Dear CMind Friends,

Sawubona! We see you!

I am certain that some of you are still sitting with the news of our sunsetting as an organization and are experiencing a range of emotions as we begin to grapple with the loss of CMind in our everyday lives. I know, understand, and feel this loss with you; however, I am clear that our ending is making space for new beginnings where the spirit of CMind and the community we have built can flourish—differently.

This week, we hear from CMind friend Lisa-Marie Napoli. Lisa-Marie assists us in understanding the role and power of contemplation in the midst of what feels like global chaos. She reminds us so beautifully, “We are all we have.” So, we must care and take care of one another and ourselves especially in these moments of deep uncertainty and perceived chaos. Perceived, yes. This is not to say that chaos is not wreaking havoc all around us. However, if we can see with the eyes of our heart and
understand with the consciousness that does not think, then we come to appreciate what the natural world teaches us—every great transformation, every moment of creation and generation is preceded by chaos: destruction, confusion, fear, and unknowing.

I believe, as I have said elsewhere, that a new earth is rising and a new way of being (more than) human is emerging. We find ourselves in the simultaneity of a grand turning and a profound rising. Lisa-Marie’s words and contemplation assists us in befriending the emotions that arise and will arise for each of us as we strive to thrive in these moments.

Gratitude to Lisa-Marie for sharing her wisdom with us.

Finally, I want to provide you with a brief update on the work of the CMind Transition Team being led by CMind Co-Founder Mirabai Bush and Board Member Stephanie Briggs. The committee has been hard at work initiating relationships with potential institutional partners to whom we might transfer the CMind assets of ACMHE, JOCI, and the CMind Digital Archives.

- We have narrowed down the list of potential institutional partners based on fit, mission and values alignment, and quality of the previous/current relationship with CMind. We have begun to enter into discovery talks and hope to have more to share with you all in July on the status of these discussions.
- The CMind Board of Directors will host a dialogue in July for members to share their fond memories of CMind and ask any questions of the Board or Leadership. We are working to finalize the date.
- The organization will host a closing ritual and celebration in August 2022 to mark the end of a very productive era of contemplative learning, community, and engagement while recognizing every end is simply a new beginning.

Our collective goal is to keep you all as informed as we can while we move through this transition. We ask your patience with us and with this process.

Gratitude to the CMind Transition Committee: Mirabai Bush, Stephanie Briggs, Amy Pucino, Lisa Napora, and Lenwood Hayman for their good work and willingness to serve.

In addition to the great work CMind has ushered forth and supported over the last 27 years, we have much to celebrate this month with PRIDE and
Juneteenth. As we celebrate PRIDE and Juneteenth, I want to recognize that June is the month of liberation. I encourage us during this month to reflect: From what do we wish to be liberated? And where might we need to claim freedom in our lives?

May your celebrations be joyful and your work saturated in justice for all. May love rise to greet you. May we come to understand the words of Audre Lorde, “Without community, there is no liberation.”

Be well.
Be still.
Trust in the infinite.
Remember our shared humanity.
Be community.
Be of good courage.

DRM
David W. Robinson-Morris, Ph.D.
Executive Director
The Center for Contemplative Mind in Society (CMind)

15 June 2022

Contemplation Amidst Chaos
Lisa-Marie Napoli, Ph.D.

At a time when most of us are exhausted and discombobulated trying to make sense of collective trauma, we turn to each other to help make sense of it all. There is a meaningful sense of belonging and connection that grounds us together as a collective humanity. Tapping into this connection can energize and assist in moving forward.

Historical trauma and systemic injustices continue to bombard us every day. Example after example of unrest, divisiveness, prejudice, and violence enter our awareness on a regular basis. The names of the victims deserve
recognition and because there are far too many, we can start most recently by holding silence for lives lost and traumatized in Buffalo, Uvalde, and Tulsa, to name a few. Let us pause.

