

The Evolution of a Conscious Community

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Bend, Oregon

By Tammy Roberts

Contributions by

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Pictures by Harry Sonneschein

“Because, yearning for community we stumbled, under the guise of an intellectual workshop, into just what our hearts were thirsting for. We became a community, and even though it was only for a few brief, wonderful hours, we experienced a surcease of our loneliness.” M. Scott Peck

The Genesis of Community

“Whenever knowledge connects with knowledge, new combinations spontaneously take place. Ideas spark ideas, which synthesize with each other until more knowledge results. It is completely natural....sharing knowledge means bringing people into conversation.”

“What if intelligence emerges as the system connects itself in diverse and creative ways?”

The World Café: Shaping Our Futures through Conversations that Matter
Juanita Brown et al

We come together in Bend, Oregon at St. Charles Medical Center, people from afar (Botswana, The Netherlands, France) and from near (Oregon, USA).. We welcome our friends who have traveled so far to be with us. We begin sharing our life purpose with one another, a way of beginning our journey as a conscious community. We sense and admire the wisdom of the group. Relationships of today and the past are here and we are reminded of our love and connection to one another. Relationships with others we have not seen for several years begin to blossom and seem to pick up again with such ease and sense of knowing one another.

A key design element is for everyone to come to the symposium to contribute their knowledge. It is through our diverse contributions that we may synthesize and draw new insights. In addition to expanding our own relationship within and capacity to create conscious communities, we will watch ourselves throughout the session evolve to a conscious community. We are in fact the experiment...a laboratory for study.

Why Are We Here? We deepen our conscious community through collective consciousness. Why are we here?” “Who will we be, what will we do and what will we have?” We have joined together to explore the question of what it means to be conscious community and how to create community?

Symposium 2005
Creating Conscious Community

| Be Mindset | Do Actions to Take | Have Results |
|--|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflective • Present / Mindful • Be Healing • Spirit discovering spirit • Be spirit • Connected to Life • Aware • Confused • Open • Be the We • Be Authentic / Real • Be Still • Intentional / Responsible • Curious • Free • Loving & Compassionate • Frightened • Exposed • Courageous • Thoughtful • Reflective | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Music – Silence • Order the Cake • Be Inquiring • short/ Focused / Brief • Get it On • Be Slow! • Listen & be Silent • Observe the Observer self • Watch this Conscious Communication • I/We Monitoring • Let Go • Speak from the We • Forward the Action | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Something to take with me for Immediate Application • Chocolate Cake • Web Site Product • Insights • Community Experience • Personal Growth • Clarity / Insight / Individual / Communication • Know & Feel the Edge • See the Barriers, Why Not Now • Ripple of CC being Catalysts • Share Appreciation & Inspiration • New Doors – Whole new set of questions to ponder • Communication language • World good true - <p>** CC – conscious community</p> |

“We knew the best things were already in view.”

Community by Design

“It is we, collectively, who can make the agreement as to how we will live together, and that only happens when we talk about it.” The World Cafe

We begin our dialogue into how would we would create a conscious community considering the role of spirit, the role of shared vision and the role of the individual. “How will we know when we are a community?”

The Role of Spirit

“A call is a passion, desire and choice, all rolled into one.” Answering Your Call by John Schuster

Through Jim Lussier we hear the story of the transformation of St. Charles Medical Center. How did this transformation occur and what was the role of spirit in making it all happen? It seems that first and foremost, a leader must have the vision and will to make it happen. Jim held

an inner calling to bring compassion and love back into the hospital, breathing new life into the possibility of authentic caring. Moving from a sterile place where spirit is thwarted by the mechanics of hospital care to a place of powerful healing.

To design and successfully implement his vision for holistic and integrated care, Jim refocused the organization on the patient and their families and away from serving doctors. Jim employed over 250 tasks forces to look at how existing care processes and hospital procedures must change to better serve patients. Through his ten year effort, Jim and his leadership team redefined healthcare delivery by recognizing that the spirit of love and compassion must be partnered with technology and intellect in the healing the body. To improve the health of those we serve in the spirit of love and compassion was the most significant conversation that the Board has undergone. To be held accountable at that level is both bold and daunting. However, Jim now takes joy in the wonderful opportunity to tell the world that this is what we strive for.

