The 2014 Evolutionary Leaders Retreat

In Attendance:

Cherine Badawi Jean Houston Ocean Robbins Connie Buffalo Barbara Marx Hubbard Yuka Saionji Scott Carlin Tim Kelley John Steiner Jude Currivan **Daniel Stone** Sage Lavine Panache Desai Lynnaea Lumbard Jeff Vander Clute Stephen Dinan Nipun Mehta Neale Donald Walsch **Duane Elgin** Nina Meyerhof Diane Williams

Linda Francis Rick Paine Gary Zukay

David Gershon Terry Patten [plus Eve Konstantine, Board Joshua Gorman Oscar Miro-Quesada Member of the Source of Olivia Hansen Deborah Moldow Synergy Foundation] Baby Zahara Amar Gorman, daughter of Joshua Gorman and Cherine Badawi, also joined us!



Evolutionary Leaders attending the 2014 Retreat in Ashland, Oregon (absent: Scott Carlin and Neale Donald Walsch), with Zahara Amar Gorman and Eve Konstantine.

Ashland, Oregon is a charming town just north of Mt. Shasta, famous for its annual Shakespeare Festival - and home to four members of the Evolutionary Leaders circle: Jean Houston, Neale Donald Walsch, and new members Gary Zukav and Linda Francis. This was the site of the 2014 Evolutionary Leaders retreat from June 20-23 at the lovely Lithia Springs Resort. The theme was "Saving Tomorrow: Crossing the Threshold Into a New Time."

DAY ONE

The first day began with the great pleasure of gathering as 29 Evolutionary Leaders came together from across the United States and several countries, with one more arriving the following morning. After welcomes by Diane Williams of the Source of Synergy Foundation, which convened the retreat, and Jean Houston and Neale Donald Walsh, the retreat's local hosts (Jean said Ashland was wonderful - "like Athens,



only without the slaves"), there were also greetings via Skype by John Perkins, Elza Maalouf, Michael Dowd, Katherine Woodward Thomas, Howard Martin and Charles Gibbs reading a special poem.

The the new members – Cherine Badawi, Connie Buffalo, Jude Currivan, Panache Desai, Olivia Hansen, Tim Kelley, Oscar Miro-Quesada, Rick Paine, plus Gary Zukav and Linda Francis (and Sage Lavine the next day) – were introduced by those who nominated them. Connie said that, according to her Native American tradition, "We're living in the time of the seventh prophecy," which Gary referred to as, "the biggest transformation of humanity in the past 40,000 years." Olivia affirmed that, "Together, we can do magical things."



Then it was time for an engaging multi-media presentation that Diane created to show the purpose and history of the Evolutionary Leaders circle, culminating with a video of everyone dancing joyfully to "The Man in the Mirror" at the 2010 public event at Royce Hall in Los Angeles.

John Steiner offered to ring a mindfulness bell every half hour or when it might be helpful, and our gifted

EL facilitator, Daniel Stone, let everyone know what was in store and Lynnaea Lumbard introduced the opportunity to present 3-minute "snapshots" of anything an EL wished to share with the group – from a simple update to a prepared PowerPoint with illustrations. This proved to be an excellent way to give each person a chance at the spotlight and still have time to hear 30 people over the course of the retreat.

After the first community dinner, Terry Patten and Lynnaea led a process called *Sharing from the Heart and Alignment Building* to encounter one another and express whatever was there in the moment, changing partners several times, and then coming together in groups of four, our first opportunity to get into communal relationship. Stephen Dinan then invited everyone interested to join in recording prayers and blessings for the solstice program on the Shift Network's Summer of Peace series that would air the following day at noon. Oscar Miro-Quesada led off the prayers, followed by Olivia Hansen, David Gershon, Yuka Saionji, Lynnaea Lumbard, Deborah Moldow and Diane Williams.





DAY TWO

The second day began with a ritual honoring the summer solstice, conducted around a fountain surrounded by flowers by Connie Buffalo of the Anishinabe nation, representing the North American indigenous culture, and Oscar Miro-Quesada of Peru, representing the South American shamanic ways. They created a beautiful ceremony together, as eagle meeting condor.

Jude and Yuka proposed that we start the day with silence as the group did on the first day. This was enthusiastically adopted by the group.

