

Collecting the Threads of the 2021 Gathering for Change Agents

2021 was quite a year... by any measure! And as we do each year, the 2021 Gathering hosting team selected a timely, value-added and purposeful theme to guide the selection of topics and speakers. Our monthly calls were rich with speakers *and* participants who gifted us all with their knowledge, perspectives, tools and resources designed to help us expand our abilities to hold and honor differing (and often polarizing) perspectives - and create inner and outer bridges to reconnect the divisive energies – in service to creating a world that works for everyone.

We've captured some of the highlights of our monthly calls below and encourage you to check out the recordings for 2021 and previous years here [audio archives](#).

February 2021 – Gathering Hosts and Participants

“Agents of Love; Weaving the Tangled Threads of Irreconcilable Differences”

- Together, we shared our perspectives on the challenges and opportunities that are ahead of us
- We offered lots of space for people to share their responses, reflections, suggestions, and creative ideas about the 2021 Gathering theme “Agents of Love; Weaving the Tangled Threads of Irreconcilable Differences”, and how our exploration of related topics can serve us, our clients and the world we share.
- “Agents of Love; Weaving the Tangled Threads of Irreconcilable Differences” is a bit of a conundrum, right? There are some intriguing paradoxes – which we love! – just like the world we live in right now that invites us into this work.

March 2021 - Tor Eneroth

“How Values Help Us Bridge Differences “

- Tor led us in an exploration of the power of the Barrett Values framework—and the general topic of values—to offer us keys for structuring our dialogues to meet each other where we are and connect on foundational common values where they exist.
- Values are a reflection of our needs; a description of what motivates us and our identity—who we are.
- Embrace your fears and tension of opposites within.
- We need to create space inside us—and a safe space around us—in order to slow down and make long-term solid decisions, or we will mathematically drive more fear.
- Perception is everything and is often manipulated at scale. Change agents need to maneuver consciously in this environment and not react from the perception of threat.

April - Lion Goodman

“Experience Reconcilable Differences – As You Shift Your Beliefs”

- We explored how people’s beliefs get in the way of welcoming and respecting others’ perspectives.
- The energetic tension of opposites can carry so much fear and shadow energy that we (conscious and/or unconscious) judge the “other” as dangerous, intolerable, and/or worthy of contempt.
- Evolutionary biology explains how our instincts perceive what is known and similar as ‘safe’ – while what is unknown and different is treated as ‘dangerous’.
- Which beliefs trigger a divisive reaction in you and what might that reveal about you?
- How could shifting your beliefs and perspectives create a bridge for you to reconcile and connect at a deeper level?
 - All parts serve...
 - Each perspective holds pieces of the holistic truth
 - What could we learn if we just get curious with each other
 - How might our views, feelings and relationships evolve if we just talk—and listen to each other—without judgment, defense or agenda?

May - Anamaria Aristizabal

“Preparing Yourself and Your Community for Reconciliation”

- Developing awareness is a key part of building a culture of conflict immunity, so that these tools are in place prior to the inevitability of conflict arising between people.
- Anamaria led on a guided visualization to meet our inner daemons - to identify and connect with a tangible character form of our protective and combative energy, which is often in the shadows. We were also guided to identify our genius and our support.
- Essential steps in building a conflict immune system include:
 - Build Reflective Capacity
 - Draft an Emergency Response Plan
 - Build a Support System
 - Walk the Talk
 - Make a Declaration

June – Dena Wiggins

"Our Call to Transform Survival Stories to New Patterns of Love"

- We were gifted with a deeper exploration of the parts/selves that shape who we are, how we see life, and how we respond to life’s events.
- Many of these inner parts/selves may have been hidden for many years - and are now activated due to the intensity of external events – the Pandemic, Social Justice and Climate events.

- Parts that have been stuck in survival patterns are unconsciously affecting our ability to be with the level of uncertainty and complexity that we are facing today.
- Learning how to transform survival-stuck patterns into new patterns of love and purposeful flourishing is essential.
- Doing this “shadow work” can be a “game changer” to opening new possibilities’.
- We experienced an amazing experiential journaling activity to unlock hidden beliefs and stories.

