From the Hosting Team...

Calling and Hosting
As the Art of Hosting has been growing and spreading globally in recent years, there has been much talk in our community of stewards of a need to connect as founders and core stewards to tend the roots, to be together in person and take some time to have intentional conversations about how best to hold healthy space in service of a growing global community and the work we see calling in the world. We were hearing and feeling a yearning to have conversations and find some more clarity on how we can together tend to the integrity of what we are calling the Art of Hosting, and support it’s evolution and growth well, with a balance of conscious ‘protecting’ or caring for it’s center, while also maintaining the shared value of invitation, welcome and heart.

In 2009/10 offers to host this work through intentional gatherings for stewards were spoken by Maria Scordialis and Sarah Whitely in Greece and also by Chris Corrigan and Caitlin Frost on Bowen Island in Canada. A core team of founders and stewards stepped forward to organize the gatherings and it was decided to host 2 connected gatherings – one at Axladitsa in Greece, and one on Bowen Island at Xenia Center.

These two locations were chosen based on the strong invitation of the callers and a sense of value of hosting this important work in both Europe and North America – for access to attend from different parts of the globe and to do the work on land deeply connected to two of the homes of the Art of Hosting work and community. The core organizing and inviting team (some were involved in all calls and emails, some just a few ) were: Ria Baek, Bob Wing, Maria Scordalias, Sarah Whiteley, Toke Paludan Moller, Monica Nissen, Chris Corrigan, Caitlin Frost, Tenneson Woolf, Teresa Posakony and Tim Merry.

The two gatherings were connected through planning calls and shared harvest. We also ensured that there would be a number of bumblebees attending both gatherings. Some design conversation was shared, though each hosting team created their own design based on what they felt would best serve the work of the group at that time. In these ways the gatherings were connected, and they also each had a flavour and life of their own.

Inviting: intention and challenges
In order to be able to dive into this work on behalf of the whole, it was decided by the core team that we needed to keep the gatherings small and be very intentional about inviting a group most suited to this particular work at hand. It was challenging to keep the gathering size relatively small given that we also hold such strong value of inclusion and welcome and we wanted to tend to relationship well. To support clear inviting and focus on the intention of the gathering we came up with some principles for inviting: active involvement in the Art of Hosting over a long period of time (founders and those with experience for many years) to keep lineage and roots in the core conversation; holding the core pattern of the Art of Hosting deeply; works on behalf of the wider community of the Art of Hosting (harvesting, sharing on the list, other work beyond local); experience working with the Art of Hosting in more than one region; diversity within the small group size; some representation from ‘apprentice’ stewards to have that voice in the work.
We came up with a list, and then sent that list out, and asked that if people on the list knew of others who 'really needed to be there' for this focus.

We also had a maximum number of participants which we set at 20 to fit comfortably in the workspace/sleepspace at Xenia and asked that people register early to ensure a space. It was challenging to keep this group size with so many amazing, capable friends in this work. We did our best to stay with our inviting principles and ended up stretching to a cozy 24 and then closed the registration trusting that this group could do the work that needed doing at this particular time on behalf of the wider circle.

Accessibility was valued and the gathering was priced at a low cost covering amount – including space rental, accommodation, food, materials and some admin expenses. The hosting team offered their time for no cost.

Connection to a wider circle than were able to participate onsite was also facilitated by having two Skype connecting calls during the gathering to enable the voices of others to be heard and woven into our work onsite. Some initial harvest was shared out, and early morning group sharing on Skype was hosted, with harvest from that spoken into the morning circle.

A 3 day Warrior of the Heart retreat was offered before the Stewards gathering and attended by most of the host team and some participants. This provided some deep practice ground for our work together.

**Bowen Hosting Team/Design**

The hosting team for Bowen Island began our setting of intention and meeting together months before the gathering, to steward the invitation and also to sense into our design together. The core hosting team for Bowen Island was Chris, Caitlin, Teresa and Tenneson. Tim joined the team for some calls and some hosting support onsite.

High level of intention and attention to our hosting and design included:

- Listening deeply into the stories and harvest of the Greece gathering and what was being called for in this second gathering;
- Holding both the connection to the gathering in Greece and the uniqueness of the Bowen gathering.
- Keeping the focus on the work at hand; also having opportunity to enjoy and nourish our relationships;
- Attention to creating and holding a strong container; to keep the work in the center; to go deeply and boldly into our work together; to hold space for important conversations to happen together.
- Work toward some clarity and outcomes from a well tended core, that would serve us all in our work in the coming years and tend the growth of the Art of Hosting community well including some clarity around leadership structure, decision making process and other needs identified together.
- Tending consciously to ourselves as a hosting team, to support each other and the whole as we were both 'in' the work of the gathering, and hosting it. Engaging with our own personal practices to keep clarity. (Using the Work with our own limiting beliefs and thinking and find/keep our clarity or purpose and connection; tapping into the strength and wisdom of the land; Warrior of the Heart training and learning together; strength of our history of hosting together and deep friendship.)
- Using our best offering from the Art of Hosting to host this gathering. Doing our work intentionally; using the best of the forms available to us to support the deep intention of our gathering and the flow.

**Design flow:** Deepening into our work over 4 days together: starting with a meal together and tending our arriving; an evening in Circle to land in and name our work and space together; core hosting team holding space and design and inviting others in to share hosting (happened more toward the end); largely working in Open Space held with connection to purpose and center over the days; also working in Circle and some Cafe; tapping into the power and wisdom of the land with time and intention; intentional convergence; listening throughout to what was needed and also holding form and trusting design to hold us through the days; good food, beauty, spacious evenings to be in our friendship together; allowing space for intensity, reflection, conversation, good thinking, good questions, movement and emergence. Inviting good harvesting.

It was a powerful, intense and beautiful 4 days of work together with good mates and held by our wider global circle. Our design held us well in our learning, work and relationships. There will be more gatherings and more work to be done, and as a team we feel we offered our best to the center for this gathering. Much beauty emerged and some good clarity for moving forward.

*Caitlin, Chris, Tenneson and Teresa, Bowen Island, August 2010*
The Stewards Gathering Gallery

The Hosting Team:

Chris Corrigan  
Caitlin Frost  
Teresa Posakony

Tennson Woolf  
Tim Merry  
Toke Paludan Møller

Ria Baeck  
Bob Wing  
Mary Alice Arthur

Steward’s Gathering #2  Bowen Island, 6 - 10 August 2010
**Day 1 - Friday, 6 August**

**Evening check in.**

**Welcome & framing - It begins...**

**FRIDAY 6 AUGUST: CHECK IN**

**Narrative Harvest from Ria:** Checking in with 24 people, most of whom haven’t seen each other for some months or years, can take a long, long time. It is difficult for me now – it is almost midnight – to make sense of the many stories, questions, longings and expectations people bring to the circle. To me it feels like a heap of too many things without an overview or a clear view on how they all fit together. How are we ever going to get some clarity in that? Or maybe we don’t...

We are gathering here on Bowen Island, the island in front of Vancouver. Chris C. said that this island has always been a place of meeting; and we are hosted here in the oldest house on the island, and the land is host of the oldest three – 1,100 years old! Caitlin, Tenneson and Teresa all added their piece to the welcoming and the framing: reminding of so much we are stewarding, naming that we are in a gathering that is halfway, maybe now going more into convergence?

Some things were very clear: the presence of Maria and Sarah through the Greek statues of the goddesses Athena and Diana; a stone from Kufunda and later another reference to Africa; a healing essence from Brazil; a calling from Japan; stories from the first nations here close by; greetings from Denmark; stories from New Zealand… diversity is really here!

As I shared and talked a little with Tim, he named the complexity that we are dealing with: the voices who want everyone do a similar kind of hosting together with the voices that want the freedom for everyone to develop her/his own style of hosting; the individual and the collective; the ones that want to talk about strategic results and others that see the Art of Hosting as a spiritual practice; some that want some (natural) hierarchy and others that don’t... the big challenge will be to see the relatedness between all these different truths; to search for the connectedness underneath all these differences.

Don’t they say that the more diversity there is, the more resilient the system is?

There is something about naming the differences, being clear about the distinctions that I am passionate about. I truly believe that if we are able to name the differences, to see and acknowledge the different capacities we have that we will be able to move on in a better way. We would see and recognize who is best at what; we would use the best person on the right spot.

Some people tend to find it difficult to name the differences, as one would be more or less valuable; or one would be more right than another... some tend to take it personally... Will we
be able to go beyond this and stay in the learning together; expanding our awareness a little bit more so that the way you are different can be included in my and our embrace?

**Check In themes from Mary Alice:** Sitting in & remembering the lineages. • Bringing in our friends around the world - Axladitsa, Kufunda & others. • Listening to fit stewarding together. • Stewarding the inbetween towards the new story. • Being stewarded by life. • Friendship of consciousness. • Stewarding the questions of shadow & doubt. • To stand with community of practice, place, circles of courage & leadership. • Bringing the threads of witnessing, elder energy & wounded healer from Axladitsa. • Being responsive to what’s needed -- stewarding is an invitation with a challenge. • Walking between the worlds. • Stewarding has something to do with pioneering. • Our work is healing work. • The community has grown faster than its practice with itself. • Need multiple purposes, keep open. Will we stay together? • Something big is building

### Day 2 - Saturday, 7 August

**Morning:** Check in with Bob Wing, World Café **Afternoon:** Open Space

**Check in from Mary Alice:** Bob Wing’s request seemed simple -- half of you stand and half of you stay seated, the half standing help the others stand up. All around me gracious invitations were made and people rose to their feet until all were standing. Except me. I could see I was unnoticed, and got still inside to see if I should make myself noticed. “No, stay silent”, I heard. As the exercise was ending, finally someone noticed me, but it was too late. Finally I felt compelled to speak that the part that was forgotten is still pained. The circle looked surprised. For some reason that feeling that we should notice what has been unnoticed and that the forgotten was still outside our circle stayed with me strongly all through the day and into the next, making me feel disconnected and out of balance. What does this mean? What am I carrying for our community?

**Narrative Harvest from Ria:** This Saturday morning, we spend the morning is World Café and later some time in dyads.

I noticed the hosts of the Café needed to expand the timing of the rounds as we were all so immersed in the conversations. We were asked to share stories about our work in the world and the offerings we have to our own Art of Hosting community. The dyad was about: What are the questions in the spaces between us that will support us in the work and our global community of practice to grow well?

To make a long story short we ended up with a whole bunch of post-it notes in the middle of our space, - in three different colours – related with Our Work, Our Offerings and Our Questions. It was kind of overwhelming by the sheer enormity of what we are dealing with, knowing that we are just 24 people in this room, and there are way more people outside of this circle!

We are now – in one of the first open space sessions - trying to make some clusters and some map or framework to make sense of it all. It seems like the Work – all that we are stewarding - is the application of our qualities and our practices; it is kind of visible in the world; like the flower or the three that we see there standing or flowering. When we tried to make sense of the Offerings at first that wasn’t easy.
We tried to link it with the work categories, but that didn’t fit really well. We came to see them as the qualities of hosting that we all seem to care about. It seem more like the roots and the stem of the flower, the three or even for a whole ecosystem.

Then we have a big amount of all very engaging questions, which arose out of our dialogue with two. If we look at them they are both about emerging practices and a deeper understanding of the qualities of hosting.

In short, the whole framework and all what we do is about improving our quality of life. If that is not the outcome of our work or our offerings then it just isn’t good enough!

Here follow the wealth of our questions, listed from the deepest level up to the call to action.

**World Café Process:**

What is the work you are stewarding? What are the offerings you are stewarding for the community? We worked onto green paper and laid out a mapping of our work. We then worked onto pink paper and clustered our offerings.

What are the questions in the spaces between us that will support the work and the Community of Practice to go well? We worked in pairs onto orange paper and laid these into the mapping of work and offerings.

