VII. APPENDICES

A. New Books on Ecogrief/Ecoanxiety (annotated) and Other Resources

Recent Books on Coping with Ecogrief and Ecoanxiety (annotated)

Davenport, Leslie. 2017. Emotional Resiliency in Era of Climate Change: a Clinician's Guide. London and Philadelphia: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.
Although the environmental and physical effects of climate change have long been recognised, little attention has been given to the profound negative impact on mental health. The author presents comprehensive theory, strategies and resources for addressing key clinical themes specific to the psychological impact of climate change.
She explores the psychological underpinnings that have contributed to the current global crisis, and offers robust therapeutic interventions for dealing with anxiety, stress, depression, trauma and other clinical mental health conditions resulting from environmental damage and disaster. She emphasizes the importance of developing resilience and shows how to utilise the many benefits of guided imagery and mindful presence techniques, and carry out interventions that draw on expert research into ecopsychology, wisdom traditions, earth-based indigenous practices and positive psychology. The strategies in this book will cultivate transformative, person-centred ways of being, resulting in regenerative lifestyles that benefit both the individual and the planet.

Ford, Bonita. 2020. Embers of Hope: Embracing Life in an Age of Ecological Destruction and Climate Chaos. LivinghEARTH.
The sheer overwhelming nature of the ecological problem can cause many of us to shut down and turn away, even as the most dedicated activists among us burn themselves out. Yet rather than scold or use shock tactics to try to promote change, permaculture educator and group facilitator Bonita Eloise Ford addresses the topic with gentleness, encouragement, and practicality. Part memoir and part meditative workbook, Embers of Hope invites us on a personal journey to better connect with ourselves and the living Earth, offering perspective shifts that help us acknowledge our sorrow, ignite our hope, and consider everyday acts to strengthen our communities. Together, we can nurture the small forces that may radically transform our world.

Grose, Anouchka. 2020. A Guide to Eco-Anxiety: How to Protect the Planet and Your Mental Health. London: Watkins Media.
This book outlines a manifesto for action, connection and hope. Showing how to harness anxiety for positive action, the author explores the health impact of experiencing eco-anxiety, grief and trauma, and signposts recommended treatments and therapies. The most powerful thing we can do to combat climate change is to talk about it and act collectively.

But despite it being an emergency, most people don't bring climate change into conversation in everyday life. The book will cultivate a pragmatic form of hope by offering a dynamic toolkit packed with practical ways to connect with community and systemic support, self-care practices to ease the symptoms of anxiety, and strategies to spread awareness and - crucially - bring about change.

Malcolm, Hannah. Expected December 2020. Words for a Dying World: Stories of Grief and Courage from the Global Church. London: SCM Press.
How do we talk about climate grief in the church? And when we have found the words, what do we do with that grief? There is a sudden and dramatic rise in people experiencing a profound sense of anxiety in the face of our dying planet, and a consequent need for churches to be better resourced pastorally and theologically to deal with this threat. The book brings together voices from across the world - from the Pacific islands to the pipelines of Canada, from farming communities in Namibia to activism in the UK. The author says she… "wanted to help people to think about the ways that grief over the world isn't about death in abstraction… The ways that we grieve the world will be particular to the places we come from…. So dialogue about those different experiences can make our understanding of this kind of grief richer."

Weber, Jack Adam. 2020. Climate Cure: Heal Yourself to Heal the Planet. Woodbury, Minnesota: Llewellyn Books.
Transform your climate anxiety and heartache into potent forces for hope and regeneration. This groundbreaking book shows you how to revitalize your life and the earth from the inside out, inspiring you to embody the phrase "heal yourself, heal the planet." Jack Adam Weber introduces you to the triangle of resilience relationships—with yourself, the natural world, and your community. He proposes that the root cause of climate crisis is a breakdown of these relationships and offers dozens of personalized self-care exercises to help you become part of the solution. This unique book is a treasure trove of practical yet innovative strategies that inspire you to take action in the spirit of interconnection and sustainability.

Additional resources

Albrecht, Glenn. 2020. Negating solastalgia: an emotional revolution from the Anthropocene to the Symbiocene. *American Imago* 77(1): 9-30. Project MUSE: John Hopkins University Press.

Cunsolo, Ashlee, S. Harper, K. Minor, K. Hayes, K. Williams, and C. Howard. 2020. Ecological grief and anxiety: the start of a healthy response to climate change? Comment in *The Lancet*. https://www.thelancet.com/pdfs/journals/lanplh/PIIS2542-5196(20)30144-3.pdf

McLean, Josie. 2020. Big Little Shifts: A Practitioner's Guide to Complexity for Organisational Change and Adaptation. Adelaide: The Partnership. 158pp.

Miller, Willa. 2017. Five practices for working with the immense challenge of climate

change. One Earth Sangha. https://oneearthsangha.org/articles/five-practices/?fbclid=IwAR34ndnuKehqsgs_R4y86EvweS_qLGUQN9hZYtDYSQ00PzwrFBl1trPDBls

Panu, Pihkala. 2020. Anxiety and the ecological crisis: an analysis of eco-anxiety and climate anxiety. *Sustainability* 12, 7888836. file:///C:/Users/kothba/Downloads/sustainability-12-07836-v2.pdf

Panu, Pihkala, with Karl Peters et al. 2018. Eco-anxiety, tragedy, and hope: psychological and spiritual dimensions of climate change. *Zygon: Journal of Religion and Science* 53(2): 545-569.

Pierce, Jessica. 2019. Ecological mourning is a unique form of grief. *Psychology Today*. March 16.

Rosenfeld, Jordan. 2016. Facing down "environmental grief": Is a traumatic sense of loss freezing action against climate change? *Scientific American*. July 21.

Stewart, Alan E. 2018. Book review of Mourning Nature (Cunsolo et al.). *Ethics and the Environment* 23 (1 Spring): 79-86.

