



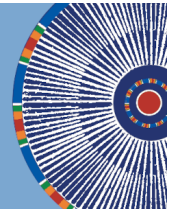
Constellation Burst

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Environmental Resilience-building for a Climate Changed Future



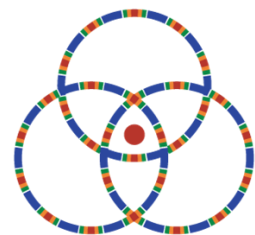
Constellation Skyscape Vista Sociocracy: Movement-building Design Principles

Pamela Boyce Simms

The networks, organizations, and movements that we generate reflect the quality of our own consciousness in the moment. What does the global state of human consciousness tell us then about the movements that we're capable of building?

If you find the answer to that question frightening, you're invited to explore a radically unorthodox approach to movement-building.

Welcome to the work of the Community Supported Enlightenment (CSE) network. The CSE network, like so many change agent groups over time, has discovered the secret sauce recipe. The answer has been hidden in plain sight for eons. However, the path to sustained application of that precious movement-building formula isn't only counterintuitive, but flies in the face of all we've been taught is real and possible. We've therefore selected sociocracy, a counterintuitive set of network design principles, to facilitate depth of impact, and especially movement sustainability.



Sociocratic Aspirations

Familiar movement-building strategies that move the needle for relatively short periods of time abound. As if trapped in a maze,

The CSE is on a quest to innovate, implement, sustain, and share a game-changing movement-building elixir as we face a pivotal inflection point in human history.

they're intent on problem solving at the same level and with the same type of thinking that originally generated the problem.

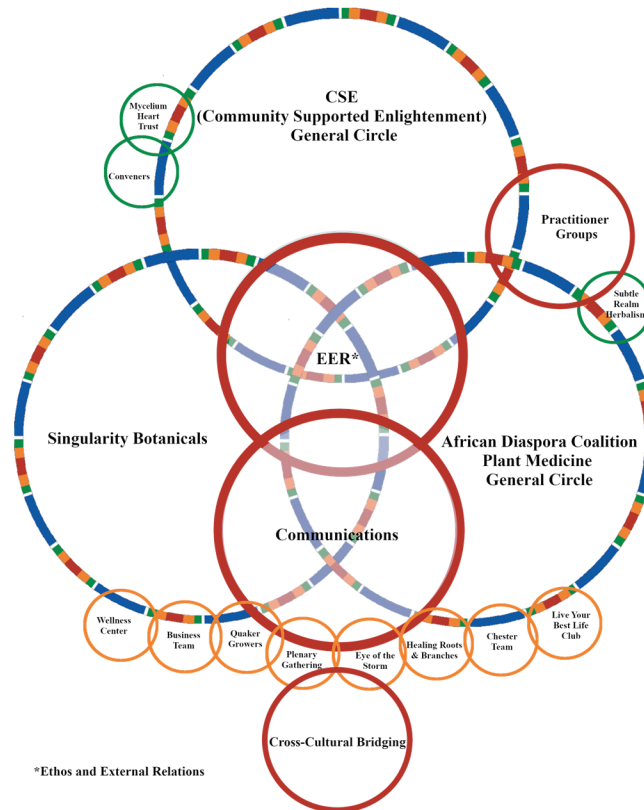
The Secret Sauce

The value-added aim of the CSE network experiment is to build, scale, and share exponentially impactful social movement-building processes by working outside of linear, analytical thinking. That is, after fully examining a challenge, the task is to:

1. Align individually and organizationally with nature's self-organizing, regenerative fractal patterns. In other words practice biomimicry; the imitation of the systems and elements found in nature to solve human problems and human design challenges.
2. Skillfully expand, navigate, and mine our own, vast interior landscapes,
3. Methodically glean wisdom from, and collaborate with non-physical, "subtle realms."
4. Strategically apply the expanded insights accrued to the challenge at hand.

Sociocracy creates a spacious container for this non-conventional work.

Woodstock Timebank Project Constellation

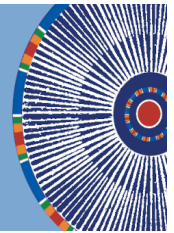


Movement Design Principles that Embrace Uncertainty

We all make meaning and find purpose by using whatever tools and information are available. Humanity is on an ecologically self-sabotaging course because the meaning we've made of the world is

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Environmental Resilience-building for a Climate Changed Future



Continued from page 1 distorted by the illusion of disconnection. The choices we've made are a function of the lenses of separation through which we've been trained to see for generations.

