

Research Interests: Permaculture

Permaculture. Or, more broadly, practices that enable us to experience abundance and meaningful responsibility rather than scarcity and coercion or false, empty freedom. These are practices which enable us to enhance the relationships by which we are sustained. These relationships include: our relationships with our minds and with our mental tools; our relationships with our bodies; our relationships with our built environments; our relationships with our families and with our friends, and our relationships with those who are not yet our friends; our relationships with our own cultures and our relationships with the cultures from which we have the most to learn; our relationships with the stars, the atmosphere, the waters, and the land; and our relationships with the communities of our landbase—communities of bacteria, fungi, plants, insects, fish, amphibians, reptiles, birds, mammals, and of all the other organisms—by which we are sustained. The practices I am interested in additionally enable us to turn sites of damage into places of healing and of new cultural growth. The practices I am interested in also enable us to prevent such damage from ever occurring. The destruction of individuals, of cultures, and of species due to encroachment on their persons or on their landbases by humans seeking to extract physical, cultural, or spiritual resources—as, to give one example, is occurring in the poisoning of the landbase of the Huaorani of the Amazonian Ecuador due to drilling for oil—need not occur. We can protect, respect, and nourish the landbase which sustains us. We can experience abundance and meaning without destroying the sustenance of others.

Teaching Interests

Working with others to practice, develop, and grow awareness of permaculture practices.

What Is the Best Teaching You Have Ever Done?

The best teaching I have ever done has been in loving other people—and in all that went into their feeling that they now knew love—providing them with memories that help them to create again experiences of similar or better quality.

What Is the Best Teaching You Have Ever Experienced?

When a girl when I was in second and third grade helped me feel great love—and when others have done the same.

What About Classroom Teaching?

The greatest teaching was not in classrooms. The greatest living engages the whole of me. The best teaching is in beautiful places where my senses are not shut down trying to avoid noise, polluted air, or polluted social relations—rather, my senses are open wide by my interest or by the force of the input.

Ah—the greatest classroom teaching I have experienced was in the dance studio—or even in the physics lecture hall or lab (or while working through the problems in a quiet library)—where truly miraculous phenomena and experiences were shared. I am not still in the dance studio because my mind wanted to explore more and in a different way. I have gone too far the other way, and will now be finding a new balance between the experiential qualities of the dance studio, the contemplation of literature, the ecovillage, music, the study of physics, activism, and of continuing to have food and shelter.

What Does That Balance Look Like?

It looks like me growing more plants at the least, and developing my music and movement practices more than I have been. It looks like me working with others to create pleasant, nourishing environments in which to live and to have adventures.

Try Again: What Is the Best Classroom Teaching You Have Ever Done?

An example comes from the first week of Leadership Camp. One afternoon, after camp was over, a counselor mentioned that Andrew had been snapping his towel at James. He had done this at lunchtime, in front of younger campers. I decided to address this with Andrew and the other Junior Leaders. I wanted to do so, however, in a way that would foreground that “Leadership is communicating to people their worth and potential so clearly that they come to see it in themselves.” This definition, from Stephen Covey’s *Eighth Habit*, I had shared on the first day of camp.

It was during my stand-like-a-tree meditation the following morning that I formulated a ceremony in which I could model and have the campers practice this principle. The first step was to make each part of the definition clear. I did this by asking them to write in silence about a time when they had felt awe, which was explained and restated as amazement, wonder, and deep appreciation. They should be willing to share what they wrote with the class. After writing, I paired with one of the campers, Trevor, and asked the others to find partners as well, and we shared our moments of awe. Trevor felt awe when he first saw his new puppy. As I shared my moment with Trevor, the room fell silent to listen. Later, I asked for volunteers to share what their partners had told them. I asked them to keep that feeling in their minds as we went on to the next step.

I then wrote “I affirm your worth and potential” on the whiteboard, and stepped the campers through each word, making sure “affirm” was understood, as well as “worth” and “potential.” *You have a worth regardless of what you do. Some people even say that serial killers or mass murderers have this worth. Some people say that God sees this worth in everyone, and some people themselves try to see that worth in everyone. That you have “worth” is related to the idea of unconditional love, which some people say parents should have for their children. It means that no matter what you do, they will still love you. Your “potential” is what you can become. If you are surrounded by people who express that you have worth, who affirm your worth, you are helped to grow and to continue to become more capable and able to make decisions about your life and your world that you could not previously make.* The words having been given meaning, we began the final part.

