



## **Community Building Working Group (CBWG) Summary of Two Community Calls September 15, 2023**

### **Update on Progress of CBWG**

- Expanding CBWG by adding Cynthia Wolley.
- Community Building Session at Teachers Retreat exploring these questions:
  - What does community mean to you and when have you experienced it in the TATC?
  - How can we strengthen our sense of community in the TATC now, and what might be blocking us?
  - What was revealed is there is a wide variety of community orientations and needs, and the teachers will continue this conversation.
- Bill Miller leading an End-of-Life Support project. He's just beginning and gathering resources.
- Next Community Call is scheduled for October 28, 2023 from 10 am – noon Pacific / 1 – 3 pm Eastern.

### **Community Building Activity**

Breakout rooms with dyads in the first call. There were 3 dyads, with each discussing these questions intended to spark connection. In the second call, everyone was in the main room, and we all shared about question 1.

1. Is there something that you've dreamed of doing for a long time? Why haven't you done it?
2. For what in your life do you feel most grateful?
3. If you knew that you had one year to live, would you change anything about the way you are now living? Why?

### **Initiative Descriptions and Updates**

#### 1) 24/7 Open Space Subgroup

Gena, Jim, Drew (web developer), Victor, Ralph H, Phil

- Description: The idea is to have an online space we can access 24/7 that can be used for connection, mutuality, and any of the community-building initiatives. For example, the book/study groups and practice groups could use this space, and also impromptu meetings and hangouts can happen on this space at any time of the day.
- Update: We've explored different platforms and have found one that's used by those in the online gaming community. It will require some training since few in our community have probably used it. We will have a Community section on our Thinkific learning platform, where people can post on different topics. From the Community section on Thinkific, people will be able to link to the 24/7 open space for video meetings. We will be testing this platform and

asked for volunteers. Allan, Amira, and Denise offered to help us test. Hopefully we can begin testing before our next community call in October. We continue to inch along!

## 2) Book/Study Subgroup

Bill E, Elaine, Fred, and Don Drake

- Description: This group will be setting up some book groups or other types of study groups, studying content that is relevant to Trillium Awakening somehow, though not directly connected.
- Update: This group is setting up a Googledoc so all subgroup members can create a list of possible books and study options. From that, they will narrow it down, and survey the community about which are most desired.

## 3) Mutual Support Forums (MSF) Subgroup

Francesca, Allen and Jill

- Description: In these monthly forums, community members (teachers, mentors, and participants alike) will bring forward topics relevant to Trillium Awakening for attendees to explore together (e.g., Emotional Intelligence or Death/Dying). They may start with a presentation or a group activity. These forums will be very interactive and will be recorded and housed in a library for ongoing access.
- Update: We have some possible topics that could be given by participants, and they are percolating. However, we might start with a teacher for the first MSF, which we are planning for October 26.

## 4) Closed Mutuality Circles Subgroup

Bob, Debi, Bobby, Diedre, Fred, and Victor

- Description: These are Trillium mutuality circles, using the format that's been in our work for many years. They will be closed groups, which means the membership is set for a length of time, to create consistency and trust.
- Update: We are inching forward. Our next subgroup meeting is coming up on 9/25. We will be working on proposing mutuality guidelines for safety, consistency, and trust.

## 5) Practices and Practice Groups Subgroup

Jim, Debi, Fred, Jill, Bobby, Victor and Rossi

- Description: This subgroup is putting together a list of TA-relevant practices, and pinpointing practice groups to deepen in their embodied awakening process. There may be different kinds of practices for different places on the journey. Ultimately, this list will include a description of the practices and people within the community who are proficient in leading, facilitating, or teaching these practices.
- Update: This group is compiling a list of practices. Although these are not Trillium sanctioned, they are Trillium related, in that they can encourage spiritual growth and opening along the Trillium Path.

If anyone is interested in joining any of these working subgroups to volunteer and help create these initiatives, please send an email to [community@trilliumawakening.org](mailto:community@trilliumawakening.org).

## **Polarity Exercise: Individual / Collective**

See Appendix for the results of this polarity exercise focused on exploring individual and collective. There's a separate graphic for each of the two community calls.

