

# INNER PATHWAYS GUIDE FOR FACILITATORS

## DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION IN THE FIELD OF EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABILITY

OUR GUIDE TO SUPPORT TRAINERS, FACILITATORS AND EDUCATORS WITH A COLLECTION OF TEACHING METHODOLOGIES, ACTIVITIES AND PROCESSES ALONG WITH A DETAILED FACILITATION GUIDE FOR DESIGNING EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES





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A DETAILED FACILITATION GUIDE FOR DESIGNING  
EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES

## **COMPILED BY**

Kasia Stępień, Paulina Łużecka, Fernanda Paiva, Debora T. Stenta, Sara Galeotti, Helena Kosková, Honza Látal, Jana Stará, Gyula Szabó, Rob Dreaming, Paola Bortini, Peter Hofmann, Agi Berecz, Krisztina Pásztor, Ilze Jēče, Santa Krastiņa.

## **GRAPHIC DESIGN BY**

Sara Galeotti

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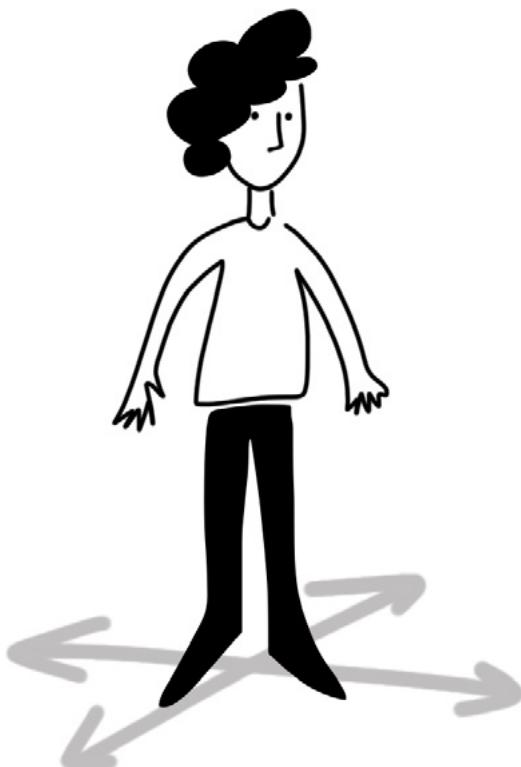
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# ORIENTATION



# **INNER PATHWAYS MANIFESTO**

## **WHO?**

### **ABOUT US**

We are a group of trainers, facilitators and educators specialising in non-formal education methods with diverse backgrounds, a few of which include community leadership, activism and research. We represent seven organisations from six European countries. There is a great variety of skill and experience in our team that is enriched through many theoretical inspirations.

What unites us is a common vision for a better world, a sustainable future where humanity can thrive in harmony with all Life. We believe that a transition to such a future is possible and that an inner transformation is a key component.

Our individual journeys have been shaped and guided by practices, tools and experiences that we share with you within the Inner Pathways project. Such have become our anchors and passions, often leading to significant lifestyle changes or support for concrete actions towards a more regenerative future.

## **WHY?**

### **A VISION FOR A SUSTAINABLE AND REGENERATIVE WORLD**

We came together at this pivotal moment in human history, driven by the recognition of a profound transformation that is needed in the world today. We are deeply concerned with the overexploitation of the Earth's resources, climate

change, social injustice, pollution and loss of biodiversity. We join those voices in the world today that call for a shift towards building a society that sustains all life, respecting the intricate natural balance on which we depend for our survival.

We feel encouraged to witness the increasing awareness of global environmental, social and political challenges, with more and more people around the world rising up, speaking up and taking action. From the smallest change in daily routines to the larger transformative work of restructuring the very fabric of our societies, we stand with those who believe that we still have a window of opportunity to act and restore the natural balance on our planet.

## **WHAT?**

### **THE INNER PATHWAYS APPROACH**

We believe that as educators and facilitators we have important gifts to contribute to this global transformation. Our approach is that of INNER PATHWAYS: a belief that a shift in awareness is necessary to power and support the transition towards a regenerative future. Such shift moves us away from engaging in behaviours based on self-interest and the overexploitation of natural resources, a sense of separateness, alienation and competitive individualism. Instead, this shift in awareness brings us back to a sense of interconnectedness with all life, which in turn promotes cooperation, care and respect. We believe that from this change in awareness, sustainable, lasting solutions will grow organically, with a ripple-like effect. We find from our own experience, that the inner change finds manifestation in the outer world with profound effects beyond the individual wellbeing – healing relationships, workplaces and communities. We trust that it has the power to eventually bring about peace and harmony on a global level.

## **HOW?**

### **THE PROCESS OF RECONNECTING**

Our approach is based on practices that aim to reconnect people to themselves, to their natural environment and to each other, bringing a realisation that we are an inseparable part of the natural world, deeply connected to other beings. This

process of reconnecting relies on continuous re-sourcing, re-charging and re-generating. It is not something that can be done just once or accepted as "truth" on a purely intellectual level. Instead, the awareness of the interconnectedness of all life is a continuous process of remembering, deepening our sense of connection, strengthening our inner power and replenishing our energy to act. Such reconnection relies on tapping into the intelligence that lies beyond our thinking minds and includes the wholeness of human experience. It is an embodied process that leads us to a profound lifestyle change.

We recognize that there is not a single path for everyone to follow. As the old proverb says: "There are hundreds of paths up the mountain, all leading to the same place, so it doesn't matter which path you take." We hope that our project will provide inspiration and useful practices for your further journey.



## 1.2

# INTRODUCTION TO THE INNER PATHWAYS GUIDE

DO YOU RESONATE WITH THE INNER PATHWAYS MANIFESTO?

DO YOU SEE THE CURRENT STATE OF THE WORLD IN A SIMILAR WAY AND WISH TO CONTRIBUTE FOR A CHANGE?

ARE YOU ACTIVE IN THE FIELD OF EDUCATION WITH SOME EXPERIENCE BEHIND YOU?

ARE YOU SEARCHING FOR INSPIRATIONS ON HOW TO ACCOMPANY AND SUPPORT PEOPLE ON THEIR INNER PATHWAYS TOWARD A MORE SUSTAINABLE AND REGENERATIVE LIFE?

The Inner Pathways Guide is designed for trainers, facilitators, educators and guides, who are active in the field of education for sustainability – those who already have experience in designing educational activities and processes and who recognise that a focus on attitudes and inner change, leads to outward acts of transformation. When we refer to the term ‘facilitators’ in this Guide, we mean both ‘you’ and ‘us’, and to include trainers, educators etc.

This Guide is meant to be a companion on your journey. The one that is there anytime, offering what you need at the moment, supporting you in designing your educational activities based on the Inner Pathways approach. You may find something that enriches, completes, gives new ideas for your activities, something that inspires you to be creative or to put your activities in a different light.

It is also an invitation for educational action. To act, to respond to the current state of the world by offering educational activities, which contribute to the vision of a more sustainable and regenerative world.

During the journey of creating this Guide, this is what happened to us. We hope you'll enjoy the journey of finding your own relation to it and enrich your way with what you find here.

## **ENTRY POINTS: HOW TO USE IT?**

Read the Manifesto first - it creates an essential base for what we are working on. If you resonate with it and want to go on, choose any part of the Guide which calls to you in the moment, be it from the beginning or in the middle.

WHAT IS YOUR  
SITUATION AND  
CONTEXT ?

WHAT  
DO YOU NEED  
AT THE MOMENT ?

WHAT ATTRACTS YOUR ATTENTION ?



In the first part - **ORIENTATION** - you can read information about Inner Pathways and our vision, and understand the theoretical background.



In the second part - **FACILITATOR'S GUIDE** - you can find tips on how to facilitate educational processes based on the Inner Pathways approach, and more widely on non formal education.



Third part - **COURSE STRUCTURE** - describes how to build an Inner Pathways course and shows an example of the online course we realised in spring 2020.



In the fourth part - **TOOLBOX** - there is set of practices/methods/activities for inspiration and widening your portfolio including two special tools for your educational designs: Modus Mandala - a creative tool which combines methods, techniques and forms of education - and Foretelling Dice - an intuitive tool which may show a new perspective, hint or direction.

In **APPENDIX** you can find tips for further reading about theories and people mentioned in the text, plus definitions of some key words we use.

To dive more into the inner pathways topic, you can also:

- read our [story book](#), where we are sharing information about different practices and how they have influenced our lives,
- listen to our [podcasts](#), which offer guided activities, interviews and short talks,
- or check out our study about the importance of regenerative practices based on the way the participants of our online course in spring 2020 reflected on it.

You can find everything on our website [www.innerpathways.eu](http://www.innerpathways.eu).

# CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

What do we mean by Inner Pathways toward Sustainability?

This chapter helps to understand where this Guide is embedded theoretically, and what the main sources of inspiration are for us. First we invite you to explore the meanings of Inner Pathways and Sustainability.

## INNER PATHWAYS

Originally the project was inspired by the conceptual map of Integral Ecology. This framework provides us with a way of uniting multiple approaches to environmental studies. The starting point is with the idea that purely objective scientific facts don't provide an overall comprehension of any given ecological issues, nor do they necessarily provide motivation for action. Consequently educational materials that serve learning for sustainability, that aim to form attitudes and ignite motivation for action, need to include wider perspectives also. These perspectives include the terrain of the subjective personal experience, and the terrain of the inter-subjective dimension of communities and cultures. This way learning includes aesthetic experience, psychological dynamics, religious meaning, ethical issues, cultural values, communication and many more of the subjective reality of oneself and one community.

	<b>EXTERIOR</b>	<b>INTERIOR</b>
<b>INDIVIDUAL</b>	<b>TERRAIN OF EXPERIENCES</b>  The subjective realities of any organism at all levels of its perception.  <i>Known by felt experience</i>	<b>TERRAIN OF BEHAVIORS</b>  The objective realities of any organism at all levels of its organisation.  <i>Known by observation</i>
<b>COLLECTIVE</b>	<b>TERRAIN OF CULTURES</b>  The intersubjective realities of any organism at all levels of its communion.  <i>Known by felt experience</i>	<b>TERRAIN OF SYSTEMS</b>  The subjective realities of any organism at all levels of its perception.  <i>Known by felt experience</i>

*The four terrains of integral ecology, based on the work of Sean Esbjörn Hargens and Michael E. Zimmerman*

We started the project by looking at the learning methodology of four fields: ecology and self, somatic practices, mindful living, communication and community practices. This original approach was useful for us as a theoretical starting point and anchor, yet on the practical level we found it difficult to categorise practices and learning methods according to the four fields of the

integral map. Inner Pathways refers to the *inner dimensions*, the personal and interpersonal subjective quadrants of the ecological issues. We intentionally give validity to the subjective, the personal, the inner, the non-tangible felt experience that we believe is the core of any learning that occurs.

We also want to acknowledge that whoever we are, in whichever way we are taking part in the global shift of worldview right now, each one of us is unique. We are unique in our way of being and acting in the world, in our path of expressing our creativity and care for the Earth, in the ways and forms we need comfort, community and inspiration, in the way of replenishing our energies and connecting with others. Our inner subjective sensations, felt experience and relational existence is valid and important in every area of life, *including* working on ecological sustainability issues. These come into play when we learn, teach and co-create any learning experience and community events and when we act with the intention to make the world a better place.

## SUSTAINABILITY

Based on a shared understanding we use the word **SUSTAINABILITY** in our project, with reference to the UN's report, "*Our common future*", published in 1987. Sustainability is by such definition:

SUSTAINABILITY

"A DEVELOPMENT THAT MEETS  
THE NEED OF THE PRESENT  
WITHOUT COMPROMISING THE ABILITY  
OF THE FUTURE GENERATIONS  
TO MEET THEIR OWN NEEDS"

"OUR COMMON FUTURE" – UN'S REPORT 1987

This definition leaves us with questions about what we mean by development and why we think it is constantly needed, as well as whether we take into account the future and present of other-than-human species also.

## REGENERATIVE CULTURES

Shortly after starting the project, a strong need arose in us to look beyond 'sustainability', and to shift to an understanding that includes a perspective of the whole of nature, not only that of humans. We needed a context that focused on sustaining life rather than sustaining development. We started to look at Inner pathways to Sustainability as a platform (a place to begin from), a network of educators and a collection of learning methodologies and tools that promote **REGENERATIVE CULTURES**.

Borrowing the definition from Daniel Christian Wahl, regeneration is:



THE ABILITY OF A CULTURE TO  
NURTURE AND RENEW HEALTHY  
ECOSYSTEMS, WHICH IS THE SOURCE  
OF WELLBEING

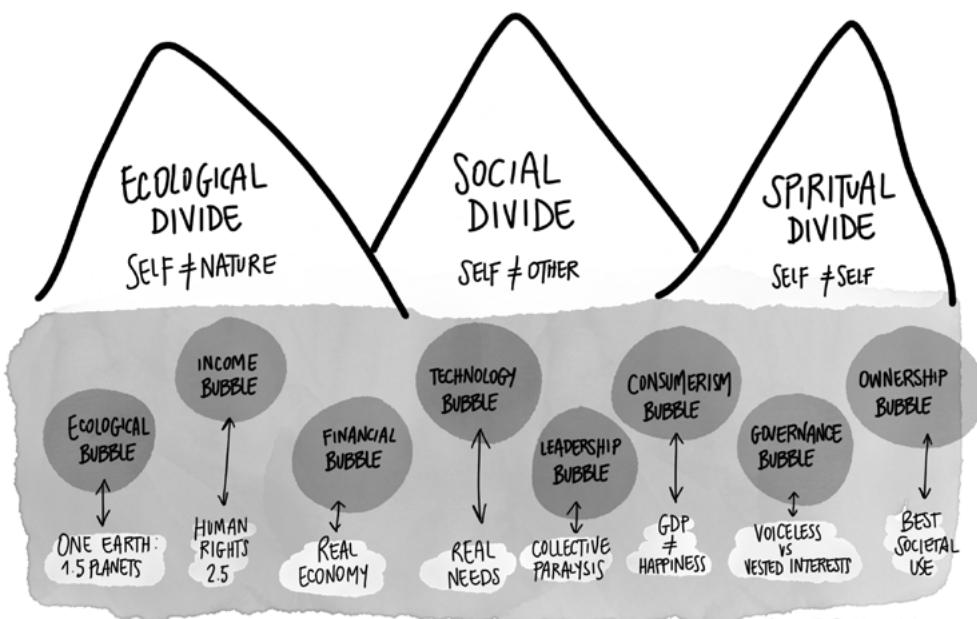
We kept *sustainability* for an easier understanding, a word that expresses a desirable direction we are heading towards, honouring the work of Joanna Macy who coined the term *Life Sustaining Society*. Her work, the "*Work That Reconnects*" provides facilitators with group-work tools to explore our feelings for the present ecological state of the world and empower our actions toward the healing of the Earth.

In the Inner Pathways Podcast on regenerative cultures with Extinction Rebellion's activist and promoter of action for happiness, Alex Nunn, he recognises how much our present mainstream culture is *degenerative*, as opposed to the aspired regenerative ways of living. He uses *degenerative* in the sense of extracting and exploiting people's energy, time, relationships and resources. He expresses that we need to learn from nature to maintain whole cycles in our lives, giving back as much as we take to ourselves and to the rest of nature; to include regenerative practices in our lives, as well as treating the world around us in a regenerative way. He talks about the importance of being able to

stop from time to time, to discover and understand the draining patterns in our lives. Replenishing ourselves while taking action outside; finding the quiet stable place we are responding from in the face of global crisis, without burning out physically, emotionally, energetically.

## SEPARATION TO INTERBEING

We see that Inner Pathways is part of a larger vision, part of a living network of people working across the globe for a shift in worldview, and a radical change in our way of living. We see that the current multi-level crisis has hugely powerful dynamics, and is threateningly urgent. Such a crisis is visible in our ecological, social, political, economic systems. It is prevailing, complex and critical. It is based on competition and isolation, on power-over and inequalities. None of the single parts of this multidimensional problem is the root cause, they are only symptoms. They are consequences of the same phenomena; of experiencing ourselves as separate from nature, separate from each other and separate from the community of life. Describing this separation, Otto Scharmer, (Author of "Theory U") talks about three areas where we experience this divide: separate from nature (*ecological divide*), separate from others (*social divide*) and separate from our higher Self (*spiritual divide*).



Based on: OTTO SCHARMER 2020

Out of that inner space that is still and quiet in each one of us, a new story is emerging. A story of *interbeing*. Interbeing is a word coined by Vietnamese Buddhist monk, teacher, author, poet and peace activist, Thich Nhat Hahn. It expresses the interconnectedness of all living beings. It is not as yet in the dictionary.