B. The Authentic Hypocrisy of Grief (Amy Spark)

CHAPTER FIVE

The Authentic Hypocrisy of Ecological Grief

AMY SPARK

Facing east, the spring breeze cools my back from the climb up Lesueur Ridge. It is a brilliantly sunny Alberta afternoon—the kind they make postcards of. All I can hear are the dry twigs snapping under my feet and the distant hum of the occasional car on Highway 40 to the south. The smells are intoxicating: hints of spring growth and dry grass, but the smell that assails my nostrils is one of freshly cut wood. It reminds me of campfires, carpentry with my father, and my childhood tent trailer.

What seems out of place is the destruction stretched out before me. My sight and sense of smell are painting two disparate pictures. Acres of open slopes where trees recently stood. Stumps as tombstones, machine tracks as scars, and a few thin trees as a testament to what was once here. The clear-cut happened so recently that the smell of chainsaws and cut wood is still heavy in the air. So, this is what it feels like to miss the forest for the trees.

Except . . . what am I feeling? Despair? Shock? The emotional jolt I had been warned about by my interview participants? No. In fact . . . almost nothing really. It isn't even numbness. All I can think about is how good it smells, how invigorated I am from the hike, and how guilty I feel for not

experiencing remorse, sadness, or ecological grief—the focus of my research and the reason for my climb.

• • •

The pages of this volume are filled with ethical considerations and complexities surrounding experiences of grief. However, I suggest that at the societal level, grief is generally seen as a straightforward, normalized reaction to the loss of something precious and dear. Most commonly discussed is the grief followed by the death of a loved one. But research has shown that one may also grieve the death of a beloved job, pet, or home.[1] These are forms of disenfranchised death: those that are "seldom acknowledged, publicly mourned, or socially supported."[2] While studying environmental degradation in the Ghost River Valley in Alberta, Canada, I stumbled on another form of disenfranchised loss: the death of an ecosystem.

Canada has been identified as a particularly death-adverse society: one that is "death denying" and that bureaucratizes grief.[3] This manifests as recommended bereavement leave durations, expensive and formalized funeral proceedings, and societal expectations around the length and format of grieving. Reactions and discussions surrounding death are often subdued or entirely avoided. Nevertheless, when the word *grief* is used (as it seldom is during "polite conversation"), it conjures loss and sadness rather than bureaucracy. The term incites empathy in those hearing of a loss, and it levels the playing field. Although people may not grieve in the same way or for the same length of time, almost everyone grieves at some point in their life. It is an equal-opportunity emotion.

As a Canadian scholar-activist, I strive to disrupt our societal aversion to discussing loss. I seek to legitimize the term and

experience of *ecological grief* within the context of Alberta. So, as the term *ecological grief* becomes used and normalized, it begins to conjure and communicate the depth of the emotions that are felt after a perceived loss in the environment. As with other forms of grief, my hope is that it acts as an equalizer and entry point into empathy between groups and individuals. While on this journey, however, I personally wrestle with the entanglements of grief, guilt, and hypocrisy. How do grief and guilt manifest in the face of environmental change, particularly when fellow humans and one's own community are the perpetrators of the crime, and we are all enjoying the economic benefits to some degree? It is in this state of personal turmoil that I have written this piece.

• • •

Later that same day, I find myself amid the quietness of a forested ecosystem. The air is much cooler now; I can feel the temperature dropping as the sun sets behind me. There is still enough light to see pink streaks across the skyline, a skunk ambling ahead, and the wetland to my right. My boots are still dusty from the hike earlier. I'm walking with a resident of the area, hearing his story about the upcoming clear-cut. He's speaking very pragmatically: in six months, this area will look like the area I saw this morning. In fact, it's already being called Cutblock 3049 by both the residents and the logging company. My companion and I may be some of the last people to walk in this section of forest. We wait for the skunk to pass, then continue, chatting about hydrology and birch trees as we go.

We come to a stand of trees, some marked with pink surveyors' ribbons. The ribbons denote a future logging road and mark the trees for the guillotine. Now, a road hovering in midair materializes in my mind. I wonder about our skunk companion from earlier and where they will find refuge once the trees are gone. As we continue to chat, our pauses lengthen. The

air seems slightly heavier, the lightness and pragmatism of our earlier conversation gone. And there it is—that tightness in my stomach that I was expecting—six hours too late. A small burning in the back of my throat as I think about the totality of what will be lost: trees, skunks, wetlands, grasses, fungi, birds, mosses, the sound of wind in the trees, habitats, relationships, and solace. I realize that I had to see what previously existed, before I could truly feel or understand what it means for the place to be changed. Earlier, I was looking at a landscape that hinted at a memory of a forest. But that memory wasn't complete; it missed the poetry of this place.

• • •

I think a lot about my guilt from that earlier hike. Guilt for *not* feeling other emotions such as sadness. It made me question not only my own identity as a naturalist but also whether my research participants were exaggerating their experiences. Or, I wondered if my interpretation of their experiences was skewed. This doubt added to my guilt—here I was, attempting not only to bring their stories to light but also to examine them deeply, all the while balancing my distance as a researcher with my sympathy. If everyone felt such deep sadness and hopelessness when viewing a clear-cut site, where was my compassion? My grief?

I was the unfeeling soul who laughs at a funeral.

Yet, to laugh at a funeral—especially with others—can be a helpful way to mourn. It provides a relief, a brief respite from the heaviness of the day. I imagine now my time up on Lesueur Ridge not as inappropriate detachment but as a break from the heaviness of interviewing and a joy at using my muscles. My grief came later, after I had time to process what a clear-cut site meant and the completeness of the loss. I realized my guilt about my delayed emotional reaction wasn't the whole story. Rather, it

was just one step in the story of my own ecological grief. My guilt became entangled with my fears about my inaugural research project and my simultaneous labels of *objective researcher* and *impassioned naturalist*. Over time I have begun to realize that my guilt is part of the larger experience of my own despair over environmental changes.