Jim moved away from hierarchy in organizing the transformation effort and utilized empowered teams to guide the change that needed to happen. Today, SCMC employs very few reporting relationships. Clusters of teams get the daily work done. Most bosses are actually team leaders. A leadership council is delegated responsibility for daily operations with an executive staff that sets the parameters. Then we turn it over to the leadership team and work teams to execute. Managers used to spend a lot of time solving problems between employees; however, today teams solve their own problems. Each team forms “interactive agreements” and are given the opportunity to determine how they are going to work together. Anytime an agreement is violated, we let one another know. This level of openness, directness and accountability reduces conflicts and builds trust.

Every process and hospital procedure was re-engineered and the staff was trained in a “patient-centered” approach to care. Innovation and experimentation was encouraged among the staff, and creativity continues to flourish. The spirit of the living environment has been tapped to support the healing process, with flowers and the beauty of the natural world spilling into the building. A fireplace, music and art have been incorporated into the healing experience. In the lobby, piano music plays to ease the pain and worry of family members and patients. Best-in-class room service is provided to each patient so that they have a choice of meals and flexibility of when they eat.

Jim tells the story of a dying cowboy who wants to return home to die...a story that illustrates the role of spirit in conscious community. When it becomes clear that the required arrangements for sending the cowboy home are not to be complete in time for the eventual end, several caregivers take it upon themselves to find a way to take the dying cowboy outdoors into the garden adjacent to the sanctuary. The cowboy passes on under the open sky in the out of doors that he so loves with family and friends at his side. Truly profound, truly remarkable, compassion and love expressed in the world, the potential of what it means to be human is authentically expressed. The truth of what it means to be a spirit connected to other spirits which is to love one another with tenderness.

Profound Insight from SCMC: *An element of conscious community is to hold all of it and everyone as sacred and to be present to the gifts being given.*

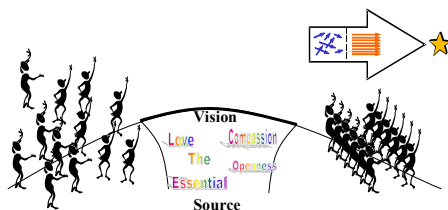
The Role of Shared Vision

With Stephen Hacker, we turn to the Impressionists to inquire into the role of shared vision in creating a conscious community. Different from leader-led or commanded vision, the Impressionists held a shared vision of art. No single artist held the vision within and gathered others to align to the vision rather the vision was already held within each individual as is done with leader-led vision. Their bond came in large part from a common fervor, a mutual enthusiasm requiring expression. They did not represent a formal society, complete with charter and drawn out procedures. Instead they shared a common commitment, painting outside the lines...or as the art critics might have said of their work, out of focus. The focus was not hierarchical structure or crafting formulation documents. Fighting over insignificant terminology was not the work at hand. Their ardor for this unique art was at hand; their shared passion formed the *pack vision*.

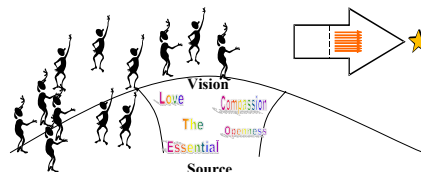
The nature of pack vision is a heartfelt internal drive that finds community, be it for a business venture, social mission, or a spiritual charge. A pack vision is not manufactured outside the person and then pressed internally through corporate slogans and platitudes. No forced conscripts or brain washing necessary. It is a communal process with focus on individual consciousness of purpose...a source of energy which is self-generating and resilient. Important is the individual origin of the passion within the vessel of community. The basis for the deep seated belief was born inside each artist. Not from any type of indoctrination, the desire to see the world through a new art channel was found in each individually. They discovered this common passion and then came together with the mission to expose their new styles to the public at large.