*"If you are a poet, you will see clearly that there is a cloud floating in this sheet of paper. Without a cloud, there will be no rain; without rain, the trees cannot grow; and without trees, we cannot make paper. The cloud is essential for the paper to exist. If the cloud is not here, the sheet of paper cannot be here either. So we can say that the cloud and the paper inter-are. "Interbeing" is a word that is not in the dictionary yet, but if we combine the prefix "inter-" with the verb "to be," we have a new verb, inter-be. Without a cloud, we cannot have paper, so we can say that the cloud and the sheet of paper inter-are."*

Interbeing lies '*at the heart of co-creating regenerative cultures*', caring for the earth, caring for ourselves and for our community. This care is driven by our innate love for life. At Inner Pathways we encourage ourselves to step away from the old story of rushing urgently for answers, but to allow ourselves to stay with the questions, with the unknown, and listen deeply to ourselves, to our own inner guidance and to collective wisdom. To find and nourish that authentic place within ourselves where new forms of creative answers can arise. Some of the practices featured in our [podcasts](#) support these connections, for example the *Sit Spot* practice for nature connection, the timeless tradition of awareness of breath and loving kindness meditations, and the ancient/new practice of the *Way of Council*.

We see our times through the global lens of historical events as a special time of liminal state; a space in between the two predominant stories, where a shift in perception and consciousness happens. It is the space in between, the old story of separation that has not yet faded away, and the new story of interbeing which has not yet fully emerged. This is the place of not knowing, a great transitional

turning. Our unique response to the crisis can emerge from this pause, and our role and unique contribution can crystallize in this place. This is the pause where we need to find our very own inner pathway.

To use the words of Charles Eisenstein, “*...we are working on creating a more beautiful world.*” A world that is not more effective, more successful or exciting, but more *beautiful* – because our souls are hungry for beauty. We humans are hardwired to thrive when we are surrounded by beauty. Beauty in our lives, in our environment and in our relationships helps us to reach our quiet, inner space. We invite you to nurture that place, your own authentic source of action, and to offer you some tools we produced within the Inner Pathways project.

2

# FACILITATOR'S GUIDE



# FRAMING THE COURSE

In the Facilitator's Guide we share insights and practical experience that can support you to design and facilitate an educational activity based on the Inner Pathways approach. Our clear intention here is to support participants through an inner journey that brings a shift of awareness from the sense of being separate to a sense of being interconnected; an 'inter-being'.

The facilitator offering such a course is expected to deliver both theoretical and hands-on experiences to participants. Theory allows the typically western mind to relax in 'knowing' something about what is to come and perhaps why, while the hands on part can both follow the theory, or be presented first, in a learning by doing approach. Either way, the facilitator is there to model the practices and speak from a place of some experience.

A metaphor that can support a good training is that of scaffolding. In order to build a house, first is erected a shell or strong scaffold, inside of which something can be constructed until the time that it can stand on its own. The scaffold is gradually taken down and removed, allowing the construction to grow, change and develop for itself, ideally with some firm foundation. For this, the facilitator is given some guiding frameworks, their own experiences and an objective or governing intent.

Building a simple house however (which is made of physical material) will normally conform to a pre-arranged plan, but with our project the area of focus is located on the inner part or pathway, a very complex organic and unpredictable set of human characteristics, individually and as a group, which means that our 'material' varies greatly in matter and consistency. Bearing this in mind, overly-detailed pre-arranged plans might be best left to a clear and aligned intent, allowing the shapes and final picture to arrange itself in the way one might allow only the superior power or collective intelligence to make.

Finally, and likely already known to the facilitator, is that the word facilitator comes from the latin Facile – to make easy. In this context that is to notice what

is emerging in a group situation, and bring it out, respond to it with best practice and support whilst remaining connected to the original intention of that session.



If your training is online, we have added the online tags in sections that it can apply, have a slightly different emphasis or something extra to take care of.

# DEEPENING OUR FACILITATOR'S MIND INTO AN INNER PATHWAY

To deepen into our inner pathways rather than a physical landscape, we must first contemplate that these inner pathways and the way we use to move through them are largely invisible to others except through our actions and expressions which result from them. This invisibility makes the art of communication and attentive perception super-important from everything from survival to our best co-operation.

Each of our journeys along the inner path will be unique, an infinite variety of ways, viewpoints, ideas, perceptions and beliefs, cultural, social and genetic influences, bringing us naturally to our task to find common ground, orientation and a shift toward better conditions for ourselves, others, and the greater world. Often it is not through one magical moment that a shift happens, nor is it complete in one go. Shifts may be undetectable in the moment, may occur later and in several steps. It takes practice and reminder, both for the participants and facilitator to stay aware of shifts when they come.

To make sense of sharing the journey in any meaningful and or collective context, we will need to make some agreements; for example, *it's a good idea to do this training*, having a **MAP**, a **PURPOSE** or **INTENTION**, use of **DEFINITIONS**, **COMMUNICATION** generally and **PRACTICES** that support our and others **POSITIVE CO-EXISTENCE**.

Back to the invisible stuff... Interestingly, both the inner pathways and the way we move through them are composed of this same stuff, though in slightly differing forms. i.e. we use awareness to notice something, consciousness to experience something, and attention to explore it.

And... Why is all this important to know?

In the external world we need to know that the physical landscape can support our ways of life, those of other species and ultimately the ecosystem as a whole. We also need to take care that our body, car or mode of transport is reliable, can slow down or speed up as necessary, is responsive (steers well !) and won't get stuck, nor damage the environment we are inhabiting... These concerns have equally important clarities to reach for in our internal condition, well-being and ecology.

## **WHERE DO I BEGIN?**

We begin with ourselves, and in particular our intention and capacities to bring about the desired changes or support for them; i.e. regularly checking in with my intention will support me to make good decisions in relation to my approach (to anything...).

# INTENTIONS

## WHAT IS MY INTENTION?

This question is essential to be asked by any would-be facilitator, clarified with self and other co-leaders, and then as much as possible embodied by speaking and acting from that place. A clear intention is like a carrier-wave that we can refer to when we lose sight of a goal. It can sustain us when our experience is at odds with the apparent direction or outcome of the goal. It locates both where we have been, and the point where we want to be. It can be adjusted if new information supercedes the original vision.

# INTENTION

An aim that guides action.

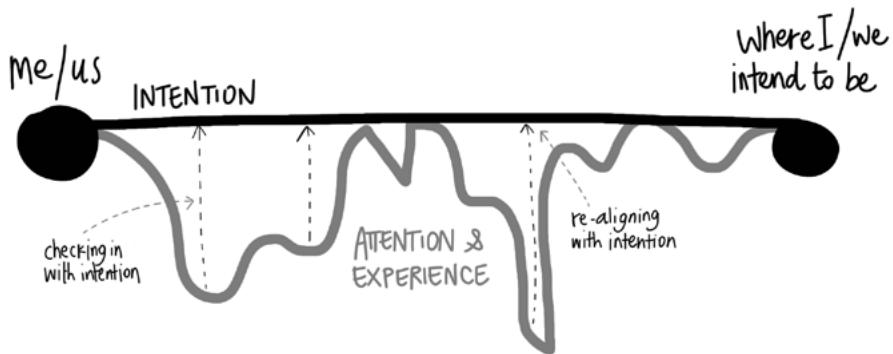
From the Latin, Tendere: To stretch. Intend, to stretch inward  
(Internal focus and vision).

# ATTENTION

To stretch toward (External focus and effort)



A clear **INTENTION** with an idealised alignment of sustained **ATTENTION**.



A clear **INTENTION** - but more commonly how the experience varies and the attention behaves!

## WHO HAS A STAKE IN THE INTENTION?

Most likely it will be us, facilitators, shared by team colleagues. What motivates us to do the activity? More often than not a facilitator's reasoning for doing an activity is the main driver and the lens through which an intention is formulated. We also believe it is essential in the process that not only we are considered to have a stake, an interest, but also the participants should have an influence in this.

Check; who do we have in mind when designing the activity? What can or would we like to offer to our participants? Maybe there are organisations involved or even funders who also might have an interest in what the activity one is intending to do.

# PREPARATION

## WHAT DO I NEED TO CONSIDER BEFORE TAKING THE JOURNEY?

Having made a clear intention, the next step is in recognition and supportive action that any training or facilitated event is preceded, (usually) with a lot of work. Adequate preparation will allow a more relaxed facilitator to arrive into the role and be in some clarity about why they are there, what is to do, and who/what is coming. Putting into place foundations for the best envisioned process and wished-for result requires research, some care and attention to details which, if unattended or left to the last minute, can lend the program a superficial quality or open to some less than constructive chaos. Nevertheless, even the best of facilitators will miss something (which is different from ignoring something) and accept that the best approach in handling that is to allow the subsequent learning to emerge as part of the flow.

## ATTENTION

Attention to the location(s) the training will take place in are important. The guardians and or owners of the place and the general environmental conditions, the resources available and contingencies for the unplanned are also a good start. Each element is influential in its own way, and will be attending the event in some presence or other, seen or unseen. Important then to ideally treat each stage of preparation as part of the training already in progress, with the same kind of care and approach that one will be presenting to the final recipients.



Online – Attention to location can also be an influencing factor on attention, especially if visible to the participants. Ensure your circumstances remain in a professional or appropriate background, both visually and in atmosphere. Encourage participants to prepare a space or something different about their usual station to be online to set a good working precedent.

# CO-CREATING A GROUP CULTURE

Whenever a group comes together, a new culture begins to form. This culture will arise in the group automatically and unconsciously as everyone brings their own unique personal values with them. Knowing this as we first meet collectively, we have the opportunity to consciously create the culture that feels comfortable and effective for learning from the start. We can name our priorities, set our intentions and the direction we are heading. When this is done together, a group is more inclined to feel empowered, take ownership and work collaboratively.

Below you can find elements which we utilise to support us in creating and co-creating an effective learning environment, set-up an atmosphere and build the community.

## BEING READY

Participants arriving at a new place sense the atmosphere, mood of the moment and often mirror the state of being of the facilitators. Therefore it is important to be present with enough time to be prepared and ready before their arrival - oneself for sure, environment and any props as well, unless there is an intention of preparing the space together with the whole group.



Online – Ensure people are well served with links, and any technical data a good time in advance. Be online before the participants arrive.

## CHECK-IN

The moment when we arrive at the airport and say, 'I'm here, count with me and this is my luggage!' In much the same way as we check in to the course, space to hear things like – *I'm here, this is me, and this is what I'm carrying with me at the moment* (my emotions, thoughts, body feelings, experiences, needs; basically what is present in my 'inner luggage') – is essential to register our presence and open a channel to express, be seen and heard before 'take-off'. Different techniques can be used; talking circle-time, movement, sound, drawing, metaphor...

Important elements are connecting with myself - with what is present - and connecting with others - sharing, listening, and as said, being heard/seen. This is important at the beginning of the course and can be useful every morning, or every moment, when we need to reconnect - again, with ourselves and/or the others.



Online – All of the above suggestions work well online including sound and movement.

## THRESHOLD

A course or activity can be seen as a learning journey to a mysterious or unknown world where we go through challenges, find our treasures and carry them back into our lives and communities to make good use of them. It can be of great service to mark clearly the beginning and end of the journey, mindfully stepping into the adventure, opening ourselves to the magic of learning and then closing it to return home with new insights. In our courses, it is important that this stepping in and out action is made by every participant, in any way; i.e. jump over the creek, give a piece of wood to the fire, step into a circle, take in the sound of the bell... It can also be accompanied by marking ourselves (sign on a face, ribbon on hand, necklace, etc) to support the group identity forming.



Online – Ask each participant to go out and do something either collectively agreed or unique within the time allotted, or simply use a bell or similar device.

## SERVICE AND CARE

Some call it karma yoga, others, a work meditation. A daily moment when everybody is contributing for the common wellbeing - cleaning and beautifying the space, preparing wood for fire, cooking, making visual reports of the learnings so far, self care and so on. In this way, we can take care of what is needed and also connect while together doing practical tasks. Such service supports sensitivity to what is needed - for me, for others, for the immediate environment and working from the heart; enjoying to be in service rather than being bothered by the work.



Online – This can be happily adapted to the home or working environment each participant is present in. E.g. cleaning their own space, collecting notes and uploading them, creating art in some way to gift the training or each participant.

## FITTING PROPS

Choose props which are fitting for you, and are support for the atmosphere you wish to create. Also to check-in carefully, what is appropriate in the environment you are co-creating for the people who are coming. Things (candle, drum or flipchart stand) can mean different things, different connotations in different cultures. This is important if one wishes to show respect for culture generally, support inclusion for other people's cultures so that sharing can be as open and free as possible. Stay mindful and respectful.



Online – Support each module with a different and relevant background, props visible within the camera range.

## CONGRUENCE

Being authentic and congruent is one of preconditions for creating an open and safe learning space. What one thinks, says and does (and what one teaches) should be aligned, and not contradictory. And *everything* matters; choice of place, food, marketing... all of which is in line with your values and values shared during the course.

# LEARNING TOGETHER

Learning may best occur when people dare to stretch beyond their everyday comfort zone, yet not provoked nor pushed too far from it. In other words, when they feel just safe enough to enter the unknown with openness to persist and find inspiration. When working with personal feelings, lifestyles, wellbeing of participants, we want to create an atmosphere where people feel secure enough to share.

## CIRCLE TIMES

Sharing in circle covers most of the basic developmental needs for the good practice of being human in the collective social sense, and therefore during the course (as the group is also developing and maturing), can serve with great capacity for community building.

Everybody has a place in the circle. At the same distance from the centre, the circle offers us as having a rightful place in the group, in community, in the hearts of people. By following simple guidelines, the circle is held and developed through the intention of building trust as a safe container with clear agreements. We can find support in being listened to and in hearing stories similar to ours which show how shared the human experience is, and which can give us a new perspective. A circle is best with clear boundaries - beginning, end, forms, structure. A simple talking/listening piece is employed and held in the hand, which clearly shows who is sharing and who is listening at any moment.



Online – A circle online works very well. It does require perhaps more attention, particularly by the facilitators to be able to read the minimum amount of available cues online, i.e. body language, tone of voice etc. Stories become even more important, break-out groups help, plus

ensure everybody has their own talking piece. It can be a great help, if possible, to have a second camera (and therefore separate screen) pointed at a candle or bowl placed in a 'centre' for reminding and focus of the agreements that we have made if in a ceremonial, or 'special time'. Clear intentions transcend physical borders.

## **CREATING A SAFE LEARNING SPACE**

In or out of circle, we as facilitators can share some of what we are doing to create a safe space. Ask the group what they need to feel safe, for people's ideas on creating a culture of encouragement, connection, listening and exploration for and in the group. These inputs can also be referred to if we feel it is necessary to remind people of the agreed guidelines.

Set the tone by naming that it is clearly the intention to co-create a safe place to talk about ourselves, to listen respectfully, to connect, to open up or to remain silent, depending on one's actual state. Point out that participation is voluntary at any moment of the course or workshop. It is important to invite people to say, share and act in a way that is right for them in the moment (staying respectful of other's boundaries), including freedom to take a step back from any of the suggested activities. Our role as facilitator is to invite and accept such participation voluntarily so that participants do not feel unnecessarily pressured.

## **AGREEMENTS**

Establish agreed principles at the beginning. For example encouraging people to listen with their full attention and without interruption and to respect differences in views and life stories, not giving unsolicited advice etc. Importantly, checking in with the group for any other ground rules that make them feel comfortable and safe.

Including basic practical agreements are a very good idea, such as phones on/off, drinks in the room, starting on time, when and where music or louder social moments can happen, smoking, hygiene, general conduct, etc.

On a course of various online or offline meetings, additionally clarify if the group is open for a new member to join after the first session. You may want to discuss with everyone whether you keep it open for people to join at the second session or later, or work with a closed group.



Online - You may think of some appropriate recommendations for your online setting.

Here are a few ideas:

- Work in a facilitator team, at least in a team of two, where one person will be solely responsible for the technical side of the workshop. This person will focus on letting people in, muting and unmuting participants, creating smaller discussion rooms and ensuring the online meeting runs smoothly. Leaving an email account open and checking at the beginning of the course in case anyone needs support in getting in is a good idea.
- As participants are in their own private space, ask everyone to make sure no one overhears the conversation – choosing a room where they can be alone, using a head-set if there is anyone around.
- Ask people to use their cameras in advance. Some people may have a broken camera or a weak connection so make sure they have time to prepare before the workshop. Make sure they can choose a place to speak from with a strong Internet connection and a well-functioning camera so that they can be seen. Explain that it is important for the group dynamic that everyone's presence can be seen and felt by the others, especially for the one speaking at the moment. It can be hard to share personal stories in front of blank muted screens.