Guilt is just as important to this story as grief. Although I have been able to unpack my guilt, I was not alone in experiencing self-blame and resentment. This was an emotion embedded in almost every interview I did with residents, activists, and proprietors in the area. However, this guilt and self-appointed blame had less to do with the expectancy of certain emotions, and more to do with the sociopolitical region in which the logging was taking place.

Alberta is a province with a conservative political and religious history and an economy based almost exclusively on resource extraction: primarily oil and gas, with forestry and mining as siblings. It is a province that grapples with a history of systemic oppression of Indigenous groups—oppression that still echoes today despite reconciliation efforts. It is an area that values hard work, innovation, and a strong conservation ethic. An area where the largest city is within a forty-five-minute drive of wilderness and home to the first national park in Canada. A region that experienced a destructive flood in 2013 and disastrous fire in 2016, yet prides itself on being resilient. An area where environmental groups are funded primarily by energy companies. A region with one of the highest per capita carbon footprints in the *world*, due to lifestyle and geography.[4] A place that, in 2015, swung the pendulum politically, voting in a progressive government after forty years of conservative leadership. This is the system that breeds complicated emotions like guilt

and abstract blame, and where conservation and resource-extraction ethics come into conflict.

Those residents I spoke with named three versions of their guilt as it related to their condemnation of the ongoing clear-cut logging practices in the area. First, they identified their guilt over the use of wood products in their own lives. How can you grieve a forest when you also live in a house made of timber? Second, many are working in a resource-extraction sector themselves, predominantly the petroleum industry. How dare you grieve the loss of forest through logging when you contribute, either directly or indirectly, to the loss and destruction of landscapes each day? Last, esoteric guilt about living in a capitalist society that condones clear-cut forestry and other detrimental land-use practices. How can you grieve something when you were part of a complacent society that enabled this loss to happen and continues to enable this destruction? These were the types of questions people were asking themselves and internalizing. Although these sentiments were evident in interviews, these are not usually the types of questions discussed among Albertans in their daily lives. How many others are silently grappling with these questions every day?

When one lives in a province that is heavily dependent on resource extraction nestled within a country where grief is bureaucratized, the mere expression of ecological grief is interpreted as a political statement. To grieve a portion of the landscape is to pass judgment on the political parties, organizations, communities, and individuals who are perceived to have caused the destruction. To grieve is also to make an abstract statement about one's role in the system. One may work in a resource-extraction sector or have close family and friends who do; one may work for a conservation advocacy organization financially

supported by the petroleum sector. Even if it is possible to remove oneself from these ties, by using the spatially diffuse and automobile-centric infrastructure found in Alberta, one is contributing to the highest carbon footprint in the world.

What results from this heightened sensitivity is a culture in which expressing remorse for environmental loss or destruction seems hypocritical. In response, grief turns into guilt, guilt into shame, and shame into uncomfortable silence. No one wants to bite the hand that feeds them, nor do they want their ethics exposed for scrutiny by others. It is much safer to remain quiet.

As an Albertan, I am not disputing that we engage in highly hypocritical actions. It is a truth that I wrestle with daily. Even our current provincial government, having recently implemented a carbon tax, is actively advocating for more pipelines. However, now begins the delicate balance of *understanding* the mechanics behind the hypocritical system without *excusing* the actions within the system. This parallels my simultaneous roles within and outside the system: a human geographer studying the context in which I live. Where does my firsthand experience of living in Alberta fit into my detached, scientifically based conclusions? Where do my anger and embarrassment with the petroleum industry end, and my empathy for those working within the sector begin? I have come to realize these are not the right questions to be asking. Instead, how can my own hypocritical actions and guilt *as an Albertan* be used as an asset and leverage for communication?

When grief is labeled as merely a hypocritical action (as in Ghost Valley), the richness of the story behind those mixed emotions and the potential to use the experience toward change are overlooked. My lack of "proper" emotions when observing a clearcut could have been the end of the story. Instead, I discovered that

my premature guilt was unfounded—I *did* feel ecological grief, but differently than was expected or explained to me. I felt it only after I experienced the fullness of the ecosystem. I wonder what stories, lessons, and truths have yet to be uncovered by the complicated emotions felt by the Ghost Valley community.

Instead of hypocrisy as the *end* to a conversation—the final blow to one's credibility—I believe it's where the conversation should begin. The discourse can evolve past "One does not have the *right* to grieve because of one's role in the system" to "*Why* does one continue to grieve natural spaces if they believe they are part of the system that has contributed to the destruction?" or "What outcomes does this grief have if it continues to go unnamed and not legitimized?" Perhaps most hopefully we can ask: What *could* happen if one had the social sanction to voice their environmental distress? Could the emotional lens be integrated into environmental assessments? Could we begin to see ourselves as emotional, loving beings capable of change rather than merely hypocrites?

I have asserted that to grieve ecologically is perceived as a political act or statement in Alberta. Yet I see my work as promoting the transfer of ecological grief from the political realm to the apolitical. For it is not the grief itself that is political, but the guilt that follows—the *expression* of this grief within the sociopolitical climate and capitalist society of Alberta. The grief doesn't become hypocritical until it is externalized and correlated to political ideology, employment choice, and identity. Scholarship about ecological grief should take social and political context into account, certainly. But my interest as a scholar-activist is in how ecological grief influences individual and community health, and how it can be used as transformative language for positive change.

By labeling ecological grief as merely "political," we obscure the spiritual, personal, familial, and physical ties to the landscape. To grieve ecologically says more (or should say more) about one's relationship to place than it does about their job title, political stance, or place of residence. What I found through my research and personal experience is that ecological grief is more about place attachment, mental health, and memory than it is about resource extraction.

• • •

I sit on a small log gazing west, not a clear-cut in sight. I'm farther south in the Rocky Mountains, a year after my interviews and engagement with the Ghost Valley. My hiking boots are once again on my feet, but this time they're dusted with snow rather than soil. I breathe in deeply, searching for a scent I can ground myself in. But with the snow on the ground, the smells are dampened. Instead, I notice my heightened sense of hearing—it is silent. Gloriously silent.

