

The Village View

February 1, 2023

Marjenta Gray, Editor

Coming Up—

- **Nature Systems Work Party**, Sahale, Feb. 3-5
- **General Circle**, February 20, 7pm
- **Pathwork**, February 12, 7pm

Learning from Death, Mid-Winter and Endings

Marjenta Gray

Death is a taboo subject in our western culture. We watch newsclips and movies that show frequent images of death and killing. We read about death every day in the newspapers and online media. So, on one level we are very aware and even desensitized to death. But, unless death creeps or bursts into our personal lives, there is a sense of, "This is not my life. This couldn't happen to me!" Talking about death or grieving for any length of time risks being considered a "downer". This is not true of all cultures. In an article in *The Conversation*, 1/25/23, John Frederick Wilson states, "In Hindu families in India, for example, relatives and friends come together to support the immediate family in an elaborate 13-day ritual. In Tibet, the Buddhist mourning period following a funeral lasts 49 days. During this time the family gathers to make clay figures and prayer flags, allowing for a collective expression of grief. In Egypt, tearfully grieving after seven years would still be seen as healthy and normal – whereas in the US this would be considered a disorder".

In the Goodenough Community, death and illness have very much thrust themselves into our shared and individual lives. We would be avoiding reality if we didn't talk about feelings, thoughts, and responses to Colette's death 9 months ago in April, or Joan's death this past November. Or Barbara's current struggle with a life-threatening brain tumor. It seems that as soon as we feel we might be re-centering, there is another death to feel for.

After noticing that the whole Women's Leadership team was impacted deeply by the deaths and illness of our friends, we decided to approach this topic head-on. As the leadership team discussed the theme for our Saturday gathering, and because the Goodenough Community's top goal is learning, we decided to focus on the learnings that can come from experiencing the death of a loved one or facing a life-threatening illness, either ourselves or with someone close to us. For participants who are younger and maybe not impacted by death in their lives yet, the same learnings can be applied to other major endings and changes in life, like with relationships, jobs, or moving.

**Those who learned
to know death,
rather than to
fear and fight it,
become our teachers
about life.**

Elizabeth Kubler-Ross

On-Line News of the Goodenough Community System

www.goodenough.org

American Association for the Furtherance of Community
Convocation: A Church and Ministry / Mandala Resources, Inc.
Sahale Learning Center / The EcoVillage at Sahale

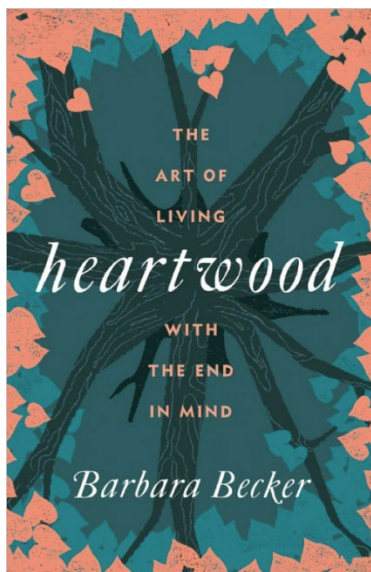
The season of mid-winter, where we find ourselves now, is its own metaphor of death and inwardness, with dead, brown leaves blanketing the plants and cold ground, stray tree limbs clutched in the boughs of their neighbors or blocking forest paths, and mammals with sense still hibernating.

As we women discussed our own experiences, we realized that, in addition to grief and loss at the death or illness of a loved one, death, and other major endings, can be powerful “re-set” times of our lives, prompting us to evaluate our relationships, our values and life priorities. In spite of the pain, these re-set experiences can motivate great positive change and therefore can be seen as silver linings or unexpected blessings. It can take months or years to appreciate these positive aspects, but they are available and can help with the acceptance of what is inevitable for us all.

Goodenough Community Women’s Gathering

Seventeen women, from Mexico to Washington DC, to upstate New York, and various locations in the Pacific Northwest, showed up on Zoom on Saturday, January 28, for the first GEC Women’s Gathering of 2023.

We first acknowledged that our circle had two significant holes in it, since the previous gathering in October; our dear elder, Joan Valles, and her housemate, Barbara Brucker. In keeping with the mid-winter season and our multiple recent experiences, our theme was *Learning from Mid-Winter, Death, Illness, and Endings*.



Hollis had introduced an inspirational book, *Heartwood*, by Barbara Becker, which we read from and used as inspiration. The subtitle is: “The Art of Living with the End in Mind. The book explains that “heartwood” is the internal core darker than the surrounding sapwood of a tree.

“Called heartwood, this core or supporting pillar no longer participates in the life process of a tree—transporting and storing water and nutrients. Although it is dead, heartwood will not decay or lose its sturdiness while the outer, living rings of newer growth sustain it. In the perfect ecology of a tree, the dead becomes the heart of the living and the living nourish the enduring essence of the dead.