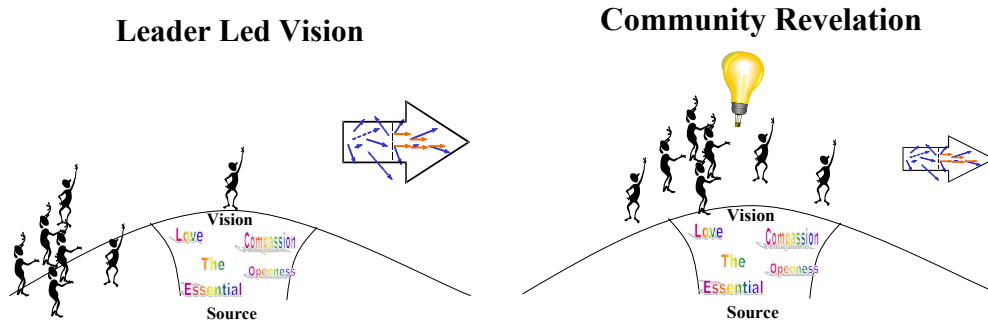
From our discussions of commanded vision, leader-led and pack-vision, a new type of shared vision emerged, that of community revelation -- the emergence of a revelation from the community. *"The wisdom emerges we get more and more connected with each other, as we move from conversation to conversation, carrying ideas from one conversation to another, looking for patterns, suddenly inspired by an insight we all share."* (Margaret Wheatley) From the emergence of a new insight or wisdom, a new shared vision may also emerge...a place in the future to move to, a new creation to bring into the community or the world.

Commanded Vision



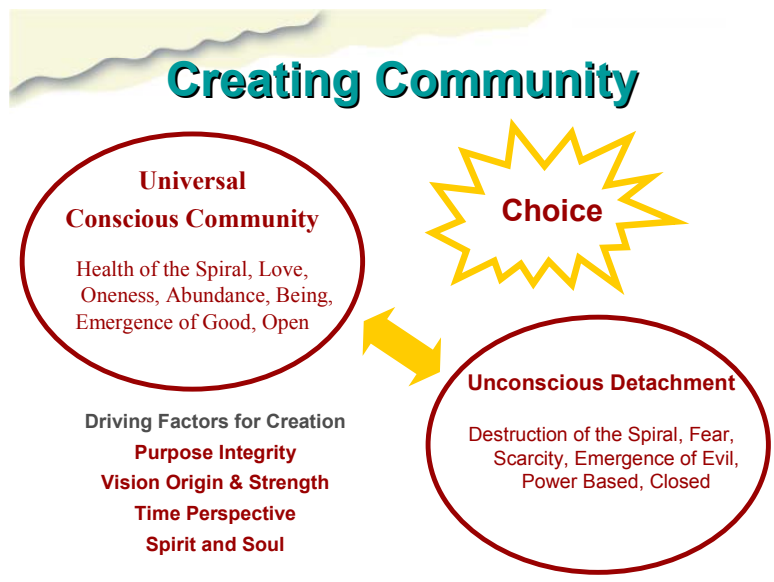
Pack Led Vision





Graphics Submitted by John Blakinger and Paul Krueger.

Vision is the essential bridge/connector to purpose/source (love, compassion, eternal or god). Vision is the beacon for focused energy....moves a community of love and compassion into focused action. It is also an essential bridge of moving from the individual (I) to community (We). Vision brings hope for better community. It is the attracting, warming fire that expands and grows the conscious community. In addition, Stephen shares with the group his summary of creating community that emerged from the day....



The Emergence of Our Conscious Community

“The wisdom emerges we get more and more connected with each other, as we move from conversation to conversation, carrying ideas from one conversation to another, looking for patterns, suddenly inspired by an insight we all share.” Margaret Wheatley

From Monica and Harry...

Again it is a beautiful sunny morning when the group meets on Saturday, the last day of the TPC Symposium on Conscious Communities. On Friday evening we have drinks and dinner at the Hackers. We sit in small groups sharing stories and experiences, enjoying one another’s company and the hospitality of the Hackers. That pleasant and relaxing atmosphere of the evening still surrounds us in the morning.