What begins to creep in, as always, is that voice in the back of my head: enjoy this natural beauty while it lasts, while there's still snow in the spring, while there is silence in the mountains, and while I have the health to bring me here. I sit with these emotions for a time: this anticipatory grief, this restlessness, this powerlessness, this faint anger. Grief for this quiet place, restlessness to get the work done, powerlessness for not knowing where to begin, and anger at my own role in the system.

Sometime later, I slowly recognize I'm no longer thinking of loss. I'm thinking of the beauty again.

• • •

I have begun to see hypocrisy and environmental guilt as a meaningful and authentic tool for engagement. Recognizing and acknowledging grief and guilt can be an effective way to move

contentious and political conversations forward. This is a small social experiment on my part—injecting the term *ecological grief* into conversation over dinner parties and work lunches. Reflecting on all that I learned from my research, I ponder what this language could do for Albertans. Using the word *grief*—a term that already exists to describe a fundamentally human experience—incites empathy. It allows us to move beyond the surface-level guilt that we may feel by living hypocritically. Through use of this common language, we can begin discussing the issue people are grappling with: that changes to landscape can have deep effects on our mental and emotional health. That loss can evoke a range of (sometimes contradictory) emotions. That these complications are something we should be talking about. And in an area where *forest* means *sanctuary* to some and *merchantable wood* to others, creating a common language is a transformative place to begin.

NOTES

1. On the grief experienced with the loss of a job, see William A. Borgen and Norman E. Amundson, "The Dynamics of Unemployment," *Journal of Counseling and Development* 66, no. 4 (1987): 180–84; on the loss of pets, see Marc A. Rosenberg, *Companion Animal Loss and Pet Owner Grief* (Allentown, PA: ALPO Pet Center, 1986); on the loss of a home, see Colin M. Parkes, *Bereavement* (New York: International Universities Press, 1974).

2. Herbert Northcott and Donna Wilson, *Dying and Death in Canada*, 2nd ed. (Buffalo, NY: Broadview Press, 2008), 107.

3. Philippe Ariès, *Western Attitudes toward Death: From the Middle Ages to the Present* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1974); Northcott and Wilson, *Dying and Death in Canada*, 107.

4. Environment and Climate Change Canada, "Greenhouse Gas Emissions by Province and Territory," accessed March 27, 2017, www.ec.gc.ca/indicateurs-indicators/default.asp?lang=en&n=18F3BB9C-1.

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Northcott, Herbert, and Donna Wilson. *Dying and Death in Canada.* 2nd ed. Buffalo, NY: Broadview Press, 2008.

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Rosenberg, Marc A. *Companion Animal Loss and Pet Owner Grief.* Allentown, PA: ALPO Pet Center, 1986.

C. Open Sentences Exercise **Source: Work That Reconnects**

Open Sentences is a guided exercise that can be done in groups or as a journalling activity. *(30 minutes)*

Open Sentences is a structure for spontaneous expression. It helps people listen with rare receptivity as well as speak their thoughts and feelings frankly. People sit in pairs, face to face and close enough to attend to each other fully. They refrain from speaking until the practice begins. One is Partner A, the other Partner B – this can be determined quickly by asking them to tap each other on the knee; the one who tapped first is A. When guide speaks each unfinished sentence, A repeats it, completes it in his own words, addressing Partner B, and keeps on talking spontaneously for the time allotted. The partners can switch roles after each open sentence or at the end of the series. The listening partner – and this is to be emphasized – keeps silent, saying absolutely nothing and hearkening as attentively and supportively as possible.

For the completion of each open sentence allow a couple of minutes or so. Give a brief warning each time before it is time to move on, saying "take a minute to finish up," or "thank you." A small bell can then bring people to silence, where they rest a few seconds before the next open sentence.

Open Sentences on Gratitude

This is a highly pleasurable activity, and you may want to invent your own open sentences. Or pick from these favorites of ours (#5 always comes last).

1. Some things I love about being alive in Earth are…
2. A place that was magical (or wonderful) to me as a child was….
3. A person who helped me believe in myself is or was….
4. Some things I enjoy doing and making are….
5. Some things I appreciate about myself are…

Here is an example of a group working through Open Sentences
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XUB-h9SlJs8

Credit: Werner Brandt 2017, Work That Reconnects, via Refugia Retreats.
https://workthatreconnects.org/resource/open-sentences/

D. Milling Exercise **Source: Pachamama Alliance**

Milling Exercise is a way to put the group in touch with two ways of being in the modern world – the emergent worldview of connectedness as it exists side by side with the all-too-familiar story of separation and isolation. It is a silent exercise (until the reflection) that can

be run with 8 or more persons with enough space to walk around generally unimpeded. A facilitator, who has practiced, reads the script.

Facilitator script (*italics in parentheses are not to be read aloud; they are hints to help with managing the exercise):*
"I'm going to ask you, in a moment, to stand up and walk over to the empty space over there, and just stand there, in no particular arrangement, a facing different directions. You can leave your belongings on your chairs. Okay, please quietly go stand over there. Thank you.
Please close your eyes, breathe deeply, and find a quiet, receptive space inside you. See if you can allow your mind to be calm and centered. *(Pause for a moment. If necessary, remind them it is a silent exercise throughout.)*
Now, please imagine that you are in the city centre of Adelaide, on a very short lunch break. *(Pause for a moment)*

Slowly open your eyes, and begin walking in a kind of rushed pace that you might actually use – but not too wild – because you are in a hurry to get somewhere during your short break. You do not see the other people around you, or look at them, except as barriers to get accomplished what you need to get done today. You have <u>important</u> things to do back at your work place – there is probably no way that you can get it all done today. In fact, there's a chance it might all fall apart. (*If they are waking too fast, you may have to tell them to keep it safe and real, walking only as fast as they would in real life. If necessary, remind them it is a silent exercise throughout.)*