So it is with our lives, where life and death cannot exist separately from each other. Heartwood is about strength in what remains and the virtue of listening to our innermost source of stability and stillness. It is about how trusting the natural cycle of life and loss can help us better live our lives. It applies equally in ordinary times as it does during the most trying of times, when the surety of our existence is called into question.”

I introduced the topic, ending with some questions to contemplate:

Death and endings can be a valuable prompt to ask ourselves questions, such as:

- How did this relationship impact me? What values/needs were met (or not) in the relationship?
- Do I have any regrets? What does that say about my values/ needs?
- What do I value?
- Where do I want to put my energy? Are there things I need to say “no” to, to allow other possibilities in my life?
- If a person in my life died tomorrow, are there ways I would wish I’d been different with them?
- If I knew I had one year or 6 months to live, what would be most important to me to do?

We spent a few minutes alone, then Aliko led us in a gentle meditation that helped us focus deeper on our

feelings and thoughts.

We met in breakout rooms in groups of three or four women and shared whatever thoughts or feelings had come up for us. I found my group of four very supportive and empathetic.



*The Dance by Marc Chagall
(offered by Janette Brown)*

Rosemary read a poem I'll include later. Hollis skillfully drew out learnings from our groups and self-reflections. Women talked of discovering love for estranged family members who had passed, of re-evaluating past choices and future priorities, and of how nurturing it was to talk to other women about hard times. Gratitude for blessings and good times and staying in the present were agreed to be helpful in balancing grieving.

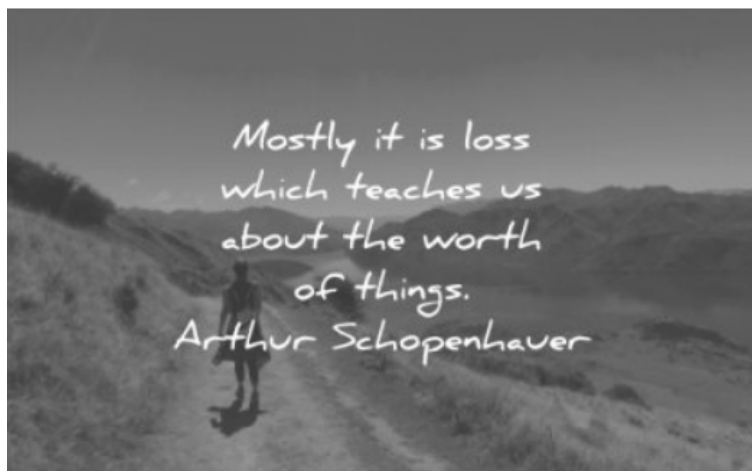
Janette Brown arrived towards the end of our meeting and shared some inspiring thoughts about her experience being with her partner, Mark, in his 5 years of illness before his death in 2021. "We have only what is right now. And in this space, the 'present time' love we share is real, vital, and not at all mortal. Why would we ever doubt it, just because the body dies? Mark and I knew we are way more than bodies. And our connectedness, while he was embodied, spanned a quarter century. It's big and a primary influence in my life."

My Learnings

I know that in my own life, death has played a huge role in my development. My mother's death, when I was 33, catapulted me into such turmoil that I landed in a Course in Miracles-based community when I didn't think I had a spiritual side at all. When my father died 5 years later, I happened on the Goodenough Community, seeking healing and resolution to questions about my family of origin. These experiences, while not perfect have helped me learn and grow. Through my personal work on my relationships with my parents, I have come to love and accept them more fully, as people with gifts, flaws, histories, and families who influenced them in their development.

Witnessing the dying and deaths of my mother, John and Colette Hoff, and several close friends, I've seen the beauty that can be part of the process. I was joined by many others in experiencing that bittersweetness with Colette as she neared her mortal end. I've come to believe that nobody should die alone unless they truly want to. I want to give love that will help my dear ones let go in a good way. Death has strengthened my commitment to continue working on myself and honor my callings and priorities, so I'm living the best life I can while I still have reasonably good health. Each of the people I've loved who has died has become part of my own "heartwood." I can find it disturbing that that layer is thickening and thickening. And each loved one helps me in my living. I especially want to learn how to work with conflict well, as I don't want to take regrets with me when it's my time to die.

And – just saying; even if I've learned some from death doesn't mean I want any more of it soon. Enough, already!



GEC Nature Circle Report and Invitation

Laura Sweany

The GEC Nature Systems Circle is stirring; our momentum is building as the sap begins to rise!

