

LOVE & REVOLUTION

Chapter 10 Tribe Gatherings, Recommendations

*"I see technocratic megalomaniacs entering the names of the human race, one by one,
into the log of a globally-centralised, militarised A.I.
I hear them joking about genocide.
I hear them boasting that in their Smart Cities what's left of human life
will be so intricately, biometrically controllable,
we will be like characters inside a video game they own and play.
Yes, it's surreal! Are these our leaders?
Have all the ridiculous villains in James Bond movies jumped out of the cinema screen,
and hopped on a train to Davos?
No - they are as real as Mao, Pol Pot, Hitler and Idi Amin!*

*Yet I feel we're in a Time of Collective Emergence
in which the Wizard of Oz's curtain has been lifted,
and governmental and corporate authorities have been revealed -
not just as a bunch of double-dealing, infantile, self-important crooks -
but as technocrat, transhumanist, fundamentalist fanatics
who see us as needing-saving, themselves as our saviours -
and believe their plans so universal, so worthy, and so grand
they need show no moral restraint.*

*Brick by crumbling brick, the once-majestic buildings of the great institutions -
palaces and parliaments, court houses and universities -
come crashing down inside our many minds.
Without faith in these external authorities, we question our values, and our lifestyles.
We see we've been conditioned to make choices that serve a heartless system,
not ourselves or those close to us -
and we open our lives and hearts to new possibilities."*

IF NOT NOW, WHEN? YES, BUT HOW?

Let's suppose you've been practising Conscious Relating with some close friends, and that they've also been practising with family and friends. And let's suppose that everyone's enthusiastic about the Conscious Tribes Vision - and wants to form a Conscious Tribe... What to do? Meet? What to do when you meet? Why meet? With what aims? What about the children? Should everyone make some sort of commitment? What other important considerations might there be?

In this chapter I want to make some recommendations I hope will be supportive... And they are

recommendations - not instructions! I offer them as starting points, with the idea that gradually, over time, each Conscious Tribe can adjust them, as it sees fit. Please consider them a resource you can use to help you get started - and then adapt and develop. They are intended to help new Tribes find their unity and direction.

How to adapt and evolve these recommendations? I will return to this question in the section on “Flexible Form” at the end of the chapter.

So, firstly, should you have gatherings? Regular gatherings? Well, you know what I am going to say! Yes, of course! Why?

- To connect with each other, and get to know each other, and strengthen your sense of unity as a Tribe – and celebrate together!
- To open deeply to each other, and become committed to each other.
- To practice Radical Honesty and Conscious Relating (one-to-one and as a Tribe), and walk the Path of Shared Learning together.
- To nourish the energy field of the Tribe - and be nourished by it.
- To all request and receive practical support in order to become less dependent on the dominant culture.
- To develop projects and collaborations and plans to be able to live in deeper alignment with our values, and contribute to the co-creation of conscious local community cultures.
- In service of the generations to come.
- To move towards living fully existentially, emotionally, physically aligned lives.
- As a service or offering to The Great Mystery Itself.

And here are some recommendations for those gatherings...

SOME RECOMMENDATIONS

* Recommended Frequency of Gatherings: weekly (if they're fortnightly and you miss one, then you don't meet the Tribe for a month!)

* Recommended Commitment to Gathering Attendance: ideally, a hundred percent! This is my recommendation because I feel that if people come “when it feels right” then that weakens the unity of the Tribe – existentially, emotionally, and also in terms of the Tribe's creative projects. Whereas if everyone commits to coming every week (even if they're “feeling worn out”, or “a bit down”) - then they strengthen the Tribe – and the Tribe strengthens them.

* Recommended Conscious Tribe Size: 10 to 30 adults, plus the children. I feel this small Tribe size is crucial, because then you really get to know each other - and vulnerability and intimacy, generally speaking, are much easier with familiar faces, where trust has grown. This size also means there's time for everyone to be heard when the Tribe “sits in circle”. At the same time - the presence of around 20 adults can generate enough energy to accomplish fairly big practical tasks together, and for there to be a spectrum of opinion, debate and creativity.