After the first two "snapshots," offered by John Steiner (along with Margo King and Mark Gerzon in absentia) and Lynnaea Lumbard, there were more Skype greetings, this time from Elisabet Sahtouris, Jeff Carreira, Howard Martin, J.J. and Desiree Hurtak, Rod McGrew, Gerard Senehi, and Shilpa Jain from Turkey, where she was leading a youth "jam."



Neale then introduced the theme of "Saving Tomorrow" – "saving" meaning to preserve the future, not to rescue it. He spoke of preserving the potential for the evolutionary process in which humanity is engaged so that it can continue to express itself into the lives of our children and children's children. He asked everyone two questions:

- 1. How is it possible that everyone wants essentially the same thing and yet are unable to get it (except for a very few)?
- 2. Is there something we don't fully understand about God and life, the understanding of which would change everything? What is the missing data? ELs are holders, articulators of the missing data each holding a piece that can be activated in daily life.



Neale spoke of the need to send a new message to the world that reverses the present separation cosmology, which produces a separation pathology. If we dare to claim our divinity and step into it, peace, love, prosperity will naturally follow. Let's join in a partnership of evolution. (He prefers the name Evolutionary Partners.)

YOU ARE DIVINITY AND SO AM I. Can we wake up to who we are? How can we work together to support the wonderful projects everyone is doing so that a single message begins to emerge from all sources?

This sparked a lively discussion. While there was widespread appreciation of, as Stephen put it, "the impulse to champion the unity of us with God," there were many views on whether the group would ever rally around a single message or what that might be. Sage suggested, "letting ourselves be anchored in true connection and true community to find the individual voice of leadership that wants to come out of each of us."

Neale concluded by saying that, "we have an urgent invitation and there may not be another one for a very long time. This is the moment we've all been waiting for and co-creating. Let us step into it, not away from it."

After a break, Jeff Vander Clute, who had been busy helping with the technical aspects, such as the Skype-ins and the PowerPoint projections, reported that he has been tuning into numerical representation of the coherence of the group, based on indicators. The measure represents expanded awareness, cessation of struggle, amount of life force, etc. He said that the group started at 55.4% (of 100%) and had already reached 83.6% at 11:00 a.m. This reading can actually go past 100% and – spoiler alert! – by the end of the last session on Monday it reached 107%, even though Jeff was reading the energy while already on the road!

Joshua Gorman reminded everyone be more environmentally conscious by no longer using plastic water bottles and instead making use of the stainless steel bottles provided in their gift bags.

Now it was time for our beloved Jean Houston to lead, in her own unique style. She took us to 1494 in Florence, to a mystery school where de Medici, Rafael, and Da Vinci are attending, becoming "multimodal," so that they cross many disciplines. There were shifts in perspective in art, music, science, and the printing press came into use to spread new ideas far and wide. We live in a new time of changing perspectives opening a new consciousness, a "harvest of the genius of the human race."



According to Jean, "We are being called to wake up — and it's happening everywhere." She asks us to tune in to our "entelechy," tapping into a universe of great forms that can offer us skills from the past, present and future. She led the group in an exercise to connect with our 13.7 billion years of experience, taking us from the distant past into the distant future, buoyed by triumphant music.

After lunch, there were two more "snapshot" presentations, by Duane Elgin and Deborah Moldow.

Next, it was time for a discussion of scalability: To what extent is the demand within us pulling us to the expansion we seek?

What have we learned about taking our work to scale? What does it mean? What would be the conditions that would need to be met to achieve it? What do we see as the major barriers or challenges? Several examples were offered.

David shared his three stages of design: 1) Prototype, 2) Working out, 3) Scale. Early adopters seek out the new (15% of culture). If you've prototyped well, the tipping point is at about 15% to scale on its own momentum. Contrary to popular opinion, he stated that it is essential to preach to the choir! He also stated that fusion of genius was even better, along with cooperation.





Barbara noted that all of our projects lead toward a similar goal. If we could articulate that into a "fusion of genius," then we could continue in alignment. Cherine pointed to yeast as a metaphor: it doesn't take much, but it must be well distributed for the loaf to rise. Tim cautioned about not enrolling in "my idea," but in collaborative process instead.

