

Learning from Our Teachers

THE VILLAGE VIEW

February 03, 2021

Marjenta Gray, editor

Upcoming Events, on Zoom:

Pathwork, Sunday, February 14

Third Age, Friday, February 26

By Marjenta Gray

In our triad at the Women's Gathering on January 23, Claudia Fitch mentioned the Private School for Human Development, which she and I attended with many other students and teachers in the 90's. The 3rd member of the triad, Shani, much newer to the Goodenough Community, expressed interest in the Private School. Both Claudia and I acknowledged that the Private School had been foundational to our committing to personal learning and growth paths. I realized I wanted to write about that experience, and some of the lessons I learned that have greatly improved my life.

I found this description (lightly edited) in a community file, *History of the Private School for Human Development*:

The Private School for Human Development opened its doors to the public in the fall of 1987. The initial vision for the school grew from the dreams of John and Colette Hoff and evolved out of annual week-long human relations laboratories. These experiences allowed staff and participants to learn about themselves through the experiences of the week and begin to use the learnings to create better lives for themselves.

By 1980, a number of people wanted to continue this personal-development and relational learning throughout the year. They coalesced and formally incorporated the Goodenough Community in 1981. The Community provided the environment and container for the Private School.

The first organized educational offering presented by John Hoff in the spring of 1984 was a 101-day course called the Eden Project. Next followed a series of study and training processes. Education for Enlightenment developed as a month-long version of the Eden Project. A transpersonal psychology study group formed in 1985-86 with 20 participants focused on deepening relational living. Content included principles of right relationship, living

On-Line News of the Goodenough Community System

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beyond ego, and personal transformation. The Private School for Human Development was birthed from this commitment and deepened desire for growth.

Educational endeavors such as the Private School have existed for thousands of years. Many ancient cultures celebrated the mystery of being human and offered the guidance of teachers and a learning community--a group of people willing to wrestle forth their own authenticity to offer an organized social response to others. As well as representing the teachings of the school's founder, Dr. John L. Hoff, the Private School was grounded in many spiritual traditions, including those practiced by Jesus Christ, Sri Aurobindo, Rudolf Steiner, G.I. Gurdjieff, and Ken Wilber. Teachings were strengthened by ideas from transpersonal psychology and other behavioral and natural sciences.

The school followed a three-year curriculum that taught about the self, relationship, and participation in organizational and societal processes. Spring term 1997 marked the completion of the third three-year curriculum of the School. More than 20 students have graduated from the School, having been questioned by faculty and other students before receiving certificates of accomplishment acknowledging their successful completion of the three-year program in the theory and skills of human development.



We met in a large, open auditorium of a local church every Wednesday evening. Each "quarter" was approximately 3 months long, beginning and ending with a week-end retreat, usually at Seabeck Conference Center on the Kitsap Peninsula. Each quarter had a theme and a very large binder workbook, as Human Relations Labs still do. It was apparent that a lot of creativity had gone into the planning of the curriculum. One term was themed around Star Trek, where each week we watched a clip from a Star Trek episode, then discussed the implications of the psychological or societal practices in the film to our lives. Another term featured an imaginary country named Gazimba. Pam and Elizabeth, with John and others, played a prominent role in dreaming up some of these themes. Much as I loved the map of Gazimba and other creative metaphors, I don't remember much about that curriculum. The curriculum was a vehicle for John's teachings and his teachings were provocations or fodder for our discussions and learning in the small groups.



My strongest memories and learnings were from the small groups I was part of. I could listen to John, or watch a clip from Star Trek, and stay fairly aloof and philosophical. Being in a small group for 3 months, or up to 9 months was like being in a family, with its comfort and safety, but also the rubbing up against different personalities and preferences that are also a part of many families.

One term Kate M. was in my small group. Many of you know her and would agree that she is a very powerful woman, very bold and unafraid of expressing herself. She had been featured in a tabloid story something like, "Woman Gives Birth to Sasquatch!!" I don't know how they found Kate to be the supposed "mother" of this story, but it created a huge splash in the Private School, spawning endless jokes, laughs and tongue-in-cheek human relations lessons. I must have been jealous of all the attention she was receiving and how uninhibited she was in being her "out there" self. What a teacher she was to me! I realized I wished I could be so open and unafraid and had to apologize for reacting negatively to her. It was over 10 years later, at a Human Relations Lab, where I was able to join her creativity with

editing the Lab newsletter. It was such a freeing, zany experience, co-writing very exaggerated stories that wove fantasy into accounts of everyday Lab experiences.