Western society in particular, is built on the flawed cognitive foundation of duality. We're educated to focus on analysis of atomized parts to the exclusion of their interdependence with all other parts and the background of the larger system. This is the worldview in which hierarchical dominance, competition, hyper-individualism, compartmentalization, and lack of communication prevails in organizations, and isolates individuals.

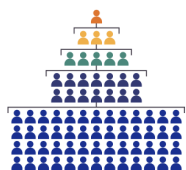
Sociocracy, the antithesis, is a set of design principles for distributing authority.

Successful navigation of the uncharted climate change and sociopolitical territory before us requires that we embrace uncertainty. We'll need to unlearn much of what we think we already know about our world, and embody an understanding of non-dual reality.

*Come to the edge, he said.
They said, We are afraid.
Come to the edge, he said.
He pushed them... and they flew.
—Christopher Logue*

As a species, humanity stands at the proverbial "evolve or die" precipice. We do have the capacity to leave the familiar nest of predict-and-control, top-down and centralized organizational structures—and fly. Among a new generation of governance processes, **sociocracy**, or governance by the socios: i.e., those who associate together, creates safe space for innovative self-expression, emergence of the unexpected, and universally equivalent agency.

Networks and movements that intend to be impactful vehicles for social change during these kaleidoscopic times need to “unlearn” linear, disconnected, and static approaches to governance. They'll need to commit to ongoing transformation in sync with incessant societal shifts. Therefore, we—and the networks that serve our aims—are poised by existential necessity to deliberately take the next evolutionary step in consciousness.



Conventional hierarchical organizational structures are not designed to deal with our current complex, multifaceted, existential challenges. The top-down structure is an inherited carry-over from a simpler, more static industrial-age environment.

Organizations now are pointlessly scrambling to adapt their rigid

hierarchical structures to rapidly shifting circumstances and unpredictable disruptions. Out of step with the speed of incessant change in today's world, they lurch from crisis to crisis. We're witnessing, firsthand, the crumbling of old organizing principles that no longer meet society's needs.

Organizations that strategically plan in static frameworks in these increasingly uncertain times perpetuate lumbering structures that are maladapted to emergent, dynamic, creative tensions. They avoid or suppress conflict that inevitably emerges and ignore most feedback-dissonance that contradicts “the established plan” in which they feel invested.

Such organizations are then compelled to disruptively reorganize when it's realized that the prevailing lines of force can change in a nanosecond.

The Rise of Implicit Governance

When hierarchically-controlled organizations “message” pseudo-egalitarianism and go through the motions of collaboration without explicit feedback and accountability mechanisms in place, an implicit power structure emerges.

Culturally “understood” social norms that protect centered power behind the scenes develop. An implicit system centers power in one person or a small set of persons. Although “invisible,” the implicit power brokerage is keenly felt, highly political, and resists change.

Organizations that are up to 21st-century challenges mimic complex, adaptive living systems and decentralize authority. Their interconnected constituent elements self-organize and change relationships among themselves

fluidly in order to easily adapt to environmental changes. Participants don't execute decisions made by superiors in a hierarchical chain of command. They tap into their own creativity, adapt, and make adjustments that further the organization's purpose.

Sociocracy Sociocracy Nuts & Bolts

Sociocracy distributes policymaking throughout all levels of the organization and establishes equivalence among its members within their domain of responsibility. It maximizes:

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2023 Spring Plant Medicine Project News



Welcome New 2023 Medicinal Herb Growsites Ahimsa Vegan Village & Julian Woods

This growing season we're excited to welcome three new medicinal herb growsites, all of which are located in Central Pennsylvania:

- Ahimsa Vegan Village, Julian PA,
- Julian Woods, Julian PA and,
- Moshannon Valley YMCA Anti-Hunger Project, Phillipsburg, PA (see article).

They join a cluster of Central PA medicinal herb growsites that include Three Leaf Farmden in Port Royal, and State College Friends Meeting. Both Ahimsa Vegan Village and Julian Woods are members of the School of Living (SOL) network of intentional communities.

School of Living (SOL) is an educational organization that holds land in trust for present and future generations and promotes personal empowerment. As a community land trust (CLT) guided by Georgist economics, SOL believes that land must be treated as a commons for the benefit of all living things rather than as private property benefiting only a few. SOL preserves the affordability of housing/land by limiting future profit from appreciated land value. The land is owned by SOL non-profit, and the land users pay a lease fee for the use of the land. SOL addresses challenges and supports the development of just and sustainable communities.



"My work is to embody Ahimsa in my life and to inspire others."