Let yourself <u>really feel</u> in your body all that you are feeling right now – whatever that may be. *(Let this go on for enough time to let them really sink into it, get it in their bodies in a significant way – intuit what the right time is. But don't rush it. This is essential to build energy for what follows – you will have a tendency to end it too soon, because it is a little uncomfortable for you too).*

And now, you will find yourself in front of someone. *(Wait a moment for them to find their partner.)* Stop there. Hold up your hand if you don't have a partner. *(Match up any solos, and have assistants ready to move in to pair any unpaired persons).*

Standing there before this person let yourself register their presence. Make eye contact. Here is someone alive on planet Earth at just this same moment, born into the same period of crisis, confusion and speed. But they're not speeding right now. *(Pause).* They're right here. *(Pause).* And they have chosen to be here. There were plenty of other things they could have done today/tonight. But they have chosen to be here with us, to confront our current situation together. *(Pause)* Feel your gladness that they made that choice *(Pause to let them do this)* and express it nonverbally in any way that feels right to both of you. *(Allow time).*

Now start milling around again, but slowly. *(Pause)*
Again, find yourself in front of someone and stop. Hold up your hand if you don't have a partner. Look at them [and if you mutually agree, hold each other's hand].

Behold this sister/brother being. *(Pause)* You are looking into the face of someone who deeply feels what is truly going on in our world – like you, they understand the full situation facing the Earth and the human species and other living creatures at this time… the changes in the environment, the rampant social injustice, and the disconnection among and within people. *(Pause)* Yet they have not closed their eyes, they have not turned away. This is someone, who like you, is choosing to love the gift of being alive in this time, with all its changes.

Allow yourself to experience what it feels like that you are not alone. *(Pause)*
Find some way to silently let them know how grateful you are that they are here. Thank you."

After the Milling Exercise, typically there is some sort of reflective process. The final pairs could sit down together and share their feelings and reactions. Alternatively there could be a group share around the general question 'Would anyone like to share something about what they experienced?'

To end the session, here are some optional closing words. "Now, look at each other one more time. There is another thing to see in this/these face/faces. Allow your awareness to open up to the very real possibility that this person is and may yet pay a role in the healing of our world, that they are at the right place, at just the right moment, with just the right gifts, resources, and motivation. Allow that possibility, with all that it means for you – and for them – to enter your consciousness and your heart. You may want to find some appropriate way to let them know how you feel about it."

Credit: Pachamama Alliance, Awakening the Dreamer Symposium Presenters Manual (version 3), 2014

E. Pachamama Alliance Visioning Exercise

Longer version presented here

ALT:

>>>Expanded Visioning Exercise [6 min.]

Imagine that you are able to move forward in time—decades out into the future. Remarkable events have occurred in the world around you now.

There is now a human presence on this planet that has restored and is caring for the natural environment—that has come to value all of life…

In this future world, human beings of all colors and cultures live equitably and harmoniously … and they are emotionally and spiritually fulfilled.

Allow yourself to be guided by some of the children from the future. Let yourself be touched by the sound of their laughter and the warmth of their hands in yours, as they show you around in their world.

Imagine that you are living in that world now. What do you see? What stands out as you look around? What has changed, for the better? (*Long pause*)

Now see yourself sitting in a circle with many great-great-grandchildren (or great-great-nieces and nephews) ◈ from many different cultures on an open field of luxuriant green grass.

Then the children ask you, "Great-Great-Grandfather/mother/aunt/uncle: Tell us what it was like for you when the world was in crisis … when the Earth's eco-systems were unraveling …◈ when there was so much inequity and injustice and oppression still

affecting so many people's lives; when people's differences were considered a problem instead of a contribution … and there was starvation and war in the human family? *(Pause)*

Then the children ask: "Dear Ancestor, we know that you were part of the Great Turning that we have heard so many songs and poems about. Please tell us about that—how you co-created a sustainable, just and fulfilling world." So tell the children who you were and what you did as a change agent for a new future. Allow yourself to be surprised by what you say into their curious listening.

Now allow these children (and the great-great-grandchildren of all species), to appreciate and acknowledge you for playing a role, for being alive at a time when your life could make a difference, and for seizing the opportunity and not going back to sleep. Let them thank and embrace you.

Thank you. Please take a breath and then gently open your eyes. *(Pause)*

3-3a [SR 40] Buffer Slide: Silhouette of Kids with Blue Sky

3.5A **>>> Group Share from Visioning**: Did anyone have an experience or vision that you would like to share with us? *(Take several shares.)*

Credit: Pachamama Alliance, Awakening the Dreamer Symposium Presenters Manual (version 3), 2014, pages 38-39.

F. Cairn Of Mourning Exercise **Source: Work That Reconnects**

Cairn of Mourning *(30 minutes)* is a ceremonial exercise for personal and communal mourning (30 min). This ritual practice allows people to express more personally their grief for what is happening to the world. In knowing the depth of this sorrow, they can know the depth of their belonging, from which comes the power to endure hardship and to act for the well-being of all.

The Cairn of Mourning is often done out of doors, though the process can be held inside as well. Invite people to wander outside, alone, calling to mind a particular part of their world,a place or being precious to them that is lost now or disappearing from their life. They find an object–say, a rock, a cluster of leaves, a stick– to symbolize what they mourn, and bring it with them when they rejoin the group..

When all are seated in a circle, the simple ritual begins. One by one, at random, people arise, walk to the center and place their object. As they do, they speak. They describe the loss that the object represents—family farm, paved over creek, neighborhood store —and their feelings about it; then they formally saying good-bye to it. As each offering is made and the objects pile up to form a heap or "cairn," all in the circle serve as witnesses and acknowledge the speaker by saying, "We hear you."

