

A Handbook for co-
support within the
Psychology of Now



OF
MUTUAL
BENEFIT
Part Four

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OF MUTUAL BENEFIT

Part Four

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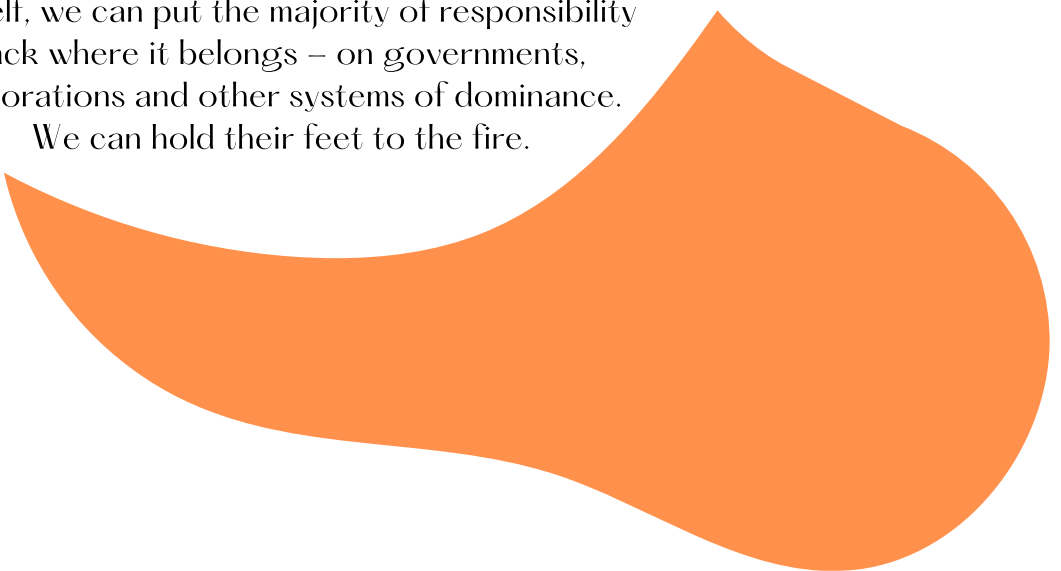
About Part Four

One of the primary issues that clients bring to this question of how to respond to what feels like the ongoing crisis of now, is not only how to figure out one's response or purpose, but how to do so when the complexity of the situation is overwhelming. Our cultural narrative of the over-simplified problem being solved by The Hero (Complex) can leave us with a sense of futility. How can we possibly know what one thing we can do that will "save the world?"

This complexity is good news however, and we can look at it with a sense of relief. The diversity of life, the intricacy of ecosystems and the multiplicities of climate change impacts requires an equally varied and manifold response. There is no one right answer, because all efforts are worthy. All of which means that your singular response, unique to you and your strengths and interests, is necessary and enough.

