



the Center for Contemplative Mind in Society Fall 2007 Social Justice e-Newsletter

“Laughter ... opens our hearts, letting love and light in, changing our perspective, and enabling us to fix our attention on what is positive in our lives.”

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Cultivating a Playful Spirit

Who ever said that lighthearted fun was only for children? When was the last time you did something absolutely “not you,” outrageous, spontaneous and fun? How about the last time you acted shamelessly, clowning around and acting downright silly? Do you remember a moment you laughed so hard you discovered stomach muscles you didn’t know you had?

As social change workers we often take our work and ourselves too seriously. In our quest to make the world a better place we become caught in the busyness and our deeply committed passion

for changing the world. Often we catch ourselves being rigid, inflexible and predictable. We forsake ourselves --mental, physical, emotional and spiritual-- “for the cause.” Sadly, we feel a strong sense of responsibility and we believe we should hold joy at bay, not realizing that fun offers tons of fulfillment and relaxation, getting us through these deeply challenging political times. Play helps us maintain lightness of heart and spirit. So give yourself permission to set no boundaries and indulge yourself in the experience of the outrageous and the absurd. Being silly is an inherent part of our soul and being. We are by nature playful beings.

The Practice of Play

Developing play as practice requires a commitment to enjoy life to the fullest. And to, on occasions, bring balance between work and play by losing yourself in play with total and unabashed abandonment. Here are some ideas to start the ball rolling:

1. Photograph funny scenes
2. Make a funny film
3. Get involved in a theater group
4. Join a dance group or take dance lessons
5. Spend more time with children
6. Make up silly songs
7. Have a costume party and wear funny costumes
8. Make up games
9. Skip rope with children in your neighborhood
10. Play your favorite childhood games

11. Draw or paint using your dominant hand
12. Write funny stories

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Recommended Reading



The Activist's Ally

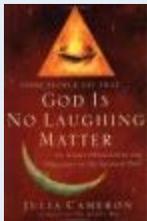
The Center's newest publication, *The Activist's Ally: Contemplative Tools for Social Change*, is a 120-page resource manual and audio CD for social justice activists seeking to bring contemplative practice into their lives, communities and workplaces. Social justice workers will find this a valuable resource for personal transformation. It provides tools and techniques for both individual and group practice. Copies are available for purchase at www.contemplativemind.org/store.



SARK

SARK's New Creative Companion: Ways to Free Your Creative Spirit

Celestial Arts, 2005



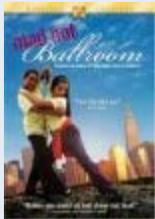
Julia Cameron

God Is No Laughing Matter: Observations and Objections on the Spiritual Path

Tarcher Publishing, 2001

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Recommended Viewing



Mad Hot Ballroom

This documentary about 11-year-old NY elementary school kids learning ballroom and Latin dance (rumba and meringue) will make you smile, laugh and cry. It's loads of fun!

Directed by Marilyn Agrelo

Paramount Home Entertainment, 2005

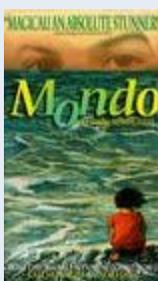


Bandits

A hilarious comedy of two bank robbers who do not take themselves seriously.

Directed by Barry Levinson

MGM Home Entertainment, 2001

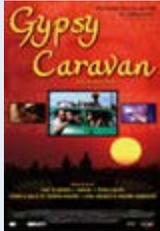


Mondo

This film is about a homeless 10-year old Roma boy who models how to appreciate life in a small seaside town of Nice and his impact in this small town.

Directed by Tony Gatlif

New Yorker Films, 1997



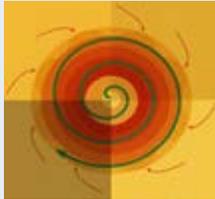
When the Road Bends: Tales of a Gypsy Caravan

Filmed on location in Spain, Macedonia, Romania, Europe, the USA and India, this enchanting documentary displays a joyous celebration of life in the midst of pain and suffering.