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**Offerings**

- Willingness to call out the pain/fear/shadow to the center so that communities can heal
- Standing in the tension, pain, resilience, passion & energy -- our diversity manifests the questions, knowing and learning.
- Intentionally working with our containers. membranes and boundaries with clarity, intention, kindness, love and learning so they encompass difference and work with the essence -- the DNA -- wherever it is needed
- Going beyond the softness and hardness to move to the essence, the core.
- Working powerfully locally.
- Building bridges which create translocal connections linking local work. Being the bridge that uses invitation and attraction to link the future and the past, the emergent and the conventional.
- Working in ways which acknowledge economic differences
- Respecting the diverse forms and unique ways in which this endless story unfolds.
- Living happens through experiencing it.
- Knowing that AoH is part of a family of many emerging patterns and communities of practice -- OST, World Cafe, Circle, AI -- and continuously bringing their learning in.
- Creating and offering, synthesizing harvesting and depicting the deeper pattern and the bigger questions.
- Listening to name and harvest the underlying stories, metaphors and beliefs that shape our lives, work and worldviews.
- Relentlessly supporting communities of practice which focus on invitation, hosting, circle practice and deep council
- Consciously teaching practice.
- Living the four fold practice -- convening, participating, our selves and cocreating.
- Consciously and continually inviting in all the generations.
- Working with music, art, poetry in the work and in the harvest.
- Calling the learning village; being in the learning dojo together.
- Learning from what doesn't work -- "the art of failing."
- Giving it away.
- Acknowledging and relying on core spirituality to frame our work.
- Awakening the art of harvesting among practitioners
- Being the stillness -- balancing the movement

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**Questions**

*Roots of our wisdom – the bigger story*

- How can we remember the roots of our wisdom?
- What kind of ancestor do you want to be?
- How do we learn to learn about the wholeness, the oneness?
- What if we really believed nothing is missing?
- How do we imagine a world that isn’t broken?
• What is the underlying story that is the foundation of this work?
• How do we recognize and host the mycelium field?
• How do we best steward the parts in the relationship to the whole?
• What is our work in bridging and bringing the earth and ancestor consciousness to the post-modern hell (industrial age)?
• What is the essential DNA of Art of Hosting and Harvesting – and how do we become carriers of that DNA and go deeper than practicing tools, patterns, theories?

Art of Hosting as Community of Practice
• When is the AoH ‘done’ its work in the world?
• Art of Hosting expanding from 2000... have we hit our container?
• What is AoH not? Who is not welcome in the AoH community?
• How do we work with conscious closure? Host the conversations into transformation, about resilience, how we exist in more and more alignment with the planet?

• What are the agreements (explicit and implicit) that will serve us well as a CoP?
• What are the paradoxes that would be helpful for us to name and embrace together?
• A council on the Shadows: What is the shadow of a relationship and mates-based culture?
• What are the realms in which coherence and alignment is beneficial? Where/when is the destructive?
• Where could clear hierarchy serve the AoH? Does it?

• How do we activate the cultural memories in our DNA to sustain the health of this community?
• Where is our threshold of longing and threshold of memory now?
• What are the next level practices and structures needed to steward this work so that it may happen in a good way?
• What is the back end support that is needed to sustain this CoP?
• What is our existing body of knowledge that supports why AoH works and how it can be sustained?

• What comes in the design of journals? Who designs? How do we honorably release tools, theories etc?
• What is the minimum cohesion that AoH CoP needs to fruitfully learn with other CoPs? (SOL, Reos, Future Search, OST, WC...)

Qualities of Hosting
• What’s the balance between emergent and strategic?
• What does it mean to hold the virtual/energetic container for each other?
• How do we elegantly pass the torch of leadership to keep the processes natural and organic?

• How do we steward with not-knowing necessary to allow and hold the space open for ongoing learning in the flow of life and evolution?
• How do we keep our perspective when we work so intensely at a local level within an evolving global community of practice?

• Where do we honor the art of failure?

• What the fuck do we do about it now?
• Where is the ‘just do it’? looking for these moments that are not premeditated but completely right when ‘just do it’?

• What is the difference between leadership, stewardship and hosting?

Practices of AoH
Harvest practice
• How can we be more intentional about sharing our learning? Personal responsibility? Personal intentionality?
• How do we harvest and host our unfolding story so we can understand, nurture and magnify what we’re learning and what we’re bringing?
• How/what is the best process to harvest our collective wisdom so that it becomes a body of knowledge?

Cross-pollinate – connecting practice
• How to nurture, support and value the bumblebees/connectors in our system to encourage maximum health and cross-pollination?
• How do we create more connection to cross-pollinate learnings across different local CoPs?

Practice of core teams and stewarding
• What is the strength of a core AoH team that makes an AoH training go well?
• What is the path to become a ‘pattern keeper’, a ‘host of hosts’, or lead a hosting team (holding the integrity)?
• What is the boundary/identity of stewardship?
• How can stewardship be the next level of the AoH?
• How can stewardship strengthen our relationship to face the challenges that are coming and help us survive as humans?
Measure impact
- What is the matrix/mandala that describes this work and what are the metrics that being to articulate its impact?

*Captured on 7 August 2010, includes input from two wider steward calls*

**World Café Process:**

Here’s how those elements fit together in practice.

These are the work domains we uncovered. (mindmap below)

We noticed both these domains (see below) and a continuum of magnitude of work, from small local systems to regional and governmental work, from development work to full scale transformation.

How the AoH works

From Chris

Questions are emergent, we bring them from our work to the centre and from the centre to our work.

Offerings to the centre support the community and influence our work. When we look in, we can see each other and our specific offerings.

Our work in the world is visible externally when we look out. The centre is at our back and is emergent, arising from a combination of our offerings and the questions we ask. That’s what makes us a community of practice.

Hosting is about improving our quality of life. Purpose is the invisible leader in the centre.

**Hosting is about improving our quality of life.**

What’s visible (the flower) are the areas of life we host in & the scale of engagement we host at.

What’s invisible are the practices & offerings we make as practitioners (the roots) are the conduit; how we make the qualities manifest.

The qualities of hosting (the soil) are the ground from which the practices grow, deepen & expand.
Harvest from Bob S on the Café question: What are we stewarding?

- Willingness to call out the pain/fear/shadow to the center so that communities can name - heal - move on
- Standing in the tension, pain, resilience, passion & energy -- our diversity manifests the questions, knowing and learning.
- Intentionally working with our containers. membranes and boundaries with clarity, intention, kindness, love and learning so they encompass difference and work with the essence -- the DNA -- wherever it is needed
- Going beyond the softness and hardness to move to the essence, the core.
- Working powerfully locally.
- Building bridges, which create trans-local connections; linking local work. Being the bridge that uses invitation and attraction to link the future and the past, the emergent and the conventional.
- Working in ways which acknowledge economic differences
- Respecting the diverse forms and unique ways in which this endless story unfolds.
- Living happens through experiencing it.
- Knowing that AoH is part of a family of many emerging patterns and communities of practice -- OST, World Cafe, Circle, AI -- and continuously bringing their learning in.
- Creating and offering, synthesizing harvesting and depicting the deeper pattern and the bigger questions.
- Listening to name and harvest the underlying stories, metaphors and beliefs that shape our lives, work and worldviews.
- Relentlessly supporting communities of practice which focus on invitation, hosting, circle practice and deep council
- Consciously teaching practice.
- The modernization of Council practice and keeping it grounded in ancient lineages/service
- Protector of simplicity -- it you don’t have stewards, you will have owners
- Apprenticeship as training
- Core teams as a conduit for presence & purpose
- Living the four-fold practice -- convening, participating, our selves and co-creating.
- Consciously and continually inviting in all the generations.
- Working with music, art and poetry in the work and in the harvest.
- Calling the learning village; being in the learning dojo together.
- Learning from what doesn’t work -- “the art of failing.”
-经济技术
- Acknowledging and relying on core spirituality to frame our work.
- Awakening the art of harvesting among practitioners
- Being the stillness -- balancing the movement
Afternoon Open Space Sessions
3:00 - 4:30
- How do we remember and articulate the ancestral roots of all our practices? (Christina)
- What boundaries/membranes serve us in stewarding well and how can we hold that space with integrity and clarity heart (Caitlin)
- Harvest & map the wealth of this morning (Ria)
- AoPL & social justice: emergence & hosting in oppressed communities (Tuesday, Kelly, Nancy)

4:30 - 6:00
- What is the simplest and most elegant way to document and bring metrics to the impact of AoH (Phil)
- What is it we are stewarding and how we will do with with and for our community? (Mary Alice & Monica)/session did not happen

Open Space Harvests
❖ AoPL and Anti-Oppression Work

We had a great conversation about the intersection of AoPL and social justice work. It was clear to us that social justice work would benefit greatly from AoPL practices and also that AoPL could be positively informed by a lens of social justice.

We are ready for a new conversation, and we’re calling it. In the session we identified both the “need” for this new conversation and AoPL practices that could support this conversation. More coming soon!

Action Group Harvest: AoPL and Anti-Oppression Work

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>What?</th>
<th>Who?</th>
<th>When?</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Paper re: AoPL and anti-oppression work</td>
<td>Kelly/Tuesday</td>
<td>Fall 2010</td>
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<tr>
<td>AoPL and Social Justice Workshop</td>
<td>Tuesday/Kelly/NYC CoP</td>
<td>Spring 2011</td>
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<tr>
<td>Connect with others in Boston</td>
<td>Steven to make connection</td>
<td>ASAP</td>
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*Jerry Nagel and Nancy Egan will also support this work going forward.

** No invitation to the larger list at this time.

From Tuesday: My stewardship was ignited at this gathering! I found many places to step in and several things to take back to my local community. Most significantly, for me, was the intention and calling of an “AoPL and Social Justice” gathering to be developed in deep connection with the NYC AoH community. I stand at the backs of those who have named themselves as stewards of the stewards and am humbled and grateful for their heeding the call.

❖ What is the simplest and most elegant way to document and then develop a set of metrics on the impact of Art of Hosting?

Who Attended: The session was called by Phil and attended by Tim, Toke, Jerry, Laura, Tuesday and ???

Framing: Phil framed the question suggesting that we not limit ourselves to just thinking about outcome/impact measurement solely in response to others requests/requirements (although that is a legitimate reason to think about the need) but also to think about what the Art of Hosting might add to the whole field of outcome/impact measurement.

Agreement on Issue: This is being asked for more and more by funders and other potential customers considering an AoH way of operating and that this is something that we need to pay attention to now. Examples of these kinds of requests and how people in the room were responding was discussed.

Insights:
- Don’t separate the narrative from the numbers
- Measurement changes whatever you measure
• Measurement is an intervention in and of itself
• Post Hoc measurement is not the “truth” about what just happened
• Post Hoc measurement attempts to describe what just happened
• Measurement that is tied to the purpose narrative reinforces the aspiration of the purpose and is part of making the intervention successful
• Write the purpose(s) statement, ask what behavior would exemplify the achievement of the purpose(s) and then develop the measures that align with supporting the attainment of the purpose(s), deliver the intervention and measure the results using the measures developed around the purpose(s). In this way measurement becomes an intervention that supports the achievement of the desired outcomes. This information is then fed back into the establishment of purpose(s) 2.0 and over and over.
• This is like writing the narrative of your future and then tying measures to that narrative as an act of helping the narrative to come true.
• This is the field of “social action research”

Next Steps:

• Several people in the session committed to trying this measurement concept in their next AoH trainings and sharing the results with others in the group as a place to start the experiment.

Day 3 - Sunday, 8 August

Morning: Check in & Open Space
Afternoon: Solo Experience, Circle

Narrative Harvest from Ria: It is Sunday morning now, more or less half way in our gathering. Yesterday afternoon, with all the rain and sessions always being longer than the scheduled time, it was decided to not convene again in the circle, as it would interfere with the dinner being ready. Some found this not a good idea, as if some harvest and stories were present and the circle didn’t feel closed.

The evening went on with taking walks on the island and many conversations bubbling up all over the place.

This morning Jerry and Toke initiated a circle connecting with the ones of the steward circle but not present here with us on Bowen Island. The feeling in my body is really weird... Tim is having a major headache... I recognize my physical feeling as a movement of energy that is happening in the field. It is a movement of energy that hasn’t found its flow.

The yurt where we are gathering is cleansed with sage and sweet grass, reminding me of many ceremonies in different places on the globe.

Ringing the big bowl in the middle...
Silence...
Ringing of the bowl again...

Chris singing his song: The old world is dying, and the new is yet the come. The old world is dying, and the new is yet the come. ... and we all chimed in.

Chris continues: It feels like we are in between. The weather is still, and the rain has stopped. Things are ready to move. The salmon can taste their stream in the ocean. Imagine such sensitivity! Welcome.

Today... the deep work in service of the whole.

Some reflections on the call of this morning: the bridge with the previous gathering was made. We heard their input; felt very extraordinary. The space
started to shimmer. What else to do than sit in that? This was a morning practice!

The core principles of stewardship were written down in 2005; are we reinventing, or maybe we never know and it stays to be a question. Is that stewardship?

• What is the core and hold it, not to smother it.
• Interest in the art of failure.
• More people are using the term AoH more and more, it comes into common language, into the streets.
• How do we pass the torch of leadership? And what is the difference between stewardship, leadership and hosting?
• How can stewardship be a doorway into the next level and not a thing?
• We are creating the community, the arc for what is to come.
• The DNA, the journey to the roots… dig deeper, even it stays dark.
• What are we stewarding into conscious closure?
• Feeling the energy from afar that something is going on…
• What is the new field that is emerging?

It felt as they were the Wisdom Council! They brought a profound level of check in and seeded a clarity of the rim. They were there in the moment. What is the wisdom point of each of us?