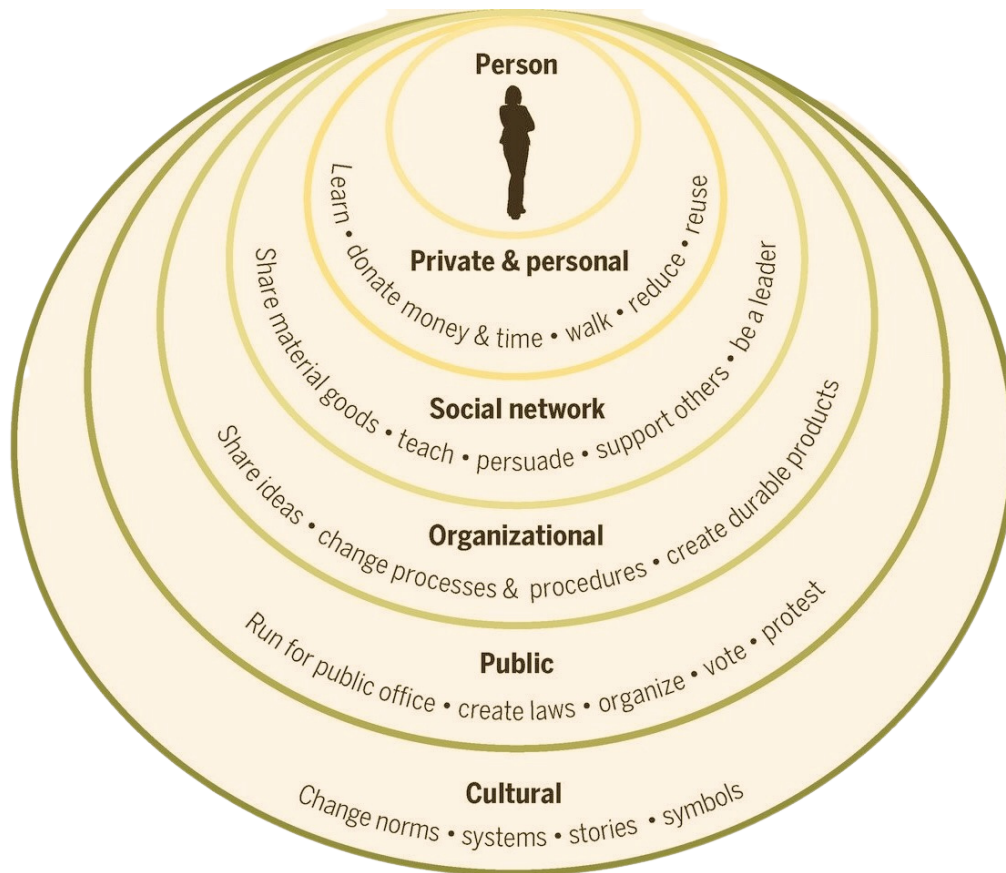
The other good news here, is that you can lean into the efforts of others, who are also doing their own good work. To that, I recommend that you find out Who is doing What. Especially when it comes to having a myriad of interests and concerns....whatever that is for you, there's likely somebody else who's on it. And even more likely, the excellent work being done by them is not being reported by mainstream media.

We are all in this together and it may be helpful to consider that rather than hyper focusing on individual change (such as green consumerism or simple living), which can be a good endeavor in itself, we can put the majority of responsibility back where it belongs – on governments, corporations and other systems of dominance. We can hold their feet to the fire.



Journal prompts for Part Four

When envisioning ways we can take part in remaking the world, it's essential that we put our muscle where we already have strength. This isn't to say that we can't branch out, take risks or question our assumptions of helplessness. It means that we leverage our assets. Even if you feel overwhelmed or like things are futile, you are invited to put this aside by allowing your journaling time to be outside of what is possible/impossible. Consider the image below:



In each of these spheres, what lights up for you? Where do you recognize yourself? Where do you feel excited, intrigued or feel a pull on your heartstrings? What is a turn off? It's ok to know your limitations. It took years of personal activism in my 20s to understand that a lobbyist – I am not. Playing our part sometimes means working with and challenging the inner voices that say "you aren't doing enough".

Let's Get You Some Comfort

This week, we find comfort by remembering we are not alone, we are all in this together and we are supported. The Metta Bhavana, or Loving–Kindness meditation comes from the Buddhist traditions. I first learned it from Pema Chodron in 2001. The version below comes from the Greater Good Science Center at UC Berkeley. [This link](#) has an audio version you may like to use.

Loving Kindness Meditation Script

Body Position

Close your eyes. Sit comfortably with your feet flat on the floor and your spine straight. Relax your whole body. Keep your eyes closed throughout the whole visualization and bring your awareness inward. Without straining or concentrating, just relax and gently follow the instructions. Take a deep breath in. And breathe out.

1) Receiving Loving–Kindness

Keeping your eyes closed, think of a person close to you who loves you very much. It could be someone from the past or the present; someone still in life or who has passed; it could be a spiritual teacher or guide. Imagine that person standing in front of you, sending you their love. That person is sending you wishes for your safety, for your well–being and happiness. Feel the warm wishes and love coming from that person towards you.

Now imagine that you are surrounded on all sides by all the people who love you and have loved you. Picture all of your friends and loved ones surrounding you. They are standing sending you wishes for your happiness, well–being, and health. Bask in the warm wishes and love coming from all sides. You are filled, and overflowing with warmth and love.

