

One rain won't make a crop.
~ Anonymous, *Deep South*

One finger won't catch fleas.
~ Anonymous



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Creating Community and Authentic Relationships

When we think of contemplative practices, what usually comes to mind is meditation, yoga, prayer, chanting or perhaps creative practices such as art, writing, dance and music. Creating community and kinship is very rarely considered. It's not surprising! Western culture strongly values individuality and independence, neither of which is conducive to building fellowship, especially those that cut across race, gender, sexuality and class. If you want community with people who share a common interest you have to be intentional about it and work hard to make it happen.

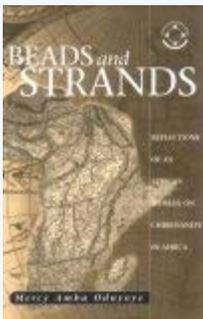
There are a couple of techniques used to build kinship worth sharing. Storytelling is a relational contemplative practice found to be very useful in a group or community setting. In fact it is used by social justice workers in the South and around the country as a core strategy for building a broad-based social justice movement. Sharing personal stories opens the heart and gently touches and connects us. In unison we become moved to compassion and empathy.

Socializing also has the qualities of being a contemplative practice. Authentic dialogue in social settings offers opportunities to listen deeply

and engages one in dialogue from deep within the heart. In a relaxed and social environment, people are likely to share stories, thereby drawing out the collective wisdom of the group.

Feeling a little insecure about building community? Take courage, start small and be persistent. You'd be surprised at the outcome.

Recommended Reading



Beads and Strands:
Reflections of an African Woman on Christianity in Africa

Mercy Amba Oduyoye
Orbis Books, 2004

This book offers some insights into how to create kinship across lines of difference.



The Activist's Ally

120 pages, full color, comb binding, plus audio CD
\$20.00 plus shipping

The Center's newest publication, *The Activist's Ally: Contemplative Tools for Social Change*, is a resource manual 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 in [our online store](#).

Recommended Viewing



The White Balloon

Directed by Jafar Panahi

Evergreen Pictures, 1996

This is Razieh's (a seven-year old Iranian girl) adventure on the way to purchase a goldfish for New Year's Day.

Upcoming Workshops, Trainings, Retreats and Announcements

If you know of any upcoming events for social justice activists, organizers, and service providers, please email the information to info@contemplativemind.org. Thank you!



[Deep Replenishment and Connection: Meditations of Loving Communion and Presence for Social Justice Activism and Service](#)

with Lama John Makransky

July 18-20, 2008

Garrison Institute, Garrison, NY

The meditation practices of loving communion and presence taught in this retreat are adapted from Tibetan Buddhism to make them freshly accessible to people of all backgrounds. These practices can help us become more fully present and connect more deeply with others, so as to evoke their hidden strengths beyond the limiting judgments of society. These practices can help ease us past the dynamics of burnout to abide in a deeper level of awareness, a place of replenishment that is beyond any need of improvement. There we can find the sustaining energy and motivation to work hard to improve others' lives. Through these practices, wise love and compassion can be rediscovered as powers that not only inspire and uplift persons, but also challenge ourselves and others in the ways that we all tend to hide from our fuller reality and potential.

For more information and registration, visit www.contemplativemind.org

non-CMind events

[Diversity Matters](#)

Hartland, VT

Diversity for Environmental & Social Change Leadership Series

info@diversity-matters.org or 802 299-8353

[12th Annual Meditation Retreat for People of Color](#)

July 26-August 1, 2008

Vallecitos Mountain Refuge, New Mexico

With Mushim Ikeda-Nash and Ven. Suhita Dharma

In many traditions, people journey into the wilderness for contemplation and purification. How often do we have the opportunity to connect to our deepest intentions and to experience spiritual renewal? Taking place at 9,000 feet in pristine meadowland in New Mexico, the Vallecitos 2007 People of Color Retreat is designed to offer and support a practical introduction to insight meditation (vipassana). Meditation embodies the essence and wisdom of the teachings of the Buddha and has been the foundation of Buddhist teachings for 2,500 years. It is a simple and direct practice. Meditation is extraordinary in its simplicity, its lack of dogma and, above all, its results. This path to self-awareness can be successfully applied by anyone to their everyday lives. The ancient and profound teachings of interconnectedness and compassion are the foundations of spiritual awareness.