At the same time these incidents were happening, I observed springtime peonies blossoming, emerging into their glory. How could that be? How do we hold the tension of juxtaposing realities, one filled with such beauty and others with such horror? The CMind community reminds me that there is awakening, purpose, alignment, hope, and collective action continuously emerging while we honestly face incomprehensible atrocities. How do we hold and explore these extreme tensions? One way is to contemplate them from a place of non-attachment doing the necessary inner work. When we talk with each other, we can remember to pause and reflect during our interactions, so we stay in-the-moment and pay attention to the ideas, energy, and behaviors we are contributing. We can find ways to use contemplation to manage our emotions especially when they feel overwhelming. Doing a daily practice that tends to the emotions can aid in uncovering stillness within. From this place of stillness, we can learn about ourselves, respond, and have a positive impact on others.

Our world feels like it has been turned inside out, and upside down, and so have we. Over the past few years, humans around the globe have learned and been trained in ways of isolation, quarantine, and distance from each other due to Covid. These ways have served a purpose for safety and protection and are viable approaches when needed. In working with students and hearing stories from others, it is easy to see the negative impacts that isolation has brought, too. Days, weeks, months, and even years of disconnecting from others in public life has caused an emotional unraveling for many people and strong trends of disengagement. Mental wellness is challenged at a new level and trained counselors are in demand at a rate that is impossible to currently fill. What if we all began to check in more with ourselves and each other to care for mental health? What would that look like and what kind of society might that create?

During the global women's march in January 2017, I held a sign that read, “Democracy is about Caring for Each Other.” I held it up with gusto imagining neighbors knowing and caring for each other, strangers talking and checking in with each other, and it all seemed peaceably and easily doable. There are many examples of this happening. Even in times of isolation and distancing, there is immense value, meaning, and fulfillment
brought forth through connection, care, and closeness with others. As we navigate our way forward through a time filled with uncertainties and fears, knowing that there are times appropriate for distance and for connection, may we do so from a place of inner clarity practicing love and kindness, trusting what feels right, and extending ourselves to check in with and care for the emotional well-being of ourselves and others beyond our usual circles. We are all we have. It makes sense to care more fully for each other these days especially when recognizing what loneliness does to well-being and state of mind.

Unveiling clarity within—finding a quiet, still spot amidst a spinning tornado—is not easy sometimes and yet, it allows for space to hold tensions such as disbelief and courage, trauma and tenderness, sadness and faith, horror and beauty. How do we keep strong and clear—at a time that feels vulnerable, confusing, and inside-out? Deep stillness holds insights and possibility for answers. Stillness allows us to let go and supports resilience unique to each of us.

We can open a door to new behaviors for ourselves and others by managing emotions and allowing them to bring contemplative stillness leading to positive, uplifting interactions. The hope is that these rippling effects will carry to those who need it most. May our hearts keep us strong and clear on the path trusting that contemplative practices can guide us to a place of stillness from where we share a place of belonging from which to act.

Discovering the CMind community last year was a huge ray of light entering my world. Such an incredible community committed to contemplative practices—modeling the demanding work while I stumble along. I imagine the CMind community means different things to each person. To me, the community creates a reservoir of hope, vision, support, and validation that is most urgently needed at this critical juncture of human history. With a fast-spinning outer world and our inner worlds reverberating, it has been a gift to engage with people that provide space to slow down, share with each other, observe what is happening in the world through contemplative lenses, look deeply within, breathe, and imagine how we can move forward together to create positive change.

Even with the heavy and sad recognition that CMind is moving toward its sunset stage, the shared learning, insights, practices, and experiences of
this community can thrive. These are powerful and incredible gifts. I look forward to seeing what can emerge for this community and what choices will be made moving forward. Letting go and surrendering to all that is happening, knowing that there are things in our control and things out of our control can fuel the community toward creativity and renewal remembering that this moment, every moment, holds opportunity and choice about how to respond.

Lisa-Marie Napoli, Ph.D., is Director of the Political and Civic Engagement (PACE) program at Indiana University in Bloomington where she teaches courses in leadership, civic engagement, and public policy using contemplative pedagogical approaches to facilitate students' reflective learning. She has decades of experience as a coach, leader, and trainer in conflict management, mediation, facilitation, deliberative democracy, community organizing, and leadership development. Lisa-Marie is an advocate for inclusion of public voices, bridge builder of divisiveness, public engagement consultant, and committed to community health in all forms.

