

Harvest from the "Deepening Our Social Action" gathering
Nov 27 in Housatonic, MA

I. Below are some highlights from our initial check-in, lightly sorted into themes.

A. *Some of us are...*

...concerned about the possibility of mass hysteria. Seeing the need to prepare now, for upcoming changes;
...seeing the importance of our state of mind.

...wanting to see how what is going on 'out there, is affecting me, 'in here';
... wanting to clean up stuff from the past, so we can move forward more effectively.

... seeing the importance of consciousness, and what "eyes" we are looking through;
... seeing the need for a shift from the individual to the collective.

...longing for communion, and for exploring how that relates to community;
...wanting the learning that comes, from being in a group.

...seeing issues of powerlessness and need for control, on all sides;
...seeing things breaking apart, and wanting to stay even-keeled.

...seeing how the inner, has become the outer;
...longing for meaningful connection in community.

...seeing an opportunity for collective transformation;
...searching for what can we do inside ourselves, that can have an effect on the wide world?

...keeping ourselves going by repeating helpful mantras, such as: "out of adversity, comes opportunity".
...connecting with others, for the sustaining power of community.

B. *With regard to projects, some of us are...*

...working to promote worker co-ops, so we can address underlying economic issues.
...working to promote more effective consensus processes on town boards.

...working on climate change, social justice and economic justice issues;
...attending NAACP meetings.

...wanting to provide safe havens for those who need it,
...wanting to help different groups come together.

...wanting to be more active;
...wanting to make spiritual support more available.

C. With regard to groups, some of us have experienced the value of...

...sharing our pain, and sharing our stories;
...getting to know each other.

...centering into a space of peace;
--focusing on opportunities and possibilities for transformation.

...engaging in a silent movement activity to express our feelings;
...engaging in a silent movement activity to express our "superpowers".

...welcoming the ferocious energy that can arise from being in a group.
...attending to the "four ethers" for a productive group process: warmth, light, movement, and reality.

II. Choosing a topic -- we began by exploring a few potential topics, before choosing one for our "deep dive".
These are the ones that were put forward:

A) A myriad of things out there to work on, and so many of us are trying to do everything...**with so many causes, how do I find a focus, where to put my energies?**

B) The country feels divided in half. I am longing to be in community. It is easy to be with like-minded people, but **how can I be in community with those who are not like-minded?**

C) Waking up to having "half of the country afraid of difference." A family member is outraged at election results, and coming unglued. **How to work effectively with volatility & rage - on either side of the political spectrum?**

D) So many different sources of information, news, media.... each with their own bias/point of view. Who can I TRUST with regard to the news? **How do I figure out what is true?**

E) I have a family member I care for deeply, and at the same time, we have very different political views. **I feel shaken to the core, by not being able to "get to the truth together" with someone I care about...**

F) **How do I reconcile my spirituality with everything else that is going on?**

III. The Constellation process

We chose D) above as the starting point. We began by exploring the topic with the person who had offered it, and then initiated a Systemic Constellations process. We are not going to recap the details of the Constellation itself here, only the insights that were offered afterward. (There is a separate document for those who may be interested in re-capping "what happened" during the constellation.)

IV. Sharing the insights:

Some of us felt that...

