

The Learning Community

McGill Summer Institute • 1993

Together we're better!

Notes from Week One

OHEN:TON KARIWENTEHKWEN

We offer our greetings...

- ...to all the people.*
- ...to the Earth, our Mother*
- ...to the waters of all the rivers, & lakes & streams*
- ...to all the fish life*
- ...to all the root life*
- ...to all the plant life (the green things)*
- ...to all the different natural medicines*
- ...to all the insect life*
- ...to all the foods we eat*
- ...to all the fruits & berries*
- ...to all the wild animals*
- ...to all the bird life*
- ...to all the trees & young saplings*
- ...to the four winds*
- ...to our Grandfathers, the Thunderers*
- ... to our Grandmother, the Moon*
- ... to our Elder Brother, the Sun*
- ...to all the stars in the sky*
- ...to the Creator*

Key Ideas

- Inclusion only happens when people consciously build community
- Dreaming and sharing our dreams and nightmares (naming and understanding the wolf) motivate inclusion

- Appreciating and sharing gifts forms the foundation of inclusion
- Getting some help, both by communicating within our own group and community-cating with other groups now outside our own, extends community (Alliance building to the academic)
- The realities of inclusion, and the next steps for increasing inclusiveness, will come when we share and reflect on the stories of change that have meaning for us.
- We can only facilitate others to move toward their dreams and to build circles of support if we join with other people to clarify and move toward our dreams and to invite others to support us.

Tools

- Graphic facilitation
- Listening from a position of awareness of the four pillars of community
- MAPS facilitation
- Circle Building
- The talking circle as a space for sharing gifts
- PATH facilitation
- Solution circles

Community grows when people...

Declare their identity; so we invite one another to say, "I am..."

Join their histories, so we invite one another to say, "Some of the milestones along my road to the summer institute have been..."

Share their dreams, so we invite one another to say, "If I get exactly what I want from our time together, I will have..."

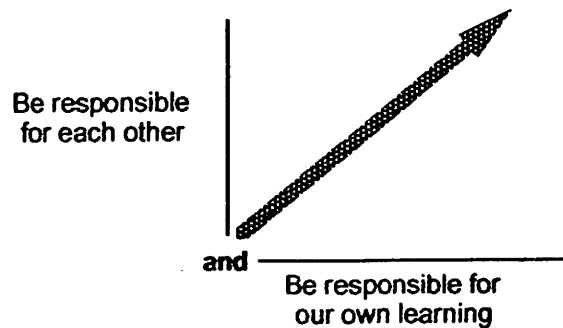
Make explicit their concerns and fears, so we invite one another to say, "These are the worst possible things that can happen to me..."

Bring forward their gifts, so we invite one another to say, "These are the strengths and experiences that will allow me to contribute to building up our community so that I will be able to get what I want from our time together."

Ask for what they need, so we invite people to say, "This is what I need from the other members of our community so that I will be able to get what I want from our time together."

Community develops within tension. One of the tensions that will shape our community lies between taking responsibility for our own personal learning and taking responsibility for supporting each other's learning. Sometimes people experience this tension as an either-or: *either* I get what I want *or* I look out for

others. Our community will develop positively if we can all work for a balance, *both* taking responsibility for our selves *and* taking responsibility for each other.



These **ground rules** will help keep us moving in the direction of development.

Responsibility for our own learning

Ask for what you want

If you need assistance, ask for it

Pursue your questions:

- Find people to talk and be with
- Read
- Think, write, draw

Learn from listening and reflecting on your experience in the group

Try new things and make the most of the whole Institute, McGill, and Montreal:

- Language
- Food, celebrations, customs
- Cultural spaces & events

You can “pass” on any suggested activity or exercise

Responsibility for each other

Be open to invitations
Acknowledge and negotiate wants with others

If you see someone who needs help, offer.

