

DISCOVERING THE QUALITIES OF BELOVED COMMUNITY

"We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny."

-- Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.



As humans we thrive in community –held, honored, and supported. When we know people different than ourselves we discover other ways of being; our horizons expand and life becomes richer.

In our vision of beloved community, diversity thrives, everyone is included and justice prevails. Each of us gets to bring our entire selves to the mix; care, trust and respect are the norm.

The community supports each member's unique way of being, each member's gifts –knowing that it is in difference that the fiber of community is strengthened.

It is a natural reflex of the human heart to care and bond. At some time or another we have all glimpsed the beloved community, pettiness has fallen away and we were held in a web of mutuality.

How ever brief, each of us has experienced an aspect of what the beloved community might be. We felt the possibility, glimpsed into what an inclusive diverse community could be.

- ✚ Tell me a story of a moment when you had a taste of the beloved community.
- ✚ What was happening?
- ✚ How did people relate to each other?
- ✚ How was spirit alive in the scene?
- ✚ What qualities were in the air? ... or what values informed the interactions?
- ✚ When geese fly in a V, the flap of their wings creates an up lift for the one behind. How are people creating uplift for one another?

Process notes:

While interviewing, don't share any of your own perspectives, instead, draw out more of the positive experience by asking questions that will invite description (not 'why' questions - but 'what did that feel like?' questions).

Listen for "glistening moments," "quotable quotes" and jot down the words that capture the essence. If you don't write as you interview, take a moment to jot them down before moving to the next step in the process.

After both have done interviews in small group share the juicy quotes and highlights of what stood out when interviewing. While listening to what came out of one another's interviews, everyone is invited to draw and write what you hear on the flip chart paper. (this should be placed on the table between everyone and what will emerge will be a childlike rendition of a web/mandala-- stick figures, hearts and other symbols are encouraged!)

After sharing the inspirations, as a group, deepen by noticing some of the common threads in what you heard. Draw lines to make a "web" of connections and highlight any dynamic tensions on the large sheet.

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