- 1) ...when the rep for "**Everyone-standing-in-their-own-truth**" came in to the Constellation, I was finally able to 'land'.
- 2) ...the larger situation going on in this country has opened Pandora's box on racism. The dynamics we are seeing in the constellation are **the shadow/backlash of racism**.
- 3) ... NOBODY is being heard. Each side has its own views about conspiracies. **Under all of the beliefs about conspiracy, is a sense that nobody's voice is being listened to...** and that is the foundation underneath those beliefs.
- 4) ...we need to understand **how beliefs are born**. Can we ever get underneath all of these beliefs? Where is *truth*, amidst all these beliefs?
 - 5) ...**getting some distance**, going outside of the field, helped to relieve my sense of nausea. And, coming back in as Curiosity helped me find a way to engage constructively.
 - 6) ...at its essence, **conspiracy is about powerlessness**. Feeling that we are at the mercy of forces we cannot control.
 - 7) ...there is a lot of **unhealed stuff around the Civil War**. There's never been a Truth and Reconciliation commission for it.
 - 8) ...we have entered an age where there is no "truth", where **there are only stories...**
- 9) ...at first, it all felt like 'just ideas'. But then something collapsed when "**each person standing in their own truth**" came in, with a lot of emotion. I felt a very powerful and grounded strength, and a sense of "I contain multitudes".
- 10) ...maybe **looking for "a single truth"** is not what we need, as much as **connection and curiosity**... Feeling some relief in this. We can focus instead developing our relationships with one another, and finding what matters to all of us.
- 11) ... "**standing in my truth**" is something that I need to **DO something about...** it isn't just about the beliefs I hold...
- 12) ...there was an **unsettled, vacillating movement** between curiosity and wanting to resist, to not resonate with the other person's position. There was both a wanting to reconcile, and at the same time, a wanting to stand in my own position....

- 13) ... it was interesting to see how much Conspiracy wanted Curiosity's attention. They are opposite poles.... certainty versus open-minded not-knowing. It seemed that **Conspiracy wants to be relieved, lightened up by, Curiosity.**
- 14)we need to figure out how to balance our complacency with facing what needs to be done. We need to **get clear about what we believe in.** To respect the opinions of others, to honor what we mean to one another, while still saying "No" to injustice, taking a stand for justice.
- 15) ...the problem goes all the way down to **our relationship with Nature.** We need to **respect** Nature and each other. The Water Protectors are showing the way. **Perhaps we can all meet one another here.**
- 16) ...we live in "interesting times". Some of us have lived through the Nazi occupation of Poland, and then the Communist regime, where Poland was sold out and great suffering occurred. **We need to brace ourselves for what may come next. This is just the beginning...**
- 17) ...everyone's truth is different. And, our sense of truth can be manipulated by internal and external events, by media, by outside forces. **Manipulation by outside forces, eventually comes down to money and moneyed interests.**
- 18) **there is a deep vulnerability, in all of the players...** and this is what gets covered up by "positioning"...
- 19) ... we may need to have **a quality of tolerance for things that are unformed,** as things shift in the social field.
- 20) **Curiosity was the bright light** in this constellation, in this situation...

V. Announcements / Upcoming events / Resources

Events:

Nov 30th. An evening exploration of the Civic Council process and Dynamic Facilitation. Email Uli ulinagel@gmail.com if interested, as there are only a few more spots.

Dec 11 at Hevreh. Reverend Sheila Sholes-Ross speaks as part of the Berkshire Human Rights Series. [The Big Talk: Part 2](#).

See also [the FB event page](#).

Dec 11 there is also an "[Aging-to Saging](#)" workshop with Audrey Seidman.

Dec 21 at Monument Mountain High School. As part of the [W.E.B. Dubois Educational Series](#), a musical performance by [Craig S. Harris](#) and his band of "God's Trombones".

January 16th, 2017. Save the date for a MLK Day celebration at First Congregational Church in Great Barrington. Starts at noon, followed by a reception and a community conversation.

Books:

"[Listen, Liberal](#)" by Thomas Frank, offers great perspectives for liberals about how others perceive things and what matters to them.

"[The Third Reconstruction](#)" by Reverend Barber. About coalition-building during this period of reconstruction.

News Sources:

Democracy Now by Amy Goodman. Available online: <https://www.democracynow.org/>

The Intercept Glenn Greenwald. Available online: <https://theintercept.com/>

CommonDreams. Available online: <http://www.commondreams.org/>

Blog post:

The link to Rosa's essay "Celebrating Our Diversity: Now More Than Ever..." is here:

<https://madmimi.com/s/bead19>