

Journey Into Awareness

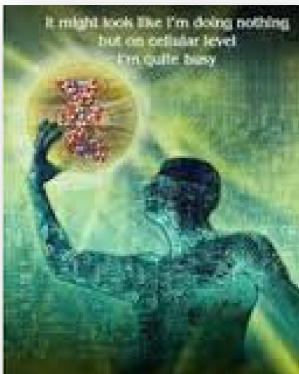
Research into Creating Humanity's Future



Just when the caterpillar thought the world was over, it became a butterfly...

Starting Points:

- What is going on with Western culture today? Have we reached the limits?
- How does this fit with prophecy and forecasts?
- How do we interpret what we see?
- What are the essential components of a culture that can sustain human and planetary well-being?



Beginning the Journey

Are you wondering what's happening to us? What's next? Have we reached our limits? What can you DO?

This webinar is an overview of the ideas, methods, and possibilities that our research has shown have been demonstrated over centuries to be effective in facilitating community transformation to sustainable cultural norms. It's designed to provide access to resources and an opportunity to explore options.

Session Two – What is Culture?

To design a culture, we need to understand what culture really is.

Most of us have been taught to think of culture as the arts, including literature. But to an anthropologist, those are just a small part of the full range of activities that make up a culture.

Think of all the things that you see and do in the course of a day. Now imagine what a hunter-gatherer in the Amazon sees and does. The difference is what defines our culture and theirs.

In this first session, we look at where we are and what it means, what the futurists and prophets have to say, and how we can track changes to see where we're headed.

Then we begin the process of creating something new! And it starts in a very strange place: our own minds.

It's not only the arts and the music but also the ways families are set up and maintained, the ways decisions are made, the rituals and what they mean, the kinds of foods that are produced and eaten, and more. Culture includes every aspect of our life.

So when we think about what a new culture might look like, we need to look at all the ways we do things and think about them. And then we need to look at what works and what doesn't, in all cultures, everywhere.

This series is an introduction to the research into how to create communities that align with the planet and the human spirit.

Each session provides a glimpse of the topics and methods offered in future classes. No outside reading or projects are required, but we'll offer pointers for application and an opportunity to share experiences applying them.

Check out the videos at gaialivingsystems.org

CULTURE:

the total set of beliefs, values, & assumptions we have about the world and our place in it, and the social structures, methods, and material things we create, build, destroy, and maintain as a result

Third Session – Social Systems

"The fundamental differences between Western Urban-Industrial culture and the many sustainable cultures of the world are in our minds."

~ R. L. Miller

The fundamental reason that human beings come together for more than a few days or weeks at a time is to provide a safe space for children to learn how to thrive.

This means that the fundamental unit of all cultures is the child-centered family, and so, when a culture is fully functional it provides the greatest ease, comfort, resources, wisdom, and peace for those who are raising the children.

When that’s not the case, the culture is generally dying.

Social systems are organized around specific functions within the child-raising process: the family itself, the education of the children, the spiritual activities, the play and entertainment, etc. And then more systems support the functioning of those basic ones.

Thinking of the way our social systems are

structured and function, we can see that there’s room for improvement, to say the least.

Thinking of past periods in Western culture can help us understand how and why that’s so. And observing the structure and function of social systems in other cultures can give us an idea of what really could work for the generations to come.

Fourth Session – Technologies

When we say “technology” in our culture, we’re usually thinking of something electronic, using the latest hardware and software.

When anthropologists use the word technology, they’re referring to all the ways that people do things, the tools they make and use, and how they make and use them.

A few decades ago, the idea of “appropriate

technology” became popular in the US. It was an attempt to remind us that we can choose how we do things, and what tools we use to do things with, that we can maximize the resources and minimize the impacts of our work, based on the context we’re working in.

Cultures that have remained healthy in one location for hundreds or thousands of years always use the appropriate technology for their

physical situation and social expectations.

So if we are to maintain a sustained culture for the next thousand years, we need to learn from them.



Fifth Session – Economies

Can you imagine an economic system that does not include money, taxes, or debt?

As hard as it is to believe, most of humanity has lived comfortably for most of history without either. There are many different ways to produce and

distribute goods and services that are far more efficient – much less sustainable – than a cash- or debt-based economy.

Looking at how various economic theories were developed and the history of money helps us to understand how we got

where we are today. Then looking at some of the most prosperous economies in the world helps us to understand what’s needed if we’re going to have true security and well-being in the future.



Sixth Session – Natural Environment

For most of us, the wake-up call to shift from the way we have been living and doing things has been the impact our Western industrial culture has had on the environment we live in.

For most of human history, people have responded or adapted to their environment, but our culture believes that we can change natural processes to suit our purposes.