- Establish a guideline about using microphones. Usually it is a good idea to have all muted unless speaking. Ask for permission to mute anyone in case they leave their mic on and background noises get disturbing.
- Start with a check-in, offering the chance for everyone to speak and to hear everyone else at least once at the beginning.
- Establish an agreed sign of someone wanting to ask or comment in the middle of a workshop, discussing or sharing. It might be simply unmuting the microphone and saying it, using the “raise hand” option, giving a sign on the side chat or any other ways. Important is to have a group agreement about it. You may want to use different signs depending on the actual method used, so do ensure it is clear to all participants.
- Having the names written on the individual screens will make it easier for people to remember and use them. You could ask people to re-name themselves at the beginning of the workshop; a name perhaps they would like to be called!
- Agree on when to use the side chat. In some cases using it may be the best way of quickly sharing reactions and reflections, but it can become disturbing if people are trying to focus on what is being said and shared. You may enable and disable sidechat depending on your group agreement and technical possibilities.

Whichever platform you choose to use, there are many safety measures in place to be aware of. Check safety recommendations from your chosen online meeting provider.

## WORKING WITH STRONG EMOTIONS

Working with our personal life stories and emotions about the state of the world can evoke strong feelings in participants. Take care! And... A sensitive sharing of our experiences with others in similar situations can help alleviate heavy feelings and can bring a certain ease most of the time. Using certain activities such as exercises based on Joanna Macy's work, the *Work That Reconnects*, can specifically evoke strong emotional release. Based on the book *Coming Back To Life* from Joanna Macy and Molly Young Brown, we summarise here some suggestions on working with strong emotions:

1. Be sure you have done a good measure yourself on your own emotions about the state of the world before attempting to facilitate others.
2. Respect people's emotions, anger, sorrow, fear and guilt are natural responses to the suffering.
3. Trust the compassion and community arising in the group.

With such work, any strong emotions that have been evoked may stay with participants beyond the meeting. Often people are able to process these emotions themselves, and, sometimes they will need support. You may want to reschedule your workshop and choose to take more time for reflecting on what has been shared or include an extra activity for this.



Online: Take extra caution that people feel secure to finish the meeting after strong emotional release. In an online space it is more challenging to "take the pulse" of the group and individuals, ask them personally if they need any extra support. A private room sharing may serve here.

# ROLE OF THE FACILITATORS

Ensure clarity about our facilitator role at the first session. We may decide to take part when needed, if numbers are odd during pair work we can step in, step out accordingly or take part and facilitate for the whole course, workshop.

The facilitators are responsible for:

- Designing the flow, the program.
- Providing a variety of inspiring learning experiences.
- Creating a learning environment and atmosphere that supports participants following their variety of learning needs.
- Supporting the development of a group dynamic based on trust, mutual understanding and willingness to learn from each other.
- Supporting individual learning processes.
- Providing resources and content in relation to the themes of the course.

## ROLE-MODELLING & STYLES

WHO AM I  
TODAY?

HOW CAN I SERVE THE  
PURPOSES AND REMAIN  
FLEXIBLE TO THE NEEDS  
OF THE MOMENT?

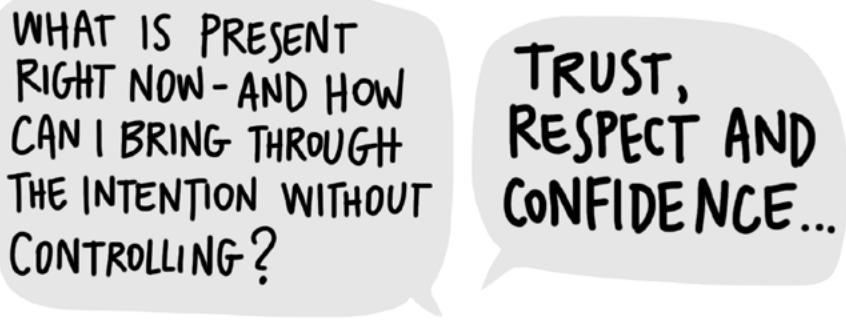
Modelling a best practice leads by example. By embodying what has been learned you can confer to others confidence and some respect for ourselves as the facilitator and the practice. And... Any facilitator will know that one is no less flawed or subject to the fickleness of human behaviour than anyone else, so how one might deal with mistakes and misses are all part of the important detail the facilitator(s) need to be prepared for and accept. A faultless training is

of course desirable, but by including mistakes as highly probable, the facilitator is encouraged to look for any learning(s) that can be brought to good attention through it.

## CO-LEADING & SHARED RESPONSIBILITY

A relevant best practice and one in which some preparation is also usually necessary, is to share leadership, share facilitation. Wherever possible, find, appoint, work with a co-leader who you can switch with, assist, support and share the role of co-facilitating. Examples of why this works are; If one forgets something, the other who is not speaking at the moment and likely more relaxed, can add it; If one alternates the offering of exercises, and or information, the facilitation demonstrates shared leadership and suffers less from a dominant focus or style; If things become 'hot' or perhaps unclear through a particular style a facilitator uses in a moment, it can be diffused or clarified by the different style of the other. Finally, the idea is of course to empower and foster responsibility within the group, and that can begin to be modelled by how the facilitators interact with each other and share the task.

## NAVIGATING THE FIELD



WHAT IS PRESENT  
RIGHT NOW - AND HOW  
CAN I BRING THROUGH  
THE INTENTION WITHOUT  
CONTROLLING?

TRUST,  
RESPECT AND  
CONFIDENCE...

In the actual event, the confluence of mood, intentions, attention and general/specific environmental conditions combine to create a 'field' of visible and invisible influence. Navigating this awesome sea of unknowns can be well supported in the initial phases of the training by asserting a strong and clear presence, perhaps with a pre-set of games or exercises that you have confidence in and have tested, which encourages recognition of competence from the

participants, and a light or fun beginning. If games are used, they allow the facilitator to start to see the participants focus on something else other than she/he as trainer, and can make assessments early on, notice who is in their body, likes to play, or already has challenges for example. By developing a sense of trust, respect and confidence in the field, it is far easier to engage both with where the tendencies are in the group to wander off topic, and gently guide them back into the intended frame.

## **OUTCOMES AND EMERGENT LEARNING – HOW TO FIND A BALANCE?**

Finding a balance between a desired outcome and managing the dynamics of a group (sometimes regarded as trying to herd cats) is a bit like surfing a wave. There are forces present that just won't conform, no matter how hard we have engineered the process, and unless we are dictating the way forward, or someone is, (which seldom results in the good feeling of a commonly shared goal) we have to remain sensitive both to our posture and that of the ever-changing group dynamic.

A basic education for a facilitator is paradoxically, 'not to know'. Not to know how it will go or how it will end, but to hold positive the intention, no matter what seems to arise, will allow the emergent part of what is not known or the answers to our enquiry to become visible in a collective way. We may come with an intention, a purpose, as do most of the participants; this is what brings people together, to explore. During a process however, putting aside a dependency on fixed outcomes becomes an important job of the facilitator in managing input and flow from all voices without directing it or allowing others to dominate or control it. A midwife and mother would be doing similarly in allowing what wants to be birthed, while giving it proper care, support and attention, trusting what comes.

# SUSTAINABILITY OF THE FACILITATOR – SAFETY & SELF-CARE

In order to be in service to others, we need to be in good shape ourselves. Therefore our responsibility to take care of our needs, create working and living conditions which are regenerative, healthy and satisfying for us, is essential and a role-model to others also.

As part of the Inner Pathways project we conducted a phenomenological research and study about regenerative practices and activism during the Inner Pathways online learning journey, based on participants' answers. A clear conclusion is that it is essential to include regenerative practices in our lives to enable us to act. In other words, self-sustainability is essential to offering educational activities in the theme of sustainability.



Online – Take a lot of mini-breaks away from the screen, and/or bring online stretching, movement etc for the whole group.

## EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Super important: do what you are competent for - you have an appropriate level of training in.

And... Stay curious, go on with your life long learning!

## **SUPERVISION, INTERVISION**

Ensure that you have people with whom to discuss work related topics and get needed support. Held moments with our colleagues or supervision with an experienced person from outside of the team, are recommended.

## **RHYTHM OF THE PROGRAMME**

Mindfully create the flow of the programme to be as sustainable as possible for all. Less can be more, i.e. participants need time to digest the learning processes and to be interactive through informal and unorganised ways. Often these are the moments which can bring a big 'aha'!

Another, would be that we as facilitators need to allow 'extra time' in the scheduling for team meetings and preparation, plus ways to ensure space for some personal free time.



Online – Appoint a mindfulness bell ringer, who is watching for the level of attention in the group. Ringing the bell calls for a mini-break or longer, spontaneous suggestions for time out.

## **PERSONAL PRACTICES**

Continuing from the above as these days on courses are part of our life (just as any other days) maintaining any of our daily practices which keep us well is to be encouraged, be it running, swimming, meditation etc. You can invite others to join and even have it as part of the optional programme, which could also motivate others for their own practice.

## **POSSIBILITY TO QUIT**

Sometimes you can arrive into conditions that are not good for working with other people; being ill, being in crisis for example, and therefore our responsibility towards self and others is to notice it, and step away. Ideally we can defer the work to a co-leader or team, but if not, to find a colleague who can take on the job. Cancelling as a last resort can also be an option!

## **NEEDS**

Enough sleep, eating well, drinking water, rest, dressing properly, finding a while to be alone, taking a walk, a swim... Without taking care of ourselves, we will have little to share from on a long run. As mentioned earlier; taking the opportunity to be a role model for others in how to take care of their needs, by taking care of our, co-creates a culture, where this is normal.

## **BURNOUT**

Without long-term balance and sustainability, we can easily face burnout. It is often occurring in care-work with people and helping professions generally, and takes much time to recover. Prevention can be applied through all of the points mentioned above. Warning signs can be; feeling stressed or tired often, feeling undervalued, losing sense of what one does, being irritated by the presence of other people, feeling apathetic, exhausted.

## **FIRST AID AND INSURANCE**

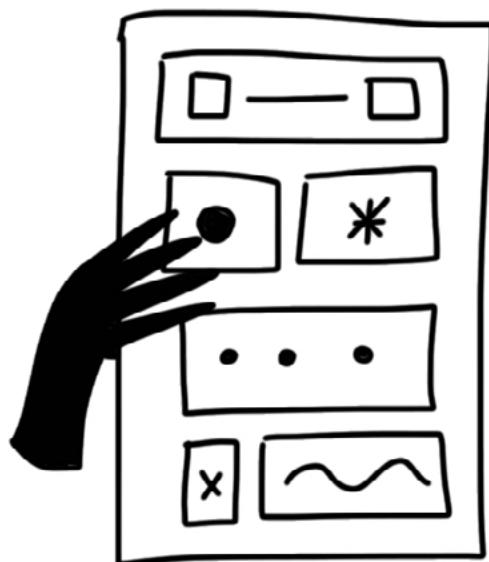
Be sure that there is somebody in the team or otherwise around, readily available for dealing with possible health issues, anxiety or concerns. Particularly when going into any wilderness situation where it takes longer for help to arrive, have a person who can do first aid and crisis intervention. Be also aware of the many possibilities of insurance.

## **FINANCES**

Balance and flow in giving and receiving is important. Of course finances are not the only “income” we have from offering activities, but on a long term basis it is important to have balance here, to be able to manage our costs and also to feel recognised in what we do. Sense what would be the proper exchange for you and what would be a fair and affordable price for participants. Find the balance!

3

# COURSE STRUCTURE



## 3.1

# INTRODUCTION

*Many roads lead to Rome.* Likewise according to this widely known proverb – that there are many ways to reach one goal – this is also true for the Inner Pathways approach! In deciding to implement an *Inner Pathways learning journey*, a large variety of course structures are possible and adaptable to one's own design, content and context.

We propose here three categories for courses differing by intensity and pace, and according to what period of time you want to stretch the course. In any case, we recommend planning for around **120 HOURS** combining live sessions, peer meetings and individual study and practice. As said there is flexibility in how we may combine these different elements; further down we provide possible allocations of hours within each of the three categories.

With the Inner Pathways project, we took a semi-intensive (over three months) online course with 30 learners (educators, community leaders, activists) from six different European countries. The curriculum of this course as we actually did it, is documented on this [platform](#).

### INNER PATHWAYS ON TEACHABLE

[inner-pathways.teachable.com/p/  
inner-pathways-learning-journey](https://inner-pathways.teachable.com/p/inner-pathways-learning-journey)

## 3.2

# DESIGN – FLOW

For the general design of the structure or flow of the course we recommend using the change model of Theory U. It is a concept supporting transformative processes of social systems as well as individuals – and lends itself therefore easily to create a red thread for accompanying the inner pathways of participants.

### DOWNLOADING

PAST PATTERNS

SUSPENDING

OBSERVING

WITH FRESH EYES

REDIRECTING

SENSING  
FROM THE FIELD

LETTING GO

What is my  
Work?

### PERFORMING

OPERATING FROM THE WHOLE

EMBODYING

PROTOTYPING

THE NEW, BY LINKING  
HEAD, HEART, HAND

ENACTING

CRYSTALLIZING

VISION & INTENTION

LETTING COME

OPEN  
HEART

OPEN  
WILL

Who is my  
Self?

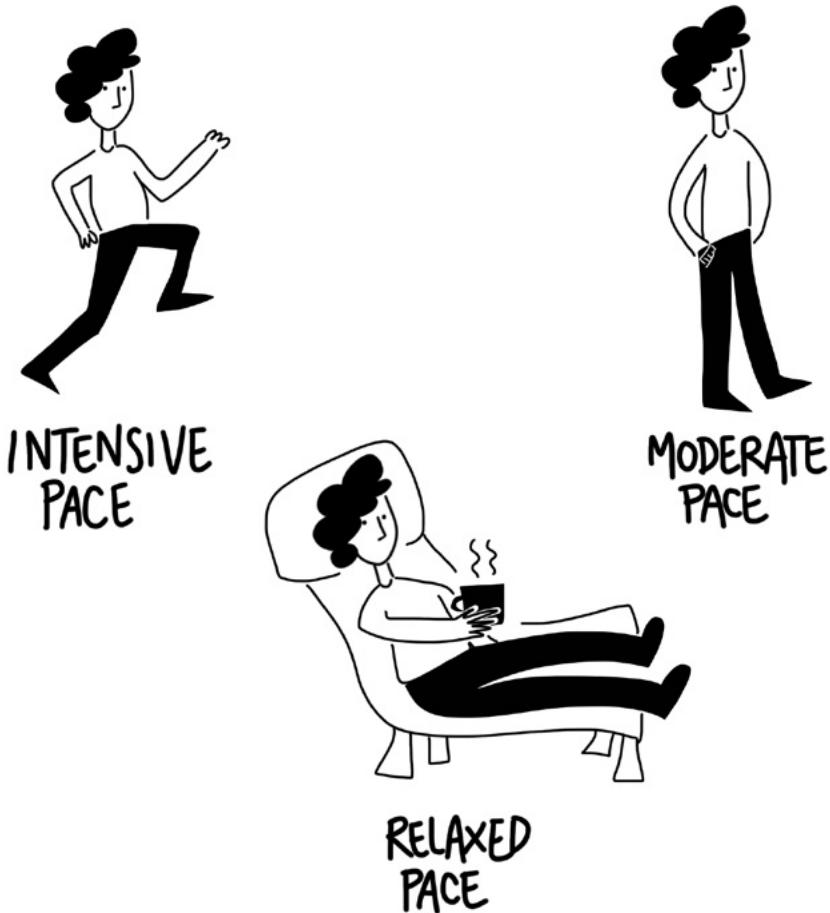
PRESENCE  
CONNECTING TO SOURCE

This unique approach developed by Otto Scharmer, enables people to act from an inner source of wisdom without downloading existing knowledge and solutions. The learning methods based on this U curve gives people a chance to be present with a so-called generative listening, cultivating an open mind, open heart and open will.

More information about Theory U can be found at the site of the Presencing Institute, where the developers of the concept are based.

### 3.3

# THREE CATEGORIES FOR INNER PATHWAYS COURSES



### 3.3.1 INTENSIVE PACE

8 DAYS RESIDENTIAL COURSE  
+ PRE/POST PHASE  
ALTOGETHER 2-3 MONTHS



#### POTENTIAL DIVISION OF HOURS

65h

##### LIVE

(60 hours during the residential + 5 in pre-/post-meetings).

8h

##### PEER MEETINGS

20h

##### PERSONAL PRACTICE BEFORE

30h

##### PERSONAL PRACTICE AFTER

#### CHARACTERISTICS

**A PRE-MEETING** (online or face-to-face) should take place around 4-6 weeks before the residential course. It aims at setting the intention for the process and initiating a preparatory study and practice period.

**A POST-MEETING** (online or offline) should happen around 4-6 weeks after the end of the residential course. This meeting aims to look at the immediate impact of the course in the weeks following, looking back at the intention and the whole learning journey with some distance.

A residential course has the advantage that **PARTICIPANTS CAN FULLY FOCUS AND ENTER DEEPLY INTO THE PROCESS**. Additionally, the group dynamic and the peer learning can play a much more important role.