- Kelle Kersten,
IHE M.Ed. grad
humane educator
veganic gardener



Ahimsa Vegan Village
We extend a warm welcome to Ahimsa homesteader, new medicinal herb grower, CSE practitioner, and Healing Roots and Branches Circle member Kelle Kersten. Ahimsa is an evolving vegan homestead and education center located near State College, PA. (*Ahimsa means*

respect for all living things and avoidance of violence toward others.)

Kelle and her partner Bob seek to build a more peaceful and sustainable world through example. They prioritize education about the importance of a vegan diet, the benefits of veganic gardening, and empowering others along the path to making the transition. Their current activities focus on home-based food production including vegetables, fruits, nuts, mushrooms, and maple syrup.



The witch hazel blossom featured in the Village logo honors a medicinal herb that beautifies the Ahimsa landscape. Witch hazel is the first and last flower to bloom every year and throughout the winter. The hope of Ahimsa homesteaders Kelle and Bob is that the Village will represent a light, a blossom, during the transition period we are living in as humanity struggles to find a new way to live in a transformed world.

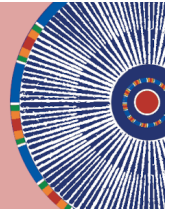


Julian Woods

We welcome Deb Fisher, a Julian Woods intentional community member who will grow medicinal herbs for the African Diaspora Coalition Plant Medicine Project this year.

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2023 Spring Plant Medicine Project News



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Established in 1975, the Julian Woods intentional community near State College, PA is a diverse group of 17 adult members, one young child, and several residents/potential members on ~250 acres. Some of the land is cleared but it's mostly hills and forest.



The community's common land is held by the School of Living Community Land Trust, and there are 68 acres of adjacent land, also in the trust. Members may own home lots after a capital investment in the common land and infrastructure. Families are autonomous, financially independent, and own their own homes on small private lots within our common land. Community decisions regarding the common land and infrastructure are made by consensus of a 5 member Board.



Julian Woods owns and operates a "living machine" in two greenhouses that constitutes the community wastewater-treatment system with almost year-round growing space. The Living Machine is an ecologically engineered system that combines elements of conventional wastewater technology with the purification processes of wetland ecosystems to treat wastewater and then recycle it. The Living Machine utilizes a series of tanks, which support vegetation and a variety of other organisms that treat the wastewater. Julian Woods also has many small organic outdoor gardens.

The community is composed of artists, teachers, carpenters and builders, business people, a forester, and a mechanic/designer. Many residents are retired or close to it. A retired Penn State instructor makes art in a large, in-home artist's studio.



The O-An Zendo located on Julian Woods land is available for meditation, yoga, Tai Chi, and other related activities. CSE practitioner Deb grows flowers in the greenhouse for market. The gravel road, water, and wastewater systems are managed by a committee.

Julian Woods residents collectively enjoy the exquisitely beautiful natural world in which the community is nestled; the swimming pond, the forest stream, and walking trails.



2023 Spring Plant Medicine Project News



Moshannon Valley YMCA Anti-Hunger Program 2023 Medicinal Herb Growsite Partner



We welcome the Moshannon Valley YMCA in Phillipsburg, PA to our plant medicine growsite network after exploring collaboration possibilities and offering onsite workshops at the Y. Specifically, we're teaming up with the YMCA's Anti-Hunger Program.

The Anti-hunger Program, run by YMCA Branch Director Mel Curtis, oversees 21 monthly food distributions now serving more people than at the peak of the pandemic! And at that peak, the Y was already distributing 3.7 million pounds of food in Centre and Clearfield Counties!

Excluding its Free Summer Lunch Program, the distributions impacted over 92,000 individuals.

The Summer Lunch Program served 19,157 lunches at 26 sites in June

of 2022, and 26, in July. The Anti-hunger Program's "Project Respect" collaborates with the Clearfield Veterans of Foreign Wars, assisting 230 veteran families.



Medicinal Herb Collaboration

Through its distribution arm, Singularity Botanicals, the Plant Medicine Project will collaborate with a newly initiated YMCA Farm Project this spring. The anti-hunger program will cultivate land provided to the project by CenClear, one of the YMCA's community partners. CenClear is a mental health service agency with over a dozen locations in Northwest and Central Pennsylvania. The agency offers preschool programs, services to adults, teens, and children as well as drug and alcohol addiction counseling.

As the Y farm gears up to grow fresh produce for its food distributions, Plant Medicine Project volunteers will break ground in a section of the farm that has been generously designated for medicinal herb cultivation.