2) Sending Loving–Kindness to Loved Ones

Now picture a person that you love, perhaps a relative or a friend. Begin to send the love that you feel back to that person. You and this person are similar. Just like you, this person wishes to be happy and have a good life. Send all your love and warm wishes to that person.

Repeat the following phrase, silently:

Just as I wish, may you live with ease, may you be happy, may you be safe and healthy (repeat 3 times).

3) Sending Loving–Kindness to Neutral People

Now think of an acquaintance, someone you don't know very well and toward whom you do not have any particular feeling. It could be a neighbour, or a colleague, or someone else that you see around but do not know very well. You and this person are alike in your wish to have a good life. Like you, this person wishes to experience joy and happiness in his or her life.

Send all your wishes for well–being to that person, repeating the following phrase, silently:

Just as I wish to, may you live with ease, may you be happy, may you be safe and healthy (repeat 3 times).

4) Sending Loving–kindness to 'Enemies'

Now think of someone that you may not get along with. It may be someone that you have long–standing difficulties with.

Call the difficult person to mind, and be honest about what you feel. There may well be feelings of discomfort. Notice any tendency you may have to think badly of that person, or to deepen the conflict you have with them (for example, by getting into imagined arguments with them), and let go of these tendencies. Instead, wish them well, repeating the following phrase, silently:

Just as I wish, may you live with ease, may you be happy, may you be safe and healthy (repeat 3 times).

5) Sending Loving–Kindness to All Living Beings

Now expand your awareness and picture the whole globe in front of you as a little ball. Send warm wishes to all living beings on the globe, who, like you, want to be happy:

Just as I wish to, may you live with ease, may you be happy, may you be safe and healthy (repeat 3 times).

Take a deep breath in. And breathe out. And another deep breath in and let it go. Notice the state of your mind and how you feel after this meditation.

When you're ready, you may open your eyes.

COUNCIL STYLE SHARING

1. Speak from the heart, with courage
2. Listen with the heart, with courage
3. Be spontaneous
4. Be lean of expression
5. Respect Confidentiality

Speak from the heart, with courage

Your truth is safe here. There is no one you need to impress with how articulate you are, or how much you have it together. Speak to your own experience with as much authenticity as you can. Keep it simple.

Listen with the heart, with courage

Listen from a place of non-judgement and openness. It's normal to have our own internal commentary come up when listening to another, especially if we strongly agree, or disagree. If this happens, just notice this and come back to heart-centered listening.

Be spontaneous

Although the journal prompts may have "primed the pump", try to speak without rehearsing beforehand, either before meeting or while listening to the other person. Trust that what needs to be said will find its way.

Be lean of expression

The use of the timer is here to help you speak to the heart of the matter without getting lost in the details. Take your time when speaking and also be aware of your listener and their need to have their full time to share too.

Respect confidentiality

To be entrusted with another's vulnerability is an honor and a gift. Keep it like sweet honey in your heart. If you feel disturbed by something another has shared, you may want to bring that to another confidential source, like a therapist.

Prompts for Week Four

To begin your co-counseling this week, consider beginning with either the Loving-Kindness meditation (reading to each other or listening to the audio together). Here are prompts to try on afterwards:

Who are the friends and loved ones who surrounded you – who's on your team?

How was it to extend loving kindness to your "enemy"?

Aside from the meditation, here are the prompts for week four. Take 2 minutes each, for each question. Decide beforehand if you want to receive/give feedback, and choose an amount of time that works for you (recommended – 2–5 minutes per question)

How was it to identify your spheres of influence? Any aspect of it you found difficult or surprising?

What/who are your personal and social spheres? Your organizational, public and cultural?

Given these spheres of influence, plus your experience and insights from the program thus far, what is beginning to light up for you in regards to next steps and taking action? (Does not have to be full fledged, can be breadcrumbs or whispers of thought)

In moving from a state of perpetual crisis, to "getting in it to win it" for the long haul, what have you learned about your personal bandwidth? Your needs to sustain health, functionality, inspiration and continuance?

Bonus:

If you and your partner want to support each other in next steps, how can your partner support you in that?



