

SUGGESTIONS FOR FORMING A CONSCIOUS TRIBE

“LOVE & REVOLUTION” CHAPTERS 21 & 23

***(Chapter 21 “From Friends to Tribe”
and Chapter 23 “Forming a Conscious Tribe”)***

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Chapter 21 From Friends to Tribe

DEPTH AND INTENSITY

"Today is a good day to die!" Roman warriors would declare when they went into battle. I can imagine they walked or rode onto the battlefield in what we would call 'an altered state of consciousness' - utterly alert, hyper aware, 'in the zone', face-to-face with the prospect of death, face-to-face with The Great Unknown.

Similarly, I would say, the more we awaken to the indefinable reality of the present moment, the louder we declare "today is a good day to live!" - and we too are 'in the zone', face-to-face with the uncontrollable, magical mystery of The Great Unknown.

I feel that the deeper we go, the more intense life becomes. The shallower our lives, the duller they are. Perhaps most of us live somewhere between the two extremes of divine intensity and bored mundanity. But towards which of these extremes do we choose to direct our lives?

In my opinion, the dominant culture pushes us relentlessly towards the extreme of meaninglessness and numbness. It does not promote reverence and gratitude. As I said before, I imagine that if a politician were to extol Universal Love, or Oneness, or the Eternity of the Moment - people would think they'd gone mad! But is that the direction you or I choose to be pushed in? Or do we choose to orientate our lives towards the adventure of the ever-unfolding mystery? Do we choose to say "today is a good day to live!" - and taste and smell and touch the day with wonder?

The point I want to make in this chapter is that if we choose depth and intensity, and want to live deeply and intensely together in this world - then I believe our Groups of Friends need to become Conscious Tribes. True friends are a blessing - no doubt about it! But if we want to stand together

before life as the Roman warriors stood before death, then I am saying we need to take friendship to another level - to the level of a shared existential journey, a shared transformational journey, and a journey of shared purpose.

SPOKEN AND AGREED

I think most people would agree there is an amplification when we unite. When football fans cheer, or we dance together, or pray together, or protest together - our individual cheering and dancing, and praying and protesting is amplified - intensified - by our togetherness. And I feel that, in the same way, when a Group of Friends unites around the intention of becoming more conscious, of opening their hearts through both the pleasure and the pain, and sharing an evolutionary purpose - the depth and beauty of their friendship is amplified. They become what I call A Conscious Tribe.

So how, realistically, can we do this? I feel it is very simple: by making agreements! By making strong yet flexible commitments to each other. By disregarding the social norms propagated by the dominant culture (images of friendship as Pizza and Netflix, a helping hand from time to time, and perhaps a shoulder to cry on) - and boldly and bravely defining our own norms, and making agreements that evoke and support our deepest needs - agreements that unite us in the presence of God, or the Goddess, or the Tao, or the Great Mystery Itself - agreements that unite us in honesty and vulnerability, and in passionate purpose.

And I mean spoken agreements - not assumed agreements. I mean agreements spoken aloud in each other's presence – existential and psycho-emotional agreements; agreements on vision, direction and purpose; and practical, organisational agreements. This is not something Groups of Friends usually do, of course. It would be a new departure for almost any Group of Friends - but I believe it would rebirth everyone's life!

EXISTENTIAL AND PSYCHO-EMOTIONAL AGREEMENTS

There are all sorts of tribes and clans and sanghas and congregations. Many endure for generations by virtue of their fundamentalism, and rigid hierarchy - which keep people bound in faithful obedience. But for those of us who refuse to sacrifice our own perceptions and intuitions, and bow down to dogma - such tribes are not an option. So what are the philosophical, psychological, purposeful and practical agreements a free-thinking Group of Friends would need to make to become an enduring Conscious Tribe? Let's begin with the existential agreements...

The first and last existential agreement I believe we need to make (you won't be surprised to hear!) is that each person recognises, for themselves, "all I have is my own, unique experience of the moment" (Radical Honesty). This, for me, as I have repeatedly stated, is an honest, obvious, undeniable, inescapable, naked realisation. You see your moment, and I see mine. Neither of us sees it all. Nobody sees my moment as I do. We are all unique. And we are all, therefore, Existential Equals.

And as we have also already discussed - the same honesty that leads us to the conclusion of Radical Honesty also leads us to the recognition of our disassociation from our experiencing. With presence comes the recognition of our absence. Our honest self-observation leads us to see our fascination and obsession with thought - and how we tend to live behind a veil of ideas. We also come to see how often we are kidnapped by our emotions - how we don't "have emotions", but how "our emotions have us" – making it difficult, if not sometimes impossible, to be with the actuality of the moment. And we see how these thoughts and emotions have entered our blood and cells – how our bodies react in inauthentic, predetermined ways to each other, and to the world.