A need to sense the whole… an invitation to have some open time for the whole… we are not yet where emergence is happening…

Then there was a kind of tension… are we staying in Open Space or are we going into circle… I recognized the tension that was present in the previous gathering in Axladitsa, although not named in the same way. And suddenly I knew what was my real question – and my weird physical feeling disappeared! This was my question: What is the core of the tension that was present and how do we make it creative? And what has this to do with the governance of our network – why are we not using the 5th paradigm in our network?

Open Space Harvests

Morning Open Space Sessions
10:15 - 11:45
• What do we know or what knowledge is accessible that supports why AoH’s set of human technologies are successful as an operating system for learning, change management, rebirthing organisations, personal growth and building communities? (Laura)
• What are we learning: “Pattern Keeper”, Core teams, Host of hosts, apprentice? What do we recommend? (Teresa)
• Are we willing to sit with each other, to explore stewardship & ownership to name our shadows with each other and the work? (Christina)

11:00 - 12:30
• “Who is here is who is supposed to be here”, “What is supposed to happen is exactly what is supposed to happen”. Invitation: “Who needs to be here now” [being more precise with invitation] (Kelly)
• What is the new story that is emerging? What does it look like? What is our role/connection to it? (Jerry & Mary Alice)
• What is the core of the tension that we just experienced (circle vs Open Space) -- how to turn it into more co-creativity? What has it to do with our unclear governance of the network (the 5th paradigm) (Ria)

There is a Dojo - a place of practice
Far beyond the place
even beneath the space
within time it is hidden

Simplicity
is the language
the practice of love
is its DO

Practicing is
the DO of DO-paths
where being and doing
becomes one
by letting go

The fee is
not to judge
breath its rhythm
trust the glue

Consciousness the sensei
Fulfilment its goal
Healing of hearts
is its action

It needs no protection
Life itself guards is gates

Joy its song
Companionship its gift

It has no name
In this moment I call it
Dojo of the Heart

My heart overflows with gratitude

For life
For being awake
NOW

-- Toke
Are we willing to sit with each other, to explore stewardship & ownership & name our shadows with each other and the work?

We acknowledge that shadow is part of our hosting work and offer this harvest from the Open Space sessions held on 8 August to continue this conversation in the network.

Our working definition of “shadow” is the things that cannot be said or are said with great peril to the speaker. Working presumption: the primary shadow work is to name these things, and to support those who name them—to not ostracize topics or people. Through this naming and claiming process we shift covert energy to overt energy: covert/hidden energy or capacity hinders a group; overt/open energy or capacity releases a group to its full potential. Christina: “I offer my definition of shadow—to me it’s the things that cannot be said or are said at great peril to the speaker. If someone takes that risk, it’s likely that circle becomes everyone but him or her. Sometimes because shadow can build up, the person who says “the emperor has no clothes”. The story never says what the village did once the little girl named the fantasy. The reason for having conversations of slight discomfort because we can stand slight discomfort. The longer we put it off the bigger it gets. Just as I see flag of stewardship with a person in front of tank does not imply a lack of boundary. Down the atomic level there is a boundary. How do you create a membrane that protects and does not harm those outside? I need to have this conversation about breaking my heart open over and over again in all my relationships. The great pain in the world is when we don’t see the seeds and wait for the thistle to come. My fierceness for this in AoH is that we must have courage ourselves to sit in the tension how can we hold it when anger or despair comes into the room in the work we do. I’ve seen people be hugely disruptive and others who have brought the shadow for profound change.” [During this conversation a bird flew into the yurt, circled the gathering and finally flew out again.]

Questions that lived in the conversation:

- What is the gift of shadow?
- What is the gift of being afraid to hurt each other?
- What are the AoH practices around conversations for clearing shadow?
- How do we host shadow in our AoH experience? How do we make time and space for disruption of the design and weave the learning back into the design?
- How do I be in this practice of shadow tending?
- How do we become hosts who are willing to host the shadow?

What are the tools to help us bring shadow into a conversation?

- Agreements that no one is ostracized for naming;
- Agreement to speak to and energetically feed the fire (center—there needs to be a transpersonal point so everyone can look together at the shadow—not move it from person to person);
- Say “yes” to whatever comes in that teaches us without causing harm to us;
- Helping to coach each other in neutral, in the moment, to call back blaming/shaming language and speak in terms of the issues;
- Inquire into and follow disturbance;
- Go for the heart’s capacity to break into openness.

Things we think we’re learning about shadow:

To consistently inquire if there is something not being addressed in a team, between mates, in the AoH field, so that we can steward it when it is a “dust bunny” and not an “elephant.”

That we do have practices and skills to help us hold necessary conversations.
At the end of a shadow work session there needs to be a ceremonial closure that rises out of group knowing.

We have resources in our network that support our learning about this. To start with see PeerSpirit’s booklet: *Understanding Shadow and Projection in Circles and Groups*, and Chapters 7 & 8 of *Calling the Circle*, and Chapters 8 & 9 of *The Circle Way*. See [www.peerspirit.com](http://www.peerspirit.com)

**What do we know or what knowledge is accessible that supports why AOH’s set of Human Technologies are successful as an operating system for learning, change management, re-birthing organizations, personal growth, and building communities?**

**Who Attended:** The session was called by Laura and attended by Phil, Toke, Jerry, and Ria

**Framing:** Laura framed the question and began with ‘what already exists?’. Ria shared the AOH website’s .ning.org which includes the beginning of a listing of research and resources that have been collected by a variety of AOH individuals. Toke, Phil and Jerry discussed ‘knowing’ from two perspectives: Wisdom and Writings/Research.

**Agreement on Issue:** More and more, funders and participants want to know, ‘how do you know’ these technologies work or make a difference in organizations and in the lives of those both trained and included in AOH work. “It is time,” was the agreement of the session attendees to support existing lists of resources and adding to the list of resources. Wisdom – from the heart; Writings/Research from the head. Both are needed now!

**Insights:** A quick listing of ‘Wisdom’ was generated by the group. This list included:

**AOH...**

- builds on nature and ceremony
- demands that we respect that we are individuals and part of the whole at the same time
- honor’s lineages that speak to the breath
- invites the path to be walked
- speaks from the heart
- supports personal aspirations
- allows space for the human dilemma: we are individuals AND we are collectively a community
- brings out the best in both individuals and in a community

**AOH works when...**

- its language helps to understand the practices, challenge, and excite
- it is practiced not just spoken
- it is done for the common good
- we begin to remember our oneness
- the power is in the practice (the medium is the message!)

**AOH is...**

- an invitation to host, be hospitable
- real
- of life’s force
- audacious
- not ‘subject / object’ instead it is ‘I am in relationship with you and we effect one another.
  - a way to ‘co-act’ forward
I have spent much time in reflection on the gathering, the learning and offerings and the shared hearts. It was truly a privilege to spend time with everyone at the Stewards gathering and to deepen my own connections to the community and the work. The graciousness with which the offering of stepping into the circle and sit on the stones next to the fire was made and the fullness of heart and spirit with which many stepped into it and the respect for the places each of us are and the choices made to step in or hold for another time and the strength of support from everyone offered to those sitting in the circle will beautifully spiral out into the world to create spaces for more and more seekers to join in the work of all being in relationship with all.  

--- Jerry

AOH allows...

- space for the human dilemma between individuals and the collective
- the more practitioners the better!
- each person to find their own personal practices

- The time (in the world of AOH) is now!
- People are ready to ‘step up’ and say, “I am ready to do this!”
- AOH stewarding focuses on the whole and the parts.

A quick listing of research theory and findings in support of AOH:

- Carl Rodgers – Becoming a person
- Victor Frankl – Man's search for meaning
- Otto Scharmer – Social field theory, downloading & dumping, debate & dialogue, presencing
- Social constructivism - moving into relationships: Diane Marie Hosking – Tilberg U; Sheila McNemee – U of New Hampshire
- Narrative Theory: Harlene Anderson
- Ken Gurgins – Swathmore
- Charles Rapp - U of Kansas; Relationships are primary and essential
- Vigotsky’s Sociocultural Theory of Cognition
- Ken Wilber – Whole and Parts
- Steve Dunce – Melbourne
- Paul McLean and Maslow: Layers of the brain and hierarchy of needs
- Neurobiology research – humans are 98% alike
- Edgar Mitchell – Apollo & science of interconnectedness
- Cultural and social development components: Choices to do it differently
- Skill development research: combining theory and practice
- New Brain Research: Language affects thoughts
- Process ontology – always in a state of coming
- New findings and promises with qualitative research
- Csikszentmihalyi & The Flow - Flow is the mental state of operation in which a person in an activity is fully immersed in a feeling of energized focus, full involvement, and success in the process of the activity. Proposed by Mihály Csikszentmihályi, the positive psychology concept has been widely referenced across a variety of fields. According to Csikszentmihályi, flow is completely focused motivation. It is a single-minded immersion and represents perhaps
the ultimate in harnessing the emotions in the service of performing and learning. In
flow the emotions are not just contained and channeled, but positive, energized, and
aligned with the task at hand. To be caught in the ennui of depression or the agitation
of anxiety is to be barred from flow. The hallmark of flow is a feeling of spontaneous
joy, even rapture, while performing a task.

Next Steps:

- The group with work with Ria to add to lists of research, a call for research (not just
citings, but citings accompanied by a quick summary re: application to supporting AOH
- AOH community will be invited to add to wisdom and theory/research

✦ What are we learning: “Pattern Keeper”, Core teams, Host of hosts, apprentice? What do we recommend?

Calling Team:
The calling team invites an Art of Hosting into an organization or community. They name the core purpose of the Art of
Hosting session, create an invitation that resonates with the purpose, actively invite people and fill the room, handle logistics
and local hospitality. The calling team works with the core hosting team to deeply understand the purpose and create high
level design. Some calling team members may wish to be part of design day, preparations, and hosting of the event. Often
the voice of the calling team welcomes the community, names the purpose and challenge and stays in touch with the core
hosting team through the art of hosting session.

Core Host teams:
There is an art to constituting strong hosting teams. At least one Pattern Keeper and most often 2-3 depending on the
composition of the hosting team and the engagement/situation. There is a commitment to having a strong team and not
working alone.

- Pattern Keepers have:
  - Depth of AoH practice in the world and depth in doing AoH workshops.
  - Depth of personal practice, being on path of learning and growth.
  - Able to anchor a core hosting team
  - Deep knowing of being a “pattern keeper” of the AoH, affirmed by others (see becoming a pattern keeper).
  - Gifts economically to AoH and encourages core teams to do so (scholarships, website, etc)

- Skilled Co-hosts:
  - Capable of stepping into different roles in the hosting team – actively coaching teams, day hosting, offering teachings
    in full circle or smaller groups.
  - Has experienced an Art of Hosting and have a hosting practice.
  - Often a skilled co-host for a long time before becoming a pattern keeper.
  - Strong peers in the hosting team.

- Apprentice: Someone who has been through an Art of Hosting or two and wants to know more: more deeply in design,
  how to work deeply in a team. Student of what all goes on here and how does it work. Path to being a strong practitioner.
  Part a broader learning journey for them. Person holds and is of service to the field and helping those who come as
  participants.

- Diversity of the team: Encourage diversity of gifts and practice within the hosting team.

Apprentice:
The Art of Hosting is a community of practitioners. Often an Art of Hosting is the launch of a broader learning journey and
period of developing your “practice.” The learning journeys go on many paths, some deeply personal and many to develop
new skills and competence in the Art of Hosting methods, models, as well as design and hosting. Some people request a
more formal relationship of “apprentice” where they receive ongoing coaching/support from a pattern keeper or skilled co-
host. This can happen virtually or in best cases in local community and local work. When local, people can partner together
in designs, hosting, and shared learning to support the growth and depth of the work and each other as individuals. It is
always about practice and learning. What are the places we can find to practice and how can we continue to learn at our
next level. Feedback Loops, learning opportunities, and community are core to growth.
Stewardship:
The Art of Hosting is rooted in a field of friendship and “mates” - showing up for each other and supporting each in our work and learning. It is a generative field of co-creation of the broad community of practice.

The community of practice is held in a field of stewardship and offerings. Gifts of stewarding are welcome and needed. It exists, grows and evolves in a healthy way because a dedicated community of people care for it, offer into it and hold it with intention. This stewardship of the Art of Hosting operates at a number of levels - including recognized Stewards of the Whole; Stewards ‘sitting on the rocks’ - a core smaller circle of this group who volunteer to meet regularly and intentionally hold the empty center; Leaders of local communities of practice; Leaders of particular Art of Hosting initiatives. While not officially identified there is also the important contributions of stewardship offered by individuals in the wider Art of Hosting community who contribute to stewardship of the Art of Hosting in some way.