One challenge might be that **THE JOURNEY IS "REDUCED" TO THIS ONE PEAK EXPERIENCE** being the residential course and it might be more difficult to integrate it into everyday life.

### 3.3.2 MODERATE PACE

ONLINE OR FACE-TO-FACE (OR BLENDED) COURSE  
WITH RECURRENT LIVE MEETINGS  
E.G. 8 MEETINGS @ 3 HOURS OVER 2 MONTHS  
+ 1 MONTH PRE/POST



#### POTENTIAL DIVISION OF HOURS

24 h

LIVE

8 h

PEER  
MEETINGS

70 h

PERSONAL  
PRACTICE

during the course,  
in between the  
live meetings.

20 h

PERSONAL  
PRACTICE

10 hours before  
and 10 hours  
after the live  
meetings.

#### CHARACTERISTICS

A **PRE- AND POST-MEETING** is foreseen as in the intensive pace option.

This version allows for **FLEXIBILITY** according to context to do it online as well as offline (or in a blended version).

The course can be **BETTER EMBODIED INTO AN EVERYDAY LIFE RHYTHM** and integrate more easily what is happening for everybody during live meetings.

The **STUDY AND PRACTICE PERIOD** in between live meetings can be designed in terms of resources and/or tasks provided.

**MEETINGS OF THREE OR FOUR HOURS ARE LIMITED** in terms of experiences you can provide.

It can happen more easily that **PARTICIPANTS ARE NOT AVAILABLE** for one or the other meeting.

### 3.3.3 RELAXED PACE



ONLINE OR OFFLINE/ BLENDED COURSE  
WITH RECURRENT LIVE MEETINGS OVER  
A LONGER PERIOD

E.G. MEETINGS OF 3 HOURS OVER 6-9 MONTHS + 1 MONTH PRE/POST

#### POTENTIAL DIVISION OF HOURS

72h

##### LIVE

24 meetings of  
3 hours or

36 meetings of  
2 hours.

8h

##### PEER MEETINGS

30h

##### PERSONAL PRACTICE

during the  
course, in  
between the live  
meetings.

20h

##### PERSONAL PRACTICE

10 hours before  
and 10 hours  
after the live  
meetings.

#### CHARACTERISTICS

A **PRE- AND POST-MEETING** is foreseen as in the intensive pace option.

This version allows for the **FLEXIBILITY** according to context to do it online as well as offline (or in a blended version).

The course can be **EMBEDDED BETTER INTO THE EVERYDAY LIFE**

**RHYTHM** and integrate more easily what is happening for everybody during the live meetings.

The longer period allows **INTEGRATING A PERSONAL PROJECT INTO THE COURSE** – something a learner inspired by the course wants to bring into life. The course can be a container for such important life projects and with it potentially transformative processes.

The **STUDY AND PRACTICE PERIOD** in between live meetings can be designed in terms of resources and/or tasks provided.

**MEETINGS OF THREE OR FOUR HOURS ARE LIMITED** in terms of experiences you can provide.

It can happen more easily that **PARTICIPANTS ARE NOT AVAILABLE** for one or the other meeting or even need to leave the course due to changing life circumstances.

# RELEVANT ASPECTS FOR ALL THREE OPTIONS

## TITLE / FOCUS OF THE COURSE

Choose a title / focus for your course that raises curiosity and creates potential resonance with the people you intend to invite.

For example:



## AIM AND INTENTION OF YOUR COURSE

In line with your focus you can define the specific aims and intentions. We would like to draw your attention though, to the fact that the course is put together with the intention to support participants exploring both their inner pathway, and a shift towards a sustainable response to the current state of the world – a strengthening of their capacity to face it with peace, resilience, creative power and meaningful action.

Specific aims the course intends to support:

- Cultivating practices to nourish and sustain participants and their community.
- Connecting to their inner source of action in service for all life and acting upon it.
- Exploring existing frameworks, movements and approaches working towards creating regenerative cultures.
- Deepening a sense of belonging to a wider community of people taking actions on behalf of the Earth.

## METHODOLOGY

The methodology of Inner Pathways courses is based on principles and values of non-formal education:

- Experiential learning
- Addressing different learning styles
- Reflective learning
- Variety of learning settings (individual / small groups / large groups)
- Diverse nature, art and body-based techniques
- Safe and inspiring learning space
- Learners co-create their learning process

Some background to Non-Formal Education, its principles and ways of working can be found in this [video](#).

It is suggested to build Inner Pathways courses around exercises and practices coming from:

- The Work that Reconnects
- Mindfulness
- Regenerative Culture
- Way of Council
- Social Presencing Theater and other embodiment techniques
- Natural Cycles and the Medicine Wheel

*In Toolbox - Chapter 4 on page 55 of this Guide some practices and exercises out of the Inner Pathways approach are listed and explained.*

## **CONTENT**

The Inner Pathways course is designed to be highly participatory and engaging. We recommend to limit direct input in a concentrated way at the beginning of the course when introducing the main inspirations for the Inner Pathways approach.

## **ROLE OF THE FACILITATORS**

The facilitators are responsible for:

- Designing the flow, the program.
- Providing a variety of inspiring learning experiences.
- Creating a learning environment and atmosphere that supports participants following their variety of learning needs.
- Supporting the development of a group dynamic based on trust, mutual understanding and willingness to learn from each other.
- Supporting individual learning processes.
- Providing resources and content in relation to the themes of the course.

*More detailed information about facilitation in the context of Inner Pathways you can find in the first part of this Chapter 2 - Facilitator's guide on page 19.*

## **PLATFORMS SUPPORTING THE COURSES**

**COURSE WEBSITE:** Participants can find here all the resources, communication and relevant information about and around the course (as an example you can see [here](#) the site we used for our course).

**COMMUNITY SHARING PLATFORM:** Here participants are invited to share reflections inspired by course sessions, materials or other connected experiences. As an example you can see [here](#) the platform as we used it during our course.

## **AN INNER PATHWAYS CAFÉ ON A SOCIAL MEDIA WEBSITE/APP:**

The most important connections, aha moments and start-up openings are sometimes happening out of the program time, during coffee breaks. This platform should help in strengthening ties between the group and fosters potential to learn from each other.

**LEARNING JOURNAL:** Participants should be invited to write a diary / learning journal during the course. This can become an important resource for the learning journey as it allows one to collect all kinds of reflections, thoughts, observations without having to structure them immediately. Meaning can arise at any point during or after the course when working with the "memory" of the learning journal.

**PEER SUPPORT:** Each participant will have one other as a peer support / learning buddy. This can especially support the reflection processes of participants. It is recommendable to schedule some of the peer meetings into the program at the beginning to support the establishing of a relationship and a dynamic in the couple.

4

# TOOLBOX



# PRACTICES

This part of the Guide is a collection of inspirational examples for facilitators. It's not a manual with readymade activities – rather a toolbox. We offer tools which anyone can use as they wish and as they are able to. We only present here one way of using the tool, give some additional inputs, show possible blindspots and leave the door open to adaptations according to your needs and conditions.

Every activity includes a brief general description, presents possible benefits of an activity of this type and gives one example with variations, one of them for online work. Potential traps are also mentioned to raise awareness and prevent unwanted results.

The examples are not meant to be followed step-by-step for best results. They are rather an open resource to be adjusted, impulses to support your creativity, imagination and skill in designing tailor-made programmes. We hope to contribute to your journey with these tasters and wish you good luck.

# ARISING EMOTIONS

*Learning to be able to spot our emotions and to learn from them.*

## BENEFITS

Often we are dominated by our rational thinking. We think that our reason has the right to prevail on the signal that our heart and body tells us. With "rising emotions" we learn to pay attention to these signals and honor the message they bring.

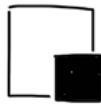
## EXAMPLE

Sit with another person, one in front of the other. One closes the eyes or is blindfolded and the other has pen and paper to take notes. The person that is blindfolded receives a bottle of essential oil without knowing the content. They start to smell and feel it by describing where they notice the smell has arrived (in the heart, the legs, the head...). Then the person starts talking about the memories and feelings that are arising, the images that are popping up and only at the end, bring the thoughts. The other person is taking notes that at the end will be given back. This process goes for two-to-three oils. Usually the first essential oil is from wood or roots, the second from flowers and the third one from spices or herbs.

Once it is over, the pair swap roles, with different essential oils. Once both have completed, there is a time for sharing the experience.

**WHEN YOU INHALE AN ESSENTIAL OIL,  
MAKE THE INHALE AT LEAST THREE SECONDS.**

## VARIATIONS



### REDUCED

If you have several oils, you can do it alone, by grabbing one essential oil and recording what you are saying, still following the sequence: where do you feel it in your body, memories and then images and thoughts.



### EXTENDED

In case of a group, you can at the end ask to share the highlights of the experience each had in pairs.



### ONLINE

Not possible

## POSSIBLE TRAPS

Often we are tempted to guess which essential oil we have in our hands. However this practice is not a quiz to guess smells; it is for training to sense and pay attention to our body.

# COSMIC NEWS

*Daily dose of news from the Solar system to invite a wider framework.*

## BENEFITS

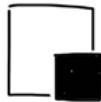
Bringing the cosmic perspective repeatedly into awareness puts your education event into a wider context and can enable reflections about the relevance and sustainability of people's plans and actions.

## EXAMPLE

Every morning during a seven-day residential course we introduced in ten minutes, two or three interesting facts about current events in the Solar system, or presented some numbers to zoom out to a wider perspective. "Right now the Moon is 367.542 km away from the Earth in the constellation of Capricorn." Or, "Today, as everyday, the Earth orbits the Sun at a speed of approx. 30 km per second.", etc. We were building up from simpler examples to more complex things, presenting new layers and broader context.

**ON MERCURY ONE DAY IS LONGER THAN ONE YEAR.**

## VARIATIONS



### REDUCED

One input focused on a specific day of the course (Full moon, Solstice, Equinox, Eclipse..). A session connected to the current cosmic moment can follow.



### EXTENDED

Next to the morning news there can be evening stargazing sessions (optional) focused more on stars and galaxies, their movements and changes.



### ONLINE

Twenty minute session with a video and some interesting facts about the current situation in the Solar system.

## POSSIBLE TRAPS

It can be boring and repetitive if the inputs are too long, if no interactive elements are included, or if a flavour of passion is missing. Too much passion can kill it as well, therefore choose the amount and length carefully.

# COUNCIL

*Social practice to be heard and seen, listen and see others and self in the context of an authentic, ancient and modern group process.*

## BENEFITS

Offers a process of group learning and social integration in variations of a universally familiar format. Has simple guidelines and invites a pace and depth that is inclusive and transparent – People sit around in a circle, attribute a center, agree basic intentions, using a talking / listening piece and conduct attention to witness, attend and facilitate a learning, a support and a wisdom inherently present within the participants, space and time allotted.

## EXAMPLE

At the beginning of the course, even daily as a short check-in if necessary, we would meet, hear our more personal self which included our hopes and dreams, our feelings and responses to current situations. By so doing, a necessary bonding took place, listening to the stories that deepened trust and allowed each to reveal more of themselves, not normally given space for in more driven collaborations.

**COUNCIL WAS USED AS A CENTRAL PRACTICE FOR GOVERNANCE  
IN THE IROQUOIS CONFEDERACY, AN 800-YR OLD CONSTITUTION  
WITHIN A LEAGUE OF SIX NATIVE AMERICAN NATIONS.**

**IT WAS ADOPTED BY THOMAS JEFFERSON  
IN PART FOR THE U.S. CONSTITUTION.**

## VARIATIONS



### REDUCED

A short daily check-in. Can be a non-verbal round of sound and movement that expresses how each feels, or a minute each of speaking etc.



### EXTENDED

Longer session at the start of a training or course, middle and end to review how things are going, if everyone is present and in a good relation with events and each other.



### ONLINE

As above, that can also include the use of break-out rooms for smaller groups to share longer stories, and then return to a large circle with highlights, pearls and anything else the group really needs to hear.

## POSSIBLE TRAPS

The guidelines are simple, yet need to be clearly held and gently reminded – people may talk too long and energy fails, there is talk '*about*' something rather than telling a story (a personal experience), giving a clear example and or getting to the point. Play a game first, before sitting, keep it light and not too long until the group is more experienced.

# DANCE WITH THE UNKNOWN

*This activity invites people to come from lying down into a standing position in twenty minutes in any way they - more correct: their bodies - want! Engaging in the activity develops embodied presence by aligning body and mind.*

## BENEFITS

The Dance with the Unknown is a playful meditation in action that can support people to be fully present plus feeling alive and awake. Additionally it invites people to let go - for a while - of habits and known concepts.

## EXAMPLE

In a course, we regularly used embodiment exercises as a methodological feature. Whenever this was the case we started getting into the body with a session of "Dance with the Unknown" as a warm-up. At the first session we introduced a few basic principles on embodiment and guided people more into the activity. Over the following times we gradually reduced our guidance to let people freely find their genuine "Dance with the Unknown".

**LET YOUR BODY BE IN THE DRIVER SEAT FROM TIME TO TIME!!**

# **VARIATIONS**

## **REDUCED**

If twenty minutes seem too daunting, it is no problem to reduce it to fifteen or no less than ten minutes.

## **CONTINUE DIRECTLY WITH THE NEXT EMBODIMENT EXERCISE (EG. THE VILLAGE)**

Best using the developed embodied presence by directly (if possible) connecting the ending position of the dances as a starting point for the next embodiment exercise. The activity, "The Village" (described on page 97), is a perfect continuation for inviting from self-perspective to a group-perspective.

## **REFLECTION**

It can of course also have a value to invite people sharing their experiences directly afterwards and reflecting what they noticed and/or surprised them.

## **FROM SITTING TO STANDING UP**

If lying down is not an option (because of the condition of the floor/ground or because it is potentially leaving people with too big a feeling of unease) you can do the exercise starting from sitting.

# **POSSIBLE TRAPS**

People unfamiliar or even uncomfortable with embodiment based activities might be bewildered or confused by this activity - therefore the introduction and guidance at the beginning is essential.

# ELEMENTAL DANCE

*Movement meditation, guided by music and facilitator. Both contemplative and dynamic practice to connect with body wisdom, inner source of inspiration and balance.*

## BENEFITS

Conscious movement bringing awareness to the body, realisation of the microcosm of our inner landscapes through the lens of five elements of the natural world; air, earth, fire, water and ether. Can help to embody a deeper understanding of our interdependence with all beings.

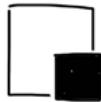
## EXAMPLE

A 90-minute guided movement meditation session that included guided explorations and exercises – to help participants ‘arrive’ in their bodies, explore and express sensations and feelings through movement, connect with others in the space and explore qualities of the five elements within. After the short meditation to arrive in the body, followed by a gradual movement, we built up through the elements, peaking with fire, ending with a gentle finish and a brief sharing circle. Before beginning, it is important to establish a safe space, giving proper introduction and clear guidance so that participants can enter the intuitive, free-form dance that allows them to express themselves freely. If possible, to dance outdoors can add to the experience.

**“THERE IS A DANCE ONLY YOU CAN DO, THAT EXISTS ONLY IN YOU, HERE AND NOW, ALWAYS CHANGING, ALWAYS TRUE. ARE YOU WILLING TO LISTEN WITH FASCINATION? IF YOU ARE, IT WILL DELIVER YOU UNTO THE SELF YOU HAVE ALWAYS DREAMED YOU COULD BE.”**

- GABRIELLE ROTH

# VARIATIONS



## REDUCED

One short session, focused on arriving in the body through mindful movement - body listening.



## EXTENDED

A (shorter) session every day - starting with an introduction to mindful movement - body listening, next five days focusing on one of the five elements, final long session combining all elements.



## ONLINE

Any variety of this session is possible to do online. It can be better supported with additional equipment, such as a good mic and two screens. It is important to ensure participants have safe space to dance in their homes, no trip hazards for example.

## POSSIBLE TRAPS

People may feel resistant to movement or dance. Many have been judged before for the way they move (which may have brought them to shut down), others may just not enjoy it. It is important to reassure participants there are no right or wrong movements, and encourage them to bring anything that is going on for them in the moment to the movement, however small or big it may be.

# EXPLORING THE FRAMEWORK OF INTEGRAL ECOLOGY

*To introduce the four quadrants of Integral Ecology.*

## BENEFITS

Integral ecology provides a framework of four quadrants, uniting multiple approaches to environmental questions. Its starting point is the understanding that purely scientific facts don't provide an overall understanding of any given ecological issue, nor do they necessarily provide motivation for action. We need to consider both the objective facts and the subjective felt experience of each individual and communities affected.

This way we include aesthetic experience, psychological dynamics, religious meaning, ethical issues, cultural values, communication and many more of the subjective reality of oneself and one community.