* Recommended Commitment to the Conscious Tribe: initially, three months. This is intended to support Tribe cohesion - especially through tough patches (because everyone's promised not to leave when there are difficult feelings!) At the end of the three months, or whatever timespan was agreed - commitments can be renewed; people can leave, new people can come in...

* Recommendations for Forming and Re-forming the Tribe:

- when you first decide to become a Tribe co-create a Commitment Ceremony (see the chapter “Forming a Conscious Tribe”)
- at the end of the timespan you all agreed, if anyone has left, or anyone has joined – co-create another Commitment Ceremony, using Flexible Form (see below)

* Recommended Conscious Tribe Gathering Structure:

1. Opening: if people have been sitting in traffic, say, or come straight from the office, or had to rush to get there, or been touched in some other way by The Culture of Stress - you might like to create a way of Opening the Gathering that includes, say, dancing together, or Yoga, or Tai Chi... something to loosen everyone up, and help them relax back into themselves. (See “Flexible Form” at the end of this chapter.) (30mins, approx.)
2. The Practice of Conscious Relating as a Tribe (as “Expression” at first, perhaps, but then more and more frequently as “Conversation” (anywhere between 1 – 2 hours, depending, in part, on the size of the Tribe).
3. Closing: The Opening and the Practice of Conscious Relating conclude the “formal” part of the Gathering. And although the Practice of Conscious Relating closes with expressions of gratitude, I would recommend something slightly more elaborate to close the formal part of the Gathering. Perhaps everyone gives and receives a hug. Perhaps you sing together. Endless possibilities... (See “Flexible Form” at the end of this chapter.) (15mins, approx.)
4. Fiesta!: Eat together? Dance? Personal connecting, outside the circle. (No time limit!)

* Recommendations for the Fiesta:

Obviously, it’s up to each Tribe to decide how it wants to celebrate. The comments I want to make here are based on the observation that we can easily and quickly default from deep unity into the fragmented superficiality of the modern “party” way-of-being. So more than recommendations, here are two suggestions – that might help sustain the presence and intimacy you just experienced in the formal part of the gathering:

1. To sit down and all eat **together** – and make eating together a way of celebrating being a Tribe.
2. To dance **together** (not only individually, or in pairs). Traditional folkloric dances were danced together, in community - and I feel the breakdown of community is reflected in the individualism/coupledness of modern social dancing. You might even want to use the tool of Flexible Form (below) to co-create your own dances...

* Recommendations for Gathering Facilitation:

1. Have a facilitator each time, and take it in turns to facilitate.
2. The role of the facilitator includes:
 - (a) Holding the Opening. (If the Opening is going to include some Five Rhythms dance, say, the Facilitator doesn’t necessarily have to facilitate the dance – but they need to make sure the music system’s there, that people respect the space once the dance has begun, and so on.)
 - (b) Reminding the Tribe of agreed timings. (Including when each part of The Practice of Conscious Relating begins and ends.)
 - (c) Making sure that the Tribe has made the necessary agreements before beginning The Practice of Conscious Relating (who practice partners will be, whether Expression or Conversation, how long the third part will be).

(d) (If it's what the Tribe wants): to offer some reminders during The Practice of Conscious Relating about the different breathing patterns, and different focuses of attention, during the different parts of the Practice.

(e) If they feel it's necessary: to gently remind people to speak from Radical Honesty and in Emotional Connection during the third part of The Practice of Conscious Relating (whether it's being practiced as Expression or Conversation) - and to make any other interventions during the Gathering that they feel necessary in order to support an energy field of presence and Love.

(f) Holding the Closing.

* Recommendations regarding Children:

1. My suggestion is to include all of the children, even the very little ones, at least for a minute or two, during the Opening of the Gathering, and the Closing (of the formal part of the Gathering) - so that ***the whole Conscious Tribe*** can see and feel itself.

2. I'd also suggest letting children and adolescents participate in all of "the formal part of the Gathering" - if they want to, and if you feel they are able to.

