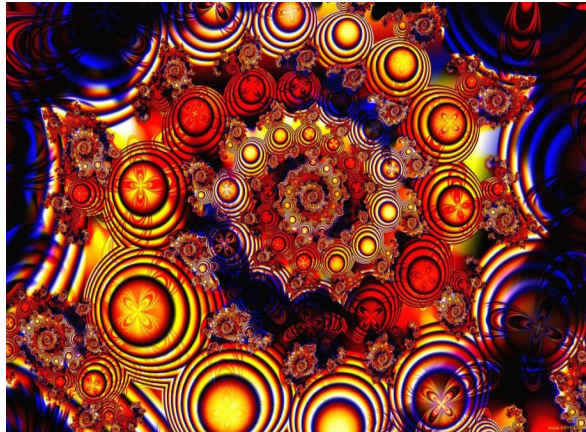


THE PRACTICE OF "CONSCIOUS RELATING" (as a Tribe)



GUIDE SHEETS

These Guide Sheets describe the practice of Conscious Relating as a Tribe. They are taken from "Love & Revolution" Chapter 7.

When you come to try it, I'd advise playing the recording "Guide Audio Tribe", so that you don't have to remember the focus or breathing technique of each part of the practice, or worry about timings.

The "Guide Audio Tribe" recording talks you through the practice in quite some detail - which can be helpful at first, but after doing the practice repeatedly, for some people, so much guidance can feel distracting. You might like to then switch to the recording "Guide Audio Minimalist Tribe", which just reminds you of the basic structure, and when to move from one part of the practice to the next.

Eventually, you might like to create your own Guide Audios - using your own vocabulary, tone, or perhaps with background music. As a reference for creating your own Guide Audios I have provided a transcript of the minimalist Guide Audio

These Guide sheets, the Guide Audios and Transcript are all available for free download at <https://www.markthemysticactivist.com/resources-recursive>

INTRODUCTION

There are two ways of doing the Conscious Relating practice as a Tribe - either as "Expression", or as "Conversation". However, the only part that changes is the last part.

There are three parts to the practice, whichever way you do it. The first part is about connecting with ourselves. It is about finding our Centre, or Vertical Axis. It is about letting go of all of our daily concerns, and FEELING the Essence of ourselves. It is about The Felt Remembering of ourselves - regardless and beyond whatever beliefs we might hold - as Unique Beings who are part of The Great Mystery we call existence.

The second part of the practice is about connecting with each other. If the first part was about cultivating the Vertical Axis, we now cultivate the Horizontal. We continue to rest in our sense of

Uniqueness and Belonging - but in relation to each other. We let ourselves be-seen, and see-each-other in our Uniqueness and Belonging. Without disconnecting from ourselves, we look gently into each other's eyes, into Each Other's Essence - and gradually, as we learn to stay in Connection and Equilibrium, we experience the effortless magic and beauty of Universal Love.

Initially I recommend doing the third part of the practice of Conscious Relating as "Expression". The basic technique here is to ONLY share our personal experience of the moment. In part 2 we establish a deep and loving connection. But the next step is *to learn to relate* without losing the depth and beauty of that love. And since "all we ever really have is our own, unique, direct, subjective experience of the moment" (as I discuss throughout "Love & Revolution"), in this third part we practice sharing and being-received in our unique, subjective experience.

This way of relating is a bit stilted. But that's OK, because this is a practice - we are self-educating. We are educating ourselves to be able to relate consciously to everyone and everything in our daily lives. So after practicing the third part as "Expression" for a while, we then begin to practice it as "Conversation". The idea here is to hold a 'normal' conversation (so the subject could be anything at all) - while everyone remains firmly rooted in their subjective experience.

This isn't easy. We revert back to our habitual unconsciousness in an instant. But by staying energetically balanced (50/50 self and Tribe), maintaining a soft gaze, and by continuing to breathe consciously ("breath to self, breath to the Tribe") throughout the conversation, we enter the flow of respectful and loving Conscious Relating together. And as we become more competent, we become able to relate to everyone consciously in our daily lives - whether they are able to relate consciously or not. And we become able to relate consciously to whatever it is we're doing. We become "the living seeds" of a Conscious Culture. This is the purpose of the practice of Conscious Relating.