In Closing

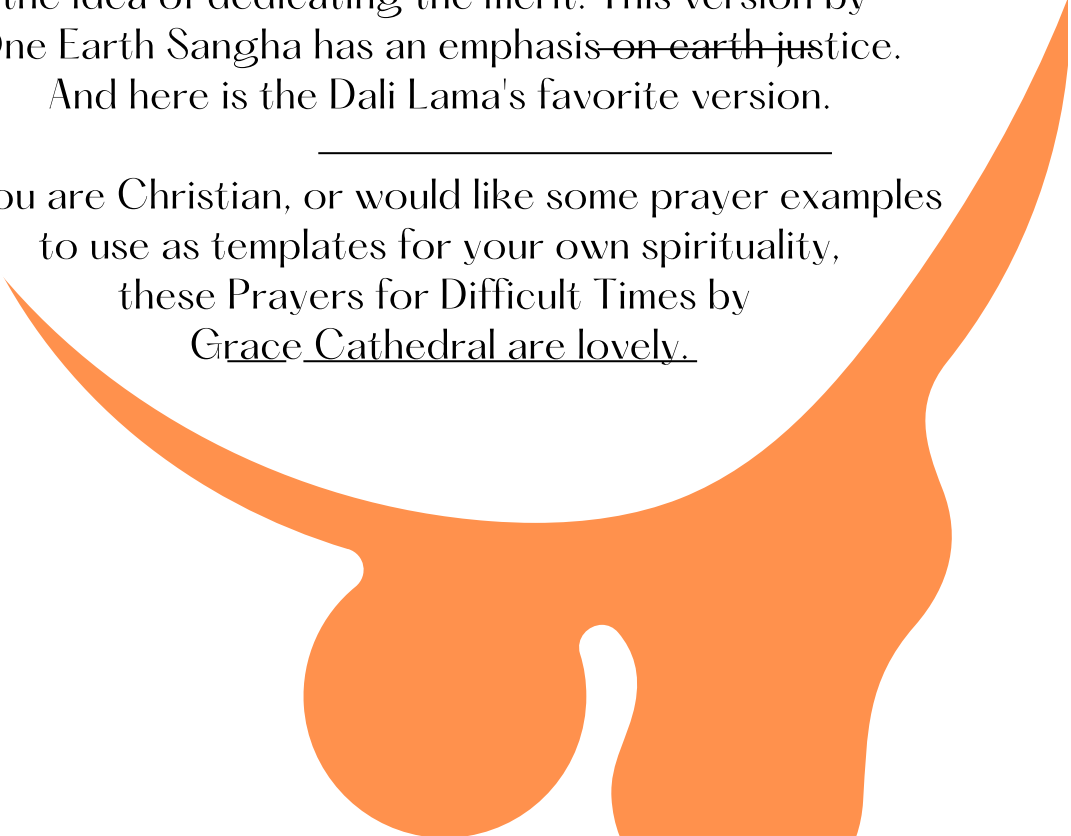
How you'd like to close your time together is up to you, but closing with intention is recommended. This contains the work you have done together and puts a period at the end of the sentence before you move back out into the world.

Taking a moment of silence to reflect, or practice the breathwork from this week, is enough.
So is simply saying "Thank you".

Many folx have their own personal spiritual relationship with the anima mundi of the land they live on, more-than-human-others, ancestors, spirit guides etc. Inviting them into this work with you can be integrative.

As a long time practicing Buddhist, I really love the idea of dedicating the merit. This version by One Earth Sangha has an emphasis ~~on earth~~ justice. And here is the Dali Lama's favorite version.

If you are Christian, or would like some prayer examples to use as templates for your own spirituality, these Prayers for Difficult Times by Grace Cathedral are lovely.



Book Recommendations for Part Four

First, I'd like to point you back to the recommendations for part one.

If you read nothing else, *A Field Guide to Climate Anxiety and Hope Matters* are worth it.

If you have yet to explore the genius of adriene marie brown, then

Emergent Strategy.

is perfect for this week and a great place to start.

This book is being released in the US as we speak, and I have it on pre-order. I can't vouch for it, but it looks promising and you might want to check it out.

Do Earth: Healing Strategies for Humankind