The ritual can end with people sitting in twos or threes to express more fully the grief they felt as objects were added to the cairn. Or it can close with people holding hands as they sound together.

Variation When natural objects cannot be collected to represent the losses, such as when working indoors, use squares of paper instead. Let people take three or four squares on which they can write words or draw images to represent the losses they would honor. Place an open basket in the center of the circle. People bring one square at a time to the basket, describing the loss it represents—blue sky, a beloved tree, bird song. This method allows for a variety of creative expression, some people writing short poems, some drawing pictures.

Credit: Credit: Werner Brandt 2017, Work That Reconnects, via Refugia Retreats.
https://workthatreconnects.org/resource/cairn-of-mourning/

G. John Seed universe and awe exercise

At Adelaide workshop several years ago, John had us 'map' our solar system on the beach in order to reflect on distance in our solar system. It is useful for invoking awe, and putting things in perspective. An object representing the correct planet size was placed at appropriate relevant distances from the sun. We walked quite far down the beach for the last planets. Did online search and exercise doesn't seem to be online. Have emailed John to see if he can share a writeup of the exercise.

H. Breathing Through Exercise **Source: Work That Reconnects**

Breathing Through is a guided exercise that has been adapted from Buddhist meditation. It can be used to practice openness and compassion.

Basic to most spiritual traditions is the recognition that we are not separate, isolated entities, but integral and organic parts of the vast web of life. We can open to the pain of the world in confidence that it can neither shatter nor isolate us, for we are not objects that can break. We are resilient patterns within a vaster web of knowing.

Because we have been conditioned to view ourselves as separate, competitive and thus fragile entities, we need to relearn this kind of resilience. One way is to practice simple openness, as in the exercise of "breathing through," adapted from an ancient Buddhist meditation for developing compassion. Italics indicate the text to be read outloud.

Closing your eyes, focus attention on your breathing. Don't try to breathe any special way, slow or long. Just watch the breathing as it happens, in and out. Note the accompanying sensations at the nostrils or upper lip, in the chest or abdomen. Stay passive and alert, like a cat by a mouse hole…

As you watch the breath, note that it happens by itself, without your will, without your deciding each time to inhale or exhale… It's as though you're being breathed– being breathed by life… Just as everyone in this room, in this city, in this planet now, is being breathed by life, sustained in a vast living breathing web…

Now visualize your breath as a stream or ribbon of air. See it flow up through your nose, down through your windpipe and into your lungs. Now from your lungs, take it through your heart. Picture it flowing through your heart and out to reconnect with the larger web of life. Let the breath-stream, as it passes through you and through your heart appear as one loop within that vast web, connecting you with it…

Now open your awareness to the suffering that is present in the world. Drop for now all defenses and open to your knowledge of that suffering. Let it come as concretely as you can… images of your fellow beings in pain and need, in fear and isolation, in prisons, hospitals, tenements, refugee camps… no need to strain for these images; they are present to you by virtue of our interbeing. Relax and just let them surface… the vast and countless hardships of our fellow humans, and of our animal brothers and sisters as well, as they swim the seas and fly the air of this planet…

Now breathe in the pain like granules on the stream of air, up through your nose, down through your trachea, lungs, and heart, and out again into the world net… You are asked to do nothing for now, but let it pass through your heart… Be sure that stream flows through and out again; don't hang on to the pain… Surrender it for now to the healing resources of life's vast web…

With Shantideva, the Buddhist saint, we can say, "Let all sorrows ripen in me." We help them ripen by passing them through our hearts… making good rich compost out of all that grief… so we can learn from it, enhancing our larger, collective knowing…

If no images or feelings arise and there is only blankness, gray and numb, breathe that through also. The numbness itself is a very real part of our world…

And if what surfaces is not the pain of other beings so much as your own personal suffering, breathe that through, too. Your own anguish is an integral part of the grief of our world, and arises with it…

Should you feel an ache in the chest, a pressure in the rib cage, as if the heart would break, that is all right. Your heart is not an object that can break… But if it were, they say the heart that breaks open can hold the whole universe. Your heart is that large. Trust it. Keep breathing…

Breathing through, once we learn it, becomes useful in daily life in the many situations that confront us with painful information. By breathing through the bad news, rather than bracing ourselves against it, we can let it strengthen our sense of belonging in the larger web of being. It helps us remain alert and open, whether reading the news, receiving criticism, or simply being present to a person who is suffering.

For activists and those dealing most directly with the problems of our time, the practice helps prevent burnout. It reminds us that both our pain and our power arise from our interconnectness, and offers a healing measure of humility. For when we accept our world's pain as the price of our caring, it naturally flows into action, without drama or self-righteousness.

Credit: Werner Brandt 2017, Work That Reconnects, via Refugia Retreats.
https://workthatreconnects.org/resource/breathing-through-2/

I. ‘Sand Talk’ Meditation

Source: Tyson Yunkaporta, 2019

state of ancestor-mind focus, while you go through a vivid imagining of a process or a story.

In this activity there are no limits to what you might experience—you can travel the solar system, walk through a market where vendors only speak Cantonese, learn how to drive a forklift or do a liver transplant. Use rhythmic language where possible, alliteration and rhyme with repetition—these are the devices oral cultures around the world have always used to assist in the transformative application of spoken texts. These devices survive mostly in poetry and song today but have lost their true place in complex knowledge transmission, with the false divisions that have arisen between arts and sciences.

The remainder of this chapter is a text I have used to bring many people to a profound understanding of being in place. It is a dream walk that I exhibited as a sound installation in an art exhibition called *Revealed*, in Melbourne in 2017. You might try reading it aloud to someone, or to a group of people, while they sit or lie down with their eyes closed. Afterwards, we'll connect all the dots.