I recommend sitting in a circle. Get comfortable. Make sure you won't be interrupted. (All turn your mobile phones off!) And sit as close to each other as you can without feeling you are sacrificing your personal space.

Then, before beginning - since everyone will be doing the second part with a partner - all make sure you know who you'll be partnering with.

The practice of Conscious Relating as a Tribe goes like this:

PART 1. 'BELONGING AND UNIQUENESS' (10 - 15 minutes)

Sitting 'in circle', eyes closed, in silence - everyone alternates their exhalations like this: "I release an exhalation tenderly through my whole body, and my sense of self - and then I release an exhalation tenderly out into the air that surrounds me - into the Universe, into God or the Goddess, into the Totality, the Tao, the Great Mystery..." Everyone gradually establishes themselves as a unique face, or unique expression, of that to which we all Belong. "Breath to self, breath to the Tao."

You might find it works better for you to release two exhalations to yourself, and then two to the Tao - or three to yourself, and then three to the Tao. Each person takes responsibility for situating themselves - at their own pace - in their Belonging and their Uniqueness. (This flexibility applies to the whole practice.)

With "breath to self" feel your Uniqueness, with "breath to Great Mystery" feel your Belonging. Gradually the two ways of breathing become one. You come to feel you're exhaling through your

own body, and into the Great Mystery at the same time - and you come to know yourself as a Unique Expression of the Great Mystery.

PART 2. 'CONNECTION AND EQUILIBRIUM' (10 - 15 minutes)

In silence, turn and face a partner. Let your eyes meet and hold a soft gaze. The gaze is important because "the eyes are the windows to the soul" - in other words, we can sense the life force in the other by looking into their eyes. We can sense the life force that we both are.

(a) At the beginning (for about a minute) maintain the same way of breathing as during the first part of the practice. This helps us all be as stable "in our Belonging and Uniqueness" now, in relation to our practice partner, as we were in the first part when we were completely in relationship with ourselves - so that we are not overwhelmed by this sudden encounter with 'other'.

(b) Now we change the way we breathe. The first exhalation doesn't change. It's still "I exhale tenderly throughout my body, and my sense of myself - within the Great Mystery." But it now alternates with an exhalation tenderly released (not into Existence Itself, but rather) towards your practice partner. Without hurrying, naturally, both nurture a sense of energetic balance in your relating - offering 50% of your attention to yourself, and 50% to your practice partner.

This "balancing-up" is continuous. If we find we are much more aware of ourselves than of our practice partner (perhaps 70% aware of ourselves, and 30% aware of 'other'), then we "lean forwards, energetically". If we are more aware of the other person than of ourselves (70% aware of our practice partner, and only 30% aware of ourselves, for example), then we "lean back, energetically". We continuously return to the magical point of equilibrium, 50/50 - in which we FEEL our own presence, and we FEEL the presence of our practice partner. We might go through 80/20 then 60/40, and so on. It is a continuous, moving meditation. We continuously return to the place of 50/50 in which we see each other's Essence (as well as our bodies and personalities), and in that resonance experience the ordinariness and timelessness and exquisite beauty of Universal Love.

If it helps, use the mind: think thoughts/feelings such as "I respect myself, I respect you", "I have suffered, and I imagine you have suffered too", "I have my own unique path through life, and you have your own", "I want the best for me, I want the best for you", etc...

(c) Little by little, with the exhalation we offer to ourselves, we open ourselves to receive. We let ourselves be impacted by our practice-partners. We do not defend ourselves. We let ourselves be energetically naked in front of them. And with the exhalation that we release (without 'pushing' it) towards the other, we bless them with our acceptance, and with our appreciation of their sacred uniqueness. We receive, we give. We receive, we give. With the exhalation that I release through my own body, I receive: I let myself be-seen, I let myself be-blessed, I let myself be-loved. And with the exhalation that I release towards the other, I give: I see, I recognise their other's uniqueness, I see them as 'the unique face of God' they are - and I let blessing and love pass through me, towards them.

If we don't feel respected - if, for example, we feel judged or aggressed by the other - we let ourselves be impacted anyway. We observe what it feels like to be impacted in that way. And if we don't feel love or respect for the other; if, for example, we feel contempt or envy or rejection, we just do the same - we continue observing. We are not there to analyse each other. We are there to learn to stay in, and relate from, our own unique experience. So we remain interested in ourselves.