My first small group in the Private School was very special. Nan Krecker and Pam Jefferson were the co-leaders. I first met and got to know Claudia in that group. The group enjoyed each other so much, we decided to take a weekend retreat together. We booked one or two cabins at the Ecologic Retreat Center, borrowed the Tochers' camper, met up and all went out there together. I must have gotten cold feet about being so close to my group members, because I split while we were waiting for the ferry. I wanted to leave. Nan was my kind shepherd, watching me, distracting me, herding me back to consensual reality. I think we went to a bar and bought some drinks, but her caring was what brought me back. I bounced into a playful mood and danced with Claudia and Gilles in the back of the camper while Pam drove us.



This was later than the Private School, but a similar image of community learning.

We had brought coffee beans, but no grinder, so the guys rolled wine bottles over the beans, trying to crush them. We spent the weekend playing and bonding; we walked on the beach, cooked for each other, all tried to take a shower together, and threw marshmallows at each other. By the end of the weekend, we floated in to Pathwork on a cloud of love. The Private School taught us about our less-effective behaviors, but also provided a safe environment to move beyond, to expand into greater openness, love and joy.



One of the lessons I remember from the Private School was what John called the "Watcher and the Watched." The skill was to develop an inner observer, the "Watcher," who can watch the thoughts and behaviors of the "me" I usually identify with, the "Watched." The aim was to observe, kindly but dispassionately, without judgement or justification. Like watching your breath in meditation, the practice is to notice thoughts and feelings that arise, without following their dips, loops and mental binds. Watch with a detached curiosity and then let them go. One of the gifts of the Private School for Human Development has been learning to detach (at least somewhat) from identifying so completely from my "Watched" mortal who seems to bumble through life, reacting to jabs and compliments like one of Pavlov's dogs. I think the concept of developing an inner observer helped me discover my Self, or my inner spiritual being, who I sometimes call my inner Goddess. I can forget this

inner observer, but she is always there, just the same.

Another valuable lesson I learned from the Private School and use in my life daily is viewing every situation I find myself in as a learning experience, seeing all the people in my life as my teachers. I've revisited this lesson recently with my co-worker, Leif. He is a Cambodian immigrant, who I trained to take over my position as receptionist several years ago. He had been bumped out of his courier position and our Supervisor took pity on him, so put him in a very different position, to keep him from being laid off. I

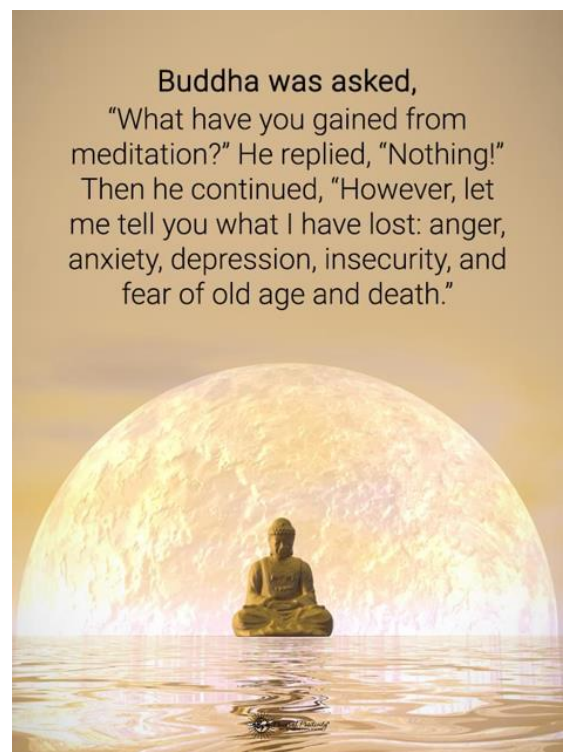
was promoted to a job with more authority. In the past 5 months, I've been hired back temporarily and am again mentoring him.