Holistic Herbal Wellness Workshops

It has been a joy to spend time with Phillipsburg residents during the fall of 2022 and early this year during our herbal education workshops offered at the YMCA.

Medicinal herb workshops convened, and those planned in the future, address:

1. Getting Acquainted: Introduction to Herbal Medicine
2. Neurological Pain Relief
3. Heart Health & Wellness
4. Holistic Approaches to Diabetes

5. Mother and Daughter, Women's Health Tea Party

Herbal Wellness Roundtable Discussions are gathering momentum as the word about holistic healing education and the availability of herbal products spread.

In the summer of 2022 we began a deep listening tour during which we met Phillipsburg medicinal herb champions and learned about the area from residents.

In preparation for our first set of workshops in the fall of 2022, sample packets of Singularity Botanicals Lemon Balm Hibiscus tea and loose leaf tea bags were offered along with workshop flyers to residents lined up in their cars at the Y anti-hunger program distribution points. That practice continues this spring and tea enthusiasts are requesting additional supplies.

In addition to plant medicine education and sampling tea blends, workshop participants have tried various sea vegetable snacks, sugar free pastries prepared by the YMCA Sports and Wellness director Sydney Swales, as well as Singularity Botanicals Fire Cider Blends.

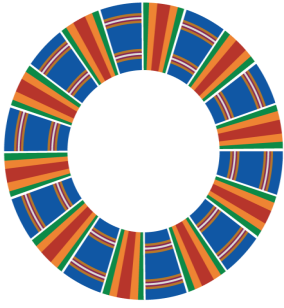
During the most recent workshops, participants took a deep dive into herbal tinctures and initiated follow up holistic wellness consultations via zoom. We look forward to the intersection of our herbal education workshops and herb cultivation at the farm growsite.



Medicinal Herbs: 2023

Singularity Botanicals

An eclectic group of twenty "growsites" in six states (*MD, NY, OH, PA, TX, VT*) compose the 2023 African Diaspora Coalition Plant Medicine Project network of medicinal herb growers.



A cluster of six growsites and wildcraft partners form an eastern Pennsylvania medicinal herb hub where aerial parts of plants (*leaves and flowers*) are grown. To ensure the highest quality herbal products we either tincture or dehydrate aerial parts of plants immediately; directly out of the hub growsites in accordance with protocols developed for each plant.

All non-eastern Pennsylvania growsites supply root crops exclusively since the aerial parts of plants begin to degrade immediately after harvest. The degradation is exacerbated when they are shipped via *any* carrier. Roots do not pose the short term and/or medium term deg-

radation challenge.

Medicinal Herb Growlist

* *Non-Eastern Pennsylvania Growsite Sourced Root Crops*

o *Coming on Stream 2023*

Arnica	(<i>Arnica Montana</i>)	
Ashwagandha	(<i>Withania somnifera</i>)	Root & Berries
Astragalus	(<i>Astragalus membranaceus</i>)	Root
Bacopa	(<i>Bacopa monnieri</i>)	
Bitter Melon	(<i>Momordica charantia</i>)	
Burdock	(<i>Arctium lappa</i>)	Root
Calendula	(<i>Calendula officinalis</i>)	
California Poppy	(<i>Eschscholzia californica</i>)	
Catnip	(<i>Nepeta cataria</i>)	
Cayenne	(<i>Capsicum frutescens</i>)	
Dandelion	(<i>Taraxacum officinale</i>)	Root & Leaves
Echinacea	(<i>Echinacea purpurea</i>)	Root
Elecampane	(<i>Inula helenium</i>)	Root
Feverfew	(<i>Tanacetum parthenium</i>)	
Ginkgo	(<i>Ginkgo biloba</i>)	(<i>Wildcraft harvested</i>)
Goldenrod	(<i>Solidago</i>)	(<i>Wildcraft harvested</i>)
Gotu Kola	<i>Centella asiatica</i>	
Grindelia	(<i>Grindelia - Gumweed</i>)	
Ground Ivy	(<i>Glechoma hederacea</i>)	(<i>Wildcraft harvested</i>)
Holy Basil	(<i>Ocimum sanctum</i>)	
Licorice	(<i>Glycyrrhiza glabra</i>)	Root
Lemon Balm	(<i>Melissa officinalis</i>)	
Linden	(<i>Tilia cordata</i>)	(<i>Wildcraft harvested</i>)
Motherwort	(<i>Leonurus cardiaca</i>)	
Mullein	(<i>Verbascum thapsus</i>)	
Nettles	(<i>Urtica dioica</i>)	Root & Aerial Parts
Milky Oats	(<i>Avena sativa</i>)	
Mountain Mint	(<i>Pycnanthemum muticum</i>)	(<i>Wildcraft harvested</i>)
Oregano	(<i>Origanum vulgare</i>)	
Passionflower	(<i>Passiflora incarnata</i>)	
Peppermint	(<i>Mentha piperita</i>)	
Periwinkle	(<i>Vinca major and minor</i>)	
Purslane	(<i>Portulaca oleracea</i>)	(<i>Wildcraft harvested</i>)
Rhodiola	(<i>Rhodiola rosea</i>)	Root
Rosemary	(<i>Salvia rosmarinus</i>)	
Sage	(<i>Salvia officinalis</i>)	
Skullcap	(<i>Scutellaria</i>)	
Spearmint	(<i>Mentha spicata</i>)	
Stevia	(<i>Stevia rebaudiana</i>)	
St John's Wort (<i>Hypericum perforatum</i>)	
Valerian	(<i>Valeriana officinalis</i>)	Root
Yellow Dock	(<i>Rumex crispus</i>)	Root