## EXAMPLE

Introduce the four quadrants of Integral Ecology:

- **EXPERIENCE:** the subjective, felt experience of any individual organism
- **CULTURES:** subjective experience of any collective, community
- **BEHAVIOUR:** objectively verifiable, observable reality of any individual organism
- **SYSTEMS:** objectively verifiable, observable reality of any collective, community

Invite participants to form groups of four, and leave them a few minutes to collectively find one specific environmental concern they hold and they feel passionate about. Ask the groups to each member choose one of the four perspectives as a standpoint.

Ask the groups to indicate who will speak first. Ask the first person of each group to describe the given phenomena chosen by the group, introducing the topic using the pronoun "I" and the present tense of verbs. Allow 3-4 minutes for one person from each group, then signal the time and ask

the second person to introduce the same phenomenon from his/her chosen quadrant perspective, using the pronoun "I" and the present tense. Each group takes four-times, 3-4 minutes sharing the perspectives of all four quadrants about the same phenomena.

Then allow time for the groups to share and discuss. If time allows, call people back to plenary and invite them for a reflection round on the process.

## VARIATIONS



### OUTDOORS

If you are experienced in working with art, you may choose to lead this activity outdoors. Groups can be invited to choose an actual natural phenomena/organism/object, then each person can use art tools to draw the given perspectives and then to share them with the rest of the group.



### ONLINE

Use plenary for instructions and break-out rooms for the sharing, making sure people are clear on instructions. Get everyone back for each new round, then put them back again in small groups.

## POSSIBLE TRAPS

You need to understand the four quadrants first to be able to lead the activity and to help people to comprehend the different perspectives they may choose to take.

**IT IS ALL ABOUT PERSPECTIVES - THIS ACTIVITY  
WILL SHOW A GREAT DIVERSITY ON APPROACHING  
THE SAME ISSUE FROM DIFFERENT ANGLES.**

# GENEROUS SHOP

*A physical place to let abundance flow to and from oneself.*

## BENEFITS

Starting from a simple experience of material non-attachment with the donation of a greatly valued object, opens the gate to abundance and in general, openness on a deeper level.

## EXAMPLE

When I first attended a week-long event where a Generous Shop was set up, I saw a long table decorated with a nice cloth, flowers, colourful ornaments and loving words like "Take what serves you" or "Let what you love be loved by somebody else".

The invitation was to put something on the table I owned of high value, for other people to take. This I did; a deeply loved item to let go of and live a new love story. At the same time I was invited to take freely what I needed from the table.

The table went on for the duration of the event and in that week I saw many things donated and taken.

**THE UNIVERSE WORKS ACCORDING TO THE LAW OF ENDLESS  
GIVING AND RECEIVING ∞**

# VARIATIONS



## REDUCED

There can either be a prior invitation before the event starts and before the arrival of the participants to bring a precious item for this purpose; or else, the object can be chosen from among random things that one has carried with themselves without prior notice.



## EXTENDED

There can be specific moments during the event when all participants gather in a circle to share their feelings and insights about this activity and support each other if there are some emotional issues.



## ONLINE

There can either be an online explanation of the activity and then a second session to gather impressions and feedback, or, the donation of precious non material things can happen via an online session, i.e. offering a talent, a capacity, a skill as a gift.

## POSSIBLE TRAPS

It can be necessary to support people if the process of giving becomes difficult, if there are strong emotions connected to the object that is offered.

It can also happen that people take without really listening to whether they need an item or not. It can be good to underline the importance of taking a little time to breathe and listen whether one really needs an object before choosing.

For some people, on the other hand, there might be feelings of guilt or not deserving; this can prevent them from taking. It may be necessary to support that too.

# GRATEFUL TO HAVE, TO CONNECT, TO BE

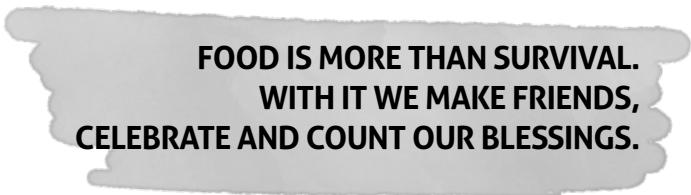
*Practice gratefulness and explore presence.*

## BENEFITS

Having a gratefulness practice in an educational event brings a moment of reflection on belonging and connection with wider society, community, nature and can help to spotlight interconnectedness.

## EXAMPLE

During our three-day project networking event, one day before lunch-break, we had a 15-20-minute guided chocolate-tasting activity. The Facilitator went around the room and offered each participant a piece of chocolate (it should be sustainable like Fair trade, vegan) and look at it as he/she would see it for the first time and not know what it is. The guiding facilitator welcomed participants to explore the piece with curiosity and by using different senses. At the end to explore also the taste and send gratefulness to all living beings who have created this piece.



**FOOD IS MORE THAN SURVIVAL.  
WITH IT WE MAKE FRIENDS,  
CELEBRATE AND COUNT OUR BLESSINGS.**

## VARIATIONS



### REDUCED

Adapt this session according to the available time. Be focused on what you say and when best to lead this activity.



### EXTENDED

Next to a specific activity, there can be common practice for all the group to meet before meals and have a moment of gratitude for what people have on the table. Can be expanded to the session about interconnectedness.



### ONLINE

Ask participants in advance to prepare for the activity by having chocolate or other products available, like tea, fruit etc.

## POSSIBLE TRAPS

If it is done just before meals people can be hungry, so choose the right length of session to have an impact but not make people lose their appetite.

# IMPACT OF MY CHOICES

*To discover impacts of our every-day choices and our interdependence with the rest of the World.*

## BENEFITS

Bringing awareness how we as humans can contribute to the well being of the World.

## EXAMPLE

Participants or trainers bring several objects that are of modern-world mass-production, such as a simple pencil, plastic bottle, t-shirt or pack of cheese; or more complicated like a mobile phone, speakers etc. The idea is for individuals or groups of people to sit with and analyze them, research and discuss; how is the product made? What are the ingredients of this product? (One can include the smallest detail, such as print on the package), What is the impact of producing this product for people, animals and nature? Is the product needed or wished for? Are there more sustainable alternatives to this creating less harm to people, animals and nature (even if nature encompasses also people and animals)?

Groups or individuals then can present their findings to the larger group, bringing forward their own dilemmas and questions. Even if this may sound like an environmental awareness exercise, it strongly brings up topics of solidarity, empathy, courage and choices that we are or are not willing to make or create. As a facilitator you can play with different dimensions and adjust it to the framework you are working with.

## VARIATIONS



### REDUCED

You can use fewer objects or questions. However depth of the analysis of the product itself may be necessary to realize how little we put attention to what the impact of our choices are.



### EXTENDED

Usually such activity may take half a day for a deeper analysis and group work. But this can be varied in respect of your own time frame.



### ONLINE

Can be worked out in groups the same way as described.

## POSSIBLE TRAPS

If participants tend to stay superficial with the analysis of the products, the whole activity may remain at that level, so to encourage participants to pay attention to little details becomes necessary to add more depth.

This exercise also may trigger some people into defending why they buy certain products or adopt certain behaviours. Reminding all that this activity is not about blaming but raising awareness of how interdependent we are and how complex the systems are around us. It is also about being able to recognize our individual and collective impact, our resistance to change, and where you can bring in the topic of privilege.

**THIS CAN BE QUITE A POWERFUL ACTIVITY  
THAT PRESENTS A CHANCE TO DIVE DEEPER  
INTO OUR OWN PERSONAL RELATION  
TO THE WORLD AROUND US  
AND TO HOW WE SEE OUR CONTRIBUTION TO IT.**

# INTERRELATIONAL MEDITATION

*To be able to connect to each other and extend individual practice to a communal practice.*

## BENEFITS

Self awareness and mindfulness exercises tend to be individual practices. This exercise will help you to bring self-awareness and mindfulness into relation with another.

## EXAMPLE

During personal development courses, people tend to put focus on their self-awareness and self-development, later having difficulty integrating internal changes in their everyday life with their family and colleagues. Thus, I like to introduce more than ten individual self-awareness practices in how participants can observe and learn a great deal about themselves as well as extend and apply such self learning into the relationship that they are creating with another person. One possibility here is to guide participants into an inter-relational meditation.

Give an option for participants to choose a partner they feel comfortable with, so that they can sit opposite at a distance that feels safe and comfortable for both. Invite everyone to close their eyes (if comfortable for them to do so) and become self-aware with the breath, observing, not judging, whatever is arising in them. After a while, invite them to open their eyes and see the partner in front of them with the same observation skill; no judgement. The cycle follows with closing eyes and deepening into self-awareness for a few minutes, then extending attention to the other. You can play with different themes; acceptance, gratitude, appreciation, love and so on. Keep in mind the aim that we support the participants to feel safe, to foster connection and create an understanding that personal change is not enough unless it is put into practices with others in the World.

## VARIATIONS



### REDUCED

Create a minute of listening fully to each other. One minute for person A, one minute for person B.



### EXTENDED

If you see it as a safe option, you can involve touch as a way of witnessing self and other, appreciating self and other.



### ONLINE

People can be divided in pairs and do the same activity.

## POSSIBLE TRAPS

Not everyone will feel comfortable and safe sitting opposite or looking into each other. Ensure to introduce how the exercise will go before asking people to get into pairs and welcome people to step back and observe the exercise if they wish to.

**IT CAN BE A TRULY BEAUTIFUL EXPERIENCE IF DONE SAFELY, EVEN WITH A LITTLE DISCOMFORT, AND CAN ALSO PRESENT A GROWTH TO SOME PARTICIPANTS. LAUGHTER MAY SOMETIMES COME AS A SIGN OF SUCH DISCOMFORT, OR A SIGN OF RELEASE. WELCOME IT ALL.**

# JOURNALING

*Get your thoughts onto paper and sort them out, later.*

## BENEFITS

Journaling is an automatic writing process that brings your thoughts onto paper without structuring them, so there are no filters. Journaling allows us to see patterns of thoughts and to identify elements that our mind may try to stop.

## EXAMPLE

I use journaling when I am in a reflective mode, after an exercise or after reading something that has put my mind to work. I take a white piece of paper or my notebook and then start putting into words the thoughts that are arising, without structuring them, without filtering and without trying to make sense of it. Actually the writing goes so fast because I try to keep up with the speed of thinking. I do not need to finish the sentences or to take care of punctuation. The only important thing is to keep the pen on the paper and to keep writing whatever comes to your mind.

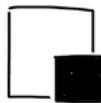
Only when the writing is complete, I then read it and start marking the words or sentences that I consider relevant.

When I use this method in training contexts I usually associate it with questions that are opening up creativity and invite imagination.

Usually the text is not used for publishing purposes, but as a tool for reflection that may feed and give birth to a more formally written text suitable for publication at a later date.

**HAVING A SPECIAL PENCIL AND A SPECIAL NOTEBOOK CAN  
MAKE THE JOURNALING MORE "PRECIOUS".**

## VARIATIONS



### REDUCED

The time is linked to the number of questions that will guide the journaling. Ensure to have around three minutes per question, not more.



### EXTENDED

There is a version using up to seventeen questions for diving into the future. So you can extend it as you wish. In this case, ensure to have a maximum of two minutes per question.



### ONLINE

It can be done online, without variations.

## POSSIBLE TRAPS

You can use this tool several times during the day or the same training event, however I will not overuse it. Remember to give time also for individual reading after the writing. Invite not to spend time writing the questions, just the number of the questions and hand out the questions afterwards.

# LABYRINTH WALK

*Building together with the group a labyrinth for individual walks. While walking to the centre of the labyrinth we are also approaching our own inner centre. Works well for introspection, inspiration, meditation or specific ritual.*

## BENEFITS

Moving our body through the labyrinth pathway creates a mirrored movement also for our inner journey. It brings authentic and fresh insights, thinking out of the box and our usual patterns. The labyrinth is an archetypal symbol, so can easily speak to people across different cultures.

## EXAMPLE

During a week-long course of deep education, we created a labyrinth out of branches and decorated it with autumn flowers. As it was 2nd November, All Souls day, we dedicated it in support of all those who are lost and in need of navigation. We walked in one by one, symbolically unwinding Ariadne's golden thread to show them direction, with a prayer for specific people or aspects. On finishing, we dissolved the labyrinth and returned the materials back to the forest.

**YOU CAN'T GET LOST IN THE LABYRINTH, IT IS NOT A MAZE.  
YOU JUST NEED TO KEEP ON GOING!**

# VARIATIONS



## REDUCED

**Meditation walk.** You enter in just following the rhythm of your own breath without a common or specific theme, open to what appears - insight, stress release, ...



## EXTENDED

Preparing personal intention for the walk  
- question to explore, celebration, rite of passage marking a life change.



## ONLINE

Letting people prepare their own labyrinth in advance, which can be a simple pattern such as a spiral. The instructions can be given online, people walk individually at the same time and then share the experience in plenary. We did this on the occasion of the Solstice celebration during quarantine, when people were not allowed to meet in person.

# POSSIBLE TRAPS

Without preparation/evocation/getting into meditative state and recalling the intention at the beginning, one can walk the path without being really present and miss the potential, take a walk as if going to the shop and back.



# MINDFUL COMMUNICATION

*Practices to strengthen capabilities for mindful communication.*

## BENEFITS

Mindful communication skills enable people to develop confidence, courage and compassion when speaking about sustainability issues with others.

## EXAMPLE

During a ten-day residential course, principles of mindful communication were introduced through a practice of empathic listening with a partner. Building up from that, a full day was dedicated to introducing Marshall Rosenberg's Nonviolent Communication (NVC). The workshop involved an exploration of the four components of NVC: making observations; expressing feelings; expressing needs; making requests. There were plenty of partner and small group exercises to explore the effectiveness of mindful communication and address some of the common barriers and challenges.

**"OUT BEYOND IDEAS OF WRONGDOING AND RIGHODOING  
THERE IS A FIELD. I WILL MEET YOU THERE."**

- RUMI

# VARIATIONS



## REDUCED

A practice of empathic listening with a partner, linked to the topic of your workshop.



## EXTENDED

Allow a full day for each of the four components with plenty of practice. Embodied learning techniques are particularly useful to help identify and manage emotions, connecting them to bodily sensations (for example anger is often experienced as a sensation of heat, tension in the body; fear as trembling etc.).



## ONLINE

A video workshop can replace an in-person experience. Participants can be assigned tasks to practice mindful communication with people around them.

# POSSIBLE TRAPS

This work can bring up personal challenges for participants, as new insights regarding conflicts in their lives emerge, stirring emotions.

# MINDFUL PRACTICES

*Practices to support bringing awareness to the present moment.*

## BENEFITS

Applying mindfulness practices into an educational context helps to create a quality of grounded presence, fostering empathy and compassion.

Mindfulness supports the cultivation of personal sustainability and connects us to the bigger picture, i.e. becoming aware of the interdependence, impacting how we respond and the choices we make on a daily basis in support of others and the planet. For example the impact of the food I'm eating on the planet or the products I'm buying on the lives' of others, etc.

## EXAMPLE

During a week-long residential course we introduced a daily mindfulness practice. Every morning we dedicated thirty minutes to share another practice, including guided sitting meditation, mindful walking, mindful movement, mindful eating or loving kindness meditation. Most of these were inspired by Plum Village tradition, as introduced by Thich Nhat Hanh. We created a safe space and encouraged the attitudes of openness, curiosity and non-judgement towards one's individual experience.

*Note: There are many teachers and practices out there, so it's important you share the ones in which you've developed a strong practice yourself.*

**"MINDFULNESS IS THE CONTINUOUS PRACTICE OF  
TOUCHING DEEPLY EVERY MOMENT OF DAILY LIFE. TO BE  
MINDFUL IS TO BE TRULY PRESENT WITH YOUR BODY AND  
YOUR MIND, TO BRING HARMONY TO YOUR INTENTIONS  
AND ACTIONS, AND TO BE IN HARMONY WITH THOSE  
AROUND YOU."**

**- THICH NHAT HANH, LOVE LETTER TO THE EARTH**

## VARIATIONS



### REDUCED

Lunch-time mindful eating practice. Or one mindfulness-related practice during the course. Guided practice might be helpful - you can find guided meditations on our [website](#).



### EXTENDED

Dedicating a full day at the beginning of the course to experience mindfulness through a variety of practices.



### ONLINE

Guided mindfulness meditations work well online. If on zoom - people may turn their cameras off to create a sense of intimacy.

## POSSIBLE TRAPS

Practicing focused awareness can be challenging for participants as we may not be used to being still, silent or focused. Some may find it boring or challenging, so make sure you have your own mindfulness/meditation practice and create safe space where people do not feel judged. While introducing the practices reassure participants that it is a common experience if they didn't practice meditation before.

Sometimes people understand meditation's goal as having 'no thoughts'. Mindfulness is about bringing awareness to what's happening, including our thoughts, not a struggle to 'empty the mind'.

# MOUNTAIN MEDITATION

*For recharging batteries and centering.*

## BENEFITS

Life not always goes as we wish, as we expect. Sometimes we feel unprepared and caught by surprise. Taking time to center ourselves is very important and provides benefit for being able to have the necessary strength to face difficult moments.