Last week I was asked to train Leif to schedule panel interviews, something I am very experienced with. The process can be complicated and frustrating, involving searches for matching openings that can seem non-existent in the calendars of busy leaders. I have learned to be persistent, and the puzzle pieces always fall into place. The hiring manager, recruiter, and panelists are always very appreciative.

Leif is terrified of doing new things, especially if they involve computers. I have encountered this attitude in him often. When he complained about how intimidating the calendaring was, I became frustrated and told him it was a requirement of the job and said it can seem like he doesn't want to learn. He heard me and said he did want to learn.

I broke the job into tiny steps, which he followed. I realized I was treating him like he was incompetent, so backed off some, giving him larger chunks without explaining every detail, enabling him to figure some of it out for himself. When the panelists began accepting his calendar invitations, he was practically ecstatic, so relieved that he was able to do this task that in the morning had seemed daunting. I realized that I was impatient with him because I have had to work with a similar fearfulness in myself, but have had to move through it recently, in order to do the jobs I've been hired to do. The perfectionist in me has been afraid of "doing it wrong" so I've limited my experiences to avoid that feeling. I've probably judged the fearful little girl in me. Helping Leif was like helping this frightened child in me. Leif was beaming with renewed confidence, and told our Supervisor, Manager and team what a great coach I was. I was reminded of John in my being stern with Leif. John could sometimes seem harsh, but it was tough love, and jarred my inner learner into waking up and listening. I am grateful I was able to learn from Leif, my teacher, and extend some of what I've learned from my teachers to him.

In this anniversary month of John's death, with Colette recovering from serious surgery, I am appreciating them both, as loving and sometimes tough teachers, committed to their own growth and coaching others to live happier, fuller, more connected lives. I have been truly blessed to have had the opportunity to have attended (and graduated, with Claudia, in 1997) the Private School for Human Development, the Splitting Group, and all the other Goodenough Community programs and experiences over the years. And I'm very grateful I find teachers for everything I need to learn right in front of me, all the time!



Buddha was asked,
"What have you gained from
meditation?" He replied, "Nothing!"
Then he continued, "However, let
me tell you what I have lost: anger,
anxiety, depression, insecurity, and
fear of old age and death."



Now we (members and friends of the Goodenough Community) are taking a stand for love and equality over all the expressions of racism and injustice and inequality against Black people. We, as mostly white, will educate ourselves and learn to make a difference. We will continue to speak out about the racial injustice in our country.