For the purpose of clarity of roles and responsibility, finding each other in our work, supporting and learning from each other, some outline of the ***stewarding categories are offered here:

Stewards (of the Whole):
The Stewards of the Whole, in some significant way, are actively and on an ongoing basis tending to the whole and the integrity of the Art of Hosting. Stewards have chosen the Art of Hosting as a primary community of practice and are actively working to advance the work. They are often but not always also pattern keepers. Stewards of the Whole are both self and peer recognized by the community of Stewards of the Whole. (decide if it makes sense to post this list on the website - there has been some request for this for clarity, and for people to be able to find each other.)

Some of the responsibilities the Stewards of the Whole are holding are:
- Active contribution and leadership of the listserv.
- Creation and contribution to Ning site,
- Actively inviting and bringing the Art of Hosting into many organizations and communities.
- Willingness to attend to the apprenticing of others with integrity.
- Leading out on significant AoH initiatives and connecting trans-locally.
- Actively coaching and supporting individuals who are using the AoH Practice.
- Contributing to models, practices, and the wisdom field of the AoH.
- Anchors the Art of Hosting community in some way,
- Actively (and sometimes fiercely) tends to the integrity of the Art of Hosting.
- Harvesting well from their work and offering that to broader community.
- Providing leadership to an area of research or other temporary leadership team.
- Creation and sharing of the generations of the journal.
- Gathering to tend to the needs of the Whole.

Stewards “sitting on the rocks:” (LET those on the rock enter that here..... and ask for thoughts/ideas if needed.)

Leaders of Local Communities of Practice: Another essential leadership area within the Art of Hosting community is that of the Leaders of the Local Communities of Practice. This is a powerful role that grows the work and the field of practice in significant ways. Those working with local communities of practice have documented some of what they are doing to help the communities be vibrant and grow in impact, wisdom, and friendship. Leader of Local Communities of Practice are self identified.

Leaders of particular AoH Initiatives: Another essential leadership area is within organizations and communities where the AoH is the core operating system. These are often large scale efforts others are watching from and learning from and referencing them as part of the story of what is possible. Leaders of particular AoH initiatives are self identified.

Typical Pathways to becoming a Pattern keeper:
- Time spent participating in Art of Hosting trainings, work and community.
- Declare intention to (at least two) pattern keepers (see list on website if needed.)
- Seek Pattern Keepers to apprentice and/or work together with over a period of time

Steward’s Gathering #2 Bowen Island, 6 - 10 August 2010
• Offer yourself/your work into the AoH community- sharing on list serve, harvesting, assisting with site, calling, organizing, creating resources to share.
• When you feel ready: self-declare to Pattern Keepers you have been working with and ask for their support. If they agree with your readiness - then the intention to name and take on the responsibility of a pattern keeper is spoken to the Stewards of the Whole - by both the apprentice coming in, and the ‘sponsoring’ pattern keepers - sharing the intention and why it feels right. (If the person is also being identified as a Steward of the Whole- this would happen in a similar way thought both would be named separately.)
• Then - if there is an official list - the name would be added.

Typical Ways of becoming a Steward of the Whole:
• Time spent participating in Art of Hosting trainings, work and community.
• Declare intention to (at least two) Steward(s) of the Whole.
• Seek out Stewards and pattern keepers to apprentice and/or work together over a period of time
• (work with more than one Steward; at least one pattern keeper; work in different settings/environments/communities)
• Offer yourself/your work into the AoH community- sharing on list serve, harvesting, assisting with site, calling, organizing, creating resources to share.
• When you feel ready: self-declare to Stewards you have been working with and ask for their support. If they agree with your readiness - then the intention to name and take on the responsibility of a Steward of the Whole is spoken to the other Stewards - by both the apprentice coming in, and the ‘sponsoring’ Stewards - sharing the intention and why it feels right. (If the person is also being identified as a pattern keeper - this would happen in a similar way thought both would be named separately.)
• Then - if there is an official list - the name would be added.

✦ What is the essential DNA of AoH and how do we become carriers of the DNA and go deeper than patterns, tools and theories?

Hosted by Martin & Christina. Eleven Stewards attended this session, held in the Lodge on Bowen Island.

Martin: We held these questions because if we understand the essence, it allows us to listen to what emerges and use patterns, tools and theories (and whatever else emerges) in service of need and purpose. It’s a bit like cooking, you learn some recipes and you cook well a fixed number of offerings under certain conditions with certain ingredients, but if you understand the “essence” or the “art” you are free to create.

Jerry: There are a limited number of known cooking techniques, but what if we created or discovered a different one? It opens possibility.

Christina: If we listen to the lineage it tells us what is the DNA. It a leader in every chair, a deep listening.

Teresa: There are working agreements.

Nancy: Part of the DNA is holding the paradox we live in. If we set patterns we become what we don’t want. It is in Service of life or life affirming. Seeking wise action.

Jerry: There is a world view that’s important to know. It goes beyond tools and practices.
**Martin:** If we have a feedback loop as part of the DNA, then it helps us create the new by sensing what happens after we link need and purpose to action.

**Teresa:** Part of what I am hearing is what the 4 Fold Practice does. General agreement around the 4 Fold practice as an essential part of the DNA.

**Ann:** In understanding the “world view” of the group each voice in room is important.

**Teresa:** ...and then there are the “Hobbit tools”. That is part of the 5 Breaths of design.

**Kathy:** What do we need to define more? What are the lightest structures, agreements and paradoxes that will give us both touchstones and simplicity (ie; 4 Fold Practice) What is the worldview we all operate from – not all articulated yet? There is a correlation between how we invite people and where the conversation actually begins (5 breaths). 5 breaths uncovers the longing and is a dive into clarity. What is the art and what is the form? Being “in form” together – live in the form for awhile and it takes you on your own learning. People want to talk a lot about the practices and methodology. There is a need to know.

**Nancy:** Need to spend more time on “preject”. Knowing who the people are, understand the context and attending to who you invite.

**Martin:** Yes the left side of the U for AOH in sensing and design.

**Kelly:** and “intentional invitation” one that speaks personally and inclusively.

**Christina:** Connection, intention and participation. Power of story in creating shared meaning.

**Steve:** Beauty, presence and practice are essential.

**Nancy:** Language is important as part of the DNA. A better name that describes all of this is participatory leadership.

**Jerry:** The DNA is a relationship with all. We are in relationship with all. It’s life affirming. What it is not is being bounded as human beings. Our ontology (or fundamental way of being or what we know) is one of becoming and not a fixed point.

**Martin:** Yes so what is present and how entities may relate can change and so there needs to be an awareness of that and that patterns and tools and theories may or may not serve.

**Jerry:** We are not bounded human beings (multi-being). We are about our own local ontologies – local truths (ontology is"what is real"). We construct our truths – main tool to do that is language and dialog principally. Not about dualistic object where we are one and the other is other that we then essentialize. There is a view that is used even in the military of: WORLD VIEW ------ METHODS/PRACTICES-- ACTIONS Its not me convincing you of my local truth but how we can co-act. Epistemology is how we know what we know. In Western science and philosophy, we know what we know through subject/object analysis. But no subject is neutral, we’re part of what’s happening, the moment we enter into any relationship with it. The moment we enter into subject/object, we become either/or, a dualistic worldview, we essentialize it as “the other”. The AOH worldview is we are always in relationship with each other and fall part of each other. We are all multi-beings. The question still remains: how do we know what we know?

**Nancy:** Part of the DNA is Harvest and conversation is not the only harvest.

**Martin:** Yes, we mostly use it as an artifact to serve as a memory and a reminder but often there are still questions that remain so part of the harvest is to name the questions that remain and what we will do with them. I think also, there is a harvest for pattern finding, much the same as we do with World Café and feed it back into system with some sort of feedback loop.
Someone: “It needs to be built into the design.: What do we hope to harvest and what will we do with it! It would be a good practice to put into the design of an AOH and not just a “teach”

Everyone seemed to feel that listening deeply to need and purpose and that tools, patterns and theories follow that. Overtime they may change and what particular “hobbit tools” are used or taught in an AOH is determined by that.

There was also a discussion around if “DNA” was the right word as while it speaks to essence most of DNA predetermines outcome. In conversation later Ann shared that while much of DNA predetermines outcome, there are always “mutations” and these create change and variations, for instance there may be only 6 foot trees and over time a 6 foot variety may “mutate” from this that both creates variety and may have a profound influence. So there is an essence and part of that may be mutation and change.. How that shows up for us is to stay with an open heart and mind in our hosting.

Finally, I (Martin) wanted to pass on a learning that Otto Scharmer shared. It resonated with me and spoke of how a tool ( even theory U) is just a tool in service of need, purpose and what emerges . It was after returning from some consulting work he did:

“I was struck by the similarity of experience that today’s leaders face across companies and sectors. As a leader today you find yourself in NO WHERE LAND. On the one side you have all the tools that you have learned from consultants, business schools, and other sources of conventional management wisdom. On the other you face the huge leadership challenge and in between these two things there is the huge gap of NO WHERE LAND and you find yourself in the middle of that NOWHERE ZONE.

The only thing that you can rely on in situations like this is your self-knowing, the deepening of your self knowing the deepening of your awareness and that is what presencing is all about. To provide a method to collectively create from the NOWHERE ZONE.

But that technology does not work if you use it with a mindset that belongs to the old toolkit (“problem solving”). It requires a mindset that is acutely aware of the NO WHERE ZONE right in front of us, right within us. That awareness of that GAP provides a crack where the window to an heightened awareness opens up. Without that window open, we cannot cross the distance from self to SELF—from no-where to now-here.

**Sunday afternoon**

**Narrative Harvest from Ria:** We are opening again with the sound of the bowl... Silence... The deep ringing again...

After a circle we will go into a solo time on this beautiful land. The metaphor of the garden is brought in. It is mid summer and time to pick some things, take away the weeds, seed something new, make some good compost. A black local stone is passed as a talking piece: *What is most useful to share now?* Here are some nuggets that I noted down (a fuller report is in an attachment). I suggest to read it slowly as it is a very ‘concentrated’ version and every sentence is a whole story in its own.

* How to create a beautiful gate, and not a gatekeeper?
* Being in the practice of relationship, although sometimes clumsy...
* Conversations are just right. Shadow – holding it with compassion and embrace it, for ourselves and with each other.
* Wanting to be in all conversations at once. I trust that I was and we all are. What was build – it is already amongst us... it feeds every other conversation. Everyone can draw upon all conversations because they seeded the middle and the field.
* ...a practice of sitting together and clear the space between us.
* The garden looks beautiful and the garden has lots of weeds and not harvested vegetables: the garden is in the eye of the beholder.
* ... the core... the membrane... everything that happens in this Community of
Practice needs to link with the core and let it grow organically.

- Our personal practices are core. What I am really stewarding is me. Hosting ourselves is first. We each choose our individual practices.
- Ahead of us: hold the container, the paradoxes, the shadow...
- The lab of the practice of measurement...
- Coming into a conversation around things change me and will carry me well.
- Open Space and circle... a tension since From the Four Directions... there is a circle that can be seen, and one that is not seen.

This is Borl... when idea and the courage to act come together.
- The scientist, the theorist has shown up. A next level of work is calling. Measurement, not to prove, but to collectively learn and impact more. Measurement and narrative can articulate aspiration, and changes the field around ‘objective’.
- Art of Participatory Leadership and anti-oppression work. Really rich. A new conversation is needed here in this CoP around differences and we are ‘this’ close! Trembling in the awkwardness and in the not-knowing.
- I want to give appreciation to the hosting team; we are not the easiest clients! It has been well worth being here.
- We are a ring of people, in one way we are looking in and give our offerings; in another way we are looking out: the world we do in the world and that has this center at my back. And the questions that we named are about going back and forth. We are always two-faced.
- I will host conversations with my family; thanks for the practice ground in hosting you as my family.
- Who else needs to be invited in? Who needs to be here? Passion needs to be bounded by responsibility... and attention to the practice of invitation... don’t get lazy with the principles, act with intention.
- Problems go away when we look from a different level of consciousness.
- Look back at my/our questions I had before I came here. What are my questions now?
- The difference in the archetypes of the feminine and the masculine is a conversation about differences that hasn’t happened in this community.
- The garden metaphor... I like some wilderness in my garden. I’m feeling very claustrophobic!
- This touches a spark in me.
- What if the new story is already here? If we just need to remember the key to unlock the hidden wisdom?

Then Pawa, a young woman from the first nations in British Columbia, was leaving and offered us an eagle song, the gift of the high perspective. This was a perfect introduction to the solo time in nature, either sitting, walking the labyrinth, visiting Opa the 1,100 year old tree; or taking a nap or journaling or any combination of all this. It was nice, as during this time the clouds finally moved a little out of the way and the sun was able to peak through. Although this rain is not normal here in this time of the year, it has given us an opportunity to experience being in a rain forest. But for dinner and our evening chats and singing we could again sit outside!

