karina added Donella Meadows's systems diagrams to the brain food section of *seeing with new eyes*. Then the Systems Game wowed everyone. The Double Circle (Seventh Generation) exercise brought deep time and *going forth* practices together; Open Sentences brought us to closure. Chanting Lori Fithian's "Standing Nation" (our beloved trees) was a perfect ending to the day.

We conclude with a report from Aravinda Ananda: On April 14th nine of us got together for a **Reconnecting Day** at the home of Joseph and Aravinda in **Watertown, MA**. Joseph opened sacred space and led us in invoking the Beings of the Three Times. Rosalie followed her beautiful introduction to gratitude with some Open Sentences. Victor offered a Lovingkindness meditation and the Breathing Through exercise. The Truth Mandala created a deeper space for honoring our pain for the world. After a leisurely lunch, we gathered outside for the Elm Dance

and a Mirror Walk, and Kristina concluded the exercises for the day with Open Sentences geared toward going forth. We wove in some pieces from *Active Hope*, and Anne led a few beautiful songs for us. The day concluded with a very interesting discussion (thanks to John's suggestion) on the importance of ritual and how we can bring WTR to different communities, with a special emphasis on religious and spiritual communities. All in all, a very nice day - it felt wonderful to be together and co-create the Spiral of the Work That Reconnects.