Directed by Jasmine Dellal
Shadow Distribution, 2006

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Our Upcoming Events



Consciousness-in-Action:

Toward an Integral Approach to Liberation & Transformation

a workshop with Raúl Quiñones-Rosado, PhD

October 20, 2007, 10 AM - 2 PM

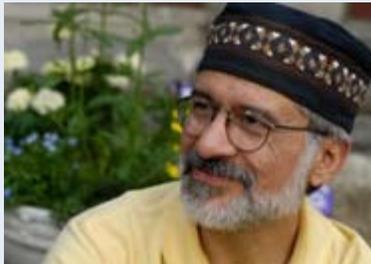
Franklin Patterson Hall, Hampshire College, Amherst, MA

[Register for this event](#)

Workshop fee: \$35 (\$36.75 if paying by credit card, to cover processing costs)

Co-sponsored by The Center for Contemplative Mind in Society and Community Partnerships for Social Change at Hampshire College.

In facing society's serious issues, many people intently work for community empowerment, social and economic justice, and institutional change, while others focus their attention more on personal growth, loving relationships, and spiritual development. Some believe change happens from the inside out; others are convinced we will be happier only when external conditions improve and justice prevails for all. All of us, undoubtedly, aspire to a better life and a better world.



In this 4-hour workshop, Raúl Quiñones-Rosado introduces key concepts and principles of **"consciousness-in-action"** — an alternative approach to personal and social change. Drawing from psychology, social theory, integral studies, contemplative practice, and years of work in communities-of-struggle, Dr. Quiñones-Rosado offers an overview of: an integral developmental framework; a psychosocial analysis of the impact of identity-based power, and; liberatory-transformative practices for addressing oppression, arguably the greatest hindrance to human well-being

and development.

Phoenix Energy

Awakening the Heart and Inner Wisdom: A Winter Gathering for Emerging Leaders

with Nghia Trung Tran

January 16-18, 2008

Nine Mountain, Plainfield, MA



[Register for this event](#)

For those who work in the realm of community transformation, this winter retreat offers the opportunity to draw one's energies inward in preparation for the new season. Participants will receive support in sustaining one's energy and commitment to social change work, face the suffering one

meets on a daily basis and create a tranquil space for reflection and clearing the heart.

Participants will be invited to walk through four stages of wisdom gathering: Illumination, Creation, Healing and Transformation. We seek to illuminate the inner-light from the heart; create pathways towards ancestral wisdom and teachings; clear and heal blockages which stand in the way of our brightest existence; and finally, seeking the phoenix energy, journey through a regenerative and transformative process. This retreat is open to everyone who resonate with inner-wisdom and ancestral teachings. Space will be made for community building, storytelling, quiet meditation, reflective activities such as writing and guided visioning and celebration. Our goal is to seek the inner-light within the depth of our hearts and learn to hold it in a sacred way in our everyday existence.

A Gathering of Activists and Organizers of Color

April 29 - May 2, 2008

Menla Mountain Center Phoenicia, NY

An intergenerational gathering of activists and organizers of color to explore the connection between spiritual practice and social action.

Mark your calendars; registration opens in early 2008.

A Zen Meditation Retreat with Rev. Hilda Ryumon Gutiérrez Baldoquín

June 13-14, 2008

Location TBA (Western MA)

Mark your calendars; registration opens in early 2008. More information will be available in our next e-newsletter.

A Meditation Retreat with Lama John Makransky

July 18-19, 2008

Location TBA (Western MA)

Mark your calendars; registration opens in early 2008. More information will be available in our next e-newsletter.