The Nature Systems Circle, which currently consists of Kirsten Rohde, Rose Buchmeier, Mike deAnguera and Laura Sweany, is building capacity in service of tending to our beautiful Sahale. We have re-instituted our monthly work parties, with the immediate goal of managing the loads of plant material that dropped in our laps after the winter Snowpocalypse. We are cheering on the yearly pruning team led by Phil Buchmeier. We are working to simplify maintenance elements during the busy summer retreat season, and strategizing about how to make our existing landscapes really shine! If you have suggestions, observations, or feel called to join our granddaughter circle - reach out to us!



Windfall damage in Cedar grove

January 2023 at Sahale:

January has seen lots of chaos created in the forest and on the land. Broken limbs of English walnuts, Black walnuts, Curly willow, laurel, Purple plum and more have littered the landscape. An entire grove of alder below Truck Trap Road now looks like a tumble of pick-up-sticks. The Cedar Grove Trail is mostly impassable due to downed trees and limbs - with photo evidence thanks to the careful camera work of Mike D. So while January was a month of wreckage, we look to February, and the tender stirrings of hazel and alder catkins, to remind us of the inevitable coming of Spring. We are ready for the returning sun!

We are hoping you are ready to join us as we gear up for monthly work parties. Our goal is to enjoy each

other's company while we tend the land by pruning, weeding, trimming and spiffing! February's work will be weeding, more pruning of windfall wood and ornamental bushes, tool maintenance, and continuing to get the public areas tidy and safe for the upcoming

retreat season. And after our labors, don't forget - the hot tub awaits!

You are welcome to join us for a day, or 2, or more. Sahale will

provide meals and lodging and will accept any donations for services that volunteers wish to make. We encourage folks to bring their own preferred tools and foul-weather gear, to make sure we have enough to go around. Please reach out to me at 360-880-2424 by text or phone, or



Windfall damage on trail to Cedar Grove

Join Us!

Our next dates for work parties at Sahale for this year are:

Friday 1pm through Sunday at 3pm:

Feb 3-5

Mar 17-19

April 14-16

May 26-29 Memorial Day Weekend –
Friday through Monday!

email alwaysgrowingdesign@gmail.com as soon as you commit to a date; I must confirm the volunteer list to the Sahale hospitality team at least 1 week in advance of each weekend.

I look forward to seeing you, and working with you, sometime soon! – Laura



The New Wood Chipper at Sahale

Jim Tocher

The Community recently bought a fancy, new WoodMaxx MX-8600 brush chipper. This wonderful machine attaches to the rear of our Kubota tractor and is powered by the Power Takeoff shaft of the Kubota. The chipper has a hydraulic feed that grabs branches up to 6" in diameter and pulls the branches into the big chipping wheel. The results are a pile of beautiful chips.

Pam, John, Mike and I worked a few hours putting the machine together, adjusting the three-point lifting hitch, and shortening the power takeoff shaft. Then to our delight, we practiced on turning piles of brush into gardening chips.

I hereby declare Pam as the official Sahale trainer and head operator of this machine. It is not difficult to operate and I expect more than one person at Sahale will soon be a qualified operator. And you will notice on your next visit to Sahale that there is no shortage of piles of branches on which to practice.



Jim Tocher with Chip, the chipper

Honoring Norm Peck's Mother

We, of the Goodenough Community, honor long-time GEC member, Norm Peck's mother, who passed January 30. Our thoughts are with you and your family, Norm.

Norm wrote these words about his mother:

Barbara (Pannkuk) Peck was born near Estherville, Iowa and was 93 years old when she died on January 30, 2023. With her parents Ben and Gretchen (Axtell) Pannkuk she moved to Topeka, Kansas during the Depression. In 1951 while attending Kansas State University she met and married my father, Ernest George Peck. Their children were Norman (1951), Laura (1953) and Eric (1956). She was preceded in death by her parents, her husband Ernie (in 2021) and brother David (2022).

Barbara was active in the United Methodist Church choir, the Shepherd's Crossing charity and the Manhattan, Kansas Master Gardeners programs. She was diagnosed about 4 years ago with Non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma, choosing to not be treated, as in her opinion the treatment was worse than the disease. She lived at home, with support from Eric, Laura and myself when I was there until the first of this year. After 2 emergency room and hospitalizations within a few days early this year, for a heart condition and pneumonia, she decided to stop eating and asked to go to hospice from the hospital. After a few days she began having more medication to relieve pain, so was alert or awake a bit less of the time. Each of us children spent a couple of hours with her twice a day, whether she was awake or not. She was moderately present when I said my final goodbye to her late Tuesday, and a couple of times the following day with my brother and sister. She was apparently comatose Friday, Saturday and Sunday, passing early Monday morning. I would say she departed on her own terms.