Open Space callers report in (NOTE: These quotes were taken from the longer harvest of the circle following lunch. I’ve selected the report backs from the Open Space session hosts only, apologies to everyone else, whose harvest is picked up in nugget form elsewhere. -- MA)

Christina: This was a morning where I wanted to be in all places at once and felt in sympathy with folks on the phone who wanted to be in the field. What I am sitting with now is the trust that I was in all conversations. What was built out of the rounds of council about shadow and creativity this morning is here among us. The conversation was among 8 of us, but feeds all of the other conversations here. It feels significant that wherever we go in our time here, we can draw on the capacity that was seeded in this center whether you were here or not. I feel the same way about the other conversations because they happened in the same field and energetics.

Teresa: Noticing our headaches earlier in the day and looking forward to solo time to bring some of this down into my feet and the earth. Noticing we went into council space to address core tension of the community. We met to discuss pattern keepers, apprenticeship, with recommendations. I feel the field coming together and asking for this. I am committed to forming recommendations, in a way of holding that is not from rigidity of who is in or out, but from integrity for those who wish to come and for the field.
Caitlin: First, we discussed the boundary membrane piece. We talked about cells with membranes. Monica was talking this morning about the core. The conversation about what the boundary might be always went through that core piece. Collectively holding the core and some need for it to be organic. Second, I am noticing the complementariness between personal practice and our work together. My personal practice is what allows me to do this work. This is not always visible and I can’t imagine moving forward without doing that. Again, making visible what is working.

Phil: What is the simplest way and metrics to document our impact? Another level of work is being required of us. When we think of this question, it is to prove the worthiness of what we are doing so that we can be valued, hired/invited to work with them? While that may be true and to speak clearly in words others understand is an important thing to do. Are there ways we can impact the objective world, we can change the world that asks for it. Talking a lot about flipping the paradigm and look at measurement as a tool along with narrative that measure aspiration. Well thought out, this is possible. The act of measurement changes anything. As soon as I pay attention to it, it changes.

Tuesday: Kelly, Nancy and I called a session around AoPL and anti-oppression work. We talked about the tension between commonality and diversity. We have anti-oppression work and how well that speaks to commonality. We are very clear that this has something of value. We asked what is the new conversation in anti-oppression work? We also think there is a new conversation in AOH that could be that generative tension. What are practices? Assumptions? Language? I have been doing anti-racism work for a long time and have been longing for a new conversation and feel we are this close and I think it will be a new conversation for this community too. I am deeply excited and deeply trembling and feel like I have been waiting to steward this.

Laura: We had a conversation on what we know and our body of knowledge. The resources available and what can be shared. I am committed to put this into a document for this group to add to it. Important to pull these resources/references. Add to it with your color, etc. There are things that are happening I think. On-line library and the Ning site where you can create a community of practice. Some things are in the works. We came back to references we know from our background – psychology, sociology, brain theorists, etc. Many thanks to all of you, these things can be some of the underpinnings when I write grants to do this work.

Kelly: We want to bring something back that ties into what has been said. A question was posed – who needs to be here? This is important to practices of building a core team, sensing the field, sensing the whole, building the field. Mostly about giving attention to invitation – an important place where we need to be working. Also questions about these beautiful practices – whatever happens is what can happen, whoever needs to be here is here. Several people mentioned laziness when these tools are used during invitation phase. Those beautiful tools are the passion part and when they are unbounded by responsibility of building the field and invitation, that is the edge we found. From our experience, those principles can perpetuate the dominant culture and inequities and old road, through inattention. This has been a little bit of a report back. It’s worth noting that it generated one of those family conversations between Tuesday and Bob W about their relationship. It shows that parallel process Chris mentioned that we do this work in and out. These are beautiful principles when they are enacted with intention and responsibility.

✦ What is the new story that is emerging? What does it look like? What is our role/connection to it?

We live into the stories we tell. How do we prepare people to be part of co-creating with and being part of a new story, especially on this edge of unprecedented change? What if it’s really about the practice of letting a story unfold? Perhaps we need to host the spaces where deep listening can be learned, stories can be heard and transformed. What if the question were: “How are we stewarding spaces and timing for story to come to the centre again?” Learning is our finest art, what will help the story to have wings? What if it really is the Art of Hosting & Harvesting stories that really matter? And what if the new/old story is already here?

✦ What is the core of the tension that we just experienced (circle vs Open Space) -- how to turn it into more co-creativity? What has it to do with our unclear governance of the network (the 5th paradigm)
When I look back at this session – a few months later - I can see that the fact of naming the tension and to open the conversation about it was a good step in the process of resolving it. My framing speaks for itself I think. Ria

Ria’s framing: I noticed the tension this morning in the circle between people wanting to be in deep circle and other wanting to continue with the Open Space. I recognized it as the underlying tension that was going on in the gathering at Axladitsa, and I want to go to a place of finding out what is the creativity hiding in that tension. And I wonder what it has to do with the governance of our network, and if we are not trying to fit to many purposes into one gathering? Is there wisdom to be found in the 5th paradigm, and why aren’t we using it?

Kelly: I love and hate these moments of tension. I like them because something can be born. Nobody is right or wrong. Something is possible that wasn’t before!

Martin: The paradox of self-organising systems: how much organizing is needed? I’m happy to sit in this fire.

Steve: I’m happy to sit in this fire too. ... 

Phil: I have been sitting in some kind of raw conversations... from a selfish standpoint to be able to hold that, and practice that... holding space in tension; and will become more important. I deeply respect for both to speak up and keep the design... important for the work we will be doing.

Pawa: My life feels like being in the groan zone most of the time... conversation about being in conflict, being in the groan zone... the weeds were trying to suffocate the life... How did we work with this traditionally? Going to the mountains alone, and face your fears. Could be a week or a month... I did. Going through the motions... it was a long groan zone. I never belonged more than where I am now. Our ancestors’ wisdom holds wisdom in our modern time.

Chris: Why don’t we operate as the 5th paradigm – because we don’t know what it is. It is a pastiche, not an evolution yet! That is how I teach it too. I know that it is transcendent... we are balancing hierarchy, network, circle, triangle... discern well when to use one... if it is mistimed... the tension was about what is the gift of circle, what is the gift of triangle? Then things come up – personal stuff - as I feel not trusted, not appreciated... struggle in the service of integration; and also to be in service of letting go. We are in an interesting cop, we come from ... we are not about one process! Learning of being in the practice of it all... ways of being and ways of doing that we are trying to learn. There is a lot at stake in our work, so we stake ourselves firmer and firmer. What if everything I am doing, is doing harm? And is distracting us from the way forward? I am totally committed to it anyway! I believe in it – many wars have started from that point. The language that we use is important. The words we use is our culture together. Music is art and not judgeable...

Tenneson: In a way sometimes I feel surprised, like people questioning if we are going to hit the deeper issues. I go to a personal place: Am I not going deep enough? I am also listening as a practitioner: what is underneath all this? From this last place: I hold something quite firmly: wholeness! The whole is available in the parts. I find myself to be flexible and hold on to the design. Am I being too passive? Am I missing something? opens a lot of curiosity. One of the offerings – my uncle, a fantastic and troublesome teacher in my life, writes from the perspective of a quantum world. Family was not understanding what he was saying. One of the things he says is: every problem is created by its solution. I found that a grounding principle. There is a bit of a fear in speaking this... me/us open... I have a strong desire to go deeper into the underlying beliefs we are working from.

Christina: First vision quest, up in Alaska, last day of 3-day solo fast... in that altered state, I saw a small bee coming out of a flower, coming from a far distance and stung me on the voice point. It became... awakening the sacred voice... don’t waste it. I came for the tension, because we can’t do it on email and conference calls. Of course there is tension in this circle of so much creative people! The places that are ... between us; where are we standing in and with and ... Most of the questions that we have named will elicit tension! It is creative! Put kindling on the fire! The profound donation of time and the courage to come... reaching out for help to total strangers... could we find ourselves at the real edge of uncertainty; peering over into the not-knowing. What is the help that the young need from us, older ones? We have put seeds here, we are seeds in what is happening now. Are we in the fire house here? How do we do that differently? I agree, we don’t know what he 5th
paradigm is; but we can do bits of it... we are standing in a river and any rock is going to be washed away. That is the energy that I want to honor here. I do want to have a chance to hear each one’s edge! Then I can go back to that, the moment when we touched each other’s pulse; because it grounds us and allows us to bless us in our work.

Ria: *(lost in time...)*

Caitlin: I felt some gift – the tension from *all of us caring so much* for what is moving through the room! We made effort to be here, and to host – we want to do it right; and there might be some attachment to it. Doing and being in different forms… triangle, circle etc… a softer flow between the doing and the being… and there need to be discernment about what form fits. I felt heat, and trembling… but also witnessing the flow… us living our practices, and letting things unfold. For the hosting team, there were many roads to take; the biggest move was to move. And we are all learning and open to it.

**Building the holding field for the tension**

Nancy: It feels like we are *building the holding field for the tension*... this afternoon there will be a harvest of some sort... we don’t know what it will bring. Maybe some glimpse of a new paradigm...

Chris: It seems like you all joined the hosting team; at least temporarily. The view of offering capacity, that feels so good. I don’t have the capacity alone to hold this and understand; and maybe there is nothing! Who knows what will happen? If you all keep sensing that is great!

Christina: A short story of the early days of hosting... coming to the end of an afternoon session... traveling the circle, and a deep level of heart... the piece came to a man, very analytical... you could feel the ignition of: what planet are you on?? The patriarchy had spoken into the circle! We stopped the process and laid it down into the center – then left it. Agreement was to come to council in the evening and sit with it, until we knew what to do with it. People, one by one, went into silence, shawls covering faces and open hands... after 20 min someone started to sing and all voices chimed in. Then we shared. We started *a healing of the patriarchy and the deep feminine*. When I don’t know what to do next, go into the container until the wisdom arises. I can decide what to do next, but I don’t know what to do next...

*(As you notice there was no real ‘conclusion’ in this conversation, but as it goes when living in Open Space and in a gathering like this... things were taking up... to me it was finally resolved on the last day in the last circle.)*

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**Consider Shibumi...**

Perhaps the Art of Hosting is the practice of Shibumi. Shibumi is the hidden garden of beauty – unassuming in all ways - that those who seek it will find. My own choice and my courageous effort, will help me find it. Its scent is the invitation. In a human being it is exquisite refinement of our humanity.

Maybe nothing needs to be protected because the beauty is so strong. If something challenging shows up, it is a chance for practicing fierce embracing, deep compassion and understanding the other. *Aah, my friend the enemy wakes me up. I am grateful!*

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*Steward’s Gathering #2  Bowen Island, 6 - 10 August 2010*
Stone heaved up by mountains from the deep
To give voice to the fountains that leap from our time together so far
Staying here but traveling far
This yurt is the inside of the north star
Boundaries to gardens, fences create opportunity for a beautiful gate that is its own keeper
Ancestors to metrics & tension
We are where we are meant to be
The stone is but already Relationship and the work is not always steady Practicing with care a we are laid bare to each other, out from under cover Shadow weeding is needing To be a practice made visible so we are not divisible But unite enough To be together in tough times & conversation
Wanted to be in so many conversations relations I was not in them all but I trust their creation We are are all streaming into each other, one field Holding it all We are the Art of Hosting ball
Roles and patterns coming to recommendation Based on integration not separation and integrity Just enough clarity for conversation To go on Pass the butter rock Start serving homeless teens by clearing their own air Between them Walking the corgi through the garden unharvested but beautiful All in the eye of the beholder Personal, collective practice the home that supports us being in this sacred kiss of time together holding tension of ownership vs stewardship Tenderness That is in the embrace of the need for Art of Hosting Summer fruit of the ginger carrot soup That measurement is meant to pull us into the future Where conversation changes me More alive - basket full No more hiding In the widening Not nice places in the world and curled up in the arms of good times with friends Around purpose, with life the knife Edge of circle or open space staying in the tent Circle seen and unseen The magic of letting go of controlling anyone else even self!
Personal practice is choice in my aloneness I discover my Creator Better now than later Bör is here Through fear To courage with mates Now that is a beautiful gate! Always seeking to apply Not sure why Bt a piece of me Is in the theory Metrics, measurement to prove worth Does not unearth The fine riches Neither a tick nor an X marks the spot We got To shift our metrics To uplift Our aspiration Into traction Articulation Of measurement Changes our state Influences our state AoPL and anti-oppression A session Into difference Art of Hosting into commonality What is the new conversation For AoH and difference
Breaking down the fences within the garden We are close New Growth In awkwardness ad not knowing Trembling and excited As Tuesday's stewardship is ignited. Typewriting hit keys hard like Ru like some of what I do But the machine has changed Glimpsing my old man I am who I am Appreciating the hosting team Be seen This is personal Worth being here From where we started Until we are parted The centre is transforming.