From **yes!** Magazine

January 25, 2021

To Dismantle Tyranny, We Need Racial Integration

CALVIN BAKER

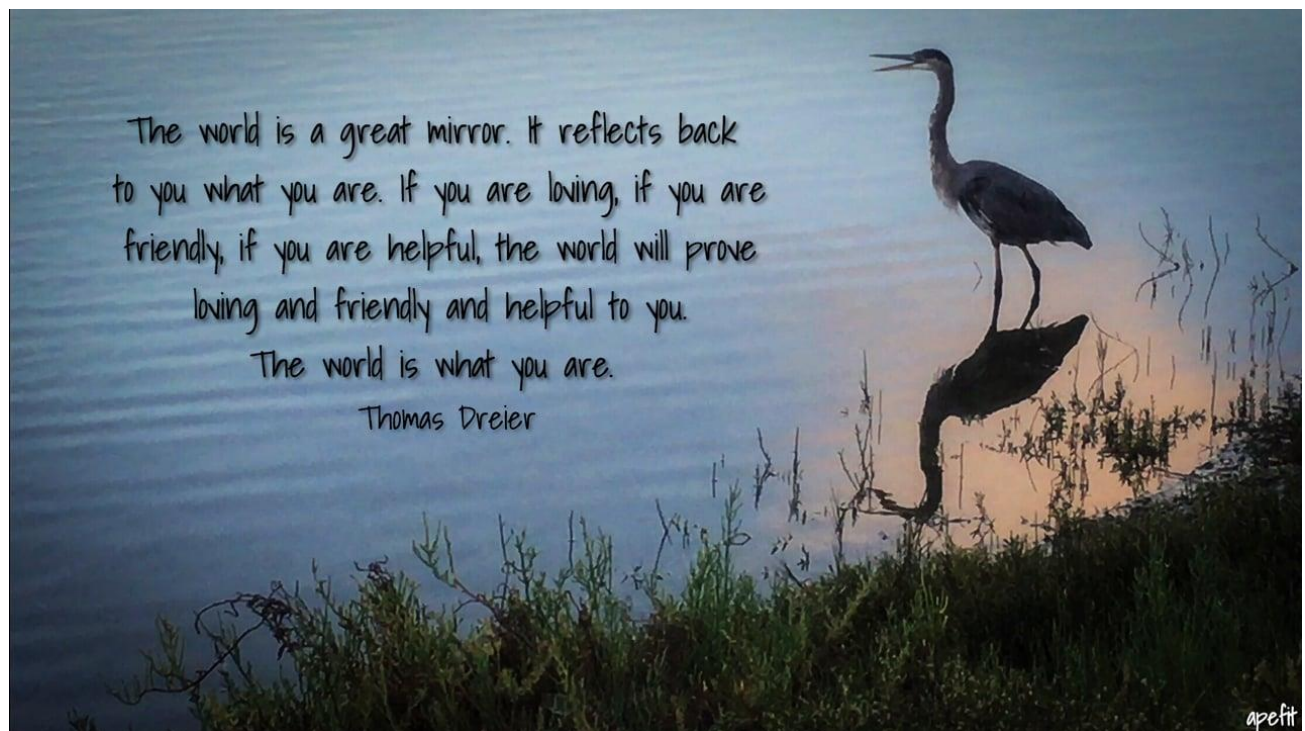


Our current notion of race began on the dim edge of the Middle Ages, before the universe was heliocentric, before we knew gravity. At best, it was a primitive,

tentative grasp toward understanding the physical world; at worst, it was a way of asserting the primacy of one tribe over another. When it was considered in earnest by science, it was initially rejected. James Cowles Prichard, a physician and opponent of slavery from Bristol who was the leading British scholar of race, wrote in an 1813 book entitled *Researches into the Physical History of Man* that “On the whole, it appears that we may with a high degree of probability draw the inference, that all the different races into which the human species is divided, originated from one family.”

Race's true usefulness, however, was not to science but as a technology of war, of depopulating continents, seizing the wealth of others, erasing the beauty and wisdom of unknown cultures, enslaving people, and otherwise dividing humanity for imperial gain: all the material forces we talk about so often, which we now so clearly know threaten to destroy the world.

Read the excerpt





Happy 21st Birthday, Marley!!!





Mindful Mike's Blog *The Cloud of Unknowing*

Mike deAnguera

What if Life was a long process of waking up? Suppose you and I started at the top at birth and jumped into the well of forgetfulness. What do babies really know? I wonder about that. Every single one of us has been a baby, yet are any of us adults remembering what that state was like? I am sure we can study children seeing how they act. Developmental stages can be mapped out. But am I in touch with my own experiences? The only way I can ever know is if I kept a journal which I did during my teen years through college. When I look at that journal today it amazes me how asleep I was.

How could adults help me wake up? Well if the adults are asleep most likely they will come from a place of fear. Therefore the objective would be to control me and make me into the success they want me to be. The adults were fearful because society relies upon fear to keep all of us in place.

If at the beginning I was on top because I am composed of Divine Energy then why do I have to learn stuff? I learn stuff because Life is a process. In order for that process to work I have to forget everything when I am born into this world. If I didn't forget everything then I have nothing to learn. I am wise already but then my life would serve no purpose.

When I leave this life what do I take with me? Certainly nothing material. Not even the clothes on my back. I take with me the relational work I have done. But if I come back then I lose that relational work all over again. That's why the adults surrounding me at birth are there to remind me of my true nature. This is perhaps the biggest reason why I want to help them to remember. This is to prepare the way back for my rebirth. True heaven transcends this realm and the state we all go to upon our deaths.

How to face my death? Well I still come from a very fearful place. I can analyze it as much as I want yet the fear does not go away.

Maybe those Tibetan monks make mandalas and then destroy them to drive home the point of creation and destruction which paves the way for something new.