To be blunt: any thought or emotion or energetic texture, or perception, or insight *not experienced within a field of intimate Universal Love* is the product of the wounded, conditioned self-in-separation - the one who does not know it is a Unique Expression of the Great Mystery - and therefore (other than, perhaps, to note these thoughts, emotions, etc. as 'stuff' we need to return to in our healing work), we give it no attention. We don't get involved in it.

As with any meditation, "let go and return to the breath". If you find yourself involved, for example, in self-judgement, or judging the other - let go of the mind without opposing it - and simply return to feeling your breath. If you find yourself overwhelmed by fear, or desire, or any other emotion - "let go and return to the breath". If you find yourself fascinated by subtle changes in the other's face, or by a sudden luminosity of your surroundings - let go and breathe consciously again. And by breathing, become present again - as the unique being you are, within your Belonging to Everything, in magical, mysterious, loving relationship with everything.

PART 3. (FIRST WAY) 'EXPRESSION' (30 - 90mins depending, in part, on the size of the Tribe)

In silence, letting go of your partner with a glance or gesture of gratitude, turn back towards the circle, and re-establish yourself as a Unique Individual in equally weighted relationship with everyone in the Tribe. Feel yourself as a member of the Tribe - no more or less a member than anyone else.

Continuing with the same way of breathing ("breath to self, breath to the other") - but now, rather than offering "breath to other" to one practice partner, offer that breath to everyone in the Tribe: let your gaze connect gently, for 10 or 20 seconds, with everyone in the Tribe. See and be-seen by everyone.

Alternate "breath to self, breath to the Tribe". Then after a few minutes, when everyone has met everyone - begin to speak, one by one, going around the circle. Speak briefly - just one or two sentences. Every time someone speaks they "self-reveal" - they share their actual experience of the moment, nothing more... They share their physical, or emotional, or mental, or energetic experience from "the witness" - like this: "I observe a certain sensation in my body, I observe a certain emotion passing through my heart, or thought passing through my mind, I observe such-and-such a change in my energetic experience..." It's not a conversation. What someone shares may or may not be related to what the previous person shared. Each person shares their own unique experiencing.

The Tribe, united, listens "actively", by which I mean - using their gentle gaze and their breathing to hold a space, or energy field, of Belonging and Uniqueness, Connection and Equilibrium.

PART 3. (SECOND WAY) 'CONVERSATION' (30 - 90mins depending, in part, on the size of the Tribe)

When the Tribe already has some experience of the third part as 'Expression', it can do this part of the practice as 'Conversation'. I see this way of doing the practice as bridging the first way with everyday life - as a step towards integrating Conscious Relating into our everyday lives.

Having turned back towards the circle, and all reconnected with each other (in other words, having established the same degree of intimacy now, with the whole Tribe, as people experienced with their practice partners), breathing "breath to self, breath to the Tribe", and holding a soft gaze - anyone can speak whenever they like, about whatever they want. We enter a free-flowing

conversation.

However - whatever anyone says, everything they say is a self-revelation, a sharing of their own unique feelings, ideas, desires - a revelation of their uniqueness. So there is a conversation, but without conflict - because no one is opposing anyone. It doesn't matter whether the conversation is about food production, or an interpersonal conflict - everyone is self-observing. Everyone shares themselves - revealing their unique beauty and craziness - within a tribal energy field of Belonging, Presence, Connection, Respect - and a Love at once Personal and Universal.

I wouldn't say that everyone SHOULD speak at least once (so that nobody becomes a dominator, or a spectator) - but I would invite everyone to be aware of their own tendencies, and to ensure they are not controlled by them. And if a subject of conversation is 'hot', or tense, or difficult in some way - I'd recommend a short silence between sharings. Don't rush! Even when a conversation is harmonious, the speed with which we revert to our habitual, unconscious ways of talking is astonishing!

Then, just like when you do the practice with a partner, when you've completed the third part of the practice - whether as Expression or Conversation - find a way to end with gratitude. You might want to all make the "namaste" gesture, have a group hug - whatever feels like an appropriate way of thanking each other for the time spent together in such deep and conscious closeness.

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