-- Tim's harvest of the circle

"My take-away from the gathering has been the subtle distinction between being AT the centre and being a guardian TO the centre, guardians sitting on the rocks dedicated to witnessing the movement and patterns emanating... and so am grateful for pattern-watchers perched at the energy's edge of this great toroidal mass that seems to be living its way onto the world beyond any of us. And as I spoke in the ceremonial circle, I believe this does not absolve any of us in the wider field from the act of stewarding on behalf of our shared purpose where and when needed."

- Tatiana
Day 4 - Monday, 9 August

Morning: Council at Opa, vision circle
Afternoon: Action triangles, Circle of the Rock Sitters

Morning Narrative Harvest from Ria: It will not be easy to write some kind of report of all what happened on our last day together. It was clear that life itself had taken over the process of the day.

The evening before the hosting team had asked for help and support in designing the last day and closing. One thing was pretty clear to all of us who gathered in the cosy living room: we needed to start the day at Opa. Opa is the name of a 1,100 year old Douglas fir, the only one on the island that has survived the loggers from 150 years ago, probably because it was not ‘perfect’ enough. You can see in the bark that a saw started doing its thing, but then – for whatever reason – the tree was left to live on. This and more (she names the tree Oma!) was told to us by Ann, who just got her book Keepers of the Trees recently published.

Because some challenges were spoken in the circle Sunday afternoon, it felt also right to give time to voice these and frame it in the context of the bigger vision that we hold. The hosting team decided that it would not be a circle where the talking piece travels for everyone to speak, but a council where the ones who feel called to speak can do and it would be limited to one hour. Life decided otherwise.

From our silent time near this enormous being, the tree, we gathered in a circle on the nearby meadow. Bob W. was the first to speak – standing – and kind of set the tone for the level of depth that would follow. He spoke about his pledge two years ago (in the stewards gathering in the Shire) to hold the center – or hold the whole – not knowing what it was he committed to and the energy and sacrifice it took to live it. Now, in this circle, it was time to return the pledge to the middle, to see who’s turn it would be now to take it up. He also said he would take it up again if no one else did.

I felt called to speak next. Different than Bob, to me it is crystal clear that I am to hold the fire in the center. In fact I cannot not do it, it is totally natural to me. I also spoke about the part of the vision that I see: how the capacity to be a good gelling hosting or core team will be an essential human capacity for the future. I see it as a core point in the Art of Hosting, although we don’t name it as such (yet?). I even think that these co-creative teams have their own soul’s purpose and that we are called to serve them.

I don’t remember who spoke next and what were all the elements of the deep vision that is held in our midst. Although few had brought paper and pen, there was a laptop and an iPhone to capture the beauty and richness of what was spoken to the middle. At some point it started to rain but we were reluctant to break the circle and we decided to move into the little sanctuary just nearby. It seemed right to support our intention to speak from that place, where you are really called, and not otherwise. It was a little cramped, fitting a circle of over 20 into a little square meditation hut. It reminded me of a teaching from a native American tradition that being in – and enduring – not so comfortable positions in ceremonies is part of your gift to the spirits.

For me there are two highlights form this time in the sanctuary. Chris came up with the image of the torus for describing what we are living and holding in the Art of Hosting. It linked back with his earlier insight that we are always “two-faced”, both looking inside and outside. On a torus there is no fence, if you want to move to the other side of the fence, you can just go down, through the center, and come out on the other end! The torus can best be described by the shape of a doughnut, and it is the shape of the magnetic field of the earth, and also of human bodies. I know it shows up more and more in recent years to describe and picture different energetic fields. It totally fitted with the model I have been discovering around circles of presence and circles of co-creation. In fact, it gives a much better image of what I try to describe than two flat matrices of 4 by 4.

Steward’s Gathering #2 Bowen Island, 6 - 10 August 2010
Then Tenneson was speaking and he used the word ‘enboldening’ and I was wondering, not being a native English speaker, if it was build on the adjective ‘bold’... People pointing at the window behind me... A bear!

What are the odds that he only bear on this island walks by this little building just as we are sitting here?! How come many traps and bear hunting didn’t have any success to capture him and set him loose elsewhere?

Tenneson had to stop as we all looked outside to watch the bear slowly, but steadily – and oh so grounded! – follow its path. It spoke to me as a confirmation of just continuing walking on the path we are on.

I’m sure there are as many versions as people in the circle of what was important in that bit of the morning and the whole of what followed next. It was time for a pee and a stretch and we decided to move back to our yurt space and leave the sanctuary open again for any visitor that is welcome there. The circle, and the speaking of elements of the vision went on till lunch.

**Harvest from the circle that began at Opa**

**Bob:** Piece of business and history that needs to be spoken: Two years ago at a steward’s gathering, I was not the most experienced and knowledgeable, but I had experience in life, circle, experience, and open space. I’m here because of relationship – that’s why I went to that gathering. A big call there - it was not my intent to join, but I stepped forward. It takes away some of my open space, it’s a sacrifice. Root word of making sacred, so I have made this sacred. It surprised me who didn’t step forward, but I stepped forward in a big way to hold this as a whole. I don’t know what this means, but it was a profound act. Ria, Chris, David Stevenson stepped forward, in different ways. We have held this. We sacrificed some of our own open space. We stepped forward out of need not want. It’s been two years, it’s time to pass this on. I am placing back that pledge. This completes it. I can only truly turn it back if some else steps forward. Someone take it though I can’t tell you what it is. You will lose some freedom from taking it, and you will gain a lot.

**Ria:** It’s not only a pledge or a sacrifice, but I do a lot of work. It’s a calling. If I’m true to my call, I take it on. I want to learn. What stewardship can be of a self-organizing web of people. If I am true to my calling, I will go on with this. I think the core of AoH is the core of the competence is to be a whole, gelled core team – a collective that has a being in itself that has it’s thing to do in the world and it’s soul in the world. It needs to be held by the collective – to help it be what it will become. I don’t think that folks should step forward with a sense of sacrifice.

Part of the vision for me is the need for study and research and being rigorous in creating feedback loops. Part of my part of holding this is doing my part in this research bit. The knowledge we gather now, make it available – we may not be able to meet this way much longer.

Share our harvest. Put it out. Make it understandable for way more people. (language) We need way more attention to harvest. I’m amazed at how little harvest is happening at this gathering. I’m not harvesting while others are singing and drinking and having fun. Still an imbalance of harvesting – as if it’s done after the real work. I think we’re all pioneers. That’s why we have friends and find each other – but we need to find good maps for others to find their way after us. I don’t want to make an organization. That’s not the way forward. But we need collectives everywhere. And we need to learn more about it.

**Tim:** We’re in the middle of a ceremony being organized by none of us. Time does not matter to me here.
Ann: Vision of a Gathering of Tribes. In these waters are orcas – they are traveling in pods. They have grand gatherings, where the pods come together. And when they come together, they come together for exchange. At Pipestone, tribes in Minnesota would come together to get materials for their pipes. They would lay down their weapons and do this together. The vision that I offer is that we are tribes. We come together to share information and skills. The tribes come to offer knowledge and harvest. How do we then – after the gathering of the tribe – share out the information. Sometimes we don’t like what they’re sharing, but they come and we offer and are richer for it. If orcas and ancient cultures can do this. We can do this.

Phil: We’ve been made not to be in the harbor, but to sail in open water. I think we’re sailing now into open water – heading into tough water. The gathering needs to be more frequent for both the learning and healing. As we head into tough waters, we will need to be in learning and healing each other before we head back out into rough water. But knowing that there’s a regular place to come back to. I’m interested in being part of the healing part of coming back together.

Mary Alice: I want to speak for the trees. I asked Opa, “What is the energy pattern of stewarding?” and the answer was Deeply rooted but leaning in. Years ago I had a conversation with the General Sherman sequoia in California – That tree said to me “We are the connectors between heaven and earth. Our roots reach down. Our branches are like your hair. We need all of the elements to be well. We have been standing here for as long as we can imagine. When people come into our energy field, they come here to be re-balanced.” I think this is what AoH is about.

Once at Montezuma’s Well in Arizona I was sitting quietly watching the water, just me and a frog in the thicket. And then the tourists came. They probably didn’t see me and they certainly didn’t see the frog. There needs to be some of us sitting by the well.

Tim: A perspective on harvest. (To Toke) I am your harvest. 10 years of relationship, this is the harvest. The kids I work with – this is the harvest. I’m that tree’s harvest. The library of Alexandria, burned. The internet will change. Yes to accelerating the harvest. The real harvest is not our artifacts. It is each other. My vision is that AoH is creating container for human harvest – in this type of quality. The tribes are gathering all of the time. The tribes are gathering in me. All of the elders I’ve met recently have said “go find your own. Don’t come to me for mine.” What is the real harvest for? What is the harvest we’re creating. It’s not Alexandria.

Toke: I’m here as who I am. The tree told me that 1,100 years ago, this is how we ruled ourselves. Heart, soul, spirit, and more – from this place, those who were willing to step forward on behalf of their tribes. Every year they came together – and stay together a long as it took – to be in this sacred ground. There is a governance system that this tree is making us remember that we can trust. My heart will know when I have sit in as many circles on this earth. Then I will be done. We are all being stewarded. I am truly honored that we are showing up with each other – we are the knighthood, sisterhood, and the brotherhood of being real together and to be of service. To be part of the incredible rhythm of creating, sustaining, and destroying – a beautiful cycle.

Tatiana: Found this is dreamtime:
**dreamtime download 09.08.10**

can we come into breathing together?
just that
acting from collective space
hosting wholeness
we are significant and insignificant to the whole
but we must not get caught in the story
of our own momentum tunnel
can we step out of time and invite possibility into probability?
how do we steward direct relationship - with nature, with the
hosting field
- not through stewards - but alongside
the act of stewardship
being stewarded
stewarding the promise of what is yet to emerge
the unknown is unknown
until its known
we just need to stay awake together
translocally
where collective space meets in places
we are also working with the energies of the land we find
ourselves on
where we walk works with us
no matter where we are
the legends and lore of those who steward the land
- many great indigenous keepers -
say we are at a time of completion,
a completion of time - as we know it
we are in a window of incredible choices, of
pattern-setting for the future,
of coming into being as light beings
hosting dreamtime in daytime
hosting creation in action
do we dare ask ourselves:
are we creating what we dream?
after decades of tenacious work by millions of well intended workers in
the world
we have reached a tipping point
its critical mass
a time for the pattern of the perfection of our future
to begin to physically manifest.
pay attention to life and you will confirm this for yourself.
where your attention is,
there you are.
empower only what we want to cocreate
stay awake
if we are busy organising inside,
life will organise outside.
stay awake
we cannot organise life,
but it will organise us.
if there is confusion here then we need to shift of the next level of
order
what if we met there?
what if we worked together there?
honouring life as source
holding space for life
breathing together
what if it were easy?

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**Martin:** Before this last time, I lived in a community of hermits and have spent a lot of time there. It’s been a place I come out of to be in community. I’ve been a focus group of 1. Gandalf came to me and asked me to be part of the shire. The stepping out has been to be part of this community. I have brought with me is an ability to listen. I’m fairly new – not to listening - but to the tools and methods and patterns. I’m noticing extreme care – for humanity and for each other. In this place of where we are in the world, the high stakes, by nature many of us are pattern-breakers. Some of us are pattern holders and some of us are pattern makers. We need to co-create a container for all of these – a place that can hold the collective tension in a creative way: a garden, a wilderness, a gate, an arch. What is the collective that we can create that we can hold together to hold these tensions that is a gift to the world and what’s needed?

**Jerry:** There is shadow – my own or collective, I’m not sure. This is my third gathering. The first two, the folks didn’t know each other. They felt always welcoming – we were seeking to know each other. This third pattern of being with old friends, with established patterns, it feels different. I’ve felt a little troubled, the energy. I’ve spent most of my life to be a pattern breaker. It comes up for me as “ins and outs” I want to break this pattern. Holding onto patterns that create division and oppression and create what we don’t want. In our work, we always want to be aware that it’s very easy to fall into pattern and be unconscious. Patterns of relationship and language – take care here.

**Kathy:** I’m in a deep tremble – in my body, a deep tremble. I could feel the consciousness of Opa and the space around Opa and the consciousness that we bring to that space, and the collective consciousness is infused by the energy, wisdom, that is deeply rooted in each of us, our work, and the call each of us feels. Gathering in a place like this – a place stewarded by a woman living in her vision. There is a shifting consciousness taking place in me as a result of being in this place. We all need to be aware of this shifting consciousness – be aware, tune in, and allow it to inform our collective space. Our work here and out in the world. This is serious business, and please let’s not be too serious about it.