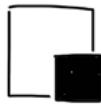
## EXAMPLE

I practice this meditation every time I need to strengthen myself; before a busy day perhaps, when I know that it potentially can be very full. I sit comfortably on the floor. I close my eyes and I start imagining a wonderful mountain, (my shape from a distance is like a mountain, with my head being the peak) its life and colors through the seasons and the different weather conditions. I try to feel like the mountain, stable and unchanged in its dignity throughout changes. I imagine people coming and going, making comments and still imagining the mountain unbreakable. Every time I imagine myself like the mountain, a slow sense of calmness comes to me, a sense of worth and dignity. I may go through seasons and rebellious weather in my life, yet still I can be stable and full of dignity.

At the end I let go of the image of the mountain by keeping the feeling of solidity and I get ready for what I need to do next.

**YOU CAN RECALL A MOUNTAIN YOU HAVE VISITED,  
A MOUNTAIN YOU WOULD LIKE TO VISIT  
OR A MOUNTAIN FROM YOUR FANTASY.**

## VARIATIONS



### REDUCED

You can vary the length as you wish. Once you have done it several times, bringing back to your mind the image of the mountain itself can be enough.



### EXTENDED

You can go into the details of every season: the white frozen winter, the colorful spring, the hot summer and the autumn with leaves falling all over. You can also go through the details of many weather conditions; wind, rain, sun, storm.



### ONLINE

You can also use the podcast with the recorded meditation: [innerpathways.eu/podcast/the-mountain-meditation/](https://innerpathways.eu/podcast/the-mountain-meditation/)

## POSSIBLE TRAPS

If you lead the meditation for a group, ensure that you are also in the meditation, while talking at a slow pace. If you read, do not be fast, and keep moments of silence.

# OPENING SENSORY AWARENESS

*Opening and activating our senses to become present and to perceive the world, connect to it from a different place.*

## BENEFITS

Sensory awareness offers the benefits of accessing a rarely used channel of perception, it widens the spectrum of awareness. It can enhance the sense of connection to the (natural) environment, the sense of being part of, or belonging to it. Sensory awareness slows and calms us down, inviting a wisdom to surface from a different part of oneself, additionally supporting us to become present.

## EXAMPLE

This exercise was introduced to bridge a theoretical session with the following contemplative walk in a forest where the event took place – a one-day-long outdoor training for a team of a multinational company, aimed at opening up awareness of sustainability and practicing wellness. Participants were asked to make themselves comfortable in any position and follow the journey of invitations with their eyes open or closed. During fifteen minutes, they explored the world around them with their senses, guided by various invitations related to;

- the sense of touch (the breeze on their skin, the clothes touching their bodies),
- smell and taste (sniffing, deep breaths and breathing through mouth),
- hearing (loud and quiet sounds, including one's own breathing as part of the forest soundscape),
- and the sense of direction (sensing the world turning bit by bit).

On opening their eyes they could experiment with their peripheral vision.

**TRY IT IN THE DARK!**

## VARIATIONS



### REDUCED

Once participants are familiar with the exercise, it can become a regular part of the training to offer a few minutes for them to open their senses.



### EXTENDED

If appropriate, participants can be encouraged to keep their sensory awareness awakened during any following session(s), and can be combined with exercises aimed at slowing down.



### ONLINE

The guided exercise may work online live if the participants are already connected to the call from a natural environment and there is a strong technical background. It is safer however to record the guided exercise beforehand and send it to the participants so that they can either become familiar with it for the session, or they can listen to the recording during the session and return online afterwards.

## POSSIBLE TRAPS

One will need to know the target group well enough to offer this in a safe way. It can be scary for some people to close their eyes in front of others or bring awkward and uncomfortable feelings to do this exercise. Better to place it in the training when there is already trust built up in the group. Choose words and length well!

# PILGRIMAGE

*Walk in a landscape with a specific personal or group intention - as a spiritual practice, way of personal development, artistic expression or activism. You can combine all these in education.*

## BENEFITS

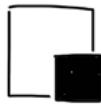
A Pilgrim steps into the unknown and dives into contemplation and dialog with the surrounding environment. The physical effort and rhythm of walking bring him or her into a changed state of consciousness; with the body movement, things start to move also inside.

## EXAMPLE

We did a two-week long pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela with a group of twenty youngsters who had grown up in an orphanage or a family with addictions. It was a rite of passage, stepping from childhood to adulthood. We walked as a group, and for the last three days to reach Santiago, we divided for a solo walk. We spent two more days together to share and integrate the experience. Next to the powerful inner journey, the experience of overcoming all the challenges on the way, not giving up and taking care of myself and of others on a practical level was very empowering. A symbolic test of independent life, handling freedom and responsibility.

**IN 1993 CZECH ARTIST FRANTIŠEK SKÁLA WALKED 850 KM FROM PRAGUE TO VENICE TO REPRESENT CZECHIA AT THE 45TH VENICE BIENNALE. HE EXHIBITED DRAWINGS, OBJECTS AND DIARIES FROM THIS JOURNEY.**

## VARIATIONS



### REDUCED

Half-day walk at the end of a training course - to integrate the experience and find ideas how to use it back home for my community. Great is to climb a mountain - the overview on the landscape supports also the overview on the topics and outcomes.



### EXTENDED

Several months pilgrimage to express solidarity with people in a war area, connected with events for local communities along the way.



### ONLINE

Pilgrimage can be done even at home - walking in a circular way around something, there and back in line, randomly... This can be introduced online and later there can be space for sharing. Another way can be recording guidelines for pilgrimage, which can be listened to on the way or guiding people through phone, when they are in nature.

## POSSIBLE TRAPS

To guide a person or group on a pilgrimage requires not only facilitators skills, but also good logistical preparation - Where do you go? Where do you sleep? What do you eat? It is important to take into consideration who you are walking with and what you want to do on the way so that you choose the proper level of challenge in length and ambition of the route.

# SELF-COMPASSION PRACTICES

*To foster self-connection, acceptance and compassion while being in a group.*

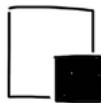
## BENEFITS

It gets tricky to be learning together with people for prolonged periods of time. Self-judgements and self-criticism emerge and personal self-care time tends to be reduced, people can get triggered by ordinary things. Invite them into simple practices that bring back not only self awareness, but also kindness and gentleness towards self.

## EXAMPLE

Self-compassion practices may be introduced as mini breaks or a full session where participants dedicate their time, thoughts and effort to take care of their bodies and minds in a compassionate manner. Some examples would be; inviting participants to close their eyes, focus their minds on finding three things to feel grateful about in themselves; sending loving thoughts to their bodies; repeating certain phrases like the ho'oponopono mantra to self, "I love you. I am sorry. Please forgive me." or the Buddhist metta (loving kindness) meditation sending loving thoughts to self, "May I be happy. May I be healthy. May I be free from suffering." Self-compassion can also be an invitation to give oneself a light face, scalp or shoulder massage, or a walk where one appreciates all senses and abilities to walk, to be, to see, to experience. Even five minutes spent journaling all about the things that are flowing inside. All practices intended to assist kind self-connection, so that you can move forward as a group with a more centered and compassion-filled presence.

## VARIATIONS



### REDUCED

You can choose a single activity that lasts for a minute.



### EXTENDED

You can create a series of exercises that encompass meditation, moving and writing.



### ONLINE

You can create self-compassion mini breaks which participants take off the screen to connect to themselves.

## POSSIBLE TRAPS

Compassion is a word that people may not relate to very well, so you can also present this as self-care practice and level and adjust the practice to your group.

**HAVING PRACTICED SELF-COMPASSION  
MINI BREAKS FOR SEVERAL DAYS,  
PARTICIPANTS MAY ALREADY NOTICE  
SOME BENEFITS.  
AND THERE IS A GREATER CHANCE  
THAT WHAT BEGINS BEING PRACTICED  
DURING THE COURSE,  
WILL BECOME A HOME PRACTICE FOR MANY.**

# SOUNDSCAPE LISTENING

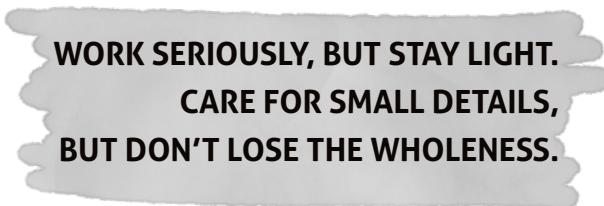
*Discover the link of environmental sound and internal resonance of body and mind.*

## BENEFITS

Deep listening to everyday sounds builds a strong link in the body and mind to the present moment. It is a useful and accessible tool of (self-)training awareness.

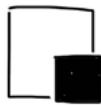
## EXAMPLE

With a group of participants we went out for a listening soundwalk. We were in a group, but kept silent, focusing on sounds around us, with the only task - to memorise sounds in a sequence. We made a half an hour loop in the park. Returning back, everyone was asked to draw a soundmap of the walk. After fifteen minutes we had individual presentations of each map. Though we all walked in a group and were exposed to the same sounds, none of the maps were the same!



**WORK SERIOUSLY, BUT STAY LIGHT.  
CARE FOR SMALL DETAILS,  
BUT DON'T LOSE THE WHOLENESS.**

## VARIATIONS



### REDUCED

Listen to 5-10 minutes recording of nature or city, (but not music) and ask students to describe particular sounds they have heard.



### EXTENDED

Make a few listening sessions in different locations. Stand silently in a circle and listen for 5-10 minutes, no talking during, after or between listennings. Then go for a soundwalk. After presenting soundmaps let people share experiences.



### ONLINE

Playback three recordings of environments (not music), 5 min each, short fade outs between. Choose different recordings that are not alike. Ask participants to make keyword notes on each recording during listening. Afterward, ask each to present what he / she heard, based on notes - 3 minutes each.

## POSSIBLE TRAPS

Choose environments and recordings very carefully - those should be neither basic nor too extraordinary. It should not be boring, or too fun - find balance.

# THE STUCK EXERCISE

*The Stuck exercise is a method in the Social Presencing Theater approach. It invites a person to embody a challenging, problematic situation currently in their life, where they feel stuck - nothing traumatic but with a "Stuck" quality. This is enacted firstly in a body sculpture representing the stuck-situation. In a second step the person initiates from the sculpture and allows a movement to emerge guided by the body (not the mind!) into a second posture that feels less "stuck".*

## BENEFITS

The exercise allows individuals to learn more about a current problematic situation in their life where they feel stuck. Using body intelligence rather than thinking about the situation allows new perspectives or even glimpses of a path into a saner, less stuck future to appear. All of this without a need to talk about the situation itself!

## EXAMPLE

In a course for teachers we used the exercise to work on challenging classroom situations. We invited them to think of a situation that regularly occurs in their classroom and which makes them feel stuck. The advantage was that they did not need to talk about the situation in front of the other teachers but could get insights on a somatic level. Additionally we let them show their body sculptures, 1 and 2 in smaller groups - the witnesses then could share what they noticed and/or how it made them feel; strictly no interpretations are wanted. At the end we invited them to share in the small groups what surprised them, aspects of what they had learnt about the situations if they wished.

**EMOTION CONTAINS "MOTION"!**

# **VARIATIONS**

## **GROUP STUCK**

Starting from the consideration that almost all stuck situations involve other people, directly or indirectly, you can form a “systemic stuck”. The person embodying the stuck can ask others in the group to enter into the sculpture 1 with them and represent a certain force in the situation by taking a certain position in relation with and to the protagonist. There is no discussion about who this is or the situation - just an embodiment of the position the protagonist asks of them. This can include up to three or four others. Once all are in their positions, there is a group sculpture (1) of the situation - the whole system then of the 4-5 people begins to move into an emerging sculpture (2), a healthier, less stuck version of the situation.

## **POSSIBLE TRAPS**

People sometimes have difficulties to let go of their cognitive concepts about a situation, and “represent” the concept rather than tapping into body intelligence.

# THE VILLAGE

*This activity is a central method in the Social Presencing Theater approach. It is both simple and profound at the same time. The Village invites a group of people to be together in an open but defined space – “The central square of the village of this group of people”.*

*For twenty minutes the group convenes without a task or an aim, but with a reduced “vocabulary” of actions; standing, sitting, lying, walking, turning, all without speaking. The overall aim is to bring embodied presence to a group, in discovery through the body, of aspects of the invisible, sensorial field in between them.*

## BENEFITS

One very clear benefit is the potential to shed light on a group dynamic. Patterns of interaction, modes of contributing, dynamics of initiating and following, aspects of inclusion and exclusion and many other constellations can become visible and demonstrated.

## EXAMPLE

In a five-day training of trainers on teamwork, we included a village exercise daily. Firstly, it became evident to the group how the changing dynamic between them reflected back through the variety of each village from day to day. Secondly, on individual as well as group level, it was a great source for our learning and awareness in set patterns of contributions, fixed concepts of how a team shows up, action and observing, or the sensing quality of center and periphery.

We warmed up before each village with an exercise supporting people with getting into their bodies - we used the Dance with the Unknown coming from the same approach. We always ended with a differing form of reflection in the questions we posed and in the group size.

**THERE IS INTELLIGENCE IN THE BODY.**

# VARIATIONS



## REDUCED

It is possible to reduce the duration of The Village to fifteen or 10 minutes (not less).

## THEME OF THE VILLAGE

If it fits into your context you can give a theme to the Village and perhaps even include an object that represents the theme in the village.

## GREETING

It is possible to include the element of "Greeting" into the vocabulary of the village - in the special form of traditional "Japanese" style (looking into the eyes, bowing, looking again into eyes). Better not to include it in the first village.

## POSSIBLE TRAPS

People unfamiliar or even uncomfortable with embodiment based activities might be bewildered or confused by this activity - therefore the introduction and simple warming up body exercises at the beginning are essential.

# THRESHOLD WALK

*Using the mirror of nature to get a deeper understanding, insights about a question the participant would like to explore.*

## BENEFITS

Spending a certain amount of time alone outside in nature with a question or an intention, slowing down and paying attention to the reflections that emerge from nature during this contemplative journey offers the possibility of accessing one's own wisdom, insights and answers. Sharing the story with a community and having it reflected back by others can offer more perspectives on the experience, strengthening trust and the sense of belonging to the community. It also evokes the feeling of being connected to nature.

## EXAMPLE

The participants sat down in a circle and each of them shared stories related to the topic they wanted to explore, ending the sharing with a clear question or intention to go out with. Then one by one they left, stepping through a symbolic threshold they built or found to mark the start of the journey. They were asked to rely more on their body and senses in choosing what to do or where to go, to hold an awareness of the things that happened during the walk and to let the question itself go. They were invited to leave all distractions behind and not to interact with each other. They returned after an hour through the same threshold, sat down in the circle again and shared what happened to them one by one. Each of them had seven minutes, which also included mirroring; reflections by the facilitators or the whole group if they wanted.

**AS WITHIN SO WITHOUT.**

## VARIATIONS



### REDUCED

The threshold walk can happen without the circle of sharing before participants go out, as long as they have some time to tune in to their intentions or question and have clear guidelines on what to do. Bringing back and sharing the stories is important though.

Mirroring/reflections are an extra, to be seen and heard (to share the stories) may be enough depending on the circumstances, aims and experience of the leaders of the group. The sharings after the walk can also happen in pairs.



### EXTENDED

To inspire the capture of metaphors during the walk, a short exercise in pairs can be offered beforehand. The pair walks together outside, one looking for things that capture his/her attention. Once the person finds something the other asks, "What can you see?" Once the question is answered the next question to ask is, "What does it mean to you?" Continue with exploring further, and with the questions for a certain amount of time then change roles.



### ONLINE

The sharings before and after the walk can be done online. Make sure to have clear agreements on how to hand over the talking peace or show the intention to speak.

## POSSIBLE TRAPS

It is important that mirroring or reflections don't contain judgements, advice or explanations, and that they simply offer back from the content of what has been shared. It is advisable to only offer mirroring with at least some experience in it. The support is in letting the participants discover their answers, find their insights from their own wisdom, as simply sharing the story can be just as valuable as with the reflection.

# WELLNESS INVENTORY

*A tool for self-reflection, to check-in with ourselves on how well we are actually doing.*

## BENEFITS

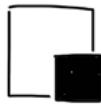
Inviting participants into personal reflection on their own well-being is a way to bring into awareness their own life-context and to become aware of the connection between inner and outer sustainability.

## EXAMPLE

To give a full spectrum insight into wellness, we used the Wellness Inventory assessment from John Travis on the second day of a residential training course. It contained twelve dimensions and ten questions/statements related to healthy living in a given topic. For example: "I am able to say "no" without feeling guilty.", "I have at least five close friends." (dimension communication). Participants evaluated their current state on a scale 0-4 according to how true was the statement in that given moment of their life. After filling the assessment, participants partnered up into couples and discussed their final wellness wheels, its meaning and their new understanding of wellness.