All twelve campers, myself, and two other counselors stood up, forming a circle around the tables, and I asked for a volunteer. Austin volunteered. I then explained what he would be doing. He would walk around the circle, stopping in front of each person. He would grasp that person’s hand and look into her or his eyes, and looking at that person, he would bring to mind that feeling of awe that he had written about, and do his best to feel awe—amazement, wonder, deep appreciation—at witnessing this person. He would shake this person’s hand and in his mind say and feel the words, “I affirm your worth and potential.” Then he would do the same for the next person, all the way around the circle. I asked if Austin was still up for going first, and he said he was. I mentioned that some people don’t like the handshake—“is anyone not OK with it?” There weren’t objections, so we went ahead.

This was enormously difficult. And long: fifteen people each greeting fifteen people, each person walking the circle by her or himself, pausing to look into the eyes and to shake the hand of each person in the circle. Austin might not have been the best choice to have go first—he, one of the younger campers, giggled most of the way around. Everyone was to remain silent during the entire go-around. When the last person had finished, I had so much pent-up tension myself that I led the group in a group yell. . . and probably shouted the loudest. We took a break, and I then explained that—in their every action with the campers who[m] they would be counselors for—I wanted them to keep this greeting in their minds, and that I would be doing my best to do the same in all my interactions with them.

I next told them I was about to take an unusual step, but that I thought it was best, and that they and I could consider afterward if it was a good thing to do. I then explained the comments I had received about a camper in our group—Andrew—and what it meant for our camp that people were noticing us, not as good role models, but as poor ones. And I asked them all to consider how we all lead by modeling. I closed by mentioning that it is a principle, written in their manuals and taught to the camp counselors, not to address the problems of one camper in front of the other campers. At this time, however, I felt it was best for all of us for me to do it this way, and I had done my best to create a space in which I could talk with Andrew about what had happened both in front of the group and in a way in which I was affirming his worth and potential. I had also hoped this approach would not increase the resistance of Andrew, who, of all the campers, most resisted participating, thereby increasing the

tendency of others to resist. In avoiding aggravating his resistance, at least, I was successful.

The ceremony was repeated in the second week. I won't go so far as to say it thoroughly transformed our relationships with each other, but perhaps it has transformed our greetings. Should it happen that I see one of these campers or counselors at the Kroc Center and we greet each other, we remember affirming each other's worth and potential, and perhaps we remember feeling awe.

I later read, in Starhawk's *The Spiral Dance*, the importance of grounding any magic or power created in a ceremony at the end of the ceremony, something I did not do very gracefully the first time I tried this. The moment of awe I described to Trevor was when I was looking at a photo on kenwilber.com captioned, "This photo was taken . . . shortly after an eleven-day 'constant consciousness' realization. . ."

My recall of this incidence of classroom teaching followed from considering an occurrence on Tuesday of this week in my RWS class. I noticed a group of students had gotten off topic in a group discussion. I joined them and began to discuss the topic with one of the students in the group, and, after a bit, the whole class stopped to listen. That class was one of the best of the semester. Michael Brandwein was the first to make me aware of this tendency of people to pay more attention when eavesdropping on a conversation than when they are being spoken to.

A final example of memorable classroom teaching I have been responsible for was when I taught computer skills to fourth and fifth graders. I believed very much in the importance of the skills I was teaching. I did not give grades, but instead developed a large chart by which students could mark their progress through the levels of the typing program and through the computer art, interactive fiction, and programming projects I found for them to work on once typing was mastered. In addition, I manufactured covers from cardboard boxes to place over the keyboards and their hands so that they could not see either their hands or the keyboards as they tried to pass a typing level.

Four or five years later when I returned to Monterey after having gone to college, I ran into the librarian from that elementary school, and she asked if I was teaching. "You are a natural," she said. "There was a line of demarcation between the students too old to have been in your class, and those too young. Only your students tested out of typing class in junior high."