In short: the introspective honesty that leads us to the understanding of Radical Honesty reveals our inability to live our understanding - and the need to bridge that gap – inviting a second agreement: a shared commitment to self-education, to the learning journey.

I am sure you can see how these two agreements could unite and deepen and transform the energy field of almost any Group of Friends. Especially if they had precise methods for living these agreements - such as the ones I am suggesting in this book! Then their agreements wouldn't just be good ideas, or good intentions – they could be the beginning of a dynamic, profoundly intimate, experiential journey.

And then there is the physical dimension – which presents the possibility of an another spoken agreement to unite and energise the new Conscious Tribe still further: agreement on vision, direction and purpose..

AGREEMENT ON VISION, DIRECTION & PURPOSE

I began Chapter 2 with these words: "my impression is that many of us share the vision of decentralised, conscious, community-based cultures embedded in nature. But how to make them real? Or another way to put this question might be "how do we weave ourselves together? How do we weave new social fabrics?" And, of course, this whole book is my answer to that question. But more succinctly: it is by Groups of Friends forming Conscious Tribes that share that vision.

So here is another agreement I feel we need to make that will transform the depth of our togetherness as friends: commitment to action whose aim is establishing basically-self-sufficient, nature-embedded, local communities. I have spoken about the shared vision of Our Own Great Reset in the chapter "A Shared Vision", and I have spoken about the need to reclaim our time, and establish local community infrastructures, and adjust our everyday living habits in the chapter "Co-Creating Local Community, The Physical Level". So I won't repeat myself.

I just want to say that I feel the superficiality of the dominant culture leaves many of us hungry for deep intimacy – so that Gathering as a Tribe and practicing Conscious Relating can sometimes feel like enough in itself. But as I said in the chapter "The First Successful Revolution", if we only make agreements on the existential and psycho-emotional levels we are basically support groups – supporting each other in surviving the alienation and stress of the dominant culture. And support groups offer no direct, overt, infrastructural, social challenge or change.

So the third agreement I propose to convert Groups of Friends into Conscious Tribes is the socially-engaged commitment to weaving conscious local community. And (as I said in the section "Alignment & Purpose" in the chapter on "Co-creating Local Community") I feel this physical, material agreement – the agreement to act (not only meditate and share) – is the agreement that brings complete coherence to our being-mind-heart-body, and aligns us, and galvanises our energy - and turns us into "a force of mass creation"!

PRACTICAL, ORGANISATIONAL AGREEMENTS

Finally, if all of this theory is to become our lived reality, I feel we need to make simple, practical, organisational agreements - like how often we meet, how we structure our time when we meet, how we include the children in the Tribe, and so on. I made lots of detailed recommendations in the chapter "Tribe Gatherings, Recommendations", but of course, each Group of Friends has to

organise its own transition into becoming a Conscious Tribe.

I hear the word 'tribe' being tossed about a lot. Self-development facilitators invite us to "come to such-and-such a workshop, be part of the tribe"; festival organisers promote their events as 'tribal gatherings', or 'gatherings of the tribe'; trendy clothes designers advertise their trousers and T-shirts as 'tribal chic', and so on. For me, this is a trivialisation of the term. For me, to become a Conscious Tribe - a non-biological extended family - implies an enormous letting-go of one's familiar, comfortable isolation. It implies an astoundingly courageous commitment to fully-live one's deepest understandings. It implies a radical humility and vulnerability. And it implies a panoramic vision that can see beyond the dehumanisation and degradation of the dominant cultural agenda. Perhaps, above all, for me, it implies giving ourselves to each other – and, for me, that implies surrender - it implies our guiding star is Love.

Very possibly, if you've been interested enough to read this book until here, you and your friends are already somewhere along the path towards becoming a Conscious Tribe. You probably have your individual existential practices, and endeavour to live as ecologically as you can. Here I'm talking about the next step. I'm talking about the spoken existential/psycho-emotional, vision/direction/purpose and practical/organisational agreements that could turn your Group of Friends into a deeply united, heart-woven, powerfully purposeful force for personal and collective transformation. This is not something that has been tried before. This is a new kind of revolution! Please - talk together about it. Perhaps you're more ready than you think!

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Chapter 23

Forming A Conscious Tribe

Here are some suggestions as to how you might go about forming your own, local Conscious Tribe.