Window Into Constellation Circles

Cross-cultural Bridging Circle



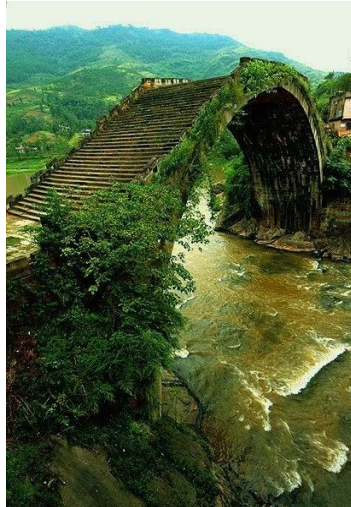
Socio-political polarization is a powerful, almost irresistible undertow in the United States these days. The pervasive division is completely immersive. And solutions that are conjured from an analytical, intellectual, beta brainwave state are either stopgap, or

perpetually evasive.

The awareness that separation, division, is an absolutely artificial construct forms the backdrop for Community Supported Enlightenment (CSE) cross-cultural bridging work. We translate awareness of that quantum reality into direct action. Sustainable solutions are conceivable from *that level of understanding*.

Nascent Cross-cultural Bridging Circle

A new "cross-cultural bridging" circle will soon be a spacious container for work that uses a CSE "alpha practice toolkit" to pragmatically apply unity consciousness, and address polarization on the ground (*See the Project Constellation Map*). Practices will bring to bear an expanded awareness of ourselves which can help all involved override fear. Circle gatherings will be opportunities for CSE practitioners to share, explore, and innovate ways to best implement cross-cultural bridging work.



Progress to Date:

The African Diaspora Coalition Plant Medicine Project's joint cultivation and enjoyment of medicinal herbs beside Appalachian community residents is potentially transformative in multiple ways. We're working together to promote healing in general, and opioid addiction in particular. We share the same space to achieve a shared goal.

Groundwork has been laid in the Appalachian region of Central Pennsylvania over the summer of 2022, early this year, and will be ongoing. Medicinal herb teas and tincture distribution, community-building and herbal wellness workshops are gaining momentum in the town of Phillipsburg.

Under the Hood: Societal Polarization & High Beta Brainwave States

When as a function of societal divisions we are habitually angry, afraid, jealous, ashamed, impatient, judgemental or resentful, our brainwaves go into extremely elevated beta cycles; in fact, two times higher than normal "conversational beta." The brain goes into hyper-aroused, emergency mode overdrive.

When the resulting cascade of stress hormones occurs frequently, people become addicted to having extreme drama in their lives in order to feel something. Incessantly spotlighted racial, political and socio-economic division fuels that drama.

In sustained high beta states, fear focuses us inordinately on pain, lack, and hardship because we are instinctively trying to detect threats or danger. In relaxed, alpha brainwave states our inner world is accessible. We judge less, analyze less, and tap into a more vastly expansive perspective from which we can creatively innovate.

What Unites Us

Both Appalachian communities and impoverished urban Black communities have limited access to quality healthcare, and experience greater rates of disability and chronic diseases.

Since both communities have lower rates of employer-provided benefits, people are more likely to be underinsured or uninsured for longer periods of time.

Both groups suffer from rampant drug addiction and high rates of death by overdose. (*Pennsylvania ranks third among states in the nation for fatal drug overdoses with 14 Pennsylvanians dying daily therefrom.*)

Finally, it's amply documented that African American and mountain communities alike are distrustful of the mainstream medical system.