I just remembered. The Meaning in Life Forum was in a classroom too, but I altered the ambiance by bringing in incandescent floor lighting. And often there were only four of us.

Selected Indicators

Just as nations need to measure success by a metric different from the GDP, so do individuals need to communicate their success differently than what may appear on the traditional résumé. I do not yet have a clear theoretical basis for the selection of these indicators, other than to address some areas of success and some areas of shortcoming.

(for the past year unless stated otherwise)

Average hugs per week: Four.

Letters written to relatives: Ten.

Letters written: Twenty.

Days when at least some time was spent with at least one relative: 330.

Days per week in which I walked with a friend: Two.

Months since last car ride: Three.

Years since drove a car: Twelve.

Air travel one way since 1998: 2001, four flights; 2003, two flights; 2006, one flight.

Dollars spent directly on war since 2002: Zero.

Cash spent on CSU Tuition since 2003: \$8,600.

Nights spent sleeping out of doors: 25.

Bicycle camping trips: Two, for two nights.

Days spent walking: Eight.

Days spent walking where there was no pavement visible the entire day: Zero.

Days when I could not breathe deeply due to a passing car or diesel truck: 365.

Days when helicopters flew or hovered overhead: 320.
Days when neighbor was heard screaming at her children: 330.
Days when peace was disturbed by engine- and car-related sounds or by amplified sound: 360.
Cash spent on housing-related costs since 2003: \$40.

Days per week I walked through the canyon (since August): Five.
Nights I walked through the canyon in the moonlight: At least four.
Mornings per week I experienced dawn in the canyon: At least two.

Legislation passed: None.
Dams removed: None.
Roads narrowed: None.
Roads removed: None.
Pavement removed: None.
Carfree areas created: None.
Carfree areas protected from encroachment: None.
Composting toilets built or installed: None.

Days spent where English is a foreign language: 0.5.
Languages spoken: Two.
Languages read: Three.
Books read in Spanish, not for school: .25.
Days spent in intentional communities: Twelve.
People of preindustrial culture met and learned from: One.

Hours per day spent on integral personal practice: 0.5 on average.
People introduced to the concept of a personal practice who are known to now be consciously developing theirs: Two.
Entire days spent sitting or laying still for far too long, reading or writing: Ten.
Days per week did kata (morning exercises) in nearby canyon: Two (since August).
Days per week I swam: Two.
Days per week I lifted weights: Two.

Percent of nutrition from personally harvested, foraged food: Two percent.

Food foraged in estimated order of quantity:

Figs (black mission, calimyrna, and others). July-November.

Citrus (oranges, tangerines, kumquat). Year round.

Avocados. Primarily summer.

Mallow, wild mustard, dandelion, pigweed, red-stemmed filagree. Primarily after the rains in the spring.

Guava. Fall.

Prickly pear (tuña). Fall.

Prickly pear blades (nopales). Year round.

Pomegranate. Fall.

Persimmon. Fall.

Loquat. Spring.

Banana. Fall.

Acorns.

Herbs: rosemary, fennel, heal-all, nasturtium, fig leaves,

On my trip East: Cherokee greens (green-eyed cone-flower), kudzu, chanterelle mushrooms, rock tripe, violets, plantain, blueberries, peaches, asian pears, apples, nettles, lambs quarters, corn.

Locally caught animals or roadkill eaten:

Yeast, in sourdough, hand-ground seven-grain (batches cultured almost daily). San Diego,

California.

Trout. Celo, North Carolina.

Backstrap from a roadkill fawn. Earthaven, North Carolina.

Groundhog from Asheville community garden. Earthaven, North Carolina.

Plant species met by name for the first time where they grow (and now remembered): Teasel, Castor Bean. Lemonade Berry.

Plant families learned by name for the first time: Pea, Lily, Aster, Mulberry, Cattail, Ginkgo.

Plant walks attended: Two.

Streams drunk from without purification: Four.

Days I did not defecate in drinking water: Ten.

Days in which I fasted 24 hours, sea salt and water only: Two.

People introduced to foraging: Three.

Plants I started growing: One fig tree from a cutting.