Contemplative Stillness: Discovered through Tending to Emotions

By Lisa-Marie Napoli

Inspired by practices from Thich Nhat Hanh, Maria Hamilton Abegunde, my therapist, my spiritual teacher, and other amazing beings

The next time you feel emotional overwhelm or deep rage, instead of responding in defensive action, argumentation, or another way that
triggers emotional distress further within, what would it be like if you sat with it, listened to it, and asked yourself what it was all about?

Emotions can be a teacher for us when we can slow down, holding a light on the emotion but resisting the urge to allow the drama of the emotion to consume us. Taking the time to contemplate the emotion by scanning ourselves quietly inside about what is happening can allow us to be in a reality where we are not being emotionally dragged through the situation. Rather, we can view the befriended emotion with compassion and kindness.

Honoring the emotion, learning from it, and having a chance to support its movement can create space to be with the truest, most precious inner self. It does not mean rejecting or denying the emotion. It is a matter of recognizing it and allowing it to be what it is, all the while knowing that we can choose to tend to it. All we need to do, yet not easy to do, is to be with it, acknowledge it, remember where it comes from and ask why it is there.

What does emotion tell you about what is happening?

Count slowly to 5 breathing in.

- Feel the muscles in your face relaxing.

Count slowly to 5 breathing out.

- Allow the release to ground you and feel the lightness inside.

Repeat and notice what comes up; pay attention without judgment.

It may take several rounds. Practice trust and patience with yourself.

- Enjoy how your breath begins to calm down
- The breath becomes still as you feel you are floating within spaciousness
- Spaciousness within and all around
- The place of stillness within spaciousness often allows entrance to a place of inner clarity
- The mind chatter slowly slows down and the emotional disarray in our minds begins to subside
• The mind feels momentarily at peace
• Breathe into that peaceful place as if it were your best friend
• Trust that when you discover that still point deep within the breath, that you gain a sense of inner clarity
• Allow clarity to guide your words and behaviors
• Clarity can ripple to others and create clarity in relationships
• You experience relief from emotional disarray
• Trust and believe you know how to move forward
• Take another long, deep slow breath in and out, and allow it to be - it is what it is
The 18th Annual Summer Session on Contemplative Practices in Education: 
Introducing Earth-Care Practices in Education

Online, August 1 - 3, 2022
CONTEMPLATIVEMIND.ORG/SUMMER

A unique combination of experiential learning, community building, and time for practice to help you connect to your intentions as an educator as you prepare for the upcoming semester.

Join us for the 18th Summer Session!
Past attendees have referred to our annual Summer Sessions as their “yearly tune-up”: a chance for personal reflection, community, and self-care, combined with professional development.

Questions we will explore include:

- What paths might lead us from human-centric to Earth-centric practices?
- How do we cultivate wellness in learning environments, holding space for our powerful emotions?

This online event offers a rich offering of plenary presentations, practical sessions, discussion, and small-group work. Newcomers to contemplative pedagogy are welcome.
Join us in celebrating a new book, *Women of Spirit Share Rituals Divine*, edited by Amshatar Monroe, foreword by Linda Lantieri and Michelle C. Chatman! In this volume, 40 awesome women of spirit share diverse,
personal, and evolution-empowering stories of our connection to rituals and the divine.

We're sharing this news with our friends at Integrate Mindfulness, co-sponsors of the online launch event, 4-6pm ET on Saturday, June 18th.

The Association for Contemplative Mind in Higher Education (ACMHE) is a professional academic association for all who bring contemplative practices and perspectives into their work in higher education. ACMHE members are creating opportunities for integrative, inclusive, and transformative teaching and learning.

Join ACMHE Today

Browse the ACMHE Community Event Calendar

Are you a new reader? Welcome!

The Reservoir is a newsletter from CMind, The Center for Contemplative Mind in Society. We intend this newsletter as a moment of respite in
The Center for Contemplative Mind in Society (CMind) is a global community of contemplative practitioners whose goal is the ongoing development of racial, social, economic, and environmental justice and the advancement of human flourishing. CMind's mission is to positively and progressively transform society through diverse contemplative practices.

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