We can begin with personal reflections on the past days. Can we really build and make a conscious community or is it something that emerges? And if it emerges, how come? Are there conditions to enhance the process? What do we have within our control and what is beyond our control? What do we have to learn or is it much more about de-learning? And is a conscious community always there or is it much more about the experience of consciousness emerging and disappearing in the process of a group?

Our relaxing way of reflecting has an impact on the group and we share experiences. It sounds like a confession when a member of the community tells us about her urge to speed up the process and her struggle with her perception on what enhances and what frustrates the process. The past days she has joined and she has left the group at certain times. There were moments when she needed some time alone, sometimes because she didn't wanted to interfere and to protect herself from interfering and sometimes just because she needed some time alone. The question emerges on what happened when she left the group? Were we aware of her not being in the room? Yes we were. And we saw that she was taken care of by others. People went over to her and asked how she was doing and what she was thinking. Isn't this what a conscious community is about? People belonging to the community are noticed and taken care of. It is about joining the process of the group and it is also about personal freedom, space and integrity. In a conscious community people should be able to express themselves in their own ways. In a conscious community variety is allowed and welcomed.





On the subject of how vision emerges in a conscious community one of us refers to a Landmark Program in which she experienced how people got synchronised and developed a new vision on how they wanted to live. In that programme she experienced that group thinking and acting was really getting anywhere. At that moment a knot emerges in the stomach of another community member. She reflects: "I saw in the way she talked about it that it was an experience she treasured and I did not want to disown her. But I needed to share my

experiences with the Landmark Program to be fair to myself and to stay connected with the group. So I tried to choose my words very carefully and I told about my dear friend who shortly after a Landmark Program went into a psychosis and who is now under psychiatric treatment for more than a year. I told the group that in no way do I blame Landmark for this but I know that something in the way they work with people triggered the collapse of my friend. In studying how Landmark works and in dialogue with the Landmark trainer for my friend's program, I drew the conclusion that one should always keep in mind that we do not know what someone else has to learn in life and in what time frame people develop themselves. So we talked about conscious community being aware of personal differences in tempo and in lessons to be learned."

In reflection on what we need to build or to make a conscious community emerge we shared beautiful stories.

"The shoe-thing"

We hear about the role of prejudices in building/detracting community and how we get these prejudices from our family and can how we also transcend them. We hear the story about how one of us meets someone who comes to the office for a job interview. The woman was wearing shoes with ankle-ties. She says I had this thought in my head: "O my God, ankle-ties-wrong shoes." She was glad that she wasn't in the commission of selection because now the woman worked there and she is very fond of her. So we learned from her story that prejudice is not very helpful in building conscious community and we had a good laugh because we all have these kind of thoughts.



"The non-linear thing"

We hear about how free association works in groups. Someone starts with a word for instance moon, the next says candles, then comes fire-heat-stove-oven followed by a predictable chain of words. Then all of a sudden someone says a word that is not predictable or understandable. This is non-linearity. Someone has broken the chain and this can be meaningful. It is about stopping the process and reflecting on what is happening.

The Role of Individual Consciousness: A Community of Minds within Us

“The idea of contribution is especially instructive because it lies in the area that unites the “I” and the “We”. We contribute because we are part of something larger than our own lives and efforts, but the form of our contribution is based on our uniqueness and our individuality. What if your contribution is a key ingredient?” The World Cafe

We Are the Same Biologically

- ◆ No matter how high-minded we are, no matter how much we wish to change. We can never eliminate our “base nature” completely, any more than we can rid ourselves of heartbeats.
- ◆ No matter how much we prize our individuality, almost all human beings act automatically in the same way. ..We think alike. We get angry the same way, we feel love the same way, we feel hatred that same way, we see colors and forms the same way.

What adaptation do we choose? What do we/you need?

Inspiring Adaptation

“To create the golden moment we must know where the gold lies in ourselves, but we must not have narrow, tidy images of what makes up our ‘gold’.” The Heart Aroused

Adaptation is choosing the best available alternative, not the best possible choice.