Collaborative herb cultivation, education, and methodical use of plant medicine to treat a shared life-and-death problem can be a selfcare antidote to the:

1. Tragic, often lethal impact of little or no healthcare access and,
2. Extreme vulnerability to more frequent and prolonged systems disruptions, *even as it creates spaces for expanded mutual awareness across the cultural divide.*

Subtle Realm Herbalism Circle



The launch and scale up of a medicinal plant project that supports environmental resilience-building has been an African Diaspora Coalition priority for five years. This hands in the soil, production and distribution process developed in tandem with *internal* resilience-building work in the Community Supported Enlightenment (CSE) network.

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Window Into Constellation Circles

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The initiation of the Subtle Realm Herbalism Circle represents the deliberate merging of CSE consciousness expansion with plant medicine work at much broader bandwidths. As we work with soil, seeds, and plants we'll simultaneously enhance our awareness to work with the non-physical plant elementals, nature presences, and the devic realms.

Resonant CSE practitioners who are:

- Experienced subtle realm explorers and,
- Herbalists, medicinal herb growers, or have an avid interest in communicating with subtle plant realms will participate in the emergent circle.

Co-partners will be challenged to let go of human exceptionalism, shift perceptual focus, and enter the consciousness of plants with curiosity and humility. We'll relate with plants as companion beings.

ings.

To that end, we'll work together to:

1. Unlearn what we've been trained to see and believe about the relationship between humanity, plants, and ecosystems.
2. Undomesticate our senses so as to open the gateways of communication with plant intelligence.
3. Gain understanding and knowledge directly from plants through sensory perception, our somatic felt-sense, and open hearts.

Subtle Realm Herbalism Circle: Scope of Work

1. *Formulate Plant Ally Communication Practices:* Develop plant subtle realm communication practices that others can use.
 - *Develop Children's Practices:* Innovate ways to involve children aged 5-10 from radically disparate communities to accompany us on the journey into the subtle realm of plants.
2. *Create Plant Realm-Generated Protocols:* Enlist plant guide assistance in deepening our healing wisdom, plant by plant, and/or health condition by health condition,
3. *Track Plant Experience of Climate Change:* Observe, gauge, and share climate change progression information gleaned specifically from the plant vantage point.

CSE Practitioner Journeys

CSE and Me

Grace Gershuny

I first met Pamela* sometime in 2016, when a friend called and invited me to come to Montpelier for a visit with someone she said I should meet. My friend was right.

Pamela was then serving as Convener of the Mid-Atlantic Transition Hub, and was promoting her vision of Inner Landscapes – Activist Communities of Practice. At the time I had just self-published *Organic Revolutionary: A Memoir of the Movement for Real Food, Planetary Healing, and Human Liberation*. I resonated deeply with her mission to develop the inner resources that would support climate and food activists like myself in the deep healing and social transformation needed to address the accelerating breakdown of earth's life support systems.



It seemed as if Pamela's wisdom and guidance had entered my life at a crucial moment. She hosted me in Philadelphia to help promote my book, and came to speak at a Social Ecology gathering near me in central Vermont. I was and continue to be part of the local Shambhala Buddhist community, living very near the Karne Choling land center, always seeking ways to integrate this ancient tradition with the activist world that often holds disdain for spiritual practice and non-rational ways of knowing.

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I was all in—“hair on fire” in her terms--when Pamela invited me into a newly initiated a Community of Practice to offer training to those aspiring to become part of the “joyous resilient remnant” of humanity that could thrive in this time of rapid change and help usher in the Shambhala vision of enlightened society. This freely offered and highly egalitarian set of teachings, eclectic and undogmatic, spoke to my own deeply held beliefs about the nature of enlightened society, especially the avoidance of authoritarian guru worship and the welcoming of a wide diversity of backgrounds and paths.

Along with a small contingent of good friends who had learned of Pamela’s teachings I traveled to Pendle Hill in January of 2019 to participate in the first in-person retreat. It was here that the participants agreed to adopt the term “Community Supported Enlightenment” for the community of practice.

That event marked a time of major transition and trauma for me. The summer before I had suddenly lost my sister as I was on my way to visit her in Scotland, and soon after returning from this journey my partner of twelve years abandoned me without warning. Then, just before the retreat I received a diagnosis of early stage breast cancer. As my Shambhala meditation practice had helped me navigate previous life upheavals, the CSE practices that helped me excavate childhood traumas and existential fears proved to be a lifeline for making sense of my own path and affirmation of my purpose in life.