> Here now. Picture in your mind a campfire you have seen, from a time when you have felt safe and happy and connected. See the fire, see it clear, have no fear. See deep into the heart of the hearth to the flame in the hot coals. See it dance, see the rhythm of it flickering. Feel the heat on your hands and face. Rub your hands together, make them hot, then rest

> them on your belly just under your navel. Rest them warm on your belly and feel the heat there.
>
> Picture and feel the campfire in your mind. It is a real thing, this image. It exists, but where is it? Is it in your brain? No, it is in your mind. But where is your mind if not just in your brain? Imagine for a minute that your mind is not trapped only inside your skull; that it can move around your body. See the campfire in your head, crackling yellow and red. Feel the heat of it reach your face. Now try and move it down, that image, see it move and feel the warmth of it move, down your face and past your chin, down your neck and to your chest, see it and feel it move down past your liver, down over your stomach to your lower belly area.
>
> Hold the image of the fire right there in your belly. It is not in your head now. Your mind is more than your brain and your sight is more than what your eyes provide. Your mind's eye can see the fire there in your belly. See it, feel it burn. There is a power there, in your belly. This is your big power. It has energy, warmth and a rhythm, just like the fire you are seeing there with your mind's eye. Feel it under your hands, burning bright. Now blow it to burn brighter.
>
> Take a slow, deep breath. Blow it gently out through lips that are almost closed, the way you blow on hot coals to make them glow. See the coals crackle and spark. Your hands are protecting the fire in your belly. See it as you breathe in again

slowly and blow right into the heart of the hearth fire. Breathe in, breathe out, see the coals glow and the flames flare. Keep breathing in and out now, fanning the flames. The air from this place, as it enters your lungs, is leaving small pieces of itself behind that enter your bloodstream and race through it to every part of your body. Those pieces are like sponges, mopping up tiny pockets of poison, poison left behind from a thousand sad feelings, bad memories, toxic events and attacks and accidents and damaged lands, stolen places, stolen things, corrupted waters, murders and massacres, fences and blocks and assaults and insults and injuries and hidden histories. Let those poisons be mopped up by the little sponges of air in your blood, let them be taken in those sponges all through your body and back to your lungs, moving back from liquid to air and blown back out through your mouth and nose. Blow the badness out, let it leave you and disintegrate in the air, rise up far above and blow away on the breeze.

The poisonous things leave behind dry areas, damaged areas, in your body. Imagine all through your limbs and torso and head, all this dry and crackly dead grass, snapped branches and grey, papery leaves. All this scrubby trash is blocking your mind from moving freely around your body. See the fire there in your belly. Blow again on the hot coals, gently, seeing them glow and feeling the heat. Blow again, harder this time, and see the sparks

begin to spiral up from the fire as you blow. Blow again, harder, and make the sparks fly further from the flames, fluttering upwards into the dry, dead grasses laying thick under your ribs. See them land there, settle in the feathery fronds, smoking softly in wisps that wind up through the itchy snarls of grasses and sticks on layers of leaves. See the tiny flames flare and climb and spiral and spread, and a sparrowhawk swoops in, wings in the rhythm of the flames, to take one of the smoking sticks in its talons, sweeping off inland to drop it smouldering in the knotted undergrowth of your chest. The fire forms a long line burning across your torso, dancing the same rhythm as the fire in your belly, bright yellow flames that burn briefly and not too hot, leaving soft, cool ash that crumbles into the soil, your flesh, and nourishes it, and will continue to nourish it each day as the dew drops fall and settle and sift inwards.

The line of fire spreads upwards. All the scars and injuries and brittle patches left by damage and loss and abuse are being swept into the fire and made into soft charcoal and ash, swirling together like crow and white cockatoo feathers. Soon it will spread to your throat, then your eyes, then your ears, then your hands. See the flames and smoke and feel the heat and hear the crackling and snapping through your ribs, your collarbones, your neck and throat, mouth and chin, nose and cheeks, eyes, forehead and scalp, ears, shoulders, arms and elbows, forearms and hands all burning and the

smoke billowing out through your fingers and high into the sky. Dry, damaged areas are all made clean and new and warm and light. The fire spreads now, from your hands, past the campfire hearth in your belly, flames leaping across from your fingers to your hips, burning through the dry grass there and on through your loins and buttocks and thighs. The fire has a rhythm—feel it dance in your legs. Your knees pop and crackle as they go up in flame, your shins and calves, your ankles and feet, until smoke billows out of your toes and high into the sky, leaving you light and clean and new. Dew drops fall and cool everything down, dampening the ashes and soot and soaking it into the ground where heated seeds sprout and begin to take root. Country is becoming well. You are Country. You are becoming well.

Think of somebody you love unconditionally, no matter what. If you can't do this you need to stop now and go take care of your life. If you can, picture that person in your mind and let yourself feel that love for them, feel it like a sensation coming over you. Keep seeing the image of that person and feeling that love, then picture them in a special place. That place will be somewhere outdoors that is special to you both, a place where you have shared joy and love together, where you have connected deeply with the land and with each other. See every part of the landscape around you, the plants, trees, dirt or stones. See the person you love holding a big bucket of water. They tip it out onto the ground. They

follow it where it flows, but let it ignore any civilised or synthetic barriers. Follow them, the loved one and the water, and pay attention to the way the water moves on the ground in that place, where it goes, where it stops, where it sinks. Feel the love for that person and then stretch out with that feeling, and feel the same sensation for that place. Let your love move all across it, through it and into it, the same way rainwater would if it fell there right now. Feel that love spreading all over that Country. Where do you feel it in your body? In your chest, head, belly? Is that all? Is that feeling just inside you, or does it go further? Can you feel that love outside yourself, a long way off, in that special place? It is right there, a part of you and a part of the one you love, a feeling, a part of your mind and spirit, right there in that place. Can you feel it?

Holding on to that feeling, let the picture of your loved one and that place fade gently into the background. Slowly replace it with an image of the place where you are now. Not a room or a building—allow all that to be transparent. See the land, the ground, the waters and landforms around you and beneath you. Hold the feeling of love. Imagine where the water would flow if it fell on that ground right now. Let the love trickle out from you, lapping outwards in ripples or tinkling in streams through the earth, see it there all around you for that place, feel it in the place. Feel the place. Love the place. There may be wounds or sickness there in the land that make

you sad, but hold that loving feeling because it is unconditional.