**Chris:** A cage went in search of a bird. (Kafka) I’ve been trying to figure this out for over 20 years. I’ve been sitting here thinking of something to say – I’ve been trying to be the cage. A warbler came in the yurt, in the vestibule. It didn’t want to
be outside. I held it and stroked it. Then it jumped up and left. I’ve been trying to think of what we should be doing. There’s nothing else I want us to do – an organization, a foundation, etc. But I’m powerfully drawn to the image of the boundary – we choose to create them all the time. Not one fence, not one gate, but a rim.

When the tribes gather, when they have been doing it a long time, they haven’t gotten a lot done – except the commitment to meet again. We see signs – the salmon’s gathering – we develop a sensitivity to the rhythm and the timing of it happening. I’m greatly suspicious of thinking that if I cease doing something, the world will die. We come together because we need to, and it is in service to the world. But we do it for ourselves. We’re not a very old tribe, we haven’t found our rhythm.

More of the pink goes in and the green goes out. The organizational form is the torus – the donut. The center is everywhere. Where the in and out are everywhere – we are in and out at the same time. The fundamental pattern of energy in the universe – maybe that’s the fifth paradigm. I’m also laying my pledge in the center. I may pick it up again. I don’t want to convene another gathering – it’s a lot of work.

The piece I pick up again is the pledge to practice again with you – those here, those not here, those we don’t even know should be here yet. Pick up the thread of practice and see it like a Taurus – to go out than go in and go in to go out. And do it with more consciousness. Purpose of the tree is the cone – to give rise to the next...

Pawa: She gives in the feast with the energy of bees coming out of a hive. A thank you for gathering in the circle of trees. A clean cut is beautiful – it is a honor to receive the gift of your clean cut. Opa’s essence and magnificent presence. Eagle wings spread across time and space. I am ready to do good work.

Laura: My opening circle purpose: listen and share the work I’m doing. It has been an honor to be here with you. Maybe it’s the eating of teachers talk, but it reminded me of stories of wisdom from Deepak Chopra and changing the field of medicine. If you take a jar and put flies in the jar and put a lid on it. The flies learn to live in it. If you open the jar, only a few will leave. If you take an elephant and tie it up to a pole or a tree – after a time, the elephant won’t move.

Thinking about the teaching of young children and the institution of education, and knowing that I didn’t choose this either. It’s not the percentage of students walking out, it’s because I know their names and faces. I’m meeting them everywhere. Where do we plant this work into the next generation – hope and chaos, and complexity, and dialogue? We’ve already begun setting up prototypes. I invite you to find the flies that would like to fly out – engage them in a dialogue, this is the sustainability of the community. Maybe you’d like to play.

I know that this is the time. It is bubbling. I must be part of that. We could be publishing the story books of our story. Interview you and your children on how these practices play out. We have some sustainable work to do. And it’s play.

Tenneson: Why did I move to Utah? I came to find tribe. And I left a tribe, also. I remember holidaying with my grandparents – when we were done, there was something that stayed with me. I just wanted to be a better person. Deep gratitude with my grandparents. I have always known: Whatever it is that I’m called to be a part of, I need tribe.

When here, I can feel touching of the center as I did with my grandparents. It emboldens me. Black bear coming through! I’m really glad to have felt the emboldening, simplifying, kinship – that has allowed me to do really good work. Glad to be with friends, colleagues, clients who touch into a center and find a boldness. I really ought to be doing more and thinking at a bigger scale – but I wonder if it’s as simple as coming to touch a center. There are times when I have felt exhausted. What is the simplest way of anchoring to center and offering to others? Offer what I can and a bit more.

Energy for me is this journey of coming together. I come out changed. And the people I get to be with. How does this boldness come out in diagram and structure? I don’t know. It doesn’t rule out the deep, thoughtful, strategic work. I offer myself into that. From this place of heart, what might we want to do together?

Vision: yes, find more tribe. Yes, leaving of some tribes. And touching a center and working from that center into a place of complete sense and genuineness and friends that I hope supports some level of the broader network. Offer ourselves in practice and see what grows.
Christina: I have been aware of the animals that have presented themselves. They are the animals that live here and all have their own medicine string and then the wild animals that walk thru the field. The twitter of the warblers and family of deer, the young bear. Bye mom, I’m going to go to Bowen Island. How did it get here? Probably swam here.

Magic and resilience. Has to do with what we host. I think the most humbling unexplainable moments is when this alchemical thing spins in group of people that we didn’t know was in us. Same time there is this magic. When I look into the problems of the world. No idea if we can get thru it. Know it is magic and wyrdness in Celtic tradition. World Café helps us meet each other. OK lets get that out of the way. We put it down and listen and scribble. There comes a moment when sinkage wants to occur. The pearl wants to float thru. And that is the magic. When the wyrd really stirs. Over and over again, after those moments I go back to my patio and stare out at the sky w glass of wine and say thank you for allowing me to be present and holding with that container. People got stirred in ways we may never get to articulate. Tennessee’s head on Toke’s shoulder. It’s a gesture almost invisible in world, but what happens that unchains us is beyond my understanding.

Hosting provides us all kinds of space to get to the wired. People say yes and no to things they didn’t know they had the capacity to say yes or no to.

Our call to the people we call. We need to do something w the gift of this magic. To notice the pledge the commitment. To mirror back the opportunity to something that you just spoken. To gather like this as stewards is such a privilege today. We count on so many things to hold us that we don’t even know. There is a way we owe back for this privilege. Our neighborhood holds us. Someone is taking care of dog and garden and neighbors chickens are laying. Creates an obligation that is very local. Trying to consider how to send people home with obligation to practice this. To send them forth to try it out and take risks. You don’t just get to come here and say wow that’s neat. You have to do it. There are ways that these experiences create the obligation, not us. One of our jobs as hosts and stewards is to name it. Our culture doesn’t understand sacred obligation. If you eat a berry you spit them on the ground. That’s what the bear is doing. You have to integrate it to the point that we can do it.

Resilience. We talked about the ‘who ever comes are the right people’ get us off the hook. My view into American culture is that we have become tremendously lazy to be disturbed. My father has cartoon. House here, Starbucks next door. Wow this oil spill is really bad, I would like a cup of coffee. OK I’ll get the car. Our work is to hold resilience. To hold people to the commitment. In my elder I see a candle burning that says you can come here and be heard. I call us to our resilience to hold space for people who are going through it.

Kelly: Called to speak as someone who has been invited into this gathering for the first time. Held as someone still learning the pattern. Quality of relationship… what you speak to the center is profound. I am hungry for that and drunk on it. Really cool… that opening up the gathering has done for that and for me. Quality… profound, from those who have been meeting together for some time. I see elders, practitioners, etc. and a willingness to hold each. An offering to hold I am naming because I can. Human beings holding the rim and there is something else, awesome and beautiful going on here. Gratitude deeply held… satiated and seeking more… but gratitude for the center and the rim. Giving and receiving and bringing back to home. For those who hold the center and holding and speaking the center…thank you. Please keep inviting disturbance by bringing new people in.

Steve: Touched by Opa this morning. Noticing the trees around him and remembering when he was one among many. Wondering who is the next Opa. Struck by the building of capacity. Noticing it in myself and in everybody else around the circle. To notice how this process that you are stewarding is to step into the next level of learning. To me that is the process that I want to be a part of stewarding here and elsewhere. Feel like I am probably long term member of Martin’s hermit club. Comfortable to be alone and in company of people. To offer my heart and move into new patterns and new relationships. Thank you.

Mary Alice: Thank you for hosting team for giving us this space. When I hear you speaking truthfully, it allows me to step into the center. When there is great love there is fierceness in the center. When you are afraid you want to hold everything. Short in metric terms and great in other terms. What does love have to do with it, everything mate! I have needed this space for holding really deep energy.
On call this morning Maria spoke about amebas as a pattern. I am a pattern seeker. I think this is what WWF is doing in their financial project. Amebas have daughters that break off. Looking for the metaphor, yesterday we had gardens and then wilderness. Yesterday we talked about the beautiful secret garden whose scent is so strong people smell it and go find it – shibumi. It protects itself. I am fierce about beauty and fierce to step in about it. If it is that bloody beautiful, we know it.

**Bob S:** Come to realizations over the past couple of days. The first is both hard and soft to say. I am not a steward of the Art of Hosting. Who or what am I? Several pieces have come with clarity about that. First and foremost, my clannmate the black bear, I am a friend. Since the call this morning I have been thinking about when Tom Hurley talked about Lady Berkana, the non-material being who called Berkana into life – the irrepressible spirit if life. I know I am this. A few months ago and Shambala, Susan B named me as someone who walked in ‘interspatial’ spaces. He who walks between and among. Which is where I have spent my life, not quite as a hermit. I wish Ann where here when she asked the question, where were you 1000 yrs ago? I was in a valley in Japan before either valley was there. When standing with Opa, he made the suggestion ‘perhaps you were a tree?’ I don’t understand this place that I am standing in now but I know I have been given a great gift to be in that space in btw to be that bridge to the land that I have always been in, Japan. Don’t know if I am a midwife, warrior, servant or all rolled together. Know that I and we need all of you and don’t know how to give the invitation but now that it is really needed and something big is there.

**Toke:** Maybe its not stewarding the AoH at all but stewarding life and allowing life to flow thru. Being at each others back. Stewarding the practice. My offering is that. Can’t help but extend the invitation. Don’t know what it is but it cannot stop itself in certain moments. I don’t know how to say that either.

To Bob, should have seen us when we met each other in Meg’s home. Two bears in skirts whose souls had been in Japan. Bob just invited me to come work him in Japan yesterday and I was crying 10 min. only my love for my mom can compare with it. This work cannot be sold. It is not that kind of work. That’s where the call comes. That is where the hermitness comes in. To be fine tuned by the aloneness in life. The invisible and have the curiosity and playfulness, trembling and boldness to go.

As all of this comes to the heart of the matter, I never know if I will see any of you again. Not disrespectful, but the truth. All the organization we need. To be held when we come back to zero. Died, be recreated and be ready to go forward and be life. Announcement. I just tickled Martin. We will start a new sect. We are the hermits. We will go into retreat for 2 yrs and then come out and talk about it.

**Nancy:** I think I will be brief. I do have a vision that we do gather together and that we bring all the tribes together. That we go into deep council and don’t be afraid to bring long groups together more than we have seen. Not afraid to be activists with the tools that we have the relationships that we have built. We don’t really know when we get to the next place, we don’t have a knowing, but we need to go there. It’s the work of our generation and as a woman who is a baby boomer I think what is my role, what can I offer and what is my responsibility. I am willing to take it. Nice that we have each other’s backs and think we need to gather in larger and larger numbers and engage our activism and think women in Liberia. What can we do with what we have built. We need to be able to deal with the pain. As long as we are holding on we cannot go to the next level.

I wanted to talk about the torus a little more... Look at this wikipedia page: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Torus  I think this might actually be our fifth paradigm, I was especially moved by seeing the triple centred torus, and it reminded me of the conversation I had with Nancy and Martin on the links between our various communities of practice.

**And later:-** Look at the animation of the punctured torus turning itself inside out. Doesn’t that describe radical shift in consciousness, where the inner becomes the outer and the fundamental centres (life affirming, self-organizing) remain the same? The fabric of our lives change completely but the essential architecture stays stable. A circle of centres revolving around a empty space and moving and rotating in two dimensions. .. Hmmmm. I feel strongly that I’m onto something!  

- Chris

**And from Bob W:** http://www.fractalwisdom.com/science-of-chaos/the-four-chaos-attractors/  
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wACFeQtMu_Q&feature=related

Steward’s Gathering #2  Bowen Island, 6 - 10 August 2010
**Coming to the river**

If everything has a season, 
then let it be said that the season is turning.

I feel it in my mind and heart and in the soft places 
that don't see the light that often. They wait there 
sheltering away from harsh realities, in a state of becoming, 
the seeds of their transformation finding root, 
their final form slowly opening.

The outside me carries on, making my way in the world. 
Moving through the day to day, 
slowly gathering evidence of change and garnering wisdom 
like women used to gather winnowed wheat that had fallen on the threshing floor. 
It is hard work, the garnering of wisdom, 
often done alone 
but so much easier in the company of others.

In the company of other hands, the work goes more quickly. 
In the company of other minds, blind alleys are avoided 
and new avenues explored. 
In the company of other quests, the pathway is illuminated. 
In the company of other hearts, sorrows are lessened and joys intensified.

I see myself in the mirror of other souls.

Give me the strength to open my eyes wide to that reflection 
and the ability to recognise beauty wherever it waits, 
yearning to be seen.

Let me carry a rose in my heart 
for those moments when courage is needed 
and compassion called for. 
Let love be the beacon that guides my steps. 
Let trust be the river upon which I rest, 
the river that carries me home.