Prince Siddhartha analyzed his experiences encountering old age, sickness, and death. What could others tell him? He could only convince himself. He wanted to be free of the whole cycle of death and rebirth which is the goal of every good Hindu. But why be free of the cycle of death and rebirth? Even the Dalai Lama came back 14 times. Now he wants to come back again as an American woman. Why? Does he wish to come back as a Teacher or does he want to start with a totally clean slate? That I don't know. I certainly would like to know why the Dalai Lama would come back as a woman. Does he need to tell me? Maybe he doesn't because Mastery can only come from Within. My writing these blogs are an attempt to achieve mastery.

We celebrated Marley Long's 21st birthday yesterday. 21 years ago, the Divine Mystery came into this world as Marley Long. You can see how happy she was in the left-hand photo. She received many presents, some of which will be useful tools for her life as a permaculturalist. At least we all have the practice of permaculture as our collective goal.



Today we had two forestry people Mark and Margaret from our state government review our forestry plan. You can see then in the right hand photo. Turns out there are a whole lot of regulations we have to meet even with the trees we cut down. Why? Because we can't be trusted by our government to do the right thing. We can't be trusted to do anything without constant oversight. Unlike the tribal people we have lost contact with the Earth.

Mark and Margaret brought along big Mac, a pooch who had his own agenda quite apart from ours. Unlike me he was not observing but actively engaged.



A Permaculture Offering

A Preferred Future, Lois Arkin with LA Eco Village

This is the second of eight Zoom Conversations offered by: Creating A Preferred Future.

Thursday January the 28th, 6 PM Pacific, 9 PM Eastern, with Lois Arkin of LA Eco Village in Los Angeles.

The Conversation with Lois is free to the first 100 attendees. It is the second of a series of 8, two per month, January to April, produced and hosted by Jan Spencer, in Eugene, Oregon. All the conversations are about Creating A Preferred Future. The content is social, economic, lifestyle, permaculture, land use and much more.

Then, Thursday, February 18, a conversation with Yvonne Chu who works with the Onandaga Earth Corps in Syracuse, New York.

See further below for the entire schedule and zoom log in info. See suburbanpermaculture.org for more conversation details including links as the completed conversations move to podcasts and you tube.

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Lois Arkin, Los Angeles Eco Village

Thursday, January 28, 6 PM, Pacific Time

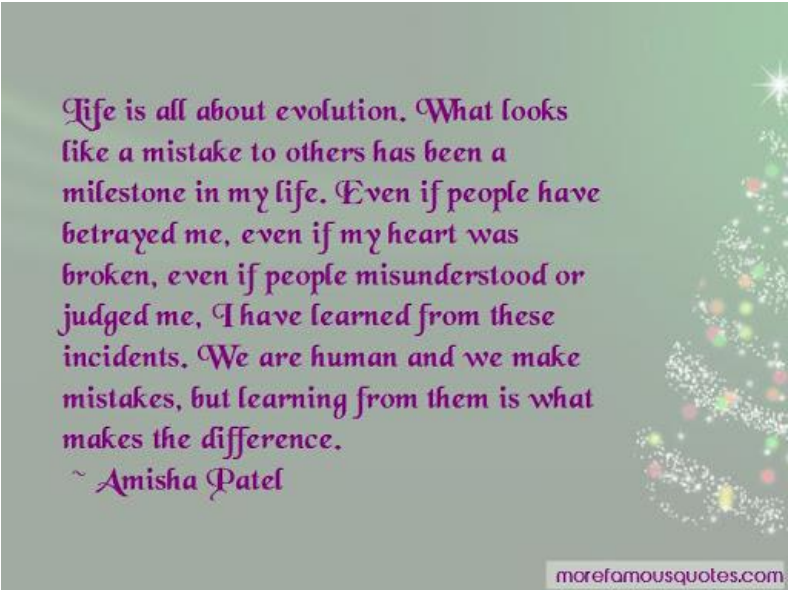
Lois is the founder (1980) of the nonprofit CRSP/ dba Los Angeles Ecovillage Institute (LAEVI). In 1993, she co-founded the Los Angeles Eco-Village (LAEV) as a project of CRSP. Co-author/editor of two books on [sustainable cities](#) and [cooperative housing](#).