Days in which songs were sung: Ten.

Days in which violin or piano were played: Three.

Days in which I danced with music: Seven.

Personal Practice Milestones

Did Carol Carlson's Kundalini Yoga video for first time (With the intention to make it part of practice).
Fall 2006.

First shared Kata with others in person. Summer 2003.

First did Kata in a group. Fall 2002.

Did full Kata for first time. Spring 2002.

Selected Media Experience

Communities Magazine. Many back issues, and Summer 2006-present.

Carbusters Magazine. All back issues, and Summer 2006-present.

The San Diego Union Tribune. Fall 2003-present.

Ecovillage Living: Restoring the Earth and Her People. Hildur Jackson and Karen Svensson, Eds. Fall 2006, Summer 2003.

No Destination: An Autobiography. Satish Kumar. Fall 2006.

Kundalini Yoga: With Grace and Strength. Carol Carlson. Fall 2006.

"Behind the Official Story." *Domination and the Arts of Resistance*. James C. Scott. Fall 2006.

Fatu Hiva: Back to Nature. Thor Heyerdahl. Fall 2006

Typee. Herman Melville Fall 2006.

The Sirens of Titan. Kurt Vonnegut. Fall 2006.

Botany in a Day. Thomas J. Elpel. Fall 2006.

Endgame. Derrick Jensen. Fall 2006.

Walking on Water. Derrick Jensen. Fall 2006.

"The Student As Nigger." Jerry Farber. Fall 2006.

Teaching to Transgress: Education As the Practice of Freedom. bell hooks. Fall 2006.

The Fifth Sacred Thing. Starhawk. Summer 2006.

Better Together: Restoring the American Community. Robert D. Putnam, Lewis M. Feldstein, and Don Cohen. Summer 2006.

Teaching Community: A Pedagogy of Hope. bell hooks. Summer 2006.

"Creating a Farm Life Your Children Will Treasure: Family Friendly Farming." Joel Salatin. *Acres U.S.A., a Voice for Eco-Agriculture* 30.6. Summer 2006.

The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership: Follow Them and People Will Follow You. John C. Maxwell. Summer 2006.

Values Clarification. Simon, Howe, and Kirschenbaum. Summer 2006.

Learning Leadership: How to Develop Outstanding Teen Leadership Training Programs at Camp.