- Mary Alice

**Hai Sensai**

my Thlimakstee thanks your Thlimakstee 
for the invitation to sit 
in an ancient grove 
where cedar, hemlock and spruce 
Connect us to our roots

A clean cut is beautiful. 
It is an honor to receive the gift of your clean cut. 
To stand strong in spirit together, 
We are and always have been 
Dancers across, through and in-between spaces 
even polar places. 
Recycled by the Earth 
There is always a Re Birth

a Stewardship for humanity 
to Host the conversations that are most 
needed for sanity 
Mother’s silent grumble 
Ice melts, mountains tumble 
Toke’s voice rings clear in my ear 
"BREATHE" 
Saaaaaaaaaaaaaaa

OPA's essence 
and magnificent presence 
a carbon footprint on my heart 
that grounds me to our Mother. 
Eagle wings spread across time and space 
to fiercely embrace 
this other more harsh world. 
I am ready to do good work.

- Pawa
Afternoon Narrative Harvest from Ria: We reconvened for the last stretch of time together answering the question what would be actions that are needed in support of this vision to be lived. We wrote them down and clustered where possible and then engaged with them; taking up responsibility to hold and steward them into a next form that would serve us and our work. The room was buzzing and we sealed each proposal and intention with a collective clap.

**Action Team Harvests**

- **What would it take for the essence of stewardship to go viral?** What if it is not about ownership of anything, but awakening the steward in everyone? + How to activate an ongoing collective practice, check-in heartbeat: Regular translocal check-in circles on the practice of stewardship of our community (if we are stewarding ourselves then we are stewarding the field) + Periodic (monthly?) open learning calls on Skype. **We called it:** The Art of Practicing Stewarding life in however it shows up.

**Who?** Hosting team is: Bob W, Toke, Mary Alice, Thomas; Bob S will eagle

What? We talked about the circle of hosting stewardship (the irrepressible spirit of life) surrounded by strengthening stewarding practice -- a chance to be on calls and explore deep conversations on stewarding [the dojo practice], where everyone is involved. What if we said that everything up until now has been training for something that demands me being at the top of my game? Borl in 2000 was the first work to get to this level of consciousness. We see two action streams:

- **Regular calls on stewarding**, could be hosted on the Maestro platform (and we can check with Lisa Berg and Benjamin, Rowan & Ria). The first level is for anyone who knows they are practicing AoH, sense the spark. We can talk about stewardship, and about the big, real work; go to a deep level of clarity on collaborative purpose. **Thomas & MA to create a platform for stewarding learning calls. Hosting team to scope out beginning calls. What background material is needed?**

- **“Spark of the Art of the Heart Gathering” in 2011**, second level is bringing your real work. The game has to be big and risky enough, shedding the AoH “holiness”, ready to really work with each other to the refinement of AoH hosting -- hosting the conversations that matter, joining the resistance -- all the tribes meeting! Needs a clear purpose. (We called Phil over and suggested we could fill the Ohio State football stadium with 105,000 people!) Followed by a gathering about work in practice in 2012 at Borl.

- **Gather the Tribes**

**Who?** Core Team - Nancy, Chris, Toke, Christina, Bob W, Ria

**What?** The project: gather the elders/stewards, alumni and practitioners of AoH and AoPL to come together to share experiences, practices, tools, strategies -- build relationships, alliances, Communities of Practitioners

**Strategy:** Use Chaordic Stepping Stones to create the plan

**Steps:** 1. Organize the first call of core team in November 2010 (Nancy will set up first call), 2. Connect with local and regional CoP’s in 2011, 3. Bring tribes together in 2012. [Note: There may be other gatherings in motion - a possible "Learning Festival" 2011 North Carolina - Juanita and David, Reos, Meg, Peggy Holman, Chris Corrigan, Tom Hurley, Tim Merry and others -- ALIA, Deep Democracy, Future Search, AI, OS, etc. to reflect on a Question: How can we look at our practices as a way a life beyond the methodologies -- integral vs silo?]

- **Art of Hosting the Pot + What are the economic needs to most simply support the infrastructure/Ning and what is the wisest, simplest, most honorable way to hold this**

**Who?** Caitlin & Tatiana

**When?** Fall 2010 - Follow up call and wider conversation with Monica, Toke, Ria, Jan and Rowan to determine next action and communication
Not out to larger community at this time. Caitlin has committed to following up and setting up a call to discuss:

**The Pot itself:** location, transition, stewardship, accounting, transparency. Looking forward...
- who is the ‘council of spending’?
- what are the needs for finances: Ning site, scholarships, other?

**Inviting money in:**
- % of profit from every AOH to pot (2% 5% 10%) -
- use and promote ‘donate’ button on website
- other ways to encourage donation for scholarship/accessability.

**Principles:**
- simplicity, overall our community is stewarded by gifting (financially and with our time/skills)
- what are the most simple, clear area/s that it is wise to have some financial support where needed (NING) and what amount is doable and honourable.

**Recommendation: A call planned for October**
- on the call: Toke, Monica, Rowan, Caitlin, Ria, Jan (who else?), perhaps at least one more person from the rock sitters?
- agenda items:
  - transferring accountability, transferring the account itself
  - the council of spending
  - sources and needs for funds: clarity and transparency with community / inviting contribution in clear ways

**✦ How to access journal pieces -- who/how is the decision made to add, edit, let go of pieces? Appreciation for and continuation of time outdoors at AoH trainings -- inclusion in journals. Deepen the worldview part of the workbook.**

**Group:** Ann, Ria, Jerry & Monica

**What?** Master content location to access most current Journal materials, 2010, Ria

**What?** Way to update existing content, 2010 & ongoing, Ria & all to contribute

**What?** Way to add new content – question: Does this need management? 2011 & ongoing, Ria & all to contribute

**What?** Additional worldview content for workbook, 2011 & ongoing (maybe yet in 2010), Jerry, Monica and others wishing to contribute

**Other topics needing clarification**
- Way to connect to other wisdom holders
- Way to clarify the issue of use
- Location for additional resource materials
- Connection to nature content for workbook (Anne and others wishing to contribute)

**✦ Holding the center and the whole of the AoH field**
This became the circle of people sitting on the rocks. Five people stepped forward in the gathering itself: Martin, Phil, Kathy, Mary-Alice and Ria. Later two other people stepped into this circle: Helen Titchen Beeth and Monica Nissen. I like to name this circle of stewards the Holding Circle. This is all very new to all of us, and we are not in the position yet to tell more about it. We agreed to have regular conference calls, every 4 to 6 weeks until the next stewards gathering. Notes of the conversations will be published on the Ning, so that there is transparency about what this circle is talking about.

**✦ Active stewardship of online presence (including static website, email list and online community space)**

Steward’s Gathering #2  Bowen Island, 6 - 10 August 2010
Ria Baeck and Rowan Simonson have taken this on; both the thinking about it and doing the structuring work.

**Doing:**
- The development of the online Ning platform has priority for us.
- The online space is now used by a few groups/gatherings as some kind of tryout.
- We still put up the information of the new events on the static site.

**Others have offered help in different topics:**
- Benjamin Degenhart for figuring out what could be a good be a better email list.
- Helen Titchen Beeth for writing and structuring the static website.
- Tenneson will use the online space in a few next gatherings and come back with feedback.

**Thinking:** How to invite people more into harvesting? Still lots to discover here!
- of cool threads that are happening on the email list
- finding a process to harvest learnings about our practice, of recent AoH trainings and events to the wider community; maybe debrief first with some pattern holders and stewards?

✦ **Academic Action Research**
Held by Ria and Isabelle Mahy.
Probably will grow into two related streams:
- holding and convening a community of researchers around AoH and other social technologies
- setting up new funded research

No timeframes set. A conversation to look deeper in collaboration between universities and for funding will happen in Oct. ’10.

**Afternoon Narrative Harvest from Ria continues:** But a few things that are needed were left on the floor or were left to my group of just one person. It seemed they belonged together:

- Convene the next gathering of stewarding practitioners
- Engage now in the question of who to invite to the next gathering and why, and why not.
- Holding the center and the whole of Art of Hosting
- Some form of core group to follow up with recommendations to move to enough clarity to offer out to the wider community

**What to do?**
For me it was clear that there needed to be a group holding the center, and I was not going to leave this gathering until I knew who was in this core group with me, as I had referred to in the morning. But other voices came in first...

Maybe there was already too much in the center – literally our center piece in the middle had become quite big and with lots of stuff – and we just had to leave it open? Open for emergence to happen? Maybe we were to do an experiment here? A few others chimed in before I had the chance to speak. I tried to explain that it is my soul’s purpose to sit in the center and hold the whole. I tried to make clear that his is my calling right now, and if nobody would hold it with me I would do it anyway.

What was going to happen? We were coming close to our closing time... Later I heard someone speak her thought of that moment: What about applying our own practice of core teams?!?
Bob W. came standing behind my back and spoke words that I don’t remember well, but they felt as a recognition of my offering to this community and this body of work and knowledge. Something had to happen and Bob said he would step in again if needed, but for now he was supporting me.

The circle fell silent.

Toke asked Christina’s wisdom about what to do, remembering a similar kind of situation in the first stewards gathering in 2005. Christina spoke words of wisdom and we moved everything from the centerpiece that was not essential. The beautiful, big open bowl stayed with lots of small local black stones. Christina talked about mystics, about sitting on the rocks near the fire, or next to the edge. She invited whoever felt called to sit on
the rocks – for whatever timeframe that felt appropriate – to take their place next to the center. There was no hesitation in me, and finally we were five: Phil C., Kathy J., Martin S. and Mary-Alice; of course with the unclarity about others not physically present now.

Each of the five of us were allowed to speak. I only remember “elder”, “firekeeper” and “I could not not do this” and I noticed a lot of silent tears in our little circle. In the meantime others had been invited to come nearer if they felt like that, and many – all? – came nearer to support us and hold our backs, sometimes for very specific persons in the circle, sometimes for the whole of it. Words were spoken in support, and overall it had the energy of a ceremony. Christina ended with giving the five of us some essential oil to bless our doing, being and heart.

We felt complete and all moved to the outer circle again. Something deep was understood by the whole community, some deep fragmentation was healed, way beyond this little circle of 20+ human beings.

• This holding and sitting on the rocks had been going on all the time, but it was not conscious until now.
• Sitting on the rocks, near the fire in the center is totally different than being the center, like a guru is. The confusion around this is gone now.

Christina asked Toke to close the circle, but the famous clapping was not appropriate here. After sharing his sadness about his mom moving towards dying, he guided us in some movements of heart connection and gratitude to the center. We stayed in silence for the next half hour till dinner. I heard people wrapping up everything, collecting paper and pens while I was laying stretched out on the floor. It had all to sink in.

It didn’t seem to be an evening of enthused singing as we had done the night before, but a calm sharing of poems, stories, and a few raps and intimate, inspiring songs. “Isn’t this like Borl, Tim?” “It sure is Toke!” People started to say goodbye as they would leave early, other met at the breakfast table. Mary-Alice requested some last bits for the harvest document; the hosting team did the final check out.

Then a text message from Miha to Tatiana: “Some good news about Borl!...” The gathering of tribes is on its way to manifestation, we are ready to host the next level.
Practical mystics

Once we were monks and hermits and sages hidden away in caves.
We chose seclusion because we thought we would be more able to hear the voice of God.
We turned our backs on the world
And silence blanketed our days.

Once we were shamans and healers, the medicine beings of our tribes,
The bridge between this world and the other
Riding the drumbeat
Calling powerful spirits to our aid, helping the people.

Once we were initiates into the mysteries,
Taken at an early age, leaving all traces of our former lives behind
They shaved our heads and we learned the chants and rituals
We walked barefoot on the mountains.

Once we painted great animals on the ceilings of caves
We made handprints on the sides of cliffs
We moved stones into circles and traced the cresting of stars
We knew the rhythms of heaven and earth.

We knew the songs that called great powers
We knew the prayers that called great peace
We knew the ways that served all life
We knew the beauty of creation.

But the cycles have turned,
Now we must learn a new way.

We must learn to gather the silence within us
We must learn to hold the peace all around us
We must learn to voice the prayer that comes from us
We must live to honour the way that calls us.

No longer can we hide away
For what we know is needed in this world of form.
Who we are is a wayshower to those who long for more
Then they see with their human eyes.

Oh modern day mystic, will you answer the call?
Do you have the strength to live your calling in the midst of all that is now?
Do you have the courage to walk this path,
So different to what the world expects?
Do you have the heart to love your devotion as much as you love yourself?

Will you sing again the songs that call great powers?
Will you recite the prayers that call great peace?
Will you remember the ways that serve all life?
Will you honour the beauty of creation?

Become the one you wait for.
Share your mystical knowing in practical form,
Bless this earth with your being.

- Mary Alice