The love is not just a feeling in your body now, or in a distant place, or with another person. It is around you in the place where you sit, in the land, along with the feeling from all the old people who have been connecting the same way with that place for thousands of years. All the memories of those Ancestors are there. All your own Ancestors' memories lie inside you in the same way, in your bones, in every part of you, in your cellular memory. Mind and memory are real things although they can't be touched, measured, proven or even seen. They exist, but not only in your brain. They extend out, to your body, to the land and your relations. Your mind is infinite and extends as far as your attention and love can go.

Mind, brain, body, land, loved ones—all these things at the front of your thoughts at once; they make you heavy. Your body and spirit sinking, thinking, heaviness moving deep through you. Eyelids heavy, closed; hands heavy on your belly, back pressed into the ground—skull, shoulders, feet, legs, all heavy. The feeling, the loving in the land and the love in your body are the same thing, you and the earth the same thing now, so you sink right into it. Feel yourself going through the floor or ground like it's quicksand, but transparent, the land, you, sinking slowly into the dirt or sand beneath you. There are layers of rock and water down here, and you pass

through them, sifted and cleaned by them as they pass through you, cooling you as you fall deeper and deeper into the dark. You are not afraid. You are not alone. You begin to feel that loving feeling again, only now it is not coming from you, but coming into you, flowing through you and around you. There is a warmth and a rhythm to it. A deep rhythm sounding deep, deep down. You sink further, faster towards the loving rhythm and the warmth.

You see a soft glow, closer and closer, warmer and warmer, the rhythm thicker, thicker and older and stronger and deeper than anything else. It is familiar, comforting, and so is the glow. The glow is from a fire, a hearth fire or a heart-fire with hot coals and you know it. You've seen it before. Could it be the sun? It is the same as the fire in your belly, the image in your mind from before, only it is massive. Its power is made of the same stuff as the power you carry in your belly, your big power. As you feel the heat and rhythm you sense the same inside you, beneath your hands, thrumming and glowing. It feels like a fish sniffing at a line, deep beneath the sea. It is faint but real at your fingertips, stirring deep in your belly. You know this. You remember this place, the earth you came from, the big mother that bore you. You're home. Now that big hearth fire under the earth stokes your own fire, the fire in your belly, replenishing your power, filling you up with endless love and energy. It is clean, warm and pure, and lifts you up. You feel lighter, and upwards you go.

The glow disappears beneath you but the rhythm and flame remain in your belly. They propel you up, up, up, up through miles of heat and rock and cold and earth and more rock and sand and water and earth, up, up, up until you reach the place where your body is sitting or lying there in the world. But you can't stop. You keep drifting upwards now, lighter than burnt leaves on the breeze, stirring and rising up, up, up through any ceilings or tree tops, up, up through any clouds and into a shining blueness that stretches as far as you can see all around. Up and up still you rise, as the blue becomes deeper, richer, darker. Soon it falls away beneath you and you are into a clear black infinity all around. The earth is far below and you drift on through burning stars.

The Seven Sisters are here, burning bright. All the hero Ancestors are up here, sky camp, watching you, blazing, that same fire again. Your rhythm is pulsing out to them; they are pulsing back, light washing through you in waves, stoking up that fire inside you again, blazing those coals, washing you clean and clear. Can your mind even extend up here, to the patterns in the endless night sky? Can your mind possibly perceive all of these stars, shapes, gaps—forms made by those gaps, the stories and morality and rich knowledge here, thousands of parts, all at once? Can it know every part at once? What it does hold for sure are the patterns created by all these parts. It sees objects pulled towards a

space and knows what must lie there out of sight. It is able to see the swirl and stories and positions and angles and times and seasons all at once, to read the big patterns these show together and therefore make predictions and judgments about land-based events, phenomena, weather, ritual, the timing of all things in your life throughout each cycle of seasons, the longer cycles of generations and the even longer cycles of deep time and story.

What would it take to free your mind, allow it to see these big patterns again? All the Ancestors up here, they left their traces in the earth and waters below as well, and you carry those traces within, those memories and knowledges and deep, deep love. Those things wait for you, below. They tug at you, begin to draw you down. You are no longer light, but not heavy either. You are in balance, and you return to your place of love below. You are a point of connection between the earth and sky camp, so go, be that. You drop, plummet through stars and darkness and blue-black and deep blue and light blue and maybe clouds and water drops and tree tops and ceilings and then softly, softly, softly settle back down, down to earth, into the feeling of your place and your body, the rhythm that never stops, the fire in your belly, your power and the infinite potential of your mind, within and without.

J. Pat McCabe meditation/reflection Source: Facebook page

Pat McCabe (Woman Stands Shining), a member of the Dine (Navajo) Nation, is a mother, writer, artist, activist, speaker and cultural liaison.

Navigating volcanic grief eruptions

I have true willingness to step into the tsunami, to allow my body to release its miraculous feeling response to both the Beauty and the madness of being Human here now.

I am participating now. My Spiritual body is strong, my experience tells me this is Freedom.

Part of the process is fully letting in, acknowledging, eyes and heart wide open, the intentional harm inflicted on me from others when I was too young to understand that it was violation.

No blaming, no shaming, but deep raw allowing of the truth of the facts.

With this release, the story I created to make sense of it all is dissolving. A new story is gathering, a liminal mist, all around me.

I am in-between, with the waves of emotion rising and falling, crashing through every false dam… too small… too shortsighted… too personalized.

I have to believe out Earth also goes through such processes. I am her and she is me.

Rolling on the ocean of evolution with my Mother Earth.

Credit: Pat McCabe, Facebook post, January 31 2020
https://www.facebook.com/womanstandsshining