Since that time, as the shape and mission of the CSE Constellation has emerged, I have been humbled by Pamela’s demonstration of confidence in me by inviting me to work with her in the EER Circle and as a CSE Resource Person (now known as the Conveners Circle). It has been exciting to deepen my understanding of the sociocratic method and learn more about medicinal herbs by growing and harvesting root crops for Singularity Botanicals. I feel privileged and honored to work with an expanding mycelial network of CSE practitioners and co-partners who have become important teachers on this path.

As Spring arrives and I begin my 74th trip around the sun, my astragalus seeds and some early greens have sprouted, and I’m looking forward to a new season of joy and abundance with the love of my life. Treasuring the network of CSE practitioners, we are learning to help each other review the practices we have been given and open to continued expansion of our spirits.

As we learn to build bridges between diverse communities, the training I’m receiving is helping me accelerate my work closer to home. In recent weeks I have helped to co-create the Co-operation Vermont Community Land Trust, aiming to remove land from the market economy, cultivate food and medicine for this community, and prepare to welcome climate refugees to one of the safest places to live as our planetary mother convulses in earthquake, drought, fire, and flood. The journey continues!

*Pamela Boyce Simms, CSE Coordinating Convener

From Activist to Alchemist

Aarti Kuber

I grew up in the bustling metropolitan city of Mumbai, on the western coast of India. Fatigued by the ever-decreasing tree cover resulting from the construction of buildings, coastal roads, and metro rails, I left my home during the pandemic in search of a quiet, slow, and rooted life. During that transition, I was trying to make sense of my frequent dreams and visions of dolphins - they seemed to have a prophetic quality.

When I shared this with my friend Neetu exactly 2 years ago, she introduced me to the Community Supported Enlightenment (CSE) group as she felt I’d fit right in. Looking back at the last two years, I’m exactly where I saw myself in those visions. Today, I live in Goa, a vibrant coastal city where my ancestors lived during pre-colonial times. However, climate change effects are starting to show up here as well. We have raging forest fires for the first time ever, as it is unheard of in the tropical evergreen forests which are usually humid and moist.

Growing up in India, I feel privileged to have been brought up around spiritual practices, volunteering and the classical arts. Right from a young age, I knew that my purpose is to be of service to others. In my last year of business school, I began organising support groups and advocating for mental health, survivors of sexual abuse, and environmental conservation. While I did enjoy parts of that work, I felt like it was exhausting to carry around the persona of an angsty, anxious activist. I felt called to break free from the disempowering narrative and focus on alchemizing that very pain, within and eventually without.



Post college, I traveled across India to various communities and spent some time at a reforestation

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project, working as a researcher. Over the last few years, I've spent my time training in expressive arts therapy, tarot reading, energy work and social change courses.

In 2017 I founded an initiative called The Chandrakala Collective which offers workshops, moon gatherings and trainings that focus on self care for social change.

When the pandemic hit, the world changed forever. Strangely, through the chaos and disruption, a part of me started to come alive. My purpose started to unravel and become clearer. My work felt more fulfilling. Being part of the CSE community, I could see that by just being me and doing my bit, I was connected to the cosmic movement that is bringing a shift in consciousness across the world.

My curiosity to learn more drew me to joining the EER (Ethos and External Relations) circle and initially I'd openly admit that I had no idea why I was part of it, except that it felt right. Since then I have been learning about the work happening in the constellation, climate change resilience, multidimensionality, plant medicine, biomimicry, emergence and the art of movement building in this community and it is supporting me in envisioning the way forward in a way that is inspired, real and radically hopeful.

Now, my husband and I have been enjoying the process of infusing CSE practices into our daily routine to recharge, reflect and respond to life. We have a new CSE practice group with our friends in India and hope to deepen work in the community locally. I'm also looking forward to deepening my connection with plants through subtle realm explorations practices.

I am so excited to share with you that we are in the process of expanding Chandrakala Collective as a community business, to distribute herbal teas, pelvic steaming blends and body scrubs for self-care. I have held this dream close to my heart for many years now and I feel so grateful for how it's all coming together.

I truly appreciate the opportunity to share my story with you wonderful souls. The process of writing this article brought back so many memories and tears of joy. In closing, I'd like to share a poem I'd written back in 2015.