Michael Brandwein. Summer 2006.
Pedestrian Culture. pedestrianculture.com. Glenn Bach. Spring 2006.
Integral Spirituality: A Startling New Role for Religion in the Modern and Postmodern World. Ken Wilber. Spring 2006.
"Composition and the Politics of the Curriculum." Bruce Herzberg. *The Politics of Writing: Postsecondary*. Eds. Richard Bullock and John Trimbur. 97-118. Spring 2006.
Writing without Teachers. Peter Elbow. Spring 2006.
Pedro Páramo. Juan Rulfo. Spring 2006.
A New Earth. Eckhart Tolle. Spring 2006.
The Eighth Habit. Stephen Covey. Spring 2006.
Maus: A Survivor's Tale. Art Spiegelman. Spring 2006.
The Elements of Style. William Strunk Jr. and E.B. White. Illustrated by Maira Kalman. Spring 2006.
"Sobre una poesía sin pureza." *Caballo Verde para la Poesía*. Pablo Neruda. Fall 2005.
"Benito Cereno." Herman Melville. Fall 2005.
Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl. Harriet Ann Jacobs. Fall 2005.
The Spiritual Roots of Human Relations. Stephen R. Covey. Summer 2005.
Invisible Man. Ralph Ellison. Summer 2005.
"Belief & Technique for Modern Prose." Jack Kerouac. Summer 2005.
San Manuel Bueno, Mártir. Miguel de Unamuno. Spring 2005.
El Libro de Buen Amor. Juan Ruíz, el Arcipreste de Hita. Spring 2005.
El Cantar de Mio Cid. Spring 2005.
La Relación. Álar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca. Fall 2004.
The Age of Consent: A Manifesto for a New World Order. George Monbiot. Fall 2004.
Poisoned Arrows. George Monbiot. Fall 2004.
No Man's Land. George Monbiot. Fall 2004.
Amazon Watershed. George Monbiot. Fall 2004.
Inside the Company: CIA Diary. Philip Agee. Fall 2004.
Trekking Through History. Laura M. Rival. Fall 2004.
Savages. Joe Kane. Fall 2004.
"Some Psychodynamics of Orality." *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word*. Walter J. Ong. Fall 2004.
"Writing is a Technology that Restructures Thought." Walter J. Ong. Fall 2004.
"The Coming of Literate Communication to Western Culture." *Journal of Consciousness* 30.1. Eric A. Havelock. Fall 2004.
Shakespeare's Doctrine of Nature: A Study of King Lear. John F. Danby. Summer 2004.
Introduction. Harold F. Brooks. *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Arden Edition. Summer 2004.
Sartor Resartus. Thomas Carlyle. Spring 2004.
The Anti-Aging Plan. Roy and Lisa Walford. Spring 2004.
Myths to Live by. Joseph Campbell. Spring 2004.
The Way of Energy. Lam Kam Chuen. Spring 2004.
PRO EVO: Pro Evolution - Guideline for an Age of Joy. Tomotom Stiftung. Spring 2004.
The Seven Storey Mountain. Thomas Merton. Fall 2003.
"Colin's Current Philosophical Framework (Anarcho / Neo Primitivism, with an Eye Out for the Integral), and Its Development." Colin Leath. Fall 2003.
Adventure Cycling Bicycle Route Maps. Summer 2003-Fall 2003.
Desert Survival Skills. David Alloway. Summer 2003.
US Army Survival Manual. Summer 2003.
Peterson Field Guides Edible Wild Plants: Eastern/Central North America. Summer 2003.
Nourishing Traditions. Sally Fallon. Summer 2003.
EcoNomads.com. Ofek. Summer 2003.
The Culture of Make Believe. Derrick Jensen. Spring 2003.
Future Primitive. John Zerzan. Spring 2003.
Yoism.org. Spring 2003.
EcoVillage-Belize Yahoo Group. Spring 2003.