Mindful Mike's Blog: The Winter of Death

Mike deAnguera

What is my goal in this lifetime? To be like the Dalai Lama? No. I can be a Buddhist which I am some of the time. But I cannot be a Dalai Lama. Why not? Because I am a Michael deAnguera and I do have something to say that he doesn't. I don't want to be a copycat of somebody else. I choose to be the unique being that I am.

Death and Life go together. Without Death, there can be no life. A mortal lifetime is the best and hardest kind of lifetime to live. My fear of Death is what drives my shadow side, an essential part of my being. In this lifetime I get to be put through all the paces required to produce a story. My lifetime has no other purpose.

The setting Sun with mist. Science can't explain most of what I can see. It is mystery. All it can do is analyze the physical components of all life as well as the Sun. But it can't tell me what Life is. Neither can it tell me what makes Earth a life giving planet while all the others are dead.

Winter is adversity. It challenges me with the cold. Also snow. But lots of people will pay a lot and travel long distances to see and experience snow. It makes possible sports such as snowshoeing and skiing. As well as sleigh rides.

I am getting old. Getting closer to Death. Is there any advantage to old age? Or am I forever having to envy the young? Old age does change my perspective on virtually everything. I end up seeing Life from a very different place. Do I want to be young again? I am finding the answer is no. I was young once. Guess I do feel wiser.

People are a mystery to me. I think I understand them but then again I am not living their lifetimes. They have adapted differently than me because they are different.

Why do some people get cancer while others don't? Again the only answer I can give is that it is adversity challenging me in this lifetime. I am not and never will be comfortable with it.

We have a grieving tree. Streamers are left by those having lost a loved one. Right now there are quite a few streamers on this tree. Notice the moon is caught in its upper branches. I worked hard to get the moon included because it lends a touch of mystery in my artist's eye.

The Designer of the Universe has the eye not of the scientist but rather that of the artist. By the same token the One likes to have all kinds of experiences. Everything is driven by the Mind, the Mind playing each and every one of us. The Soul is pure Being, a light source from which all ideas of the Mind arise. The Mind uses a





Body which is the Universe and all contained therein. The Body is the work of Art which is constantly changing. Why can humans walk on the moon, a feat no other creature can do? Good question and one I can't answer. I have not managed to even answer the mystery of my own existence.

Sometimes I can get scared that I am looking out of my eyes at all. Why am I looking out from my eyes and not anybody else's? The mystery of me.

Does waking up involve questioning the reason for my existence? Yes, I believe it does. It is a question nobody else can answer but me. If I have not taken possession of my own life then I have no understanding of what I am doing here. That's not a spot I wish to be in.

Oh, to be unconscious like Cody. He never thinks about the mystery of his own existence at all. He just digs when he feels like it.



Programs and Events of the Goodenough Community

Community is about adapting to change, and that has been the case with Covid 19, the pandemic, as we adapted many of our ways to connect, most of which have been held on Zoom. This has enabled people from outside our area to participate in community events. Now we are adapting to change following the death of our co-founder Colette and our need to learn from the past and look toward the future of our community.



Throughout the year we offer programs and events that help you participate in your own development, learn about relating well with others, and help you discover your potential for having a good time in life and with others. As we work through this period of transition, we have limited or changed our offerings, but check this page for the latest information. Information about future programs and events also will be found on our website: www.goodenough.org and in future Village Views.



Human Relations Laboratory, August 2023

This event was cancelled in 2022. Please look forward to Human Relations Laboratory 2023

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.

Contact: [Elizabeth Jarrett-Jefferson](#)



The Goodenough Community's governing body, the General Circle

Currently meets weekly on Monday evenings, 7 PM on Zoom. Next meeting **February 20**. 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. The Women's Program will meet from 10 AM to 1 PM on Saturday, **March 25, 2023**, via Zoom. For information, contact [Hollis Ryan](#)



The Third Age - Those aged 60 and older have customarily been gathering every other month, Friday evenings, at 7 PM by Zoom. Stay tuned for an email about our next meeting date. 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 our own lives, other men's work, advocates, and the founders of this circle. Contact: [Norm Peck](#)



Pathwork, A Program of Convocation: A Church and Ministry.

Pathwork offers a spiritual home in which to rest and to share your heart and mind as you move through these unpredictable times. Participants come together and find support and encouragement, gaining wisdom from the world's faith and wisdom traditions. All are welcome to join. Meetings are held via Zoom on alternate Sundays: 7 to 9 PM. Next meeting: **February 12**. Contact [Kirsten Rohde](#) for more information.



New: Founders Day Celebration This new event is designed to celebrate our shared community life and to honor our founders, John and Colette Hoff. The first Founders Day celebration is scheduled for the weekend of **April 22, 2023**, at Sahale.



Work and Play Parties Throughout the Year. Traditionally, the Goodenough Community sponsors work and play parties over Memorial Day and Labor Day weekends 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. **Nature Systems Work Party, February 3-5**