Share your experiences, ideas, information, and resources

Contribute when you are moved; listen when you are not

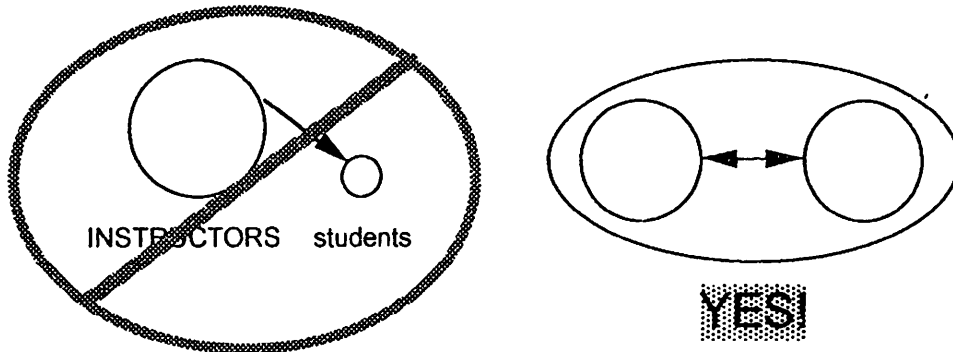
Make room for and encourage participation from others

If you see a problem, fix it... if you need help to fix it, ask

Build our community...

- Make our space alive
- Share your gifts

Because there are “Instructors” and “Students”, there is a danger built into our community. It is the danger that some of us will feel little and powerless and expect the “Instructors” to figure out and meet all of our community’s needs. One sign that this is happening is “murmuring” among community members: passing around complaints and saying “How could they let that happen?” or “When are they going to fix that?” We will grow as a community when all of us take responsibility for cleaning up our own messes, fixing the problems we can, and surfacing the issues that need all of our attention.



We are one, but we are not the same.

Our job is to discover and recognize the differences among of us.

We may not be willing or able to hold the difference;

but we have a responsibility to know and acknowledge it.

-Shafik

It takes a whole village to raise one child.

-Nigerian saying

To make a circle, **you** have to be centered.

-Jack

from Marsha

Don't evaluate or judge, but just ask yourself: "What would it take for me to accept responsibility for bringing things that will build up our community?"

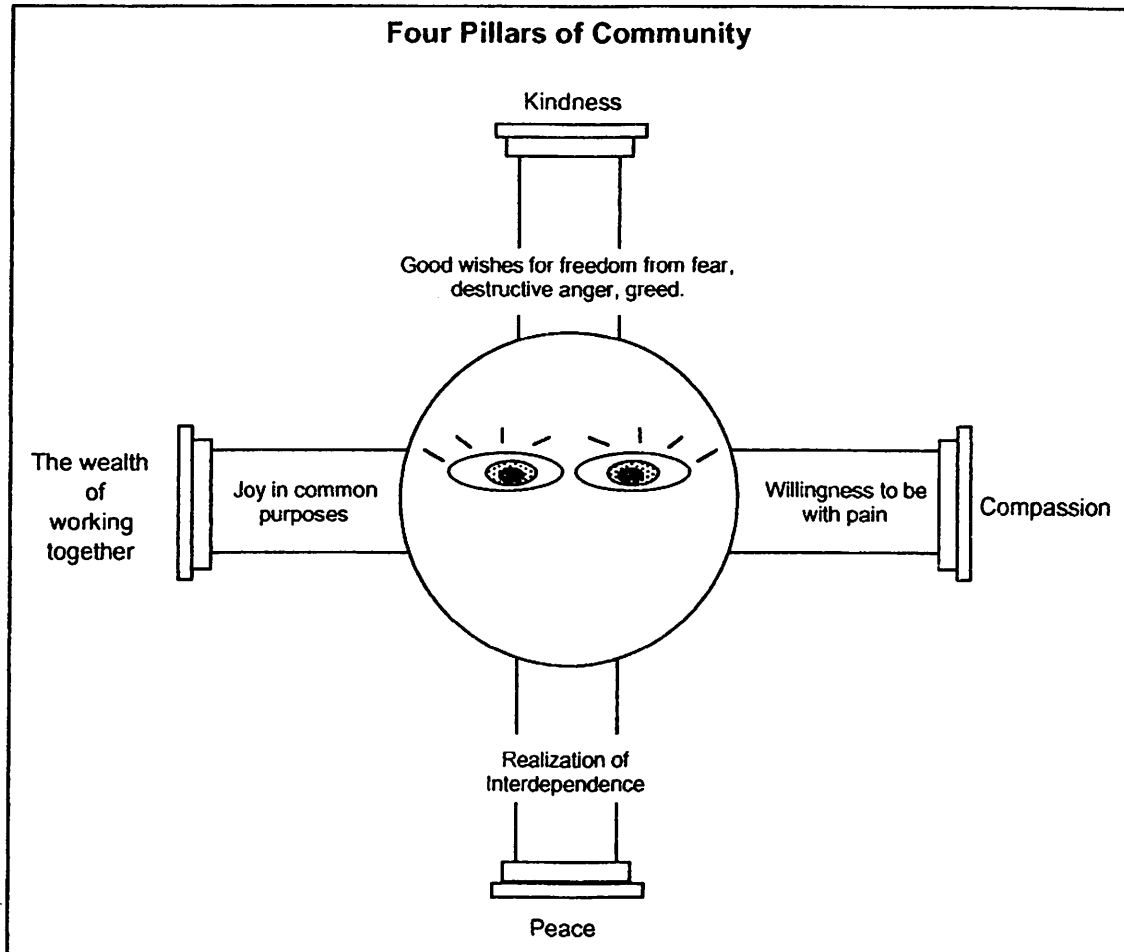
"Good idea! Who will do it? Who will help you?"