NATURALLY

Perhaps the most natural way of forming a Conscious Tribe is to share the practice of Conscious Relating with those close to you... As you introduce the practice to a partner, and then a friend, and then a biological family member - and they then share the practice with people they are close to - people can experience the depth and beauty of Conscious Relating, and the possibility of becoming a Conscious Tribe will soon be obvious.

At the same time, I'd also recommend that everyone read "Love & Revolution", and talk about it. Who's inspired by it? Do people resonate with concepts like Radical Honesty, Uniqueness and Belonging, and Existential Equality? Do people feel we need to include the four levels of our experience that I name? Do they have a Shared Vision? And do they want to participate in the co-creation of a Conscious Local Community Cultures for the generations to come?

You might want to agree to meet - once a week, say - to discuss all of this. And, above all - to have the opportunity of doing the practice of Conscious Relating with different people, and even, perhaps, as a group.

As this process evolves there might come a point when the air will be full of the question "OK - so shall we commit to becoming a Conscious Tribe, or not?"

And I'd say - don't shy away from the question. Let it be present. Feel it. Ask "Are we **really** committing to a shared journey of self-education and transformation? Are we really committing to being emotionally naked in front of each other - to seeing and being-seen, to loving and being-loved? Are we **really** committing to becoming a non-biological Extended Family? Are we really committing to Each Other?

And ask "Do we **really** want to commit to Being the Change - to being the seeds of new Conscious Cultures? Do we really choose the revolutionary commitment - not only to learn to live in Universal Love - but to adjust our lifestyles in ways that support and enhance our learning? Do we choose - not only to find ways of surviving the dominant culture's impositions, but of becoming proactive agents of the co-creation of alternative cultures?

These are the larger, deeper questions. I would also advise re-reading the recommendations regarding commitments in the chapter "Tribe Gatherings, Recommendations" - and contemplating possible agreements as to how often you'd like to meet, how long you're committing for, and so on...

And at a certain point, if it becomes clear that you **do** want to become a Conscious Tribe, and everyone's prepared for their life to change - probably, for most people, quite radically - I'd recommend co-creating a Commitment Ceremony: a ritual in which everyone states their commitment to each other - to the Tribe.

The ceremony needn't be esoteric! It can be quite simple. It might just be, for example, that one by one, each person announces their commitment in their own words, and says what that means to them. Or, of course, it can be more elaborate...

My own understanding is that "the secret" of ritual is in symbolic acts. Symbolism can invest ordinary actions with special significance – and somehow imprint them upon the deeper levels of our psyches. So, for example, as well as ending with the words "I commit to this new Tribe" each person, after speaking, might place a candle in the middle of the circle... This is a symbolic act. The candle symbolises themselves. It represents them. And as one candle after another is placed in the centre we all have a visual image, and a felt experience, of the formation of the Tribe, and of ourselves as part of it.

This is, of course, just an example. How do we decide what symbolic acts to perform? I'd say we model them on our intention. We ask ourselves what our intention is – we ask "what is the message we want to send to ourselves?". And then we ask ourselves what symbolic actions could accomplish that – we ask "how do we portray that - how do we "theatricalise" that?"

So let's say, for example, that the Tribe wants to welcome someone new into the Tribe. That's their intention. They want to honour the fact that someone new is committing to giving themselves to, and receiving from, the Journey of the Conscious Tribe. Not a minor commitment, they feel! And they want to honour it. They also want to express their openness towards this new person. So they ask "how can we symbolise these intentions?" And they decide, for example, that the new person will enter a room where the Tribe is already "in circle", and go around the circle and share an embrace with every member of the Tribe, before joining the circle themselves. Rituals, or ceremonies, can be simple like that.

LOCAL EXPLORATIONS

This “natural” way of forming a Tribe might not be feasible for you, in your particular situation. You might, for example, have just moved - and not know anyone locally. So another, perhaps more deliberate way of forming a Conscious Tribe would be to initiate a process, a journey of exploration, in the local area.

So rather than sharing the practice of Conscious Relating spontaneously, encouraging your friends to do the same, beginning to meet regularly, and eventually committing to becoming a Conscious Tribe - you might prefer to announce or publicise your desire to form a Conscious Tribe, and call an open meeting. You could even use a social networking platform like www.meetup.com to create a local group.

And in your invitation to the meeting I would suggest you let people know how to download “Love & Revolution” – to help them make a more informed choice as to whether or not to come to the meeting.

And I would recommend doing the Practice of Conscious Relating a.s.a.p. at the meeting! In other words, to not just sit and discuss the Conscious Tribes proposal – because that could easily become a purely intellectual exercise, with little impact on The One Heart we all share. After perhaps, welcoming everyone and offering a brief outline of the purpose and structure of the meeting, I would recommend using a Conscious Relating Practice Audio, and doing the practice in pairs - *before* discussing the proposal.