Ocean suggested that what makes an idea scalable is that it is: 1. Edgy, radical, new, fresh; 2. Communicated as common sense, logically coherent; 3. Responding to cynicism and critique ahead of time, making them into strengths; 4. Direct

benefit that responds to a need, known or unknown; 5. Compelling stories or human faces attached to it. And it also needs systems to handle the growth.

Jude added that it needs connectors who add value with their inspiration, championing, articulating the story — so people can take on the role of transmitter. According to Sage, it's our light that attracts people as an organic, natural response.

Panache asked, "What needs to unleash in us to inspire an entire planet?"

Terry offered inner work as the key to "get beyond our strategic mind and catch the wind of new emergence." Nipun shared a different lens, from the technology world. He described three models to



illustrate Gandhi 3.0.: 1) the one-to-many is an author + readers; 2) one-to-one; 3) many-to-many is a network. NBC as #1 cannot create a YouTube, which is #3.

David asked whether this group could live evolution by modeling the shift from single cell to multi-cell organism.

Gary reminded everyone to, "Moment by moment, find the intention that is activating what I am saying or doing," so that we "develop the ability to distinguish between fear and love and choose love every time."

After Neale pointed out that the morning's discussion had been about contextualizing what this group could do in precisely those terms by acknowledging who we are first, Daniel stepped in as facilitator to note that we'd come full circle back to the question of who we are and what we might do collectively.

Everyone was abuzz with possibilities as they went to get ready for dinner in town at the Black Sheep Pub, followed by a trip to the Oregon Shakespeare Festival for a highly imaginative production of Stephen Sondheim's musical, "Into the Woods."







DAY THREE

On the third day, Tim Kelley led a meditative process to bring the being and doing among the EL circle into deeper alignment.



When the full group gathered, Oscar had laid out an altar to the four directions in the middle of the circle, on which he placed the EL mission statement. Several EL "snapshots" by Oscar Miro-Quesada (who put our Mission Statement in the center of the circle, on an altar to the Four Directions), Nina Meyerhof, Olivia Hansen, and Nipun Mehta started the energy flowing.





Then Stephen and Barbara led a marvelous meditation on the evolutionary impulse, leading us toward the creation of a powerful unitive field that would resonate throughout the rest of the retreat.

Linda Francis opened the sharing by speaking from her heart, creating space for a rich conversation. Tim spoke of the tension between being and doing, such as focusing collectively on an overarching project. Terry noted the spontaneous, unspoken shift from us showing up in our personas, to becoming authentic friends. Stephen saw three levels of evolution here: we're here to evolve ourselves personally,

we're holding tensions as a group of leaders, plus we have a larger sense of collective mission. For Lynnaea, consciousness itself is the capacity to stand in the tensions of the opposites, as an exciting part of our work. Jude spoke of a process of "into-great-ion." We're dancing with it as cells coming together to co-create an organism, coming into place of authenticity, mind and heart. Connie asked if we can create from that place of relationship, opening space for that which is creating to create us.



Before we broke into smaller groups for the next part of the program, Ocean Robbins and Sage Lavine led a beautiful process, giving each person the chance to feel who is in the room and become appreciative mirrors for one another, seeing the leader in partner after partner. Instead of sharing afterward, all had a few moments to reflect internally and really take it in.

Small groups were then arbitrarily assigned, and each group went outside to find a lovely spot in which to share. This segment was designed as "peer coaching." Each person had the

spotlight to use any way that would be empowering: to share a work or life issue, a new project, an idea and to get feedback from the other 3 or 4 members of the group. Naturally, the conversations varied greatly from group to group, but the time to go deep together was appreciated – as was the picnic lunch.





After lunch there were more "snapshots," by Tim Kelley, Scott Carlin, Barbara Marx Hubbard, David Gershon, Rick Paine, and Yuka Saionji, each a tantalizing glimpse into the work of one of our ELs. The group discussion was on the theme of "saving tomorrow" and what it would mean to "go to scale." Oscar offered a condor feather to serve as a talking stick. Panache Desai suggested that we focus on our unique strengths and combine in collective vision of our uniqueness working together to transform the world. Tim brought forth the wisdom from the morning meditation, affirming that "doing is a natural upwelling of being," and that group intelligence can link projects and foster diverse projects with self-selected participation.