**IF YOU LET YOUR WELLNESS WHEEL RUN DOWN THE HILL,  
IT SHOULD BE ROLLING, NOT JUMPING.  
THAT'S CALLED "BALANCE IN ALL DIMENSIONS".**

## VARIATIONS



### REDUCED

A guided introduction to each wellness dimension where participants scale their well-being (how satisfied they are in the given topic) without reading the specific statements.



### EXTENDED

The group creates their own set of questions/statement related to wellness in chosen dimensions.



### ONLINE

The self-assessment can be done individually online or pen/paper.

## POSSIBLE TRAPS

Participants might not expect to get so personally involved in the topic, yet the reflections can open up some sensitive issues and the whole process with twelve dimensions can be quite time-consuming. It is good that the facilitators team undergoes the inventory themselves prior to the session, so they have personal experience with the process.

# WELLNESS SPIN

*An activity to support personal reflection and deeper understanding of a specific experience.*

## BENEFITS

The wellness spin gives a chance to perceive a given situation from the “wellness perspective”, or better said from the perspective of all wellness dimensions. It gives a great chance to experience the holistic aspect of a problem or situation.

## EXAMPLE

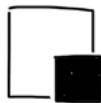
At the end of a residential training, we created a station with twelve wellness dimensions in a circle. The participants were invited to step into the center of the circle with a specific question/experience/stressor. While facing one dimension after another, they could reflect on questions :

- 1) How XX influences my “breathing”?
- 2) How can my “breathing” influence XX?

Like this they visit all twelve wellness topics or can stay longer with the few that call their attention and give them deeper answers.

**SIDE-EFFECTS MAY INCLUDE SWEATING,  
EUPHORIA AND GENERAL AWESOMENESS.**

## VARIATIONS



### REDUCED

Take a guided Wellness Inventory, where a facilitator reads the questions and times thirty seconds for writing down the very first thoughts that run through participants' minds.



### EXTENDED

The group can do a wellness spin about a shared situation or topic and brainstorm their answers together.



### ONLINE

The self-assessment can be done individually online or pen/paper.

## POSSIBLE TRAPS

Participants might not expect to get so personally involved in the topic, yet the reflections can open up some sensitive issues and the whole process with twelve dimensions can be quite time-consuming. It is good that the facilitators team undergoes the inventory themselves prior to the session, so they have personal experience with the process.

# WELLNESS WALK

A *nature-based intro to wellness dimensions.*

## BENEFITS

Introduction to the wellness dimensions (or any holistic and multidimensional concept you work with) helps participants better understand the context of the learning program or activity, and gives them the chance to reflect on their interconnectedness.

## EXAMPLE

On the first day of a longer residential course, we invite participants for a walk in nature. With the intention to introduce twelve dimensions of wellness (from Wellness Workbook by John W. Travis and Regina S. Ryan), there were twelve stops prepared on our path. On each stop, the trainer briefly introduced the basic principles of each dimension and explained a practical activity or a reflective topic for the walk until the next stop. For example: "Breathe in the rhythm of your own steps. (dimension Breathing)" or, "For your next steps, use the most silly walking style that comes to your mind (dimension Moving - sponsored by the Ministry of Silly Walk)." For our stations we just used the natural context where the whole group gathered - stone, fallen tree or creek etc. The last station related to dimension Transcendence was located in a cave from where participants walked back to the venue on their own or in couples - having the chance to remember and discuss the twelve dimensions.

**"THE CURRENCY OF WELLNESS IS CONNECTION"**

- JOHN W. TRAVIS

## VARIATIONS



### REDUCED

A group standing in a circle, after a brief intro to each dimension the group walks around the circle with a reflective question to ponder on.



### EXTENDED

The stations can also be self-manageable with texts to read and activities and/or reflective questions to experiment with, and as such can be available to participants at any time during a residential training.



### ONLINE

A ninety-minute session with theoretical inputs from trainers and several reflection times, group discussions or practical activities.

## POSSIBLE TRAPS

It requires some deeper understanding of the model introduced, so that the dimensions are smoothly connected to each other. Practical activities are fun, but for the bliss, participants can miss the larger point of view, so it's good to accompany this practical walk with some printed handouts, if knowledge of the model is needed for future work.

# WHEEL OF THE YEAR CELEBRATION

*Ritual celebration of the eight seasonal feasts of the annual cycle.*

## BENEFITS

Connecting to the energy and traditions of these eight points of the year can be a powerful grounding, healing and balancing practice for the self. It can strengthen the sense of community if celebrated collectively, and can create a deeper sense of unity and bond with the natural cycles.

## EXAMPLE

The eight festivals are connected to the main solar events (solstices and equinoxes) and the midpoints between them. In every tradition and many parts of the world they consist of symbolic acts, foods, rituals, stories, medicines that characterize the time of the year to which they refer.

For Oestara, for instance, the symbol of eggs and seeds is really common.

For Litha fires and flowers are always present, and so on. This is an invitation to explore and learn how in your own place and culture these events are and have been celebrated over time. Syncretism is possible too.

**ONCE YOU GET USED TO THESE CELEBRATIONS  
YOU MIGHT NOT WANT TO DO WITHOUT THEM ANYMORE!**

# VARIATIONS



## REDUCED

It can be a very private, intimate, one-person celebration consisting of a single, simple act or prayer.



## EXTENDED

It can be a circle of a dozen people, with an altar and exchanged gifts and shared rituals, or even a big festival. It can be celebrated in an indoor urban environment or in remote natural places in contact with the natural elements.

There can be a thread woven throughout the whole year, if the group is a permanent one (journaling, visual documentation, art creation...)



## ONLINE

The celebrations can happen during an online conference, enriched by hints and traditions from many different places of the world.

## POSSIBLE TRAPS

The ceremony can be carefully planned in order to avoid boring and lengthy explicative moments. Paying attention to creating a dynamic rhythm, symbols and simple acts with interactive elements; these are effective and involve all kinds of people, sometimes more than a long meditation.

It is good to make it sacred and ceremonial, yet at the same time it can lose meaning if it is mainly focused on formal aspects.

Choose the amount and length carefully.

# WIDENING CIRCLES

*A Work That Reconnects activity to experience a shift In perspectives.*

## BENEFITS

Bringing the cosmic perspective repeatedly into awareness puts your education event into a wider context and can help the reflection about relevance and sustainability of people's plans and actions.

## EXAMPLE

Participants sit in groups of four, facing each other. The facilitator asks them to bring to mind a global/local issue they feel really concerned about looking at the state of the Earth; a problem that concerns them, allowing a moment of silence.

After the time allowed for thinking, one from each group describes his/her topic taking a few minutes. Invite them to talk about the issue from their own experience and point of view, including their feelings, using the pronoun "I", and in the present tense. Signal when time is up with a bell, repeat instructions to the second person from each group. Repeat this for the 3rd and 4th person from each group.

- After the last person has shared, introduce the second round. In this round they will speak about the same issue, still talking from first person, mentioning their feelings, but now putting themselves into the shoes of someone else: as from the perspective of a person whose views on the issue are very different, even adversarial, introducing themselves and speaking as this person, including their feelings, using the pronoun "I" and the present tense of verbs.
- Follow the same form in the third round, this time inviting people to speak from the viewpoint of a non-human being that may be impacted by how we deal with the issue; including their feelings, using the pronoun "I" and in the present tense. This may be a plant, an animal, a rock, a landscape or an object.

The facilitator announces each perspective when the time comes in the exercise, rather than all of them at once, and instead of posting all of them where they can be seen. The perspectives are repeated in the same sequence for each of the following speakers. It is best to allow two-three minutes for each perspective. Signal the time with a verbal cue (“take another moment to finish”) and then with a bell or chime to end that step. Allow for silence between each step and after each person finishes.

- At the conclusion, allow time for people to share in their small groups what they felt and learned. If the size of the whole group is large, and time permits, you may wish to invite brief reports from volunteers.

## VARIATIONS



### EXTENDED

If time allows you may want to include an extra round, inviting people to talk about the same issue, in the voice of a future human whose life will be directly affected by the choices and actions we take now on the issue, including their feelings, using the pronoun “I” and the present tense of verbs.



### ONLINE

Use plenary for instructions and break-out rooms for the sharing, making sure people are clear on instructions. Get everyone back for each new round, then put them back again in small groups.

## POSSIBLE TRAPS

It can be long and complex to lead this activity online with many potential technical faults in between each round.

**THIS MAY BE THE FIRST TIME PEOPLE EXPERIENCE GETTING INTO THE SKIN OF SOMEONE ELSE AS DIFFERENT AS A NATURE ELEMENTAL OR A PIECE OF CAKE.**

# WORK THAT RECONNECTS

*Experiential group work to connect with emotions that arise in response to sustainability challenges and other global crises, building inner resilience, courage and active hope.*

## BENEFITS

An antidote to burnout and despair. Connecting to how we feel and witnessing or being witnessed by others is a powerful experience, allowing development for new perspectives, understanding of our unique contributions and releasing fresh energy to act.

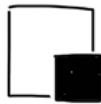
## EXAMPLE

A full day workshop in Joanna Macy's Work that Reconnects (WTR) was offered to environmental activists in London after a wave of demonstrations. The workshop followed the four parts of the WTR spiral: beginning with gratitude for the precious gift of life on Earth; followed by exploring and honouring our pain for the world; developing new insights and perspectives through practices focusing on "Seeing with New Eyes"; and ending with making plans and setting intentions for the future.

**"THE SORROW, GRIEF, AND RAGE YOU FEEL IS A MEASURE OF YOUR HUMANITY AND YOUR EVOLUTIONARY MATURITY. AS YOUR HEART BREAKS OPEN THERE WILL BE ROOM FOR THE WORLD TO HEAL."**

- JOANNA MACY

## VARIATIONS



### REDUCED

Pick one or several practices suited to your particular event. Many of the gratitude practices work particularly well as ice-breakers and can be incorporated into other sustainability-related training.



### EXTENDED

To go deeper, allow one day for each element of the WTR spiral.



### ONLINE

Some of the practices can be adapted to online settings with the use of Zoom or similar platforms.

## POSSIBLE TRAPS

This work is likely to trigger the release of difficult emotions, so make sure appropriate support is offered. Avoid using “Honouring the Pain” as standalone practices: they can be too heavy if not accompanied by other elements of the spiral.

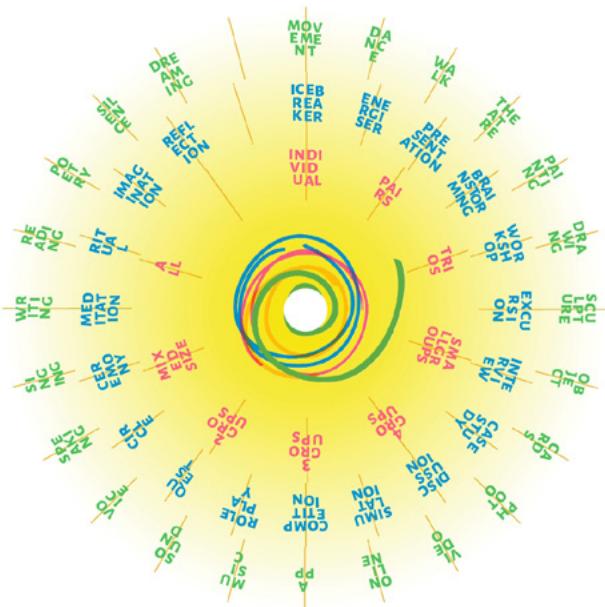
# MODUS MANDALA

## A CREATIVE TOOL WHICH COMBINES METHODS, TECHNIQUES AND FORMS OF EDUCATION IN A PLAYFUL WAY.

This part of our toolbox works with three elements of educational activities which can be combined into various settings. It can also show possible creative solutions, blindspots, break usual patterns or challenge classical clichés. Methods (role play, reflection, brainstorming, etc.), techniques (dance, video, cards, etc.) and forms (individual, pairs, small groups, etc.) can be connected in different ways. If two are given, a third can be found. More techniques can be selected for use in one method. A very unusual experimental combination can bring some inspiration. In every part there is a free slot where you can add your own aspect or use it for imagination - to create a perfect match.

The mandala was produced in a limited number and is for now only distributed to the networks of partner organisations of the project. Similar to the practices, the mandala is an example of how to invite a playful aspect into preparing your course, workshop or a session.

You are encouraged to use your way of combining the right ingredients for the education meals you offer to your participants.



Check it out here: [innerpathways.eu/mandala/](http://innerpathways.eu/mandala/)

# 4.3

## FORETELLING DICE

### AN INTUITIVE TOOL TO SHOW YOU A NEW PERSPECTIVE, HINT OR DIRECTION.

This set of three dice is intended to bring a spark of magic, intuition, coincidence or synchronicity to your practice. Senses, elements and directions are the areas which you can play with. Throwing one, two or all three dice is possible. The number of answers is endless and they depend on your questions. Touch - Earth - Back / Listen - Air - Inside / Fire - Forward / Flow.

The dice were produced in a limited number and are for now only distributed to the networks of partner organisations of the project. We again invite you to use any similar tool of your preference or to create your own divination technique to experiment with and to boost your imagination.

Check it out here: [innerpathways.eu/dice/](http://innerpathways.eu/dice/)



# APPENDIX

# I. DEFINITIONS

To define something creates a clear boundary between one thing and another. In language, there may often be made interpretations that vary from one interpreter (person) to another; one person's idea of 'inner' may be really quite different from another's, so here we add key definitions that we as Inner Pathways agree on to support the reader to know what we mean.

## **DEFINITION**

The state of being clearly outlined, given clear meaning for the purposes of any given focus.

## **FACILITATE**

To make easy or easier. To lead in some way, as by asking questions, mediating between opposing viewpoints, or ensuring that all participants' views are heard.

## **INNER**

Relating to the mind, perceptions, feelings, soul or spirit. What is inside or internal. Not visible or tangible in material terms.

## **PATHWAY**

A route, access or way to reach, achieve something. A sequence of experiences or learnings that are related toward an outcome, or destination.

## **SUSTAINABILITY**

A development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. The ability to continue indefinitely or for an agreed length of time, without detriment to existing or optimum conditions (ecology).

## **ECOLOGY**

The relationship between organisms and their environment.

# **ENVIRONMENT**

The total external (to me) conditions, surroundings, influences and forces.

# **REGENERATION**

In biology, regeneration is the process of renewal, restoration, and growth that makes genomes, cells, organisms, and ecosystems resilient to natural fluctuations or events that cause disturbance or damage.

# **REGENERATIVE**

Having the effect of making something resilient and strong again.

# **REGENERATIVE CULTURE**

There is a spectrum of definitions for the term 'regenerative culture'. We use –

Regeneration is the ability of a culture to nurture and renew healthy ecosystems, which is the source of wellbeing – It can be comprehended as a step 'beyond' sustainability... an antidote for exploitation and degenerative culture... or putting a little bit more in than we take out!

We understand Regenerative Culture as a worldview, "a new way of relating to self, community and to life as a whole," that creates conditions where all life can thrive.

Based on the story of interbeing<sup>2</sup> - interdependency of all - the principle that humans are not separate from nature, it offers a framework based on natural principles to develop our own approach to practicing a regenerative way of being.

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1 "Designing Regenerative Cultures" by Daniel Christian Wahl

2 See Charles Eisenstein "The more beautiful world our hearts know is possible"

## II. RESOURCES

In this part you can find brief descriptions and references to practices, methods, concepts and authors, leaders, teachers that inspired us in our Inner Pathways.

### **INTEGRAL ECOLOGY**

A comprehensive approach to the complex planetary issues based on Ken Wilber's integral theory. The approach is elaborated by Sean Esbjörn-Hargens and Michael E. Zimmerman in their book Integral Ecology: Uniting Multiple Perspectives on the Natural World.

<https://integrallife.com/integral-ecology-uniting-multiple-perspectives-natural-world/>

### **MEDICINE WHEEL**

A map of wholeness originating from ancient times across the world. 'Medicine Wheel' was a term used by anthropologists who interpreted Native American culture and applied this to the ceremony they witnessed. Based on four cardinal directions, used for guidance, healing, other ceremonial purposes and or as a metaphor for a journey through a designated time.

### **MINDFULNESS**

Mindfulness as a practice has a history of more than 2500 years and can be found in one way or another in all major religions. The most influential source for today's practice and understanding of mindfulness can be found in Buddhism. The secular movement around it started in the 1970's with the work of Jon Kabat-Zinn.

The most widely-spread definitions are:

1. Guy Armstrong: "To know what one is experiencing while experiencing it."
2. Jon Kabat-Zinn: "The awareness that emerges through paying attention on purpose, in the present moment, and nonjudgmentally to the unfolding of experience moment by moment."