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Other (non-CMind) Events and Opportunities of Interest

The Alston/Bannerman Fellowship Program

Long-Time Activists of Color Invited to Apply

Award: 3+ month sabbatical / \$25,000 stipend

Deadline: December 15, 2007

The Alston/Bannerman Fellowship Program is committed to advancing progressive social change by helping to sustain long-time activists of color. The Sabbatical program honors those who have devoted their lives to helping their communities organize for racial, social, economic, and environmental justice, and provides resources for these organizers to take sabbaticals for reflection and renewal.

Visit the program's Web site for complete program details:

<http://fconline.foundationcenter.org/pnd/10009223/alstonbannerman>

Compassion as a Vehicle for Liberation:

A Daylong Meditation Retreat in the Burmese Vipassana tradition

at The Stone House, 6602 Nicks Road, Mebane, NC

Sunday, October 21, 2007

10 am - 6 pm

followed by potluck, Burma slideshow and discussion

Cost: \$15-40 sliding scale plus dana [donations] for the teacher and for Burmese relief work.

The day will balance 2 primary meditation techniques: vipassana/insight meditation and karuna/compassion practice. Both are based in Buddhist teaching that strengthens the mind's ability to witness and accept our lives as they unfold and to cultivate our ability to care for the suffering in our selves and in the world around us. The retreat portion of the the day will be held in silence with instructions, a talk, and time for questions and answers. Lunch will be served. Following the retreat, we'll have a potluck dinner, a slideshow of Burma and a discussion of the current situation there. Please bring a contribution for the potluck if you plan to stay for the evening event. You are also invited to attend just the potluck and evening program.

Visit <http://www.stonecircles.org/work/events.html#stone> for more information.

Auschwitz-Birkenau Bearing Witness Retreat

Oswiecim, Poland

November 5-10, 2007

Visit peacemakerinstitute.org/Auschwitz.html for full retreat details

Zen Peacemaker Circles Training Intensive

Levels I and II

Friday, November 16 - Sunday, November 18

Northampton, MA

A workshop for people from diverse spiritual backgrounds who are comitted to grounding their social action in spirituality and who are open to exploring Zen and circle practice as a path to transform suffering into wisdom on both personal and societal levels.

To register, contact Margi at 413 585-8481; margigregory@comcast.net by November 10.

New York City: Meditation Practice and Discussion Groups for People of Color

There are two ongoing groups that we know of:

1. 7 to 9 pm on the second Monday of every month, led by Gina Sharpe.

New York Insight Meditation Center

28 West 27th Street, 10th Floor

Learn more at www.nyimc.org.

2. Shambhala Meditation Center of New York

118 W 22 St. 6th Flr.

New York, NY 10011

212 675-6544

Visit the event calendar at www.ny.shambhala.org for more information.

Boston People of Color Buddhist Meditation Group

The ongoing Boston POC Meditation Group meets at the Sacred Space, 200 Ell Hall
Northeastern University, Boston, MA
Sundays, 4:30 to 6:30 p.m.
Enter Through Curry Student Center.

Come together to learn and practice the joy of meditation as nourishment.
Chairs are available, but you are welcome to bring your own sitting cushion.

For more information, please contact: pocmeditate1@mac.com

**Spirit in Action's Leadership Program
Belchertown, MA**

Sunday, October 28th – Thursday, November 1, 2007
Wednesday, January 16 – Sunday, January 20th, 2008
For more information, visit www.spiritinaction.net.

Urban Word NYC

New York, NY
(212) 352-3495
Free spoken word, poetry hip-hop and college-prep workshops.
For more information, visit www.urbanwordnyc.org

DIVERSITY MATTERS: changing the culture of change

DIVERSITY MATTERS is a nonprofit organization dedicated to making diversity and inclusion foundational assets of environmental and social change leaders, organizations, and movements.

Training events in Boston and San Francisco Fall 2007:
Diversity Learning Community
Diversity for Environmental and Social Change Leadership Series
People of Color Leadership Network Meeting

For more information:
write to Diversity Matters, 34 Linden Road, Hartland, VT 05048,
call (802) 299-7317,
or email info@diversity-matters.org

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