If you did it all alone and it didn't lead to people asking for and giving each other help, don't call it MAPS; don't call it PATH.

A MAP is not a MAP without the graphics.

The graphic is the symbol and the anchor.

-Mike



from Jill

Censored

Penny Shumaker*

Because we suspect
ourselves, knowing
what we're capable of, knowing

how thin the veneer,
wanting to control
what gets away from us

even now, with restraints
wrists, ankles,
our chastity belted down

so we can save ourselves
for and from. Because in our visions

* *Ploughshares*. (Spring 1993)

our best moments

We all speak forbidden
languages. Because if anyone
knew us really,

they could not
love us. This goes
for God, triple.

This is a relation that will beget some wonder, and it well may, for most of our world are at present possessed with an opinion that visions and miracles are ceased. And, though it is most certain that two lutes, being both strung and tuned to an equal pitch, and then one played upon, the other that is not touched, being laid upon a table at a fit distance, will –like an echo to a trumpet –warble a faint audible harmony in answer to the same tune; yet many will not believe there is any such thing as sympathy of souls.

–Izaak Walton (quoted in Albert Goldbarth, *A Sympathy of Souls: Essays.*)

If you are a leader, you are a **sanitation worker**. People don't come to you and say how are you... they come up and say how they aren't. We clean things up. that's our job.

In early '30's a very powerful African came to the US: King Kong. Something he wanted to do: climb the highest building in the world, he did it. If you get to the stage that you want to, you will. I'm not saying you won't catch hell when you get there or find out that you are afraid of heights. Only that when you want to, you will.

Say it and hear it:

The food that I give to others
is the food that nourishes me.
and the freedom I win for others,
is the freedom that will set me free.

–Shafik

Step by step
The longest march
can be won, can be won
Many stones to form an arch
singly none, singly none
And by union what we will
can be accomplished still
Drops of water turn a mill
singly none, singly none

–Sweet Honey in the rock (by way of David)

Pieces

David Hasbury

Pieces

Large and small fragments
strewn across my life
some new
others old
and there are the ancient ones

spaces
between the pieces
remind me of parts
somehow forgotten
too tender for me to touch

yet I am drawn
to the texture of the pieces
you bring into my life
leading me to uncover fragments
always meant to be seen
and touched

and you
love me
even when I sit in the spaces

by my side
you walk with me
as we gather

pieces.

Community

Michael D. Averitt

The Creator
takes one
pebble.

Binds it to
another,
and then
another,
in this manner,
a rock is formed.

And then a mountain
And then a world.

The Creator,
takes one feather,
binds it with another,
and another.
In this manner
a wing is formed,

and then a body,
and then an eagle.

In this way,
all things are formed.
Small joined
with small,
to make a greater
To make a whole.
Where before
naught existed.