3. Shinzen Young: He talks about three dimensions of mindfulness - Focus/ Concentration on a chosen object with intention; Clarity about the true nature of this object in its details; Equanimity – an attitude of openness and acceptance towards the experience one has while focusing on an object.

[www.mindfulnessandsocialchange.org](http://www.mindfulnessandsocialchange.org)

## **SIT SPOT**

A core routine of deep nature connection. It is a practice of getting to know a place really well by regularly spending time there, tuning our senses with the plants, animals and other natural elements, observing them.

<https://innerpathways.eu/podcast/sitspot/>

Jon Young: What the Robin Knows: How the Birds Reveal the Secrets of the Natural World.

## **SOCIAL PRESENCING THEATRE**

An embodiment approach connected to Theory U with the intention to bring new insights, perspectives and awareness to social realities through our bodies.

[www.presencing.org/aboutus/spt](http://www.presencing.org/aboutus/spt)

## **WAY OF COUNCIL**

Council is an ancient and modern practice of speaking and listening from the heart, conducting attention to the present moment and the wisdom of the collective. "Way of Council" is a particular thread which originates from Ojai California, as a synthesis of gifted teachings from indigenous elders and leading edge thinkers more than thirty-five years ago.

[waysofcouncil.net](http://waysofcouncil.net)

## **XR, EXTINCTION REBELLION (ABBREVIATED AS XR)**

A decentralised, international and politically non-partisan movement using non-violent direct action and civil disobedience to persuade governments to act justly on the Climate and Ecological Emergency.

[rebellion.global](http://rebellion.global)

## **CHARLES EISENSTEIN**

An American public speaker and author. According to Eisenstein, global culture is immersed in a destructive “story of separation”, and one of the main goals of his work is to present an alternative “story of interbeing”.

[charleseisenstein.org](http://charleseisenstein.org)

## **JOANNA MACY**

Author and teacher, a scholar of buddhism, systems thinking and deep ecology. Initiator of the Work That Reconnects, a group work designed to foster the desire and ability to take part in the healing of our world.

[www.joannamacy.net](http://www.joannamacy.net)

## **THICH NHAT HANH**

A Vietnamese Buddhist monk, peace activist, and founder of the Plum Village Tradition. He coined the term “interbeing” - to inter-dependently co-exist, recognising the dependence of any one person or thing as to all other people and objects.

[www.plumvillage.org](http://www.plumvillage.org)

## **ALEX NUNN**

Head, Movement Building at Action for Happiness, a contributor to Regenerative Culture in Extinction Rebellion and a Regional Community Builder in the Earth Holder Network. <https://innerpathways.eu/podcast/regenerative-culture-interview-with-alex-nunn/>

[@alexflxnun](https://twitter.com/alexflxnun)

## **OTTO SCHARMER**

Senior Lecturer in the MIT Management Sloan School and co-founder of the Presencing Institute. He is co-author of Leading from the Emerging Future, which outlines eight acupuncture points for transforming capitalism. His most recent book, The Essentials of Theory U, summarizes the core principles and applications of awareness-based systems change.

[www.ottoscharmer.com](http://www.ottoscharmer.com)

## **DANIEL CHRISTIAN WAHL**

Speaker, author, activist, change agent in the transition towards diverse regenerative cultures everywhere, author of Designing Regenerative Cultures.  
[medium.com/@designforsustainability](https://medium.com/@designforsustainability)

# ABOUT THE AUTHORS

## AGI BERECZ



Agi has worked in environmental education since 2004, mainly in the fields of youth work and adult learning for sustainability. Being inspired by ecopsychology, deep ecology and the path of yoga, her interest has been shifting from the outer to the inner dimensions of personal transformation towards a life-sustaining society. She lives in a Hungarian village, teaches yoga, studies integral psychology and above all is the mother of two

young girls. The immersion to motherhood made her conscious about how becoming a mother and raising children are the foremost sources of personal transformation and connectedness to our earthy Mother. [Mother Nature](#) is a project she set up with colleagues that currently works as an international support community for mothers.

Agi is part of Pandora, in Hungary: [pandora.org.hu](http://pandora.org.hu).

## DEBORA T. STENTA



My formal education includes Degrees in Classics and MusicArtTherapy.

After quitting safe jobs as Project Manager in NGOs and other non-profit organizations, I have been a dancer/musician/artist and traveller for many years.

Motherhood brought a multi-dimensional research on everything concerning childhood: analogical thinking, wilderness, spontaneous and undisturbed processes, unlearning paths, self-led learning, spirituality, nature. At the moment I serve as doula/birth-keeper, group facilitator, consultant.

Debora is part of Casa del cuculo, in Italy: [casadelcuculo.org](http://casadelcuculo.org)

## FERNANDA PAIVA



Fernanda is a practicing astrologer with a BA in History, and is currently working on her dissertation for the MA in Cultural Astronomy and Astrology at the University of Wales Trinity Saint David.

She is passionate about nature, psychology, empowering people through the development of self-awareness and writing. Fernanda is also particularly interested in the relationship between spirituality and ecology, and how we could apply it in order to create more balance in the world now.

Fernanda is part of ASHA Centre, in the UK: [ashacentre.org](http://ashacentre.org)

## GYULA SZABÓ



Living and working as a part of a circle; this is what I am looking for myself, my community and my Planet.

After having completed degrees in Economics and History and experiencing the world of corporate communication, I now work as a green-living coach and trainer at Ökoszolgálat Alapítvány (Ecoservice Foundation).

I am a Council facilitator working with different groups of people in both business and education. I live with my family in an eco house in Budaörs, Hungary.

Gyula is part of Ecoservice foundation, in Hungary: [okoszolgalat.hu](http://okoszolgalat.hu)

## HELENA KOSKOVÁ



Trainer, nature guide and facilitator of rituals and group processes within the Natural Spirit platform. Gardening apprentice. You can often find her walking, exploring diverse forms of pilgrimage or sitting with others in circle, listening to stories and collective wisdom.

Helena is part of Čia Čekija and Natural Spirit, in Czechia:

[www.naturalspirit.cz](http://www.naturalspirit.cz)

## HONZA LÁTAL



Trainer, facilitator, ritual designer and nature guide from South Bohemia. Interested in religions, cultures, archaeology, astronomy and experimental music. His speciality is connecting nature, art and spirituality in learning.

Honza is part Čia Čekija and Natural Spirit, in Czechia:

[www.naturalspirit.cz](http://www.naturalspirit.cz)

## ILZE JECE



Ilze Jece is social change facilitator and movement and bodywork educator with years of experience in social and environmental activism. In the training courses she integrates movement, bodywork, acrobatics and various pedagogical tools to create a playful and inspiring learning process.

Ilze is part of Zāļa brīvība, in Latvia: [zalabrviba.lv](http://zalabrviba.lv)

## JANA STARÁ



Jana Stará, PhD. is a wellness promoter who has dedicated her research and teaching practice to promoting the concept of wellness in her country. She is interested in finding ways of how to develop and implement wellness programs with respect to different cultural environments and traditions in Europe. She teaches at the university, facilitates training courses and believes that better times for European wellness are yet to come.

Jana is part of Čia Čekija and Wellcome, in Czechia: [www.wellcome.cz](http://www.wellcome.cz)

## KASIA STĘPIEŃ



Kasia is a facilitator of learning processes in the fields of social change, peace education and personal transformation. She is a mindfulness practitioner, embodied learning educator and environmentalist (at heart and in action), trained in the Inner Transition through nature connection. She loves dancing in the rain, playing drums and walking in the woods.

Kasia is part of ASHA Centre, in the UK: [ashacentre.org](http://ashacentre.org)

## KRISZTINA PÁSZTOR



Trainer and facilitator of nature-based practices, passionate about holding space for groups throughout the process of outdoor transformative experiences.

Council facilitator, gardener, permaculturist, forest bathing guide, outdoor experiential trainer.

Kriszta is part of Pandora, in Hungary:

[pandora.org.hu](http://pandora.org.hu)

## PAOLA BORTINI



Through the last twenty-five years, it has been fascinating to strengthen people and organisations throughout Europe, to support them in the liminal phases of learning from and for the future, with creativity. Above all at the centre of my methodical approach is mindfulness, Theory U by Otto Scharmer (and his team from the Presenting Institute), “wilderness” nature work and pure essential oils.

Born in Italy, I have lived and worked in many countries, currently living in Austria with my family.

With many years of meditation practice, trained in Mindful Self Compassion, Mindful Based Stress Reduction, Mindful Compassionate Parenting, Insight Dialogue, the Way of Council. Certified Emotion Mentor Coach with Rebecca Linder Hintze and AromaTouch; trained in Theory U and Social Presencing Theater with Arawana Hayashi.

Paola is part of Limina, in Austria: [www.limina.at](http://www.limina.at)

## PAULINA ŁUŻECKA



Paulina is passionate about building a sustainable future, in which humanity would thrive in harmony with the rest of the planet. Over the last decade, she engaged with transitions to sustainability as a student, academic researcher, writer, educator and facilitator. In recent years, her interests have moved towards the interrelationship between inner wellbeing, community cohesion and the health of the Earth's ecosystems.

Paulina is part of ASHA Centre, in the UK: [ashacentre.org](http://ashacentre.org)

## PETER HOFMANN



With his expertise in designing and facilitating learning and dialogue spaces for small groups and teams, big groups and conferences, Peter has worked for supranational institutions as well as for many non-governmental organisations for over 15 years.

Inspired several years ago by Theory U, he began to engage in and with Mindfulness, particularly in the field of education. He is now a trained facilitator in both Mindfulness and Social Presencing Theater.

Peter is part of Limina, in Austria: [www.limina.at](http://www.limina.at)

## ROB DREAMING



Rob is an international Facilitator, Mentor and Trainer in Way of Council, 18 years leading council practice, and a SOLB trained wilderness guide, mentored by Gigi Coyle (Ojai Foundation Trainer & author of Way of Council). With over 18 years experience facilitating groups, coaching individuals, designing and running trainings in the areas of consciousness and communication, he is also a poet and has had published 4 children's books.

Rob is part of Ecoservice foundation, in Hungary: [okoszolgalat.hu](http://okoszolgalat.hu)

## SANTA KRASTINA



Santa has more than 10 years of experience in the NGO sector. She has implemented educational activities for society on sustainable, environmentally friendly ways-of-life, encouraging to take responsibility and participation for the improvement of the environment.

Santa is part of Zalā brīvība, in Latvia: [zalabriviba.lv](http://zalabriviba.lv)

## SARA GALEOTTI



Sara is a facilitator, graphic designer and a mother. She lives in a shared house with two other families in the beautiful hills of Emilia-Romagna, Italy. She loves drawing, fermenting foods and growing her garden. She works for Casa del cuculo, the 4-people-cooperative she founded in 2010 that has the same name as the house she currently lives in.

Sara is part of Casa del cuculo, in Italy:  
[casadelcuculo.org](http://casadelcuculo.org)

# ORGANIZATIONS

## THE ASHA FOUNDATION



**ASHA CENTRE**

INSPIRATION • CONNECTION • PURPOSE

The ASHA Foundation is a British educational charity working for the empowerment of young people worldwide. The ASHA Centre delivers transformative, holistic education designed to bring about lasting inner, social and environmental change, providing residential training courses and volunteering placements to young adults from around the world.

Our core belief is that unlocking the human potential and inherent goodness in young people is vital for our world today. Our mission is to create an educational environment in which young people can experience a sense of inspiration, connection and purpose.

Website: [ashacentre.org](http://ashacentre.org)

## CASA DEL CUCULO



**CASA  
DEL CUCULO**

Casa del cuculo is a cooperative based in Emilia-Romagna, Italy. It was founded in 2010 by four people who have been researching and experimenting together on the theme of community-building and social research through non-formal methods.

Website: [www.casadelcuculo.org](http://www.casadelcuculo.org)

## ČIA ČEKIJA - NATURAL SPIRIT



Since 2004 we work with young people with difficult socio-economical backgrounds, with an aim to support them in finding their place in the world, developing needed competencies. Since 2013 we also focus on youth-workers, social workers, teacher and guides. We are teaching mainly through community and nature based methods, in cooperation with the Natural Spirit platform. We are learning from old teachings from different cultures all over the world, looking for the universal essence and developing around it methods, techniques and activites, which are accessible and useful in present-day society.

Website: [www.naturalspirit.cz](http://www.naturalspirit.cz)

## THE ECOSERVICE FOUNDATION



The Ecoservice Foundation is the first green living, coaching NGO in Hungary, founded in 1991.

We offer counseling, lectures, trainings, workshops for schools, individuals, communities and companies about holistic green lifestyle change. We believe that it is important to get to know the world around us for a successful change. We need to find an inner harmony, we need to take care of our personal well-being, we need to re-connect to Nature and then come to the eco practices – how, when and what to change for our way of life.

Website: [okoszolgalat.hu/](http://okoszolgalat.hu/)

## **GREEN LIBERTY - ZAĻĀ BRĪVĪBA**



### **Zaļā brīvība**

meaningful decisions connected with their lives directly and indirectly; opposing abuses of power.

Website: [www.zalabriviba.lv](http://www.zalabriviba.lv)

## **LIMINA**



Limina supports people and organisations to learn in and from phases of transition by providing educational activities aimed at developing the liminal competences. LIMINA designs learning spaces and experiences to allow for new perspectives, pathways and opportunities to successfully engage with transition and change processes, that are often dominated by uncertainty and ambiguity. Our approach is based on 3 keywords: exploring, engaging and emerging.

Website: [www.limina.at](http://www.limina.at)

## PANDORA ASSOCIATION



ourselves, each other and the more than human world.

Website: [pandora.org.hu](http://pandora.org.hu)

Pandora Association was founded in 2012, initiated by people who had had several years of work-experience in the fields of learning for sustainability, working within the European Youth In Action Programme, and non-formal education. We are a non-profit association (NGO) operating within local contexts as well as at regional, national and European level. We focus on learning that supports the inner dimension of change, to connect with

# ABOUT THE PROJECT

## INNER PATHWAYS TOWARD SUSTAINABILITY - INNOVATIVE APPROACHES IN LEARNING FOR SUSTAINABILITY



### INNER PATHWAYS TOWARD SUSTAINABILITY

How and when does change happen in a person who begins to live mindfully on the Earth? What is the interplay of inner and outer dimensions of such transformation?

Through where leads the inner pathway toward sustainability, and what further external support is needed until this change becomes permanent and manifesting on a level of actions?

These and many other guiding questions are at the core of this project.

Inner Pathways toward Sustainability aims to closely examine concrete methods, theories and practices that involve "Heart, Head and Hands" – applications that lead to a change in a person towards a sustainable lifestyle.

### WHAT IS THE 'INNER PATHWAYS TOWARD SUSTAINABILITY' PROJECT?

An international learning partnership of seven organisations from Austria, Czechia, Latvia, Hungary, Italy and UK, coordinated by Pandora Association from Hungary. The project runs in all six countries for 27 months, and began in September 2018.

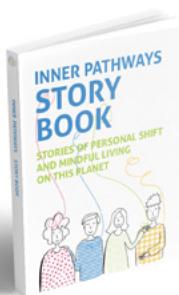
### WHO IS IT FOR?

The project is an international platform for educators, trainers, facilitators of learning for sustainability, community leaders, and anyone that would like to make a sustainable change in their environment and the world.

## **WHAT ARE WE DOING?**

We aim to bridge approaches and practices that are related to human development in the field of personal, societal and natural sustainability. We will explore and collect practices and stories that can enlighten daily actions and human behaviour, so as to create a better world both for ourselves and others.

# FURTHER INNER PATHWAYS RESOURCES



## THE INNER PATHWAYS STORY BOOK

Features stories that arose from our own inner pathways: the practices, tools and experiences that shaped us and guided us on our individual journeys. They have become our anchors and passions, often leading to significant lifestyle changes or supporting concrete actions toward a sustainable future.

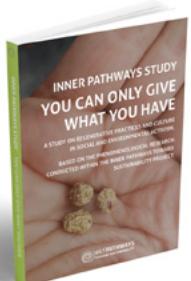
[innerpathways.eu/tools/book/](https://innerpathways.eu/tools/book/)



## THE INNER PATHWAYS PODCAST

Our series of Inner Pathways Podcasts is a joyful collection of practices, stories and reflections, carefully and lovingly put together as an accompaniment along your inner journey towards a regenerative lifestyle. Through these practices we invite you to explore your relationship with life on Earth and your inner source of action, and to respond to the current state of the world with peaceful, resilient, creative and meaningful acts, attitudes and experiences.

[innerpathways.eu/tools/podcast/](https://innerpathways.eu/tools/podcast/)



## THE INNER PATHWAYS STUDY

A study on regenerative practices and culture in social and environmental activism. Based on the phenomenological research conducted within the Inner Pathways toward Sustainability project.

[innerpathways.eu/tools/study/](https://innerpathways.eu/tools/study/)





[WWW.INNERPATHWAYS.EU](http://WWW.INNERPATHWAYS.EU)

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