Barbara envisioned what would arise if all projects contributed to a meta-experience. Neale said the group could declare that the meta-experience is our identity with the Divine, so that Divinity could express itself through us. That's what the Divine would do! John asked, "How do we go into action from what Barbara and Neale said?" What governance structure could support us as a network? Stephen spoke of the group as an incubator that creates fertile conditions for evolutionary projects and partnerships to emerge.

The discussion heated up around the dynamic tension around the ideas of transformation, leadership, how to come together, and what level of agreement is needed. Ultimately, that very tension led to the opportunity for some real vulnerability in our sharing. David Gershon stated that the struggle we're in is the struggle humankind is in. He asked, "How can we be the evolutionary vanguard of this shift from single to multi-cell organism? How can we design the experience to figure it out through our not knowing, to let it emerge?" Gary stressed that it was important to find the intention that is activating what I am/we are doing. Neale suggested we embrace oneness as our overarching principle.

There was concern that our least productive and synergistic and most conflictual sessions have been those focused on trying to cohere consensus around "collective action" and a sense that it's the wrong focus. Many felt we can spawn collaborations among groups of us without needing us all to do one single thing.

There was a group discussion on collective EL action/projects. John shared that in his experience groups that are more like networks typically don't have a high success rate with activating collective projects. He believes what works best is if they are at the invitation level. For instance, Ocean said that he is busy and doesn't really have time to work on organizing with others an EL collective project but would be open to signing onto something that was initiated by a member or a group of members. Tim expressed that he didn't think projects would work if just one EL initiated it. Instead he felt any project needed to come out of the collective energy of the group. Many felt collective projects/activities will naturally emerge when people come into communal relationships with one another and these will be self-organized.



This discussion led nicely into the next activity, an open-space time to discuss whatever was wanted. Lynnaea helped organize the groups, which included one to discuss Neale's proposal, one led by Nipun on Internet technologies and one organized by Cherine Badawi (who is an awesome drummer) to move and sing for a half hour. The retreat design team ended up meeting together, along with David and Barbara, to examine more deeply how to support the potentials of this group for fellowship, collaboration, and learning.

The open-space time was another occasion to enjoy the beautiful weather and the lovely outdoor spaces at Lithia Springs Resort.









Then the moment arrived that everyone had been waiting for: time to go to visit Jean and Connie at their home in Ashland! Jean, Connie and their staff were waiting for us with a great feast that included homemade wine from Jean's vineyards and a tour of her extraordinary house filled with indescribable gods and goddesses and artifacts from many eras and cultures, each with its own fascinating tale, of course! The evening was sheer joy, allowing the tensions of the day to melt into happy, bonding time together sharing the warm hospitality and "abbondanza."





DAY FOUR

Everyone arrived on the final day with an expanded sense of community, enriched by our wonderful experience of the evening before. The last set of inspiring "snapshots" began the day, by Jeff Vander Clute, Ocean Robbins, Daniel Stone, Linda Francis and Gary Zukav, Diane Williams, Jean Houston, Terry Patten, and Connie Buffalo.

An interesting snapshot invitation came from Deepak Chopra, via phone from the wilds of Tanzania, where he was visiting with his family. Deepak thanked everyone for attending the retreat and for keeping the EL conversation going. He explained a new idea called Integrative Studies Historical Archive

and Repositories (ISHAR). He invited all the ELs to join in co-creating the largest online database – like the ancient library at Alexandria – to serve as a repository of all the work that has been done in integrative studies, complementary medicine, consciousness research, mind-body healing, genome, epigenetics, perspectives from all over the world, from Ayurveda to Chinese medicine to meditation, yoga, indigenous practices and notable biographies, etc., often with some being denigrated on Wikipedia yet supported by scientists at major universities including UCSC Medical School and Harvard. From history to the modern cultural impact of integrative medicine, ISHAR's goal is to be the first credible online compendium and database of its kind. Additionally, ISHAR will be offering online discussions to build a bridge in understanding between holistic and the more orthodox views on these subject matters. For more information, there is a temporary website at www.isharonline.org.