My Second Chance (2015)

When I was 4, I woke up one day
Saw people bringing down
All the trees in my community
Tall and green and brown

I wept and cried in disbelief,
I couldn't understand,
My grandpa held me close and said,
"My child, let's pray for the land"

I'm 20 now, it's happened again
My once green backyard
It's naked and bare
But this time, I played a different card

I ran downstairs asked them to stop
Chopping on a whim,
I requested them politely,
To give the trees a trim

I collected all the leaves I could,
From the neem tree that was dumped,
Before they could burn it down,
I turned it into some body scrub

My grandma said I'd made her proud,
That my grandpa would've been happy,
And if these trees could talk,
She's sure that they would've thanked me



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- **Equivalence** through egalitarian distribution of authority and the universal power to influence.
- **Transparency** through flow of information and collective values.
- **Efficacy** through continuous evolution and adaptation to changing contexts.
- **Productivity** by making tensions explicit and establishing processes that use them as fuel for innovation and evolutionary change.
- **Commitment** and buy-in by affirming and applying the collective genius that proceeds from a confluence of varied vantage points.
- **Harmony** through respectful, dispassionate-compassionate unity.

Nonhierarchical egalitarianism that mirrors the interconnectedness of nature organically guides organizations toward maximizing their potential.

Sociocracy anticipates and accommodates complex, multilayered, and interconnected 21st-century challenges and ever-emerging, ever-shortening timeframes. The governance process increases capacity to effectively handle accelerated uncertainty.

Organizations that successfully implement sociocracy become adaptive organisms that foster innovation. Tensions that emerge are viewed as valued, important sensors of the human consciousness which are harnessed for creative change and evolution. Channels are established to process insights as they emerge.

Sociocracy distributes authority among all constituents through explicit organizational agreements which nurture and cultivate the whole. Authority shifts from domineering “veteran heavy-hitters,” personality-cults, or “resourced” leadership to egalitarian organizational processes. The circle configuration and speaking in rounds without cross-talk ensures and safeguards everyone’s agency.

Decision-making Principles

Decision-making principles revolve around:

- **Consent:** policy decisions are made with the consent of those who are most directly affected. Consent is defined as “no objections,” “good enough for now,” and “safe enough to try,” which creates space for change. Policies facilitate day-to-day tasks and resolve issues to achieve organizational aims.
- **Circles:** policy decisions are delegated to circles composed of members who function as equals and elect their own officers: a convener, a facilitator, a delegate (an elected representative), and a recording secretary. Day-to-day operational decisions are made by the convener and/or facilitator adhering to the policies established by the circle and the larger organization.
- **Double Linking:** delegates participate in other issue-related circles. Circles are arranged according to the scope of their decision-making. The General Circle for example, is composed of



linked delegates from circles dealing with more specific aims and issues. Double links create overlapping participation in decision-making by members of various circles. This establishes communications and feedback loops.

Practices

Following are common sociocratic practices:

- Nominations and elections are conducted exclusively by consent after discussion (not a majority-vote election). All circle members participate in assigning roles and responsibilities.
- Rounds invite each person to speak in turn and are used to maintain equivalence in a meeting. They balance the discussion giving each person the opportunity to speak and to ensure that everyone participates in decisions.
- Evaluations are conducted as each policy decision is reviewed periodically. Evaluations include feedback on member work and emergent role needs.
- Transparency is essential when all members are expected to exercise agency in their own development and that of their circle. Information must flow continually and be readily available for effective and informed decision-making.

What Is Possible?

We can start by fully accepting that antiquated systems no longer serve us in these tumultuous times. Sociocracy offers an exciting opportunity to shed outworn worldviews. Its dynamic opens organizational governance up to innovation and adaptation to accelerated change in service to social transformation.

We can resist the temptation to look at and work on, local, national, and global problems in isolation. We can withstand the siren song of the old paradigm, calling us to reflexively try and find “the right part to fix.” We can cease trying to strategically tinker with our organizations or reshuffle their elements expecting a result beyond mediocrity. We can accept that it is a comprehensive, holistic transformation that: 1) creates space for evolution 2) will lead to efficacy and, 3) can sustain impactful movement relevance.

Culture-building that accompanies an organization’s adoption of sociocracy expects participants to enthusiastically do the introspective work that shifts their worldview toward serving the aims of the whole.

Preconditions for Constructive Work With Objections:

Group members...

- Trust each other and the sociocratic process,
- Share a common aim,
- Are willing to listen deeply, work through, and learn from the objection,
- Agree to unanimously abide by the decision (s) to which all have consented.

By embracing sociocracy we willingly step into increased autonomy, personal responsibility, and opportunities to grow. We contribute to authentically collaborative workspaces and community relationships.

Sociocracy provides a pathway for those whose organizations and networks are ready to stand in the epicenter of social transformation, and offers an evolutionary response to society’s multitiered, existential challenges.