### **Takeaways from September 15 Community Calls**

- I am excited about the potency of this group. I feel the excitement of the creation, the creative organism.
- I feel gratitude for being together. I appreciate the willingness and am looking forward to the conflict resolution for vax/no-vax discussion.
- I am glad that we are working to break down boundaries between participants, mentors, and teachers. I love the potential wisdom coming forward when everyone has capacity to participate.
- It is also exciting to hear that we are facing the resolution of issues around polarization with the vaccine concerns.
- Our local community has been looking at/working with a gift economy and how to bring that into the Trillium Awakening community in a way to support everyone.
- I enjoyed the polarity exercise and can see ways it could be useful in my life... A way of living that flows. Not looking at things being right or wrong.
- I am excited to see the sharing of people's talents.
- I am looking into the science of compassion and the ability to develop empathy and to set up a program to bring community into my life.
- The quadrant exercise brought me a new perspective on polarization.
- I feel grateful. Encouraged. It is so wise to invite community to say what works for them. And to be listening to the community through the Community Building Working Group.
- I really liked the questions, the creative structure and breakout group exercise. I very much liked the way that the teachers were woven into the community as participants.
- I feel a lot of excitement with teachers making progress in collaboration. Good things are happening.
- I hear everything. I want to be a part of the group. Being here together allows me to be here.
- I feel amazing gratitude to be part of this community (call). I am wowed. Ideas are percolating. This work helps all of us find out what our gifts are and creates the ability to plug those in to share with the community; to donate to the system that is being born that includes everyone.
- I am deeply touched by people sharing about dreams and the level of openness and vulnerability. The beauty of each individual.
- Melting of the walls between teachers and non-teachers.
- This meeting has emulated the ideas and values we are working towards; The feeling the individual/group. It embodies what I think Trillium is about. Love. It's about love.
- The polarity exercise highlighted my preference for working as an individual and the joy and wonder of looking again at working in a group.
- I am wondering how can we encourage more teachers ("advanced teachers") to participate in Community Building?
- I feel very buoyed by the group. Coming into the unknown, awakening into our interbeing/interconnectedness with everyone.
- This is just the beginning. Evolving in a different feeling sense that I had imagined... dropping into an interconnectedness. Beautiful heart opening. All of us benefiting from all of everyone. A full rich, lush exercise.

- This has been a beautiful call. Humanity falling into interdependence. The collective moving forward. In this type of community teachers and students co-create a new model. The grain of sand that grows into a pearl.
- We are co-creating this together. Interbeing channel of community heart is bursting open. We are creating community here.

## Appendix:

### **Polarity Thinking™ Exercise** **09-15-23**

When we hear the word “Polarity” we usually think of it to mean a Polarizations. Polarizations are typically defined as a divergence of attitudes away from the center towards ideological extremes, they usually are “either/or” dichotomies. The “Far Right” and the “Far Left” are examples of polarizations. There exists no overlap between the two and so neither group has a common ground on which to have dialogues.

That’s not what we’re talking about here. We’re going to working here with an exercise called Polarity Thinking™ developed by Barry Johnson. For this exercise polarities are two positive qualities that can feel like opposites. Some might call them dilemmas, tensions or paradoxes. Though polarities pull in different directions they are actually differences between two alternatives that cannot be ignored without serious negative consequence. They are a pair of interdependent alternatives that are ongoing and unsolvable. But both are needed to optimize the functioning of leaders, individuals and organizations. For example, take breathing. Inhaling and exhaling are polarities. You cannot do one while doing the other, but both are necessary in order to live. Polarities are “both/and.” You need both sides to function in a healthy way.

In this exercise we explored the polarities of the Individual Initiative and the Collective Initiative. Both sides of the polarity are necessary. You cannot have collective initiative without individual input and vice versa; the individual needs collective input in order to make sense of his/her own initiatives as well as to gain perspective on how that initiative fits into the collective goals, purpose, mission and vision.

When the polarities fall into the negative zones, then distortion and dysfunction arise, which causes people to one to cross over into the (+) on the other side of the polarity. What is meant by this is that when one side moves out of the (+) of that side into its negative aspects, it is time to switch sides of the polarity and move into the (+) on the other side. People focused many on one side of the polarity typically only see the (-) aspect of the polarity on the other side. This exercise is geared to expose people to the (+) of the other side. The goal is to live as much from the (+) aspects of both sides as possible, while monitoring when the (-) aspects. When (-) aspects are noticed arising on one side then it is time to shift focus to the other (+) side of the polarity to maintain a balanced dynamic within the polarity.

What are positive results from focusing on the Individual?

- Unique perspective
- Quicker
- Freedom
- Outside the box
- Autonomy
- Co-create something new
- Meets needs
- No compromising your vision
- Being heard and seen
- Feeling appreciated

**Individual**

### 1st Call 9-15-23

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- More perspectives in the group
- Inclusion
- Collaboration and community
- Play
- Support
- Enjoying mutuality
- Co-creating innovative solutions
- Larger effect
- With love
- Synergy

**AND**

**Collective**

- Perspective is too limited
- May not be well thought out
- Take longer
- Not as much fun
- Drain the energy of the group
- Tyrannical
- Only meets my needs
- Limited vision
- Feeling cut out and disempowered
- Creates selfishness

What's the downside of over-privileging the Individual over the Collective?

What's the downside of over-privileging the Collective over the Individual?

What are positive results from focusing on the Individual?

- Autonomous
- Empowering
- Inspiring
- Satisfaction of contributing
- Creative freedom and control
- Has a purpose / working toward a goal
- Unified vision
- Having a voice / being seen and heard
- Saving time
- Efficiency

**Individual**

### 2nd Call 9-15-23

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- More diversity / perspectives
- Collaboration / compromise
- More creativity
- Mutual inspiration / feed off of each other
- Broader vision
- Everyone feels heard
- More fun
- Learn a lot more about yourself and others
- More needs can be met
- Part of something bigger than one's self

**AND**

**Collective**

- Tyranny
- Lack of diversity / creativity
- Limited perspective
- Disempowering to others
- Shuts down the flow of the group / energy
- Delusion
- Difficult group dynamics
- Lose cohesion

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