“New organs of perception come into being because of necessity. So necessitate one, increase your need.” Rumi

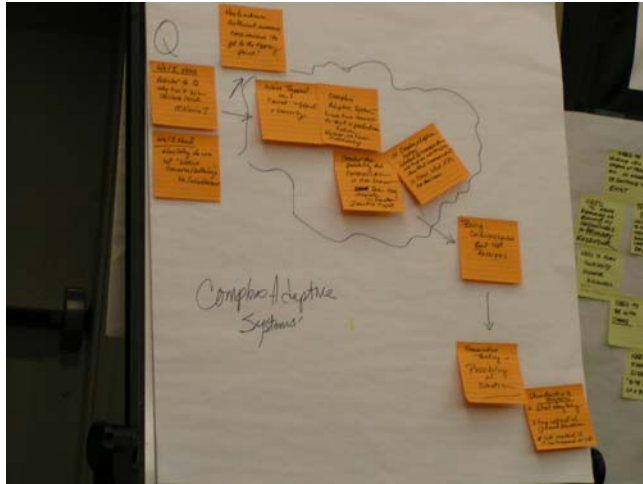
We have a beautiful presentation on the evolution of consciousness by John ... He tells us that our brains have not changed for decades. Basically humans all experience the same feelings of fear, anxiety, love, humor, etc. In group discussion we comment that the expressions of feeling in behaviour difference.

So we have a dialogue on the different experiences and talking about how conscious communities emerge. John asks us to think of conscious communities we have been part of and to draw pictures about how these communities work.

One group draw a circle. They said the process needs not to be circular. It could also be spiral. The ingredients for conscious communities are: love; human endeavour; conflict; diversity which challenges us to grow and adapt; the need to overcome adversity; openness; listening and building trust.



The start of a conscious community can evolve or emerge from every ingredient. For example group conflict can lead to conscious communities, etc.



Another group was into the Complex Adaptive Systems (CAS). They exchanged meaningful stories related to conscious communities they have been part of. There insight is that the process is non-linear. It's a process of rationalities and irrationalities, planning and synchronicity. Bringing consciousness instead of recipes.

The third group reflected on the basic needs of people in communities. They stated that conscious communities are aware of the fact that people want to belong in a group. They made a beautiful



explanation of the word belonging. It is "longing to be". They concluded that for a conscious community we need: to feel connected, to be observing, not make bad or wrong about what is being observed, to notice identity layers for need, to have clarity about intentions self, to love unconditionally, to cultivate trust and to be trustworthy, understanding and to consistently show up as love.

to understand to be able to create a conscious community.

The last group made a drawing about the Kronos and Kairos principle that you have

Kronos means being the exact time, Kairos is the experience of time. Ever since Aristttotle we have traveled on the ship of rationalism. The ship became our universe almost in complete denial of the ocean in which it is sailing. The ship is about: cause and effect thinking, rationalism, duality thinking (good-bad), control thinking, plans, standards and basically about "human-doings". The ocean stands for: live your life, inclusive thinking, intuition, synchronicity, spirit, non-linearity,



unconsciousness, experience and human beings.

The funny thing was that during the presentations consciousness emerged. The day before Tammy Roberts read a passage from the Different Drum by Scott Peck. Scott M. Peck describes it best what emerged on Saturday, the final day of our Symposium.

“When a group enters community there is a dramatic change in spirit. And the new spirit is almost palpable. There is no mistaking it. No one who has experienced it need ever ask again “How will we know when we are a community?” Nor will one ever question that it is a spirit of peace that prevails when a group enters into community. An utterly new quality descends upon the group. People seem to speak more quietly; yet, strangely, their voices seem to carry better through the room. There are periods of silence, but it is never an uneasy silence. Indeed, silence is welcomed. It feels tranquil. Nothing is frantic anymore. The chaos is over. It is as if noise has been replaced by music. The people listen and can hear. It is peaceful. But spirit is slippery. It does not submit itself to definition, to capture, the way material things do. So it is that a group in community does not always feel peaceful in the usual sense of the word. Its members from time to time struggle with each other, and struggle hard. The struggle may become excited and exuberant with little, if any, room for silence. But it is a productive, not a destructive, struggle. It always moves towards consensus, because it is a loving struggle. It takes place on a ground of love. The spirit of community is inevitably the spirit of peace and love.”