More "snapshots" followed, by Joshua Gorman and Cherine Badawi, Sage Lavine, Panache Desai, Jude Currivan, and Stephen Dinan. Then all were given the opportunity to report back from the break-out groups of the previous afternoon. Some groups offered statements, and Tim suggested that we test the alignment around them with quick polling. Jude presented to the group an internal unifying principle that emerged out of the open-space group she was part of: "We hold as our unifying principle that we and all that we call reality is divinity manifesting." There was high resonance in the room for this statement. A small group of Jude, Deborah, Tim and Connie volunteered to continue as team to take the next step with the unifying principle, with input welcome by writing.

John suggested collecting up to nine statements – including the one Neale had proposed – and sending them to the larger group to find the greatest alignment. Stephen offered, "We are one sacred family, united in our divinity, celebrating our individuality."



All of this led to a discussion of the name of the group. Neale had mentioned on the first day that he preferred Evolutionary Partners. There was a significant discussion around this. A number of people expressed discomfort with the possible connotations, saying that "Evolutionary Leaders" might seem precious or self-important or elitist. Barbara mentioned the idea of us being a fellowship, John mentioned he sees us as a network, and a number of members expressed other various names that they felt more closely identifies what we stand for. Diane shared a bit of the group's history including that the word "leader" had come in her meditation when this effort was first conceived. She also mentioned that the name consideration came up in the past and the group had an extensive dialogue about it over the course of several months. In the end, they decided it made sense to keep the name because it was very challenging to come to consensus on any one name with so many possibilities offered and also in part because we have already been out in public many years with history

and branding. Deborah added that we address those on our mailing list as "evolutionary leaders," that we are part of a larger community. Others said that the world is hungry for leadership. There were several votes on the name and we realized that most of us feel similarly – we share the same discomforts with the name "Evolutionary Leaders" but we could not reach any final consensus around a better name, especially considering the costs of changing the name of an established group. The discussion closed with less polarity around the name and more feeling that we are all searching for the best way to present ourselves, as well as creating group synergy among us.

Gary has offered to help with a possible new tag line, which is now "In Service to Conscious Evolution," perhaps with the word "partner," "partnership," "fellowship" or "network" in it for group consideration.

There were various expressions of urgency at the state of the world and the need to take effective action. Panache encouraged us to be clearer about our mission. The group talked at length about what our real purpose as a collective is or should be. We realized that we need to articulate our mission better as well as conveying who we are, including giving new members a better sense of how we engage. Many in the group felt it was beneficial to focus on helping to catalyze each other to become more effective ELs, especially when we are together in the annual retreat, instead of spending time trying to create a common action/project or struggling to come into alignment on various business items. Many felt emphasis should be placed on nurturing synergy and connectivity, building relational alignment, and focusing on what is already working within our group. It was noted that there has been increasingly frank, human and vulnerable contact among us, and a valuing of the catalytic power of the love and mutual service among us. Others felt that our coming together should be about activating a sense of collective mission. Some saw the group as an incubator that creates fertile conditions for evolutionary partnerships and projects to emerge.

Terry shared an inspired "download" that came to him that could help describe how we engage:

We come together to catalyze one another, to evolve one another and everyone we serve, and to magnify our ability to be of benefit. We aspire to pioneer the processes by which evolutionaries and change agents themselves continually evolve-holistically, personally and in our service to others. We are committed to mentoring, coaching, inspiring and loving one another dynamically, so that we all continually keep becoming more and more authentic, integrated, powerful, humble, cooperative, courageous, vulnerable, co-creative, effective, and innovative.



[NOTE: Ocean and Terry have stepped forward since the retreat to build upon this statement. They have been in communication with Daniel, Deborah and Diane to move this forward. *The revised statement will be sent for everyone's consideration.*]



This led smoothly into the final segment of the retreat, the business meeting. The major points addressed were:

- Nomination/selection process
 - o Better to bring in new ELs with more time before retreat dates
 - Consider optimal proportion of new to existing ELs at a retreat
 - o Would be useful to have clearer materials for new ELs to understand our purpose
 - A few members seemed frustrated about lack of collective action. If there was a statement on how we work/engage, then people would have a better sense of what to expect as a participant of the EL circle.
 - We could be explicit that we are about catalyzing one another to be effective as evolutionary leaders
 - An orientation for new ELs attending the retreat would be helpful, maybe ½ day
 meeting or lunch together prior to the retreat. (Post meeting, we thought this could also
 be done via Skype prior to the retreat.)
 - o Both Olivia and Sage expressed similarly that, as a new person, they felt welcomed with love.
 - o Maybe set retreat first, then see how many places for new ELs?