What we’ve seen in the past 50 years is that belief is unfounded. We’ve learned that Nature is bigger and more powerful than us, and that when we try to control natural processes, we often pay a huge price.

If we were to live in a way that ensures our comfort and security, but working in harmony with natural processes, the leaders of other cultures

tell us, we will be able to sustain humanity on the planet for thousands of years to come.

The question for us is, how can we do that? How can we be comfortable and honor Nature? How can we learn to trust that natural processes support our well-being rather than undermine it?

Again, history and other cultures have much to teach us.



Seventh Session – Political Processes

Our way of deciding what needs to be done and how is to choose a few people and tell them to take care of things while we focus on something else.

This is exactly what those who want things their own way want us to do. That way we’re not watching while they do what they please.

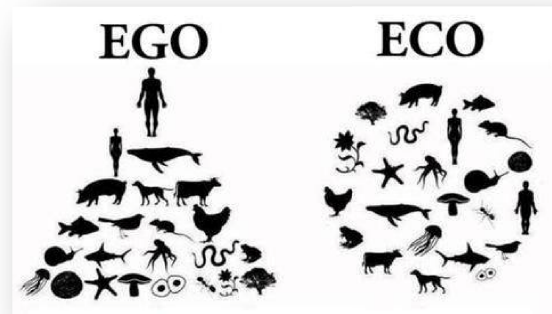
This is not what democracy – or even a

republic – was designed to do, and the leaders of other cultures are sometimes amused but often appalled at our willingness to let them.

If we are to live sustainably on this planet, humanity must find ways to make collective decisions that truly serve the whole, rather than a few.

And again, doing so requires looking at our

own history to understand what we’re doing and why, as well as how other cultures make decisions that affect everybody.



Eighth Session – Values, Assumptions, Beliefs

What we believe and the assumptions we make based on those beliefs determine what we think about our lives and the world, and how we act.

So, if we want to be living in a different way, we need to change our minds. Consciousness is an over-arching term that includes all of our values,

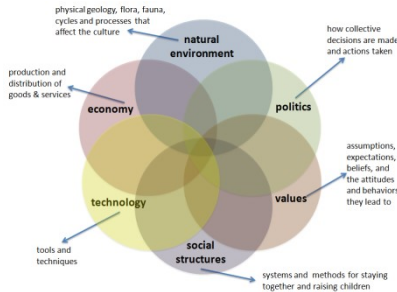
beliefs, and assumptions, and more. When we think of consciousness as what we’re aware of, then what we need to do is clear: become aware of more.

Following the Greek dictum to “Know Thyself” offers a simple way to do this. So, we start with finding out what’s going on inside our own minds.

We continue by discovering what’s going on in the minds of those who live in cultures that have been sustainable for hundreds and thousands of years.

Having done these things we can then explore the broader consciousness sometimes called the One Mind for further answers.

Ninth Session – Interactions & Drivers



While much of what's not working in our culture today is because the systems are inappropriate for the world we live in, some of the problems come from the interactions between them.

The delays in responses from the natural environment or in our

bodies may lull us into thinking that what we're doing has no negative effects. The apparent lack of connection between two activities may distract us from the fact that one would be impossible without the other.

Both of these are true at physical and metaphysical levels.

As we look at the interconnections and the drivers in a culture, we begin to see why and how various actions and assumptions work and don't work.

More, we can model how they might look over the long haul, testing various alternative approaches over time.

Tenth Session – Examples & Possibilities

This is the last class in this course. It's the day we look back over the series and see what we've learned and where we need to focus to actually accomplish what we've talked about.

We'll explore ways to make some of these ideas real in our experience, and some of the things that are already happening in the world to make it so.

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed people can change the world. Indeed, it's the only thing that ever has."

~Margaret Mead

About the Presenter...

Dr. Ruth-Ellen L Miller is Research Director at Gaia Living Systems Institute. She has been helping facilitate the shift in consciousness that our culture is going through for all her adult life. Her degrees, in anthropology, environmental studies, and the systems sciences, were earned as part of her quest for tools and knowledge.

About Our Organization...

Gaia Living Systems Institute was formed in response to a need, based on a vision. The need is for more people who understand the nature of sustainable communities and can facilitate their development. The vision was a shared image, held by two retired professors, of a new kind of learning organization in which science and intuition were held as equally valuable and the

essence of the new culture was the operating focus.

Gaia Living Systems Institute is being launched through the support of New Choices, an Oregon-based nonprofit corporation, tax exempt under US IRC ch. 501(c)(3). Visit them (or donate) online at

www.newchoicesoregon.org

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If you're interested in creating sustainable community...

If you're feeling changes in the culture and consciousness...

...Join us in providing information and resources through our online classes and website

Email info@gaialivingsystems.org for more information.