She is a board member of the [Global Ecovillage Network – U.S.](#) as well as the [Global Village Institute](#), and served for 17 years on the Community Advisory Committee of the Wilshire Center/Koreatown Redevelopment Area. Lois is passionate about reducing auto use in L.A. and is a public advocate for sustainable urban living. Lois's current focus is repurposing an old auto shop in LAEV into an eco community hub.

She can be reached at

crsp@igc.org

website: www.laecovillage.org



Life is all about evolution. What looks like a mistake to others has been a milestone in my life. Even if people have betrayed me, even if my heart was broken, even if people misunderstood or judged me, I have learned from these incidents. We are human and we make mistakes, but learning from them is what makes the difference.

~ Amisha Patel

morefamousquotes.com

Programs and Events of the Goodenough Community

Includes dates for Winter 2021

Because of our unpredictable times, dates and descriptions shown represent our plans for now.

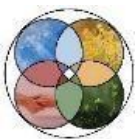
What makes community meaningful and fun? The richness of life in community comes in many ways – getting together informally over a meal ... celebrating a significant birthday with long- time and new-found friends ... working together in a creative endeavor ... collaborating during a work party ... thinking deeply with others about what it means to be fully alive and connected with ourselves, each other, and Spirit ... and more.

Of course, community is about adapting to change, and that has been the case with the pandemic as we have adapted many of our ways to connecting, many of which are via Zoom.

Throughout the year our intention is to offer programs that help you participate in your own development, learn about relating well with others, and help you discover your potential to have a good time in life and with others.

Information about programs and upcoming events can be found on our website:

www.goodenough.org



The Goodenough Community's governing body, the General Circle, meets monthly, 7:00 PM, via Zoom. Below are dates for our winter meetings:

- February 15
- March 1

For additional information, contact [Elizabeth Jarrett-Jefferson](#)



The Women's Program is a long-established and ever-growing way for women to enjoy each other's company, learn about themselves as women, and even perhaps to experience the Divine Feminine. For more information, contact [Hollis Ryan](#). Stay tuned for an announcement of the next Women's gathering.



The Third Age - Those age 60 and older have been gathering monthly, Friday evenings. 7:00 PM. With the pandemic, meetings are virtual. The next scheduled meetings is February 26. Contact [Kirsten Rohde](#) for more information.

The Men's Program - Our Men's Circle is an expression of brotherhood and practice with wisdom, gathered from own lives, other men's work advocates and the founders of this circle. A weekend is planned from June 4 & 5, 2021. Stay tuned for details.



Pathwork, a Program of Convocation: A Church and Ministry – Pathwork offers you a spiritual home in which to rest and to share your heart and mind as you move through these unpredictable times. We come together under the leadership of Pastor Colette Hoff and find support and encouragement as we clarify our personal goals and develop the practices we choose for a spirit filled life, gaining wisdom from the world's faith & wisdom traditions. You are welcome to join. Meetings are held via Zoom on alternate Sundays from 7pm to 9pm. Contact Colette: hoff@goodenough.org for Zoom information.

February 14 and 28
March 14 and 28

True Holidays Celebration, Saturday, December 4, 2021



We are planning our 2021 event! Hold this date on your calendar. We traditionally hold this event on Mercer Island. Stay tuned for details.



Human Relations Laboratory, August 8 to 14, 2021

This intense and joyous week-long event is a communal experience of personal growth and relational development within a rich culture with art, music dance, song, drama and more. This summer we will celebrate 52 years! Contact: Colette Hoff, hoff@goodenough.org

Work and Play Parties throughout the Year. *Traditionally*, the Goodenough Community sponsors work parties over Memorial Day weekend as well as other times to express gratitude for the presence of our beloved retreat center, Sahale, and to experience the satisfaction of playing and working together. Please email hoff@goodenough.org with questions during these times of the Pandemic.



Quest: A Counseling and Healing Center



Our belief is that mental and emotional health is a prerequisite for spiritual wellbeing, collaboration, and the expression of compassion. Quest's counseling and education programs, open to all interested individuals, focus on empowering individuals, couples, and family groups to be happier and more effective in relationships. *Call Colette (206-755 8404) if you find you need to talk out your feelings regarding the pandemic crisis.*

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