I feel that if people can have a felt-experience of the practice and know, at least to some extent, what it means to relate consciously in presentness and intimacy - and therefore understand, at least to some extent, what I mean when I say "the cultures we now co-create will be Made Of Us", and "cultures are relational systems, so we can only co-create conscious cultures if we learn to relate consciously" - they will then be able to talk about the Conscious Tribes proposal in a less conceptual, more personal and felt way.

I wouldn't expect the discussion to be a Tribe Conversation in which everyone is breathing consciously ("breath to self, breath to others"), only speaking subjectively, self-revealing, and listening actively! I don't think that would be a realistic expectation! But everyone could be *encouraged* to speak subjectively - to humbly speak their own, limited feelings and opinions - without posturing and pretending they were more than that.

Then close the meeting respectfully - and set a date for another! I would expect there to be fewer people the next time. Every Local Exploration will be different, of course - but I would expect most Local Explorations to be a whittling down - until only the people who are deeply, personally interested in the proposition remain.

Meet again and again. You could use the Recommended Conscious Tribe Gathering Structure that I suggest in the chapter “Tribe Gatherings, Recommendations”. Practice Conscious Relating. Discuss the Conscious Tribes concept. And then, eventually, I imagine you'll arrive (just like the people following the “natural” way of forming a Tribe), at a point when the air will be full of the question "OK - so shall we commit to becoming a Conscious Tribe, or not?" Now your Local Exploration and the Natural Way of forming a Tribe become the same. You too begin to move towards a Commitment Ceremony.

OTHER POSSIBILITIES

There are perhaps unlimited ways in which a Conscious Tribe could be formed. Here are a few more possibilities...

Rather than forming a Tribe “naturally”, or initiating a Local Exploration (both of which are processes of several months), you could convene a weekend workshop. Whether it was for family and friends only, or an open invitation in the local area - you could meet together morning, afternoon and evening throughout the weekend - and in that way have the equivalent of six or seven weekly meetings in one weekend!

Here are some suggestions for that idea:

- Begin on the Friday evening (this can make the weekend much fuller - because people don't spend the Saturday morning accustoming themselves to being there, to 'arriving energetically')
- If possible, meet at a venue in the countryside.
- If possible, all stay over on the Friday and Saturday nights (make the weekend 'residential').
- Use the recommendations in the chapter “Tribe Gatherings, Recommendations” to structure the morning/afternoon/evening sessions (particularly the “Recommended Conscious Tribe Gathering Structure” and “Recommendations for Facilitation”).
- Devote different sessions to the different ways of doing the Conscious Relating practice.
- If people feel ready, make your agreements - and end with a Commitment Ceremony!

In my opinion the advantage of this format, as I said, is that it's fast. And the downside to this format is, yes, that it's fast! For people who are just getting to know each other, and who have little experience in the practice of Conscious Relating - it might be too much to ask them whether or not they want to commit to being part of a Conscious Tribe, after just one weekend together. But you could also organise a workshop without going into the issue of commitment, or you could organise several workshops - there are so many possibilities...

If you feel you'd like some help in setting up a weekend of your own, please feel free to get in touch with me. I'd be happy to talk it over with you. Or if you'd like me to come to your local area and facilitate a weekend for you, again - just get in touch (contact details are in the last chapter).

Another possibility would be to ask me to run a Conscious Relating Online Course especially for you and your friends, or your group, or people in your local area. This should give you all a firm foundation in the Conscious Tribes outlook and experience - which you could then build upon afterwards - until you feel ready to form your own Conscious Tribe.

Yet another possibility would be to ask me for a one-off Private Session on Conscious Relating. This could be for you, individually (to help you feel more confident to begin a “natural” process of Tribe formation, or initiate a Local Exploration), or it could be for a group of local people interested in the proposal (to help everyone feel more confident in their understanding of “Love & Revolution”, Radical Honesty and Conscious Relating - and respond to any doubts they might have).

There are, no doubt, many, many more ways in which a Conscious Tribe could come together, but these are the ways that occur to me now. There is more information on resources and support in the last chapter. If you decide to form a Conscious Tribe using any of the methods I've suggested, or any other method, and would like to share your experience with me - I would love to hear from you! And if you begin forming a Conscious Tribe, but find yourself stuck or unsure in some way, and feel I might be able to help - again, just get in touch. I am here in service of this vision.



You might also be interested in “Love & Revolution” Chapter 24 “Integrating Conscious Tribes Into Existing Groups, Organisations & Communities”

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