July 2021 - Shannon Downey

“Weaving Community One Thread at a Time“

- *“Is it joyful to use a medium that has historically been used as a tool of subjugation as a tool of subversion.”—Shannon Downey*
- Shannon’s work focuses on raising voice and expression for people who typically are marginalized in our culture—namely women throughout history.
- We explored the power of “stitching” in community as we learned about Shannon's life path and how it led her to teach more than 5,000 people to stitch over Zoom.
- We learned about "Rita’s Quilt" - Quilting brings together disparate pieces in a way that’s new and intriguing—colors and shapes that you might never think to put together come together to become something new.
- How can change agents use the metaphor of quilting to bring to weave disparate pieces in a way that’s new, curious and holistic?

August – Gathering Hosts and Participants

Harvesting in our collective wisdom

- Ignited by the courage, persistence and resilience exhibited by of our fire lighter Katharine Porter, we explored the boundaries of our own tolerance for differences and observe how our “parts” contribute to our ability to be open and curious to those differences.
- We created welcoming space to hear the collective wisdom of the participants on the call.
- We saw that as “change-agents”, we can benefit by resisting thinking that we are alone in our efforts and lean into each other for support, restoration and energy.
- We examined how dehumanizing of “other” is a mirror to the rejection of our own undesirable parts.
- Resilience comes from embracing all aspects of ourselves, each other and the world... creating an inclusive, both-and world.

September 2021 - Quanita Roberson & Tenneson Woof

“The Gift of Grief“

- “We think grief requires suffering,” Quanita said. “It doesn’t. Grief is sad, it’s not suffering. We create suffering by resisting grief....”

- When we take on other people’s grief, we’re not doing them a service. We’re preventing or limiting their experience....
- We can’t grieve alone. We’re too afraid to do it by ourselves. Community is essential to grieve.”
- One way of changing our orientation with grief is not to think of it as an event, but rather as a relationship that offers us a new and deeper perspective.
- We explored the three layers of grief that are happening all the time: Individual, Cultural and Global.
- There is something waiting for us on the other side of grief. The moment we grieve, and we allow it to go all the way through—we can experience joy and can laugh.
- One way we can find comfort with grief is to become more ceremonial—whatever that is for you.
- Something essential - might be available if we let the “unseen” world be part of our grief process.

October – Bobby Austin

Public Kinship

- We had a rich discussion about creating community and connection by first focusing on “self-leadership and responsibility” and appreciating that we must first ask:
 - “Who am I in creating or not creating this connection?”
 - “How am I looking out for my brother or sister?”
 - “How am I modeling what I want to see in the world?”
- Bobby shared that at the core of his Public Kinship work is cultivating the individual and collective responsibility to take care of one another.
- We learned about Bobby's 7- step framework of Public Kinship Skills.
- He left us with provocative questions to explore:
 - Who am I?
 - Who are they?
 - Who are we?
 - What does it mean to develop a moral mind?
 - What does RIGHT ACTION look like?

November - Tom Rausch

“Navigating Disruption; Finding Ease with Uncertainty”

- Together, we explored our potential for creative responsiveness – even in the face of the amplified volatility and divisiveness we are experiencing around the globe in these times.
- Tom deepened our understanding and appreciation for the nature and potentiality of disruption.
- Learning to be present and conscious in the space “between” gives us more space to discern, create and respond.
- Tom shared the five pillars of human adaptive resilience:

- How we can develop our self-efficacy: our beliefs around navigating uncertainty and disruption.
- Where insights from modern neuroscience and eastern wisdom traditions meet.
- How we can graduate from rearranging what has been – to creating something new.
- Practices for leaders willing to catalyze what wants to emerge.

If you want to listen to the full recording of any of these sessions or any session that we have hosted in the past 9 years, you can access the programs through [this link](#) to The Gathering's **audio archives**.

You can also Join other Gathering members on our **Facebook group**.