Annual retreat

- Model: one retreat/year with local hosts (Jean, Neale)
- Other possible model: some smaller retreats in other places that would not supplant the main retreat (i.e., Peru, Japan, Europe). May need more self-organization.
- A retreat is not a place to get things done, but to get recatalyzed, reactivated, etc., through the collegial activity of spending time together and retreating from our day-today work in order to come together
- o We are more of a fellowship which is compelling and transformational

- Option to consider: having some of topics we want to address and having a day where we are just together, get to know each other, build relationships; and then moving into the business of the retreat
- Building a deep community of respect and listening and then moving into the agenda so we come together unified and as a family (invited Connie onto design team)
- After our meeting, question is whether we are getting any smarter, do we need to have the same conversation every year, and can we do it any higher on the spiral?
 - David asked, "What are our social learning goals so we can measure ourselves against them, so we actually become evolution?"
 - If the impulse for action is important, what is that impulse and how do we do it skillfully?
 - Follow up with Google doc or private FB page
- Appreciate what we are doing here; ELs sounded elitist but knew this was a group of people who each had own agendas and messages in world and were willing to come together and be in same room because it was modeling the most important thing each of us could do
 - We are a microcosm of what is going in world except we are committed to the evolution of human consciousness
 - So we should measure our success against the energy of this moment and not anything else
- May be impossible for us to all join in one project but several projects could be birthed from this group; would like an easier way for that to happen









- Communications platform:
 - o Purpose of newsletter is to give people an overview of what many of us are up to
 - Projects we most want to feature are collaborations among more than one EL
 - Please make sure that at least <u>evolutionaryleaders@evolutionaryleaders.net</u> and/or Diane and Deborah on your mailing list
 - Website features all ELs with bios, quotes, library of materials
 - Blog post on our home page send your articles
 - Make sure we have Twitter feeds live on home page
 - Suggest a couple times a year to have a web conference, perhaps with next level of technology (Maestro, etc.)
 - Contact list if someone wants addresses they may ask the administrators of the group, but they are asked to keep it confidential – NEVER FORWARD OR SHARE OUTSIDE OF GROUP









- Sustainability Eve Konstantine, as a board member of the Source of Synergy Foundation, and Sage made an appeal to the members to invest in the community.
 - We need to support the staff that runs this project (Diane and Deborah) to keep growing and sustaining group
 - o Consider what you feel you are getting and what would be a match as your contribution
 - O Nipun shows us that the less you own, the more you have!
 - o Also, what is it worth to the world for ELs to have this community?
 - o We will set up PayPal for recurring donations for those who prefer
 - Retreat scholarships
 - When we put out the retreat cost, we also ask who needs scholarships and who can give them
 - This year we gave several scholarships through generous funders
 - Would like 100% buy-in by everyone in the community making an annual contribution based on what he or she can afford.
 - Spirit of generosity some members can afford more than others
 - Non-monetary contributions (ideas, energy, networks, volunteering, etc.) gladly accepted
 - Fundraising suggestions
 - What would an evolutionary funders group look like, how might it be assembled? Possibly Invite funders to a table to come and look at bigger field they are part of
 - Could imagine crowdfunding at some point

At the end of the session, Sage made a dynamic call for immediate action and asked people to fill out their pledge forms in real time. This resulted in a very successful outcome that will allow the project to reach the next level of its evolution.



Diane and Deborah thanked everyone for their generosity.

CLOSING

By this time, the coherence in the room was palpable, with everyone in deep appreciation of one another's gifts and presence. We all sensed that Jeff's readings would be off the chart, even though he was already driving back to Oakland. Our gathering had deepened our friendships, given us greater understanding of each one's role in the evolution of human consciousness, and brought us into the heightened communion of our natural synergy.





Our indigenous ELs, Oscar and Connie, honored us with a sacred circle that included farewell hugs for our closing, around the altar with a special water blessing guided by Connie.

A sizeable crowd went off to a joyful lunch at a nearby Mexican restaurant, where we were entertained not only by a gifted guitar player, but also by Mexico winning a semi-final at the World Cup during our meal! It was a happy and auspicious ending to the 2014 Evolutionary Leaders retreat.