The retreat is based on the intensive training retreats that are traditionally the heart of Buddhist practice. The daily schedule, conducted in silence, is comprised of group sitting periods alternating with walking meditation outdoors. There are group interviews with the teachers and a daily discourse from the teachings of the Buddha. In addition, there will be opportunities for optional group hikes and mindful movement to allow practitioners to fully experience Vallecitos' beautiful natural setting, and to support physical joy and ease. "Gourmet" vegetarian meals add to the special nature of this retreat. To cultivate the meditation process, please note that complete silence is maintained at all times throughout the retreat, except during meditation practice interviews and the talks by the teachers, which may be followed by a communal conversation.

This retreat continues the ground-breaking tradition established at Vallecitos over the past decade. People of color come to the mountains, the forest and the river not to conference, network, analyze or plan, but to practice one of the world's oldest and wisest contemplative traditions. For some, the retreat may be the first extended period of meditation practice and practicing silence. No previous meditation experience is required to participate and the retreat is suitable for individuals at all levels of practice.

Registration & Cost:

To ensure that the retreat is accessible to all who wish to participate, we are offering a sliding scale of \$100-\$450. Scholarships and payment plans are available.

Fees include meals, accommodation and tuition. No dana or donations will be offered to the teachers.

Click here to [register](#).

Classes and workshops in nonviolent communication

Nonviolent communication (NVC) is a process developed by Marshall Rosenberg and others which people use to communicate with greater compassion and clarity. It focuses on two things: *empathy* — listening with deep compassion, and *honest self-expression* — exposing what matters to oneself in a way that's likely to inspire compassion in others. The ideal of NVC is to get one's own needs met while also

People of Color Meditation/Sitting Groups

If you know of any additional groups, please email the information to info@contemplativemind.org for inclusion in future newsletters. Thank you!

[Shambhala Meditation Center of New York](#)
118 West 22nd Street, 6th Floor, New York City
Third Monday of every month, 7:00-9:00pm

[New York Insight Meditation Center](#)

meeting others' needs.

Communicating with Compassion

A project of the Institute for Peaceable Communities--workshops located in Amherst and Arlington, MA.

www.communicatingwithcompassion.org

Seeds of Connection

Classes and workshops in Northampton, MA

www.seedsofconnection.org

You can search for many more classes and workshops at <http://www.cnvc.org>.

28 West 27th Street, 10th Floor, New York City

Second Monday of every month, 7:00-9:00pm

Boston POC Meditation Group
the Sacred Space, 200 Ell Hall (enter through Curry Student Center)

Northeastern University, Boston, MA

Sundays, 4:30 to 6:30 p.m.

Chairs are available, but you are welcome to bring your own sitting cushion.

For more information, contact pocmeditate1@mac.com

[East Bay Meditation Center](#)

2147 Broadway, Oakland, CA

Thursday evenings, 7:00-9:00pm

[Insight Meditation Community of Washington](#)

Unity Woods Yoga Studio

2639 Connecticut Avenue, NW

Suite C-102 (lower level)

Washington, DC

The next meeting will take place June 14th, 4:00-6:30pm. Meetings resume again in September.

[San Francisco Buddhist Center](#)

37 Bartlett Street

San Francisco, CA

Regular sits are the second Sunday of every other month, 1:00-3:30pm (6/8, 8/10, 12/14)

[Manzanita Village](#)

Los Angeles/Long Beach, CA

First or second Wednesdays of each month, 7:30-9:30pm

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