Our Profound Thoughts

“We are all mystics to the degree that the experience of oneness – not as an idea but as a living fact – is awake and active within us.” Igniting the Soul at Work by Robert Rabbin.

“If we were to become sensitized to reality, we would no longer objectify other living things. We would begin to feel their feelings, intuit their language and meanings, and understand their rightful place in the world. We would come to know all things as sentient. We would see ourselves in others, and thus cause them no harm.” Igniting the Soul at Work by Robert Rabbin

- Perhaps we are “already-always” profoundly related and conscious community is only hidden. What must “fall-away” are preconceptions; expectations; prejudices; ideology (this is “the one and only way”); image-making; need to heal, convert, fix or solve; need to control - all creations of the mind - for community to be revealed. Surrender with belief. Community is what we were, who we are and what we will be ... for eternity.
- Know that you will prosper in the We (you don’t have to do anything). It’s much easier to reason ourselves into fear in today’s world. We need the power of community to affirm, one another.
- We are already connected...perhaps it’s in the “grasping for it” that it is lost.
- The noise in our culture hides our nature of being loving and compassionate.

- Community includes yet is also beyond reasoning and intellect. It taps intuition, emotion and shared feelings, goals and objectives. It is both visible and invisible. Listen for and discover the “music of community”.
- There is beauty and oneness in the “endeavoring of the human spirit. The “I Am” that seeks the mystery.”
- When frustration in the community emerges, simply “name it”; you don’t have to make chocolate out of it, move beyond fixing and solving.

Profound Questions

As is customary of our Symposium, many questions emerged from the community. These questions will remain with us and create a powerful source for inquiry over the next year.

Definition – what is “it”?

- Are we being/ becoming conscious community while we are talking about it? What determines the level of conscious community we are being?
- Why does it feel different being at the Chicago airport than being at St. Charles Medical Center?
- What is conscious community?
- Can there even be a global definition of community? . . . of consciousness?
- What is a conscious spiritual community for ME? What’s the example!!!

Purpose and Order

- Is there a purpose to evolution? Survival? To what purpose?
- What is Spirit?
- Who allows what?
- Who gets to impose the rules?

How to be/stay conscious

- What if community is already – always there? If so, what needs to “fall away” so that community can be seen, or better yet, can emerge?
- Can we stay conscious to the ocean our ship is sailing on?
- How does the individual operate from a place of honoring the design and intent of the community?
- What role does intuition play in conscious (or unconscious) community?
- What are the natural limits of the human experience of being “spirit?”
- Can we do the mechanics in a way that doesn’t suck the aliveness?

How to scale (small → global)

- What is the relation of a conscious community (smaller) to the creation of a conscious global society?
- How can we arouse creativity in self and others?

- How to ongoingly create?
- The Ripple Effect! – What is the magic outside of this community? How do we “be the pebble” and help surface the pebble in others?

Transcending duality

- Does “consciousness” transcend the “duality” in life? Does it give us a means to go somewhere together?
- Rational vs. revelation . . . Boat and ocean. . . Non-dual or dual?
- Is revelation (spirit-based) a much greater gift than reason (head-based) for giving us access to what we?
- Pain and pleasure are agents of change – What’s your pleasure?
- What is the/a powerful and accurate interpretation of the relationship between mind and heart spirit?
- How do we change the myth of the rugged individualist to shared vision or community?

Fear

What about fear, risk in creating conscious communities?

Fear $\leftarrow \rightarrow$ Love What is the dance?

What will bring compassion and love between religious fundamentalists and conscious communities not religiously based?

When is it ok to put someone outside the community?

Leadership

- When did we separate love and compassion from serving people’s needs? It seems it is no longer allowed.
- Leaders set context, provide the bigger picture. They engage their community to put flesh on the vision and to choose their role. Who am I in a co-created vision?
- What if politics were about creating a “more perfect union?”