In this manner
we build
from one person,
working with another
and yet another.
An order,
where before
was human chaos.

We work together
toward a common goal
joining hands.
One with another,
and another,
and then another.
In this manner,
a couple is formed,
and then a group,
and then a community.

We must not fear
to depend on another.
Be strong enough
to let others depend on us.
Together we can soar
like the mighty eagle.
Apart we drift
in chaos,
like feathers
tossed to the
raging wind.

Such is the way
that we must be.

It is good.

Shafik

I want the day to come when we don't say "I have a problem" but instead "I need some help with... (what I want to do)." This creates an opportunity for us to get to know one another, to come over to one another's house, to eat one another's food, to fall in love.

People thought because I could not walk, I could not talk, and I could not think. Cars get disabled, they break down and don't do a damn thing. People don't get disabled.

Malcolm X and Ed Roberts and Judith are angry people guided by love.

MRI scares me and so I decided I wouldn't do it unless they would let me bring my friends.

Remember the anchor. We have to, because everybody is trying to change us...

We are trying to love in a society that teaches hate.

We are trying to include in a society that divides and oppresses.

We are trying to do what's right in a society that won't reward us for doing right.

The whole purpose of coming up a mountain is so you can gather strength to go back down into the valley. We didn't come to live here and the clouds would probably not welcome us to live here. But we can gather strength here.

For Kyle

Circle of Friends 1

Circle Of Friends

With Spirit

words and music by brian lillo and lorna lillo

The musical score is written for piano and voice. It consists of three systems of music. The first system is an instrumental introduction in 6/8 time, starting with a forte (*f*) dynamic. The second system begins with the vocal entry, marked mezzo-piano (*mp*). The lyrics are: "rock in still wa- ter, and rip- ples a- bound. help one a- no- ther should be our aim. Je- sus said love all as you would love me." The third system continues the vocal line with lyrics: "Cir- cles that move out and touch all a- round. So ma- ny peo- ple no two the same. Dis- cover his mes- sage and then you'll be free. to". The piano accompaniment features chords in the right hand and a simple bass line in the left hand. Chord changes are indicated above the staff: D^b, A^b, E^b, E^b, Fm, B^b7, and E^b.

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Circle of Friends 2

I send out circles for you to join in.
Celebrate differences and then become
love one another in the circle with me.

mf Come join my circle of Friends
Part of our circle of Friends.
Let's make a circle of Friends.

f Let's make a circle of Friends.

Let's make a cir- cle of Friends

Chords: D \flat , A \flat , E \flat

Detailed description: This system of musical notation features a grand staff with treble and bass clefs. The melody is written in the treble clef, and the accompaniment is in the bass clef. The key signature has two flats (B \flat and E \flat). The first measure has a D \flat chord, the second has an A \flat chord, and the third has an E \flat chord. The lyrics are 'Let's make a cir- cle of Friends'.

Let's be to- ge- ther un- till the world ends.
2. Help- ing each o- ther un- till the world ends.
3.4. Spi- rits to- ge- ther be- yond the world's end.

Chords: D \flat , A \flat , B \flat 7

Detailed description: This system continues the musical notation. It includes three vocal lines. The first line is 'Let's be to- ge- ther un- till the world ends.' The second line is '2. Help- ing each o- ther un- till the world ends.' The third line is '3.4. Spi- rits to- ge- ther be- yond the world's end.' The chords are D \flat , A \flat , and B \flat 7.

Let's make a cir- cle of Friends. To Friends.

Chords: A \flat , B \flat 7, E \flat

1. 2. 3. D.S. al Fine

mf *p* *p*

Fine

Detailed description: This system concludes the piece. The lyrics are 'Let's make a cir- cle of Friends. To Friends.' There are three endings: '1.', '2.', and '3.'. The first ending leads to a double bar line with 'D.S. al Fine'. The second ending leads to a double bar line with 'Fine'. The third ending leads to a double bar line with 'Fine'. The dynamics are marked as *mf* (mezzo-forte) and *p* (piano). The chords are A \flat , B \flat 7, and E \flat .