- Participating in Nature*. Thomas J. Elpel. Fall 1998 & Spring 2003.
- Field Guide to Nature Observation and Tracking*. Tom Brown. Spring 2003.
- Road to Heaven: Encounters with Chinese Hermits*. Bill Porter. Spring 2003.
- The Secret Team: The CIA and Its Allies in Control of the United States and the World*. L. Fletcher Prouty. ratical.org. Spring 2003.
- Snakegirl.net. Beverly Thomson. Fall 2002.
- S.K. Thoth. Choreography, Vocals, Percussion, Violin. Central Park. skthoth.com. Fall 2002.
- Beyond Civilization*. Daniel Quinn. Fall 2002.
- Coloring Outside the Lines: Raising a Smarter Kid by Breaking All the Rules*. Roger Schank. Summer 2002.
- At a Journal Workshop*. Ira Progoff. Spring 2002.
- Six Thinking Hats*. Edward de Bono. Spring 2002.
- The Life We Are Given*. George Leonard and Michael Murphy. Spring 2002.
- What Really Matters: Searching for Wisdom in America*. Tony Schwartz. Spring 2002.
- Jürgen Habermas' unfinished project of modernity, and George Herbert Mead's generalized other, among other concepts. *Modern Sociological Theory*. George Ritzer. Spring 2002.
- One Taste*. Ken Wilber. Spring 2002.
- The Foundation Trilogy*. Isaac Asimov. Spring 2002.
- Peace Pilgrim*. Spring 2001.
- The Newstart Lifestyle Cookbook*. Spring 2001.
- Against Therapy: Emotional Tyranny and the Myth of Psychological Healing*. Jeffrey Moussaieff Masson. Spring 2001.
- The Sudbury Valley School. sudval.org. Spring 2001.
- The Teenage Liberation Handbook: How to Quit School and Get a Real Life and Education*. Grace Llewellyn. Spring 2001.
- The New Games Book*. The New Games Foundation/Stewart Brand. Spring 2001.
- Maps to Ecstasy: Teachings of an Urban Shaman*. Gabrielle Roth. Spring 2001
- Pina Bausch. Choreography. Spring 2001.
- Gabrielle Roth. The Five Rhythms. Choreography, Text. Spring 2001.
- Contact Improvisation. Spring 2001.
- Martha Graham. Choreography. Spring 2001.
- Bicycling the Pacific Coast*. Tom Kirkendall and Vicky Spring. Spring 2001, Spring 1995.
- Push Comes to Shove: An Autobiography*. Twyla Tharpe. Fall 2000.
- Your Money or Your Life*. Joe Dominguez and Vicki Robin. Fall 1999.
- Notes on the Synthesis of Form*. Christopher Alexander. Fall 1999.
- "The Effect of Participation in the Meaning in Life Forum on Participants' Experiences of Meaning in Life." Colin Leath. Summer 1999.
- "The Experience of Meaning in Life from a Psychological Perspective." Colin Leath. Spring 1999.
- The Lord of the Rings*. J.R.R. Tolkien. Spring 1999.
- Summerhill*. A.S. Neill. Fall 1998.
- Top Shape*. Joyce Vedral. Summer 1998.
- "being history." Colin Leath. Spring 1998.
- The Humanure Handbook*. Joseph Jenkins. Spring 1998.
- Fear and Favor in the Newsroom*. Studs Terkel, Narrator. Randy Baker and Beth Sanders, Directors. Spring 1998.
- Ecocity Berkeley: Building Cities for a Healthy Future*. Richard Register. Spring 1998.
- Ecotopia*. Spring 1998.
- A Pattern Language*. Christopher Alexander. Spring 1998.
- Carfree.com. Joel Crawford. Spring 1998.
- Ishmael*. Daniel Quinn. Fall 1997.
- The One-Straw Revolution: An Introduction to Natural Farming*. Masanobu Fukuoka. Fall 1997.
- This Place on Earth: Home and the Practice of Permanence*. Allan Thein Durning. Fall 1997.
- "My confession." Leo Tolstoy. *The Meaning of Life*. Ed. E. D. Klemke. Spring 1997.
- Man's Search for Meaning*. Viktor Frankl. Spring 1997.

Order Out of Chaos. Ilya Prigogine. Spring 1997.
How Much Is Enough. Allan Thein Durning. Spring 1997.
Existential Psychotherapy. Irvin Yalom. Spring 1997.
Human Ethology. I. Eibl-Eibesfeldt. Spring 1997.
The Experience of Nothingness. M. Novak. Spring 1997.
 "Identity in Adolescence." J. E. Marcia. *Handbook of Adolescent Psychology*. Ed. J. Adelson. Spring 1997.
Beyond Freedom and Dignity. B.F. Skinner. Fall 1996.
Religions, Values and Peak-Experiences. Abraham Maslow. Fall 1996.
 "The Void." *Real Change* 3.9. September 1996.
Optimal Experience. Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi and I.S. Csikszentmihalyi. Summer 1996.
The Human Side of Human Beings. Harvey Jackins. Summer 1996.
Eat the State. Periodical. Geoff Parrish, Ed. Summer 1996-
Neuromancer. William Gibson. Summer 1996.
A Confederacy of Dunces. John Kennedy Toole. Summer 1996.
Love in the Time of Cholera. Gabriel García Márquez. Summer 1996.
How I found Freedom in an Unfree World. Harry Browne. Fall 1995.
The Art of Loving. Erich Fromm. Spring 1995?
The Wayward Bus. John Steinbeck. Fall 1994.
Living The Good Life. Scott and Helen Nearing. Summer 1994.
A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man. James Joyce. Spring 1993.
 "Bartleby the Scrivener." Herman Melville. Spring 1993.
Walden. Henry Thoreau. Spring 1993.
 [a windsurfing book]. Summer 1992.
Blue Adept. Piers Anthony. Circa 1989.

Some People I Have Learned from in Person

Ellee Igoe. Fall 2006.	New York Hostel visitors. Spring	Chip Johnston. Summer 1993.
Betsy Till. Spring 2004.	2003.	Kyle Decker. Fall 1982.
Frank Cook. Summer 2003.	Dudley Leath. Spring 1994.	