3. Have a separate space ready for the babies, toddlers and children.

4. Take it in turns (at least two people at each Gathering) to be responsible for the children's space.

* Geographical Recommendation (Who to Invite?):

1. Ideally, everyone in the Tribe will live locally.

2. If this is not immediately possible, keep in mind the possibility that as Conscious Tribes become more popular, your current Conscious Tribe might subdivide into Tribes of people who live nearer to each other.

* Recommendations for Getting to Know Each Other Better:

1. As well as all meeting at the regular Conscious Tribe Gatherings, consider meeting as a Tribe for a whole day sometimes - especially early on, when people are just beginning to "get the feel" of being a Tribe, and some people might still not know each other very well. Try to meet like this once every two or three months.

2. In the early days, I'd suggest making a special effort to connect with people in the Tribe ***between*** Gatherings. Speak on the phone, meet up. Especially with people who are new to you.

3. You might want to create a Social Media Chat Group for the Tribe. Remember this is ***not, not, not*** a substitute for meeting face to face!

4. Finally: if for some reason, despite your commitment, you're not going to be able to attend a Gathering - write or record a message, and ask that it be shared at the Gathering. This helps us stay connected.

FLEXIBLE FORM - CO-CREATING OUR OWN TRADITIONS

If every person comes to the Conscious Tribe with their own existential path and practices, then how, practically, do we decide how we open and close our Gatherings or, say, design a ritual to honour the birth of a child, or the death of someone in the Tribe, or a celebration to honour a solstice or an equinox? If different people have different ideas about how things are done - then how do we maintain our unity?

By using what I like to call Flexible Form. Flexible Form is a technique, a method, that we can use to maintain our unity. For example: a Conscious Tribe wants to gather to celebrate the Summer Solstice... (And by the way, if we want to co-create communities that are embedded in the natural

world, I would strongly recommend celebrating the turning of the seasons). So... in this particular Conscious Tribe there are people influenced by the Celtic Tradition, people influenced by Buddhism, and people whose spirituality was forged at raves, on MDMA, on the dance-floor. How do we celebrate the Solstice then?

We sit together, and we agree a structure that includes everyone. We include, perhaps, Celtic nature-based ritual, Buddhist silent meditation, song, dance, and MDMA for whoever wants...

Now we have a form, a structure, for our celebration - our own, co-created form. And we try it out. And then, sometime before the next Summer Solstice - we meet again, and we talk about what we felt worked, and what we feel needs adjusting - and we add and subtract to the form we created.

In this way, year after year, we begin to establish our own Tradition! A Tradition that has the historical resonances, and carries the accumulated energies and power of repeated Form - and also the freedom and freshness of Flexibility. Our Tradition has a clear form, as did the rituals and celebrations of pre-modernity - and yet, in a very modern way, we are not subservient to the Tradition. We don't do things "because that's the way they're done". We humbly honour all that has gone before, but we don't follow blindly. We do our best to ensure the Tradition remains vibrant, and continues to serve the community. We re-shape and re-structure *our* Tradition, reverentially, together.

Flexible Form can be used, in exactly the same way, to structure and evolve ways of opening and closing the Tribe's Gatherings. A Tribe could co-create a Gathering Opening or Closing and review and adjust it every two or three months, for example. And more broadly, as we envision the Conscious Cultures we seek to co-create, we can use Flexible Form to evolve our own Traditions: Rites of Passage into adulthood for our children, for example. Traditions aligned with *our own* perspective.

As I understand it - over the last centuries, with the advancement of modernity, dogmatic, spiritual authorities have been increasingly rejected - and religious traditions therefore abandoned. And with ever-increasing urbanisation, the extremely ancient "folkloric" community traditions that honoured the passage of the seasons have come to feel irrelevant - and also been abandoned. But I feel passionately that we need Traditions. I believe community is woven on the loom of Traditions. But the Form must be Flexible - otherwise we'll end up in the hierarchical dogmatism of pre-modernity again!

(There's more on what we have lost by rejecting the pre-modern in the chapter "The Sacred Flight, The Feeling Of Tribe - Uniting